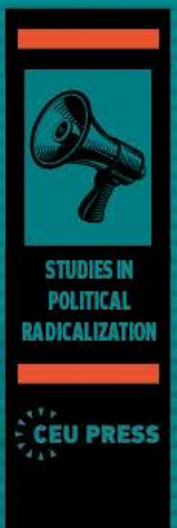
Anti-Fascism in European History

From the 1920s to Today

Edited by

JOŽE PIRJEVEC · EGON PELIKAN · SABRINA P. RAMET



Studies in Political Radicalization
Historical and Comparative Perspectives

Series Editor
Prof. Dr. habil. CONSTANTIN IORDACHI (CEU Vienna)

Violent extremism was a defining mark of the political upheaval of the twentieth century and is still on the rise in the twenty-first century. To contribute to the study of this contentious issue, the book series promotes a new research agenda on radicalization that is critical, transnational, and interdisciplinary. The series promotes novel socio-cultural approaches to multifactorial processes of political transformation leading to violent extremism. To this end, we invite comparative or case study contributions dealing with grassroots or top-down processes of far-right or far-left radicalization leading to violence, at the level of ideology, dissemination, and political practice. The series calls on scholars of fascism, authoritarianism, populism, and the radical right, in particular, to further reflect on the comparative, transnational, and interdisciplinary foundations of existing approaches, taking into account both their historical roots and their entanglement or histoires croisées with related contemporary extremist and radical phenomena.

A key aim of the series is to underscore the historical and contemporary links between fascism and the radical right, and to reassess the importance of studying political radicalism in East Central Europe, in close comparison to other European or world regions. Another major aim is to promote a new research agenda for studying radicalization comparatively, based on a greater convergence between various national and regional historiographical traditions while also correcting the Cold War bias towards focusing on Western phenomena in Anglophone social and historical sciences. It is our conviction that the study of political radicalism can function as a driving force of historiographical innovation, facilitating academic cross-fertilization among multiple research fields and clustering interdisciplinary approaches pertaining to socio-cultural history, gender, and transnational history, to name but a few.

The series collaborates closely with the International Association for Comparative Fascist Studies (ComFas, www.comfas.org) a nonprofit and nonpolitical scholarly association dedicated to the comparative and transnational study of fascism in a global context.

The Editorial Board comprises some of the most prominent researchers worldwide in this field: Arnd Bauerkämper, Maria Bucur, Tomislav Dulić, Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi, Leandro Pereira Gonçalves, Roger Griffin, Aristotle Kallis, Antonio Costa Pinto, Sven Reichardt, and Javier Rodrigo Sanchez.

For further inquiries and submission of manuscripts, please contact
Constantin Iordachi (iordachinc@ceu.edu) or
Linda Kunos (kunosl@press.ceu.edu).

Anti-Fascism in European History

From the 1920s to Today

Edited by

JOŽE PIRJEVEC • EGON PELIKAN • SABRINA P. RAMET

CEU PRESS

Central European University Press

Budapest—Vienna—New York

Published in 2023 by
Central European University Press

Nádor utca 9, H-1051 Budapest, Hungary
Tel: +36-1-327-3138 or 327-3000
E-mail: ceupress@press.ceu.edu
Website: www.ceupress.com

On the cover: Tone Kralj, *Fleeing Mother*, 1942, oil on canvas, 158 x 152 cm, inv. No. SK-39, Art collection of MUZEJ NOVEJŠE IN SODOBNE ZGODOVINE SLOVENIJE / NATIONAL MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY HISTORY.

ISBN 978-963-386-657-3 (hardback)
ISBN 978-963-386-658-0 (ebook)
ISSN 3003-9738 (Online)
ISSN 3003-972X (Print)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Pirjevec, Jože, 1940- editor. | Pelikan, Egon, editor. | Ramet, Sabrina P., 1949- editor.
Title: Anti-fascism in European history : from the 1920s to today / edited by Jože Pirjevec, Egon Pelikan, Sabrina P. Ramet.
Description: Budapest ; New York : Central European University Press, 2023. | Series: Studies in political radicalization: historical and comparative perspectives | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2023028822 (print) | LCCN 2023028823 (ebook) | ISBN 9789633866573 (hardback) | ISBN 9789633866580 (pdf)
Subjects: LCSH: Anti-fascist movements--Europe--20th century. | BISAC: POLITICAL SCIENCE / Political Ideologies / Fascism & Totalitarianism | HISTORY / Europe / Eastern Classification: LCC D726.5 .A568 2023 (print) | LCC D726.5 (ebook) | DDC 320.53/3094--dc23/eng/20230620
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2023028822
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2023028823

In memory of the great Austrian historian,
humanist, and anti-fascist,
Prof. Dr. Karl Stuhlpfarrer
(September 23, 1941 – November 5, 2009)

Table of contents

Preface

This volume is based on a conference entitled "Anti-Fascism in a Transnational and Comparative Perspective" funded by the Slovenian Research Agency ARRS. The conference was the culmination of a three-year project led by Dr. Jože Pirjevec and funded by the same agency. The conference was held via zoom on 27–28 May 2021, with the participation of historians based in Slovenia, Austria, Italy, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In addition to those papers presented there which are included in this volume, we also contracted three additional chapters, which are included herein.

We are grateful to Dr. Tilen Glavina and Dr. Mateja Režek for technical support, to Linda Kunos for her interest in this project, and to the two reviewers for the press, one of whom identified himself (Constantin Iordachi) for helpful comments.

Jože Pirjevec
Egon Pelikan
Sabrina P. Ramet

A Note on Spelling

In this volume, following the standard convention in fascist studies, the capitalized word “Fascism” is used to refer to the system in Mussolini’s Italy, while the lower-cased “fascism” is the generic term.

What is Anti-Fascism?

Its values, its Strength, its Diversity

JOŽE PIRJEVEC, EGON PELIKAN, AND SABRINA P. RAMET

What is anti-fascism? For that matter, what is fascism? The starting points for this volume are the understandings that neither fascism nor anti-fascism is monochromatic, and that there may be some variation in values defended by one or another anti-fascist movement just as there may be some variation in the values advanced by one or another fascist regime or fascist movement. Roger Griffin has provided what might be the most useful definition of generic fascism. In his words,

> Fascism is a revolutionary species of political modernism originating in the early twentieth century whose mission is to combat the allegedly degenerative forces of contemporary history (decadence) by bringing about an alternative modernity and temporality (a 'new order' and a 'new era') based on the rebirth or palingenesis of the nation...[Concretely,] fascism is a form of programmatic modernism that seeks to conquer political power in order to realize a totalizing vision of national or ethnic rebirth...and usher in a new era of cultural homogeneity and health.[1]

Fascism, as a form of political religion—to quote Emilio Gentile—

> ...rejects coexistence with other political ideologies and movements, denies the autonomy of the individual with respect to the collective, prescribes the obligatory observance of its commandments and participa-

1 Roger Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 181–82.

> tion in its political cult, sanctifies violence as a legitimate arm of struggle against enemies and as an instrument of regeneration. It adopts a hostile attitude toward traditional institutionalised religions, seeking to eliminate them, or seeking to establish with them a relationship of symbiotic coexistence...[2]

But fascism historically has not proven to be uniform. For example, while Hitler's Third Reich imposed clear limits to what was allowable in art,[3] Mussolini's Fascist Italy (capitalizing Fascist in the case of Italy) proved to be tolerant of a degree of diversity in art and cultural pluralism. This was exposed to full view at the Exhibition of the Fascist Revolution, which ran for two years starting on 28 October 1922. The aesthetic pluralism on display at the exhibition was reflected in the fact that four alternative artistic movements were represented there: Futurism, Novecento, Rationalism, and neo-Impressionism.[4] Or again, while the fascist Independent State of Croatia, which lasted from 1941 until 1945, instrumentalized Catholicism as a badge of loyalty to the Croatian state, pressuring Orthodox Serbs to convert to Catholicism, Hitler's Nazis worked with Protestant collaborators to create a pro-regime German Christian Movement, which redefined Jesus of Nazareth as an Aryan and removed the Old Testament from the Bible.[5]

Fascism may also be seen as quintessentially anti-liberal. Where the classical liberal tradition has championed the rule of law, tolerance, individual rights, respect for the harm principle, and some notion of human equality, fascism has championed the rule of the leader *(Führer, Duce, Poglavnik,* etc.) and intolerance as a badge of pride, insisting on the inequality of peoples, and rejecting both the harm principle and any notion of individual rights. But one does not have to be a liberal to be an anti-fascist. On the contrary, as Ramet and Hassenstab note in their chapter for this

---

2 Emilio Gentile, *Le religioni della politica: Fra democrazie e totalitarismi* (Bari: Laterza, 2001), 208. Extract translated by Stanley G. Payne and cited in his review essay, "Emilio Gentile's Historical Analysis and Taxonomy of Political Religions," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions,* Vol. 3, No. 1 (Summer 2002): 123–24.

3 See Frederic Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics* (New York: Overlook Press, 2002; 2018).

4 See Sabrina P. Ramet, *Alternatives to Democracy in Twentieth-Century Europe: Collectivist Visions of Modernity* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2019), chap. 3.

5 See Doris L. Bergen, *Twisted Cross: The German Christian Movement in the Third Reich* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); and Susannah Heschel, *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010).

volume, anti-fascism may be inspired not only by a liberal commitment but also by anarchist,[6] monarchist, communist, social democratic, or Christian conservative conceptions. While there are certainly some differences in the anti-fascisms originating in these diverse ideologies, there is a core set of values which we may identify with all of these except communist anti-fascism, viz., respect for individual rights and autonomy, respect for Christian faith (and potentially, but not necessarily, also freedom of religion), and repudiation of the fascist championing of racial inequality. Communists opposed fascism for mostly different reasons; while they objected to the championing of racial inequality, they also rejected fascism's downplaying of class inequality as an issue and understood, whether consciously or not, that the fascist quest to construct an alternative modernity directly competed with the communist quest to do likewise but on different foundations. The core anti-fascist values were the inspiration and driving force in the anti-fascist struggle against fascism.

Benito Mussolini, who served as Prime Minister of Italy from 1922 until he was deposed in 1943 and as *Duce* of the Fascist Party from 1919 until his execution in 1945, boasted that he was creating a "totalitarian" state in Italy and, in an article co-authored with Giovanni Gentile for the *Enciclopedia Italiana* in 1932, wrote that "For Fascism, the State is absolute, individuals and groups relative" and, further, that "the Fascist conception of life stresses the importance of the State and accepts the individual only in so far as his interests coincide with those of the State." Accordingly, for Mussolini and Gentile, Fascism necessarily sought to shape "the whole life of a people."[7] Although the fascists wanted to control society, whether in Germany or Italy or elsewhere, were especially concerned to control women, who were shunted into fascist women's organizations and told that their primary duty was to bear children and raise them for the nation.[8] For many, the fascist doctrine was completely unacceptable and anti-fascist struggle was the only choice.

---

6 See Robert J. Alexander, *The Anarchists in the Spanish Civil War,* Vols. 1 and 2 (London: Janus, 1999; reprinted 2007).

7 Benito Mussolini [and Giovanni Gentile], "The Doctrine of Fascism" (1932), trans. from Italian, at www.worldfuturefund.org/wffmaster/Reading/Germany/mussolini.htm, 3, 8.

8 See Kasper Braskén, David Featherstone, and Nigel Copsey, "Introduction: Towards a global history of anti-fascism", in Kasper Braskén, Nigel Copsey, and David Featherstone, eds., *Anti-Fascism in a Global Perspective: Transnational Networks, Exile Communities, and Radical Internationalism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2021); Victoria De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women: Italy, 1922–1945* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992); and Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family and Nazi Politics* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1987).

The Conception of the Volume

The analysis of anti-fascism provides a mirror of the structure of social, political, ideological and philosophical dimensions of fascism (lowercased when used generically). While Slovenia serves as the central focus of our volume, we also include chapters on other countries, including Denmark, Finland, Germany, and Slovakia. Slovenia is a particularly interesting case for at least two reasons: first, because of the activity of the communist-led Partisan movement, which took up the fight against Fascist and Nazi occupation of Slovenia (as part of their carving up of Yugoslavia in partnership with Hungary and Bulgaria); and second, because the division of conservative Catholics, between those prepared to collaborate with occupation authorities and those who rejected any such collaboration, played an important part in developments in wartime Slovenia. In this volume, looking at the story of anti-fascist resistance from the vantage point of the twenty-first century, we note five significant developments since 1991:

The first development is that the Slovenian state won recognition as an international subject, thus asserting its statehood for the first time, only in 1991. As a result, it became as a subject of an entirely separate analysis of historical developments in the Slovenian area (separate from the Yugoslav context) only in the last 30 years, even if Slovenian historiography (as part of Yugoslav historiography) undoubtedly played an important role both in national (i.e., Slovenian) and in the Yugoslav context.

The second development is that it was only the introduction of democracy and the collapse of the one-party system that brought an end to the Communist Party's monopoly on "anti-fascism" in historiography, which had an impact on the historical analysis of anti-fascism after World War Two. What was problematic was not so much censorship of the contents of research—research was, as a rule, conducted in a scientifically correct manner and in accordance with professional rules—as "blank spots" in the form of the absence of studies and analyses of events that were not (allowed to be) covered. And that is precisely what our edited volume reveals: a pluralism of Slovenian anti-Fascism that goes "beyond the limits of the far left" (Nigel Copsey). The volume aims to

bring to light a number of overlooked anti-fascist actors, campaigns and organizations, which will significantly broaden our understanding of the "Slovenian response to Fascism."

The third development acknowledged herein highlights is that, since 1991, a number of international archives (e.g., Soviet archives in Moscow, archives of the German Democratic Republic held in Berlin, and other archives across East Central Europe) have been opened. Newly accessed sources have revealed a wealth of hitherto unknown information, allowing researchers to reach new conclusions, which are presented in the chapters of this edited volume.

The fourth development, since 1991, is that Slovenia and other post-communist states abolished ideological and political censorship (thus bringing an end also to self-censorship). Censorship had been one of the pillars of communist rule. Communists marshalled "anti-fascism" to legitimize their ascent to power and later their retention of power itself, while the so-called "bourgeois parties" had less claim to a tradition of anti-fascism. However, it has to be pointed out that all states behind the Iron Curtain as well as socialist Yugoslavia and Albania affirmed, in their constitutions, the "primacy of the party," legitimating their political monopoly in part by reference to their (variable) anti-fascist credentials. By emphasizing this argument, we do not want to deny the fact that in the interwar period it was European Communist Parties that developed the most radical anti-fascist movements and engaged in the most direct military actions.

The fifth development is that, in the aftermath of the introduction of political pluralism and the independence of the Republic of Slovenia in 1991, Slovenian historiography focused its research on the anti-Fascism of bourgeois parties. The chapters related to the Slovenian ethnic area shed light on the wide spectrum of anti-Fascist political groups and parties: anti-Fascist Slovenian organizations and groups in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, members of the Slovenian minority in Fascist Italy who were of liberal orientation (TIGR, Borba), anti-Fascist Slovenian clergy in Fascist Italy. Researchers have also investigated the role of women and individual intellectuals in the anti-Fascist movement.

"Active" and "Passive" Anti-Fascism

In addition to what has been mentioned above, Part One of the volume focuses on anti-Fascism in the Slovene ethnic area with special emphasis on the analysis of anti-Fascism of the Slovene minority in Italy and of anti-Fascism in the Slovenian-Italian borderland. The chapters included herein confirm the hypothesis that anti-Fascism *per se* is not a consistent ideology; on the contrary, it embraces a multiplicity of activities "against" authoritarian and totalitarian regimes in Europe.

Terminologically speaking, the definitions of "active" and "passive" anti-fascism[9] could be regarded as slightly controversial as it is difficult to define the boundary between the two terms. If the anti-Fascism of the Slovenian clergy in Italy, which spread Slovenian books and opposed the Fascist cultural genocide, attempted through its clandestine organization (generously financed by the Kingdom of Yugoslavia), and could be labelled "passive anti-Fascism," how can we then regard, for example, the collection of intelligence for the Yugoslav secret service, which was carried out by the same organization of the Slovenian clergy in Italy? We could argue that within the same anti-Fascist organization, one section acted "passively" and the other "actively" (see, for example, the chapter by Egon Pelikan).

While the Slovenian clergy in Julijska krajina (i.e, the Slovenian name of the region annexed by the Kingdom of Italy) organized itself in an anti-Fascist struggle, the Roman Catholic Church and the camp of Slovenian political Catholicism in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia collaborated with the occupier (in both organizational and military terms). That provoked numerous harsh conflicts between the Primorska clergy on the one hand and representatives of political Catholicism in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia on the other.

When we write about "Slovenian responses to Fascism," we therefore have in mind the wide spectrum of Slovenian anti-Fascism (of liberal, Catholic, social democratic, or communist provenance), as well as the role of women, intellectuals and clergy in the anti-Fascist struggle. Their engagement took place in a very small area with a Slovenian speaking

9 See Kasper Braskén, Nigel Copsey, and Johan A. Lundin, eds., *Anti-fascism in the Nordic Countries: New Perspectives, Comparisons and Transnational Connections* (London and New York: Routledge, 2019).

population of slightly more than a million. One could regard it as "a nook in the heart of Europe," whose anti-Fascist contribution to the wider European context was disproportionately great. Its anti-Fascism was also "active": one may also note that the nation whose population at the onset of World War Two hardly surpassed one million contributed as many as 536 volunteers to the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War, of which 231 lost their lives.

The Chapters

This volume is organized into three sections, with Part One devoted to the anti-fascist defense of Slovenian culture and language in Slovene-inhabited regions of Fascist Italy and to outrage over the suppression of both the Slovenian language and, in the South Tyrol, the German language. Part Two focuses on the diversity of anti-fascism over space and time, and Part Three takes up the theme of anti-fascism as a legitimating ideology. These chapters are followed by an afterword by Nigel Copsey.

Part One opens with a chapter by Jože Pirjevec which reviews the prehistory of the complex Slavic-Romance, later Slovene-Italian, relations in the northern Adriatic leading up the arrival of the communists in Yugoslavia toward the end of World War Two. As Pirjevec shows, interethnic friction around the turn of the nineteenth/twentieth centuries escalated, resulting after World War One in a series of conflicts initiated by the Fascists. At the end of the war, Italy annexed Slovene-inhabited regions which had been part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In the interwar period (1918–1941), the Fascist regime banned the use of the Slovene language, changed place names in Venezia Giulia to Italian, and put pressure on Slovenes to give their children Italian names—all with the objective of perpetrating ethnocide.

This is followed by three chapters examining the relations between Italy's Slovene minority and the Fascist state. Vesna Mikolič examines the speeches of four MPs from Trieste—two Slovenes and two Italians—identifying keywords and phrases harnessed by the Italian members to promote the Fascist agenda and by their Slovene counterparts to defend Slovenian values, including the Slovene language and culture. The different vocabularies could be seen as codes reflecting very different pro-

grams. For the Fascists, as Borut Klabjan shows, ethnic and cultural homogenization was the order of the day and entailed not just the ethnic and linguistic repression described by Mikolič but also the repression of political opponents, specifically the Social Democrats, Communists, and Catholic organizations. Marta Verginella brings the anti-Fascist activities of Slovene women in Venezia Giulia into the story. As she notes, there were three women's periodicals published in the Slovene language between 1922 and 1928: *Slovenka,* published in Gorizia between January 1922 and December 1923; *Jadranka* (Adriatic woman), published in Trieste between 1921 and 1923; and *Ženske svet* (Woman's world), published in Trieste from 1923 to 1928.

The final chapter in Part One is Egon Pelikan's investigation into the role played by the Vatican and Catholic clergy in confronting Fascism. He reveals how high-ranking papal legates made secret trips to interwar Italy, presenting themselves alternatively as tourists or as butterfly hunters. They prepared reports for the Holy See about the status of Slovenes and Croats living in Venezia Giulia. The clergy violated Fascist laws by refunding, in secret, a Christian Social Organization to resume the work of two once-legal Slovene organizations suppressed by the Fascists. In addition, the Assembly of the Priests of St. Paul hoped to bring about the annexation of Primorska, taken by Italy after World War One, to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

Part Two, devoted to the diversity of anti-fascism, opens with a chapter by Sabrina Ramet and Christine M. Hassenstab, which takes as its case study the anti-Nazi White Rose group in which Sophie and Hans Scholl were prominent. The chapter opens by emphasizing that "anti-fascism comes in various strains, whether inspired by liberalism, social democracy, communism, monarchism, anarchism, or, as in the case of the White Rose, Christian conservatism." The Scholls' Christian principles were intellectually grounded in their reading of the writings of St. Augustine of Hippo, St. Thomas Aquinas, Cardinal St. John Henry Newman, and Blaise Pascal, as well as other writers both Christian and non-Christian. Newman, for example, held that "it is never lawful to go against our conscience; ...conscience is the voice of God." Augustine defended the notion of a just war (translate as anti-fascist resistance), and Aquinas taught that human law is valid only if it conforms with Natural and Divine Law; he also specifically defended a right to rebel against a tyrant, while Pascal held that people had a duty to oppose tyranny. Basing them-

selves especially on Augustine and Aquinas, the Scholls rejected the idea that an assassination of Hitler might be justified because that would have entailed abandoning their commitment to nonviolence. The Scholls and other members of the White Rose wrote and distributed five anti-Nazi pamphlets; all of them were eventually arrested and executed.

The diversity of *fascism* is highlighted in Pontus Järvstad's chapter on the Nordic countries. In particular, he cites Kjell Johanson's 1963 book, *Fascism, Nazism, Racism,* in which the author wrote that "even though the form of fascism varies over time and place, its content remains the same." Johanson drew upon Herbert Tingsten's writings in the 1930s that portrayed fascism as "essentially nationalistic and bourgeois." On this foundation, Johanson admitted that he had difficulty differentiating between fascism and imperialism; indeed, Great Britain was clearly imperialistic in the seventeenth to twentieth centuries, but equally clearly it was not a fascist state. While Järvstad points out that historians do not consider Franco's regime in Spain (1939–1975) or Salazar's regime in Portugal (1932–1968) to have been fascist, Johanson, in the second edition of his book, included these two regimes in his list of fascist regimes.

The next chapter in Part Two is contributed by Marek Syrný and Anton Hruboň, who analyze the roots, causes, and evolution of the anti-fascist tendencies in Slovak society beginning in 1938. The collaborationist Slovak state mixed "traditionalism, nationalism, Christianity, and an emphasis on family life," and happily deported Czechs and Jews, thinking that Slovaks or the Slovak state itself would inherit their economic holdings. Instead, "strategic enterprises such as ironworks, arms factories, the oil industry, and even wood processing plants…[came] under German control." Resistance began immediately in October 1938 but it was not clearly anti-fascist until later. There were, as is well known, two strands in Slovak anti-fascist resistance: a democratic strand seeking to reestablish Czechoslovakia under a pluralist constitution and a communist strand seeking to set up a one-party dictatorship in Czechoslovakia.

This is followed by Gianfranco Cresciani's study of the political career of Josip Vilfan, President of the Edinost Association, and an outspoken advocate of Slovene linguistic and cultural rights, against the Italian Fascist undertaking to suppress both the Slovene language and Slovene culture, assimilating Slovenes into the Italian nation. As Cresciani points out, Giovanni Gentile, serving at the time as Minister of

Public Education, abolished Slovene-language instruction in the schools in the newly annexed regions in the Italian northeast (Venezia Giulia). Cresciani protested vigorously against the suppression of Slovene-language instruction and met with Mussolini on four occasions, to register his opposition to the anti-Slovene policies of the Fascist regime. Vilfan left Italy in 1928, moving first to Vienna and later to Belgrade, where he died in 1955.

In the final chapter of Part Two, Klaus Tragbar raises the issue of moral dilemmas under fascist rule. Tragbar recounts the life of an accomplished German architect, Franz Josef Ehrlich, who was incarcerated first at Zwickau Penitentiary from 1934 to 1937 and subsequently in Buchenwald concentration camp until October 1939. At Buchenwald, he was assigned to work in the construction section and, although a convinced antifascist, he designed villas for SS officers, a casino for the camp Kommandant, and even a falconry for the concentration camp. Upon his release in October 1939, he was classified as unfit for military service because of his prison record. Nonetheless, by February 1943, he was assigned to Strafdivision 999, which was dispatched to the Peloponnese as a member thus of the occupation force. Although deployed as a member of a Nazi unit, he was also active—by his account—in local resistance and was in friendly contact with Greek anti-Nazi partisans. After the war, in the GDR, Ehrlich was recruited as a secret informant for East Germany's State Security (the Stasi). Given Ehrlich's collaboration with both the Nazis and the Communists, Tragbar judges that Ehrlich had no choice but to be useful to these regimes if he wanted to survive. Tragbar concludes, finally, that "even radiant anti-fascists can have their dark sides."

Part Three takes up the theme of anti-fascism as a legitimating ideology, looking at the examples of the German Democratic Republic, Socialist Yugoslavia, and transnational anti-fascist activities in and related to Denmark. Given the record of Nazi Germany's aggression, hate-mongering, atrocities, and perpetration of the Holocaust, East German communists considered it crucial to distance themselves from the Third Reich. In fact, a considerable number of German communists were imprisoned by the Nazi regime. But, in addition, the fact that German communists, some of them rising in the ranks of the GDR's ruling party, had joined the fight against General Franco during the Spanish Civil War, allowed the regime to promote the legend of their role as anti-fascists and

to build a case that East Germany was to be regarded as an anti-fascist state. In her contribution to this book, Catherine Plum looks at the role of school, rituals, commemorations, and namesake campaigns in passing on the official anti-fascist narrative to the younger generation.

Anti-fascism was also a central legitimating ideology in Socialist Yugoslavia, with memories of the role of the Partisans, led by communist Josip Broz Tito, constantly being revived in the daily press and in public forums. Anti-fascism was, in brief, what legitimated rule by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (later, League of Communists of Yugoslavia), as Božo Repe explains in chapter 13. But, in the 1980s, alongside the initially gradual but accelerating disintegration of the Yugoslav state, a revisionist reinterpretation of World War Two and the National Liberation Struggle led by the Partisans began to appear. After 1990, the history of anti-fascism and the Partisan struggle became an important feature in the political polarization in the Republic of Slovenia, with right-wing politicians quite ready to rehabilitate at least some Axis collaborators, such as members of the Home Guard. Even the Catholic Church became involved in this reinterpretation of the past, Repe points out, largely taking the side of the collaborationist Home Guard.

Like Repe, Vida Rožac Darovec is focused on conflicting memories about World War Two in Slovenia; as she writes, the conflicts erupted into heated public debates after the Republic gained its independence in 1991. While parties on the political left have stressed that the Partisan struggle contributed to the defeat of Nazism and Fascism, parties on the political right have dwelled on the extrajudicial mass killings by the Partisans perpetrated after the end of the war. The latter have even suggested that "Slovenes would have been better off not actively resisting the overpowering invader."

Part Three continues with Kasper Braskén's study of responses to Italian Fascism among members of the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland. He points to the conspicuous role played by the Comintern in backing anti-fascist activities in Denmark and notes that "Stalinist anti-fascism later became a crucial foundational myth for the repressive communist regimes of post-war Eastern Europe." He argues specifically that, in the context of Denmark, anti-fascist practices changed over time, escalating from removing swastikas from public buildings to maritime sabotage. He also notes that, among Swedish conservative elements, there was initially some support for fascist anti-communism, but the

increasing levels of fascist terror, the decay of democratic rights, and the treatment of ethnic minorities in the Italian borderlands became pivotal issues that changed their assessment of fascism. The final chapter in Part Three is Jesper Jørgensen's study of transnational anti-fascist activities related to Denmark. These included participation in the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War, arms smuggling to the embattled Spanish Republic, and sabotage of Axis shipping during 1937–38. The involvement of Danish maritime communists in these activities contributed to a legitimation of Soviet anti-fascist credentials and, as Jørgensen notes, "Stalinist anti-fascism later became the foundational myth for the repressive communist regimes of post-war Eastern Europe."

Viewed narrowly, as a response to the archetypal fascist regimes of the years 1922–1945, anti-fascism would seem to be a historical artefact, a past episode of heroism, integrity, and the defense of basic human rights. However, viewed more broadly, it is clear that there continue to be authoritarian regimes around the globe—regimes to which a reimagined anti-fascism may be the most fitting response.

Part One

ANTI-FASCISM IN FASCIST ITALY'S BORDERLANDS

1

Hate Speech[1]

JOŽE PIRJEVEC

"Words can be stones"
(Primo Levi)

The complex Slav-Romance and subsequent Slovenian/Croatian-Italian relationship in the eastern and northern Adriatic provoked a series of conflicts that reached their peak with "Fascism/Anti-Fascism" in the interwar period. It was a longue durée process of contention escalating into a violent struggle (social, ethnic, ideological etc.) which reached its peak during World War Two.

At the turn of the twentieth century, friction among the ethnic groups living in the Adriatic increased dramatically as a result of the verbal violence employed by the irredentists, which facilitated the rise of Fascism in Italy and allowed Mussolini's regime to impose ethnic integralism at the state level. To understand why this happened it is necessary to understand the "prehistory" of such "cultural genocide," as it was called, examining the seeds of the fascismo di frontiera /border fascism), expressed in the totalitarianism experienced in Venezia Giulia—the former Austrian Littoral/Primorska. During the interwar period, border Fascism unleashed a national purism never before seen: a ban on the Slovenian language, names and family names, the replacement of all toponyms, inscriptions in churches and even on tombstones, the complete destruction of Slovenian/Croat cultural and economic infrastructure. The ultimate goal of Mussolini's regime was ethnocide, which however, gave rise to a virulent anti-Fascist movement spreading across the

1 This research has received funding from the Slovenian Research Agency (ARRS) under the grant agreement n. J6-3121 *Decade of Decadence. Citizenship, Belonging, and Indifference to the State in the Northern Adriatic Borderland, 1914-1924*, and within the research programme P6-0272 *The Mediterranean and Slovenia*.

entire Slovenian ideological and political spectrum and culminating in armed struggle, first led by Nationalists, later by communists.

* * *

This chapter deals with widespread hate speech used by a plethora of Italian journalists, writers, and politicians against the Slavs in the eastern Adriatic area from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards, and the tragic consequences as a result of the fierce ethnic antagonism it fueled. The territory I am referring to runs along the coast from Trieste/Trst in the north to Boka Kotorska/Bocche di Cattaro in the south, encompassing a narrow strip that has long since been populated by people speaking dialects of Latin or Slav origin. The history of this territory is complex. It was part of the Roman Empire, which conquered it and imposed the Latin language and culture on the indigenous population. Starting in the sixth and seventh centuries, Slavic tribes settled more or less peacefully in the countryside, whereas the Romanized population gathered in the seaside urban centers surrounded by huge city walls. This dichotomy of the rural and urban populations, speaking different tongues and living in separate economic and cultural cocoons, lasted without much friction for centuries under various dominions, the most important of which were two mighty empires, the Venetian and the Habsburg—the first a maritime, the second a continental power. During the middle ages, Venice managed to colonize the entire eastern Adriatic coast in order to protect its maritime traffic, allowing the Habsburgs only inner Istria and just one outlet to the sea at Trieste, which had sought refuge under Austrian wings in 1382 for fear of its aggressive Venetian neighbor.[2]

This situation started to change after the defeat of the Turks by Christian armies near Vienna in 1683. In the following decades the Ottomans, who dominated the Balkans for more than 300 years, were pushed over the Danube and Sava Rivers by Imperial troops, led by such talented generals as Prince Eugen of Savoy. At the same time, Venice experienced an economic decline due to a shift in maritime trade to the Atlantic. The Adriatic Sea and the eastern Mediterranean, for centuries a Turkish-Venetian condominium, were now open for commerce to a third party. Animated by mercantilist ideas, the Habsburgs were quick to exploit the opportunity, from 1719 on transforming Trieste from a sleepy borough of about

2 Viktor Novak and Fran Zwitter, ed., *Oko Trsta* (Belgrade: Državni centar Jugoslavije, 1945).

5,000 inhabitants, known for fish, salt, oil, and wine, into a thriving commercial center, a free port which because of its privileges (among them religious liberty) attracted thousands of immigrants from near and far: Jews, Greeks, Croats, Serbs, Dalmatians, Italians, Armenians, and Slovenes. The last of these, who had compactly populated the surrounding countryside from the early Middle Ages, also living within the city walls, flocked from the hinterland to Trieste during the eighteenth century, significantly adding to its ethnic variety. According to Church registers at that time the majority of marriages celebrated in town were contracted by those born in nearby Slovenian provinces. During the same period, relations between Venice and Trieste reversed dramatically. The Republic of Saint Marco became economically stagnant, whereas the port of Trieste boomed, abandoning its Friuli dialect, spoken until then by the majority of the inhabitants, and adopting the Venetian dialect as the lingua franca, the language of commerce. The demographic growth of the city was significant; at the end of the eighteenth century, it numbered about 22,000 inhabitants. One hundred years later it reached 180,000, becoming the most important Mediterranean port after Marseilles. There was a considerable assimilation to the bastardized version of the Venetian dialect full of Germanisms and Slavisms spoken by the new arrivals, especially those who were largely illiterate, such as the Slovenes.[3]

At the end of the eighteenth century, Napoleon dealt the final blow to the Serenissima. Later he even occupied Trieste, central Slovenia, Istria, and Dalmatia, creating the Illyrian provinces as part of the French Empire. It was a short spell that lasted only from 1808 to 1815, but a significant one. Whereas the previous authorities, both Venetian and Austrian, had shown little interest in the Slavic population of their Adriatic provinces, mostly made up of illiterate peasants, the French showed some concern for their material and intellectual development. In the area in and around Trieste the French administration published, for instance, instructions in three languages—French, Italian, and Slovenian—on how to plant potatoes, while, in central Slovenia and Dalmatia, they even permitted the publication of newspapers in local languages other than German or Italian. This official recognition, combined with Enlightenment and Romantic ideas ignited a spark of national renaissance among the

3 Aleksej Kalc, "Migration nach Triest im 18. Jahrhundert," in *Jahrbücher für Geschichte und Kultur Südosteuropas*, Vol. 8 (2008): 95–116.

few local intellectuals of Slovenian and Croat origin, priests mostly, that Metternich's authoritarian regime was unable to stop after 1815.[4] On the surface nothing changed in the Adriatic Littoral and Dalmatia. Austria ruled these provinces with an iron fist, preserving the Italian language in administration and higher education and allowing the use of the Slovenian or Croat languages only in rural areas at the elementary school level. The social structure, characterized by the dominance of the Italian or Italianized bourgeoisie, culturally and materially richer than the Slav peasants, artisans, and humble workers, remained unaltered. When in the late 1830s the Slovak writer and propagator of brotherhood among Slavs Ján Kollár visited Trieste on his way to Venice, he met some Slovenian and Croat intellectuals, highly inflamed by patriotic ideas, but isolated. His view of the prospects for the survival of the Slav presence in the Adriatic port was rather dim.[5]

The revolution of 1848, which erupted in March with angry demonstrations against the oppressive Metternich regime and led by Viennese students and the local populace fully demonstrated the explosive force of the national idea. It nearly destroyed the multiethnic Habsburg Empire as a result of German, Hungarian, and Italian uprisings. Even the Slav nations under the Habsburg scepter started to organize themselves politically, formulating their requests without rebelling against the dynasty. A group of Slovenian intellectuals for instance even dared to send a manifesto to Emperor Ferdinand I, asking for the creation of a new state entity—a united Slovenia—from the traditional hereditary lands populated by their nation.[6] At this pivotal moment, the provinces of Trieste, Istria, and Dalmatia remained quiet, although not untouched by new national ideals. The Trieste Slavs, mostly Slovenes and Croats, created a political party for the first time, publishing a bilingual newspaper, *Slavjanski Rodoljub* (The Slav patriot), where they expressed their desire for freedom and equality with the Italians. The Slovenes in particular asked that their language be held as equal with Italian in public administration and schools, not just in the villages of the surrounding

---

4 Robert A. Kann, *Das Nationalitäten Problem der Habsburgermonarchie: Geschichte und Ideengehalt der nationalen Bestrebungen vom Vormärz bis zur Auflösung des Reiches* im Jahre *1918*, translated from English by Marianne Schön (Graz-Köln: Böhlau, 1964), Vol. I, 246–49.

5 Jan Kollar, "Cestopis obsahnjici cestu do horne Italie," in *Spisy Jana Kollara* (Prague: I. L. Kober, 1862), 71, 72.

6 Kann, *Das Nationalitäten Problem*, Vol. I, 304.

territory but also in the city itself. This request was based on the decree by the central government in Vienna, which stated that instruction in elementary schools should be given in the mother tongue of the pupils. This disposition was successfully opposed, however, by Niccolò De Rin, a member of the Commission which administered Trieste, with the argument that a city cannot have two or three mother tongues, just one.[7] This view is still dominant today. In the center of Trieste, the Slovenian language is off-limits, as it was in the past.

But let's return to 1848–49. As is known, the revolution collapsed and the Austrian authorities imposed the so-called Bach dictatorship on the Empire, which silenced all national demands by its different peoples, without being able to suppress them. At the end of the 1850s, King Victor Emmanuel II of Savoy, champion of a united Italy, entered into war with Austria, with the help of France liberating Lombardy from its rule. It was the first step in a process which, in the following years, saw the annexation to Piedmont of other small states in the peninsula as well as the southern Kingdom of Sicily. Outside its borders there remained—apart from Rome and the provinces of Venice and Trentino, compactly Italian—the provinces on the eastern Adriatic, with their mixed population. After a humiliating defeat in Northern Italy, Emperor Franz Joseph was obliged to grant a constitution to his complex monarchy, convening a parliament in Vienna with diets in different regions under his crown. Among them was the Kingdom of Dalmatia, where two political parties were formed: the Autonomous Party, representing the Italian speaking population, and the National Party, which reclaimed the establishment of a new administrative entity—the so-called triune Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia. Its goal was to unite the Croat nation and give it more weight within the framework of the Empire. This aspiration provoked a violent reaction from the Autonomous Party, inflamed by the recent unification of Italy. Animated by Italian patriotism, its members considered with horror the possibility of Dalmatia's merging with regions which for centuries were foreign to their Venetian heritage. It was not just a question of cultural identity, but also of political dominance, considering that, although the Italian-speaking bourgeoisie accounted for less than 4 per cent of the population of Dalmatia, it completely controlled the levers of power. The result was a violent verbal clash between

7 Samo Pahor, "Zrel je čas za človeški zorni kot," *Primorski dnevnik* (2. Januar 2001): 10.

the two groups, both of which published a stream of pamphlets and articles in favor of their aspirations. The best-known herald of the Autonomists was the famous philologist, poet, writer, and politician Niccolò Tommaseo, born in Dalmatia but living in Italy. In the past, being of Slav origin himself on his mother's side, he encouraged in his writings the renaissance of the Slavs not just in Dalmatia but in both the Balkans and Central Europe. The danger of unification of his homeland with Croatia and Slavonia, however, inspired him to flamboyant speeches against the National Party which in the following years served as a model for many demagogues who were even able to overtake the master.[8] The leitmotiv of his reasoning was simple: the Slavs were culturally underdeveloped and, as such, unsuitable to replace the Italians in their dominant role in public life. One of these Italians, Vincenzo Duplancich, proclaimed that Dalmatian civilization had always had an Italian character and should be thus in the future. The Italian race was "the most legitimate inhabitant and lord of the country."[9]

Thanks to an electoral system that favored the moneyed classes at the beginning of the 1860s, the Autonomists won. But since they were such a tiny part of the Dalmatian population, they lost power already in 1870 and recovered it only between 1941 and 1943, when Dalmatia was occupied by Italian troops.[10] Meanwhile, the struggle between Slavs and Italians shifted to the North, to Istria and Trieste, where the balance between ethnic groups was tipped in favor of the Italians. In Istria, they were less numerous than the Slavs, but in the city of Trieste they constituted the majority.[11] In this environment, the polemics became even more violent than in Dalmatia, considering the numerical preponderance of the Italian speaking ruling class. To Italians, we must include many Jews living in Trieste, particularly those who had left their religious community and embraced liberal ideas. As elsewhere in the Habsburg monarchy where the population was ethnically mixed, they tried to become part of the dominant nation, adopting its language and political aims. Moreover, for them the newly created Kingdom of Italy, anti-papist and secular,

8 Jože Pirjevec, *Niccolò Tommaseo fra Italia e Slavia* (Venice: Marsilio, 1977), 196, 205–15.
9 Pirjevec, *Niccolò Tommaseo fra Italia e Slavia*, 196.
10 Salvator Žitko, *Avstrijsko Primorje v vrtincu nacionalnih, političnih in ideoloških nasprotij v času ustavne dobe (1861–1914)* (Koper: Zgodovinsko društvo za južno Primorsko & Inštitut IRRIS & Libris, 2016), 42–50.
11 Žitko, *Avstrijsko Primorje v vrtincu nacionalnih*, 68, 145, 154.

where the Jews, being few, were integrated into society, was appealing if compared with the arch-Catholic Austria, where antisemitism was growing dangerously. Hence, it is not surprising that the most prominent Irredentists, those who considered themselves "unredeemed" from the Habsburg yoke and claimed the annexation of Trieste, Istria, and Dalmatia to Italy, were Jewish by origin.[12] They were fiercely opposed to the Slavs, seen *en masse* as conservative peasants who were devoted to Church and Emperor. An early example of their disdain is eloquently expressed in a speech by Pietro Kandler, the most eminent local historian, who in 1867 on the occasion of the wedding of a Jewish couple complained about the recent appearance of Slovenian toponyms in documents and maps. "I am disgusted by these Slav names ... and cannot understand that it is possible to prefer the idiotic, crude, most vulgar language, unreasonable beyond belief, to nomenclature in a noble, cultured ... language..."[13]

This attitude towards the Slavs, "those stupid lumberjacks," as Kandler called them, was put into practice in the following decades by the political elite in Trieste and Istria, in power thanks to the aforementioned electoral system. They aimed to block the intellectual, economic, and political rise of the "sc'avi" (slaves), as they were called in loathing, partly succeeding, partly not, thanks to two factors: the reaction of the Slovenes and Croats, who started to organize themselves into political associations under the slogan "culture will be our vindication" and the Austrian constitution from 1867, which on paper granted equality to all nations of the empire. Due to this fundamental law, the Slovenian and Croatian languages in Trieste and Istria were slowly introduced into the judiciary, despite the rabid opposition of the irredentists; however, they were not introduced in the public schools, since education was under the control of the municipal authorities. If the Slovenes, Croats, or Serbs living in urban centers controlled by the National Liberal Party wanted to provide their children with a primary education in their respective mother tongues, they had to organize private schools. When, at the end of the century, the Ministry of Justice tried to put a multilingual inscription on the Tribunal of Piran/Pirano, the populace reacted

12 Štefan Čok, *"Eos eiicimus foras—Spodili jih bomo": Italijanska liberalnonacionnalna stranka v Trstu 1882–1908* (Koper: Znanstveno raziskovalno središče, Annales, Trst: Slovenski raziskovalni inštitut, 2019), 176, 177.

13 Pietro Kandler, *Discorso sul Timavo per le nozze di Guastalla-Levi* (Trieste: Tipografia Lloyda Adriatico, 1864), 12.

with an uprising which could be quelled only by military intervention. When some years later the Ministry of Education decided to open in Pazin/Pisino, a mostly Croatian town in central Istria, a Croatian high school in addition to the already existing Italian one, violent protests took place in all the important centers of the Littoral. "This province," the irredentists proclaimed, "for twenty centuries was fertilized by Latin genius, was made prosperous and lovely thanks to the Italians only, the heart, the brain, the only light of history and civilization in this extreme gulf of Adriatic."[14]

In the last fourteen years before World War One, the question of an Italian university in Trieste became one of the main topics of the national struggle both between irredentists and the Viennese government and between irredentists and the Slovenes. After the Prussian and Italian war against Austria in 1866, the province of Veneto, with its university in Padua, was annexed by the Savoy Kingdom. The Italians of the eastern Adriatic, still Habsburg subjects, who for centuries had frequented this famous university, had to go to Vienna, Graz, or Innsbruck in order to earn degrees recognized by law. They requested that an Italian university be established in Trieste, but the central authorities were reluctant to grant this, being more and more alarmed by the separatist aims of the National Liberal Party. Instead they offered to establish an Italian faculty of law in Innsbruck and later in Rovereto, a provincial town in Trentino, but both proposals were a flop. The "Italian University in Trieste" became a battle cry of the irredentists who even hoped, to quote one of their leaders, that it would not be granted, since it was such an excellent fodder with which to nurture the hostile sentiments of the Italians against Habsburg rule.[15] At the same time they even opposed the creation of Slovenian high schools in Trieste, arguing that the Slovenian language, culture, and history were in their infancy and hence were not needed.[16]

Although, according to Robert A. Kann, one of the most prominent historians of the national question in the Habsburg monarchy, the Italians, despite their exiguous number (about 600,000) and privileged status in Austria, felt threatened by the Slavs, who at the end of the nineteenth cen-

14 Samo Pahor, "Zrel je čas za človeški zorni kot," *Primorski dnevnik*, 2. I. (2000): 10.
15 Jože Pierazzi (Pirjevec), "Problem slovenske univerze v Trstu v avstrijski dobi," in: *Zgodovinski časopis*, Vol. XXIX, No. 3-4 (1973): 233–61.
16 Marta Verginella, "L'anti-italianità nello specchio dell'antislavismo," *Memoria e ricerca*, a. XXVI, No. 59, 394.

tury and the beginning of the next one managed to be more and more assertive in public life. In particular, the Slovenes in Trieste, represented by a political party called Edinost (Unity), saw significant growth as an economic and cultural subject, creating a young bourgeoisie which started to respond in kind to Italian "hate speech". The Italians were contemptuously called "Lahi" (from Vlahi—Balkan pastoral tribes of Roman origin) and "camorristi" with reference to the Neapolitan mafia. Hints at the Jewish origins of the most important leaders of the ruling National Liberal Party and to their murky masonic affiliation—linked to Italy's Grand Orient lodge (*Grande Oriente d'Italia)*—were frequent in their press. To the Italian accusations that the Slovenes smelled bad, that they were all lazy liars, the latter answered back in tune, asking: "How should they not stink, since real Italians don't even have white skin?"[17] The impact of the mutual insults of the warring parties wasn't of course equal. Whereas everybody in Trieste spoke Italian in addition to his or her own mother tongue and was able to read the most popular mouthpiece of anti-Slav propaganda, the daily *Il Piccolo*, owned by Teodoro Mayer, a Jew who emigrated to Rome and became a Senator, nobody outside the Slovenian community was able to follow the Slovenian press. The tit for tat didn't work. To make things worse, the Slovenian proletariat started to be more and more numerous in Trieste due to the decline of the assimilation process and to the explosive growth of the local economy and industry between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Trieste saw a rise in the number of Slovene immigrants—among them numerous railway employees, since they were bi- or trilingual—most of whom adhered to the Slovene branch of the Austrian Social Democratic Party, which favored a mutual understanding between the local ethnicities. Some Slovene leaders of the Party even advocated the creation of a double University in Trieste, similar to the German-Czech Charles University in Prague.[18] To no avail, since the irredentists lumped all "sc'avi" in the same pile regardless of their political leanings, accusing Vienna of favoring them at the expense of the "italianità" (Italian character) of the Littoral and pretending not to know that the Slavs were as disliked by the Germans and Hungarians, who dominated the Empire, as they were feared by themselves.

17 Jože Pirjevec, *"Trst je naš!": Boj Slovencev za morje (1848–1954)* (Ljubljana: Nova revija, 2007), 50.

18 Jože Pierazzi (Pirjevec), *"Problem slovenske univerze v Trstu v avstrijski dobi,"* (Zgodovinski časopis, Ljubljana, a. 28, n.3/4, 1975) 257.

And for the same reason: "Slavic machinations" (*Slawische Umtriebe*)—the quest to gain an equal partnership in the frame of the Monarchy—were seen by all "historic" nations in opposition to those "without history," a mortal danger for the *status quo*.[19] In order to oppose the Slav invasion, the National Liberal Party favored the influx of Italian citizens from the Savoy Kingdom—called *regnicoli*[20]—often employing them in the municipal administration in the city.[21]

The affirmation of the Trieste Slavs reached its peak in 1904 with the inauguration of the *Narodni Dom*, the House of the Nation, an imposing edifice which was seen as a challenge to the ruling bourgeoisie and its endeavor to deny the presence of Slovenes in the city. The palace, built by the star architect Max Fabiani, was a polyvalent cultural and social center—the first of its kind in Europe. It was a city within the city, proclaiming the cosmopolitan character of Trieste and stressing the aspiration of the South Slavs to transform the dual Austro-Hungarian monarchy into a trinitarian body, adding a South Slav administrative region to the Austrian and Hungarian ones. In the past all the local ethnic communities—the Greeks, Serbs, Germans, Armenians, and British—built places of worship, some of them imposing. No one was bothered. But the erection of the *Narodni Dom* and its symbolic message was unacceptable for the irredentists, who reacted with increased verbal hostility.[22] The Jewish leaders of the National Liberal Party, who headed the most important economic institutions in Trieste, hastened to add to the already existing synagogues a new one, built as a monumental temple, inspired by ancient Middle East architecture and Viennese *Sezession*.[23]

The Italian government, although allied since 1882 with Austria-Hungary and Germany in the so-called "Dreibund" or "Triplice," was not insensitive to the plight of its compatriots in Trentino or in the provinces on the shores of the eastern Adriatic; nor was it deaf to the assertions of patriotic and nationalistic associations which preached that Italy, as heir of both the Roman and Venetian empires, should reach its histori-

19 Kann, *Das Nationalitänproblem der Habsburgermonarchie*, vol. I, 270.
20 regnicoli—immigrants from »il Regno« - the Italian Kingdom.
21 Štefan Čok, "L'Italia e il Patto di Londra nelle fonti diplomatiche italiane: Alcuni aspetti meno conosciuti," *Acta Histriae*, 25 (2017): 951.
22 Gorazd Bajc, Borut Klabjan, *Ogenj, ki je zajel Evropo: Narodni dom v Trstu 1920–2020* (Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 2021), 56.
23 Tulia Catalan, *La comunità ebraica di Trieste (1781–1914): Politica, società e cultura* (Trieste: LINT, 2000).

cal frontiers on the Alps and assert its domination on "*mare nostrum*," the Adriatic, redeeming its kin as much as from the foreign yoke as from the Pan-Slav "threat." In fact, Russian expansionism was considered even more dangerous than German expansion. Numerous journalists, writers and historians such as Virginio Gayda, Attilio Tamaro, Alessandro Dudan, and Ruggero Fauro Timeus, spread these ideas in their articles and books, contributing to the creation among the Italian middle classes of an atmosphere of imperialistic intoxication that the victorious conquest of Libya in 1911 helped inflame.[24] The attitude of complete refusal of any ethnic presence in the Littoral but the Italian one was eloquently expressed by Ruggero Fauro Timeus, a talented young journalist from Trieste, who took shelter in Rome. In his book, *Trieste,* he wrote: "Where the people are homogeneous, the foreigner is considered something totally alien, and sometimes, if he is an enemy, as monstrous and evil. But in our area the Slav or the German sometimes does live in the same building and can be a man who greets you with deference, smiles at you [and] pats your children on their heads. Everybody should know that he is also an enemy who should be hated and fought against without quarter."[25] According to Timeus, the only Slavs who were acceptable were, after their successes in the Balkan wars, the Serbs, but just as vassals of imperial Italy. "Therefore," Timeus wrote in 1912, "we should consider with favor the new dream of a greater Serbia, but only if it is built with our help, controlled by our might, with Italy spread to its natural borders and ruling the Adriatic, with our fleet anchored in the naval bases of Pola, Valona and Zara. Only like this and in no other way."[26]

At the start of World War One, the government in Rome at first decided to remain neutral, asking Vienna for Trentino and Trieste as compensation. In April 1915, however, it found greater understanding for its territorial claims from the Entente powers—Great Britain, France, and Russia—which offered more: strategic borders at the Brenner and Julian Alps, the Istrian peninsula, and central Dalmatia.[27] One of those who fervently favored venturing into war was the famous poet, Gabriele

---

24 Čok, *"Eicimus eos foras,"* 189.
25 Ruggero Fauro Timeus, *Trieste* (Rome: Gaetano Garzoni Provenzali, 1914), 9.
26 Timeus, "La guerra balcanica e le terre irredente," in *Scritti politici (1911–1915)* (Trieste: Tipografia del Lloyd triestino, 1929), 110.
27 Uroš Lipušček, *Sacro egoismo: Slovenci v krempljih tajnega londonskega pakta 1915* (Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 2012).

D'Annunzio, who surpassed even Niccolò Tommaseo with his rhetoric. When the government in Rome proclaimed its reversal of alliances without revealing the existence of the secret pact with the Entente, D'Annunzio spoke to a large crowd in Rome: "We don't fear our destiny but go toward it singing. We are oppressed by a senile, leaden hood, but our youth explodes now like lightening. In each of us burns the youthful spirit of the twin Horsemen, guarding the Quirinal. Tonight they will ride their horses to the Tiber's water, under the Aventine Hill, before riding towards the Isonzo that we will redden with barbarian blood."[28]

The twin Horsemen are the mythical Dioscures—Castor and Pollux—whose statues stand in front of the Quirinal Palace. The barbarians are the people of the Austrian Empire, above all the Slavs. In this frenzy, more than a million soldiers were sent to the Isonzo front, a river the majority of them had never heard of for a cause they knew nothing about. Nearly 600,000 of them lost their lives in battle or from friendly fire. In October 1917, they experienced a terrible defeat near Kobarid, known in Italy as Caporetto, but despite this, Italy emerged as the victor at the end of the war. Austria-Hungary collapsed and new states sprouted up from its ruins, Yugoslavia among them. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes managed to encompass Dalmatia, but not the ex-Austrian Littoral with a quarter of the Slovenian territory, Trieste, and Istria. Nearly half a million Slovenes and Croats came under Italian rule without any guarantee of minority rights.[29]

The loss of Dalmatia was a blow for the Italian nationalists, who started to speak of a "mutilated victory." They considered the newly acquired lands on the Northern Adriatic to be their rightful conquest, renaming them "Venezia Giulia" in memory of the Republic of San Marco and Julius Caesar. The local Slovenes and Croats—about 500,000 of them—were referred to as "*alloglotti*" or "*allogeni*"—an amorphous people of another tongue and foreign origin. The new authorities aimed to assimilate these Slav subjects as soon as possible to realize the old irredentist dream: the only language to be used in these territories should be Italian, even in church, even on the tombstones in the graveyards.[30]

---

28 Gabriele D'Annunzio, *Prose di ricerca, di lotta, di comando...* (Milan: Mondadori, 1947), Vol I, 35.

29 Milica Kacin Wohinz, Jože Pirjevec, *Storia degli sloveni in Italia 1866–1998* (Venice: Marsilio, 1998), 27–33.

30 Kacin Wohinz and Pirjevec, *Storia degli sloveni in Italia*, 33–41.

Such a policy, implemented immediately after the occupation by Italian troops in the Littoral in November 1918, was openly formulated by Benito Mussolini during his visit to Venezia Giulia in September 1920. Speaking in Pola he declared: "When dealing with such a race as the Slavic -inferior and barbarian—we must not pursue the carrot, but the stick policy...We should not be afraid of new victims ... The Italian border should run across the Brenner Pass, Monte Nevoso, and the Dinaric Alps ... I would say we can easily sacrifice 500,000 barbaric Slavs for 50,000 Italians..."[31] These were not just the hollow words of a demagogue. Two months earlier, on 13 July 1920 the *Narodni Dom,* the Slovenian cultural center in Trieste had been burned down by Fascists, to the jubilation of the Italian populace and the tacit approval of the military and civil authorities. Twenty years later the director of *Il Piccolo,* Rino Alessi, remembered: "The big flames of the Balkan (this was the name of the hotel in the *Narodni Dom*) finally purified Trieste, purified all our souls."[32]

The Trieste pyre, followed by a chain of anti-Slav and anti-socialist violence, which spread all throughout Venezia Giulia, was for Italy, wrote Mussolini's biographer Renzo de Felice, "the true baptism of organized squadrism."[33] How brutal the attitude was regarding the Slavs was eloquently expressed in an article published by the newspaper *Il Popolo di Trieste*, which, responding to the complaints made by *Edinost* on 4 February 1921 about intolerable fascist violence, advised the Slavs: "Be quiet. We are ready to ignore the similar insects living among us, provided those insects stay and mold in the shadows. Otherwise they will ruminate bitterly over the consequences."[34]

The hate speech used by the new rulers referring to the "sc'avi" was identical to that used by irredentists. What was new was the possibility of translating this language into physical and psychological violence implemented without delay even before Mussolini reached power in 1922, but more thoroughly after. How? Italianizing all Slav names and surnames, and all toponyms by decree, eliminating elementary education in pupils' mother-tongues, destroying the cultural, political, and eco-

31 Annamaria Vinci, *Sentinelle della patria: Il fascismo al confine orientale 1918–1941*, (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 2011), 102, 103.
32 Pirjevec, *"Trst je naš!"*, 107.
33 Renzo de Felice, *Il Mussolini rivoluzionario: 1883–1930* (Torino: Einaudi, 1995), 624.
34 Annamaria Vinci, "Il fascismo e la società locale," in *Friuli e Venzia Giulia: Storia del '900* (Gorizia: LEG Libreria Editrice Goriziana, 1997), 227.

nomic life of the Slav population. Despite the widespread belief that the „sc'avi" were a passive herd, the Slovenes and Croats reacted to this cultural genocide with stubborn resistance, at first hoping it would be possible to find a dialogue with the ruling regime via the mediation of their representatives elected to the Rome parliament such as Josip Vilfan, Engelbert Besednjak, and others.[35] Since this tactic resulted in failure, the first to react were local Roman Catholic priests, nearly the only educated Slovenes and Croats who remained in Venezia Giulia after a massive exodus of local Slav intellectuals to Yugoslavia. In the face of mounting Fascist violence the priests sent a plea to Pope Benedict XV in May 1921, asking for his protection, with the support of the new bishop of Trieste Angelo Bartolomasi, the former military bishop of the Italian Army. His predecessor, Andrea Karlin, a Slovene by birth, was attacked in his mansion by an irredentist mob on 29 December 1918, and forced to abandon his diocese a year and a half later.[36] Although undoubtedly an Italian patriot, in his letters to the Holy Father Bartolomasi denounced the "terror" used by Fascist gangs against the Slavic population with the tacit tolerance of the authorities and begged for help. Benedict XV replied on 2 August 1921, with a lengthy missive in which he took up the defense of the Slavic priests and their flock, provoking a rabid protest in the Triestine "liberal" press.[37] This brave papal stance in favor of a national minority—probably the first one in history - was later abandoned by the Holy See as in the years to come Pius XI would follow a policy of appeasement with victorious Fascism and its Duce. The Slavic priests were not deterred by the Vatican's indifference to their frequent laments, but within the framework of "Saint Paul's association," they developed a clandestine network against the regime, organizing a feverish cultural and political anti-Fascist and anti-Italian campaign that the authorities were unable to control, penetrate, or dismantle.[38]

Whereas the clergy refrained from violence, in the late 1920s a group of young men formed a terrorist movement called TIGR (an acronym for

35 Kacin Wohinz, *Narodnoobrambno gibanje primorskih Slovencev v letih 1921–28* (Koper: Založba Lipa, Trst: Založnistvo tržaškega tiska, 1977), Vol. I-II.

36 Jože Pirjevec, "Škof Karlin v Trstu," in: *Karlinov simpozij* (Celje: Mohorjeva Družba, 1996), 27–33.

37 Antonio Scottà, ed., *I territori del confine orientale italiano nelle lettere dei vescovi alla Santa Sede* (Trieste: Edizioni Lint, 1994), 219–225.

38 Egon Pelikan, *Hitler and Mussolini in Churches: The Ideological Marking of Space along the Slovene-Italian Border* (Bern & Oxford: Peter Lang, 2020), 83–113.

Trst, Istra, Gorica, Rijeka—the centers of the territories to be liberated) modeled after the Irish Republican fight against Great Britain. The regime's repression of this unexpected Slavic decision to resist Fascist oppression with sabotage and guerilla activity was harsh, but in spite of widespread arrests, torture and death sentences, ultimately unsuccessful.[39] It only served to fuel a spiral of hatred on the part of the Slovene and Croatian population in Venezia Giulia, further fed by the Italian attack on Yugoslavia in 1941, the subsequent dismemberment of its territory and occupation of vast areas of the country. A Partisan resistance followed during World War Two, animated in Venezia Giulia by the same anti-Fascist spirit that had pervaded the pre-war Nationalists.[40] Upon victory, the Partisans were unable to refrain from acts of revenge that further embittered the relations between those living in the multi-ethnic Adriatic region. The mutual aversion between Italians and Slavs—nursed by bitter memories and the heritage of the century-long verbal and physical oppression, has not been fully extinguished even to the present day.[41]

For the Italian presence on the eastern Adriatic, the demonization of the Slavs and the stubborn refusal to engage in dialogue with them was shattering. The Italians hoped that a united Italy would be able to implement an imperial policy and transform the Adriatic into *mare nostrum*. One of the most fanatical irredentists, Ruggero Fauro Timeus, wrote some years before World War One that Trieste was Italy's key to expansion in the Balkans and Eastern Europe. "We want to conquer regardless of the national rights of other peoples and international agreements, regardless of the morality of our deeds."[42] In this ambition, not supported by the strength of the Italian State and people, they were bitterly disillusioned. During World War Two, the victorious Slav partisans liberated Dalmatia, Istria, and Trieste, being forced to withdraw from that city by the Americans and British only due to their fear of communism at the start of the Cold War. The other areas annexed by Yugoslavia were abandoned by the Italian population *en masse*. Their world had collapsed. The despised *sc'avi* were in power, and worse still, they were communists. Add to this the harassment of the local authorities and the economic paucity of post-war Yugoslavia. The Belgian politician and university pro-

39 Kacin Wohinz and Pirjevec, *Storia degli Sloveni in Italia*, 54–63.
40 Jože Pirjevec, *Partizani* (Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 2020), 372–80, 459–73.
41 Jože Pirjevec, *Foibe: Una storia d'Italia* (Turin: Einaudi, 2009), 3–243.
42 Žitko, *Avstrijsko Primorje*, 203.

fessor Camillo Huysman was right in 1950 when he visited Trieste to understand what was going on. To the representatives of those exiles he said bluntly: "It's clear. When you were not able to dominate in Istria anymore, you abandoned it."[43]

43 Pahor, "Zrel je čas," 10.

2

Comparison of Fascist and National Defense Discourse

VESNA MIKOLIČ

The expression of a particular time is its language.
(Victor Klemperer, LTI The Language of the Third Reich)

Objectives, Methods, and Theoretical Starting Points of the Study

The aim of this chapter[1] is to describe the political discourse of members of the Slovenian and Italian ethnic groups in the Julian March during the tense interpersonal and social relations between the First and Second World Wars. Therefore, I have analyzed the speeches of four deputies from Trieste and its surroundings who were members of the Italian Parliament in Rome in the 1920s, during the rise of Italian fascism, namely: Francesco Giunta from Trieste, Antonio Pogatschnig from Poreč, Josip Vilfan from Trieste, and Engelbert Besednjak from Gorizia.

On the basis of their political speeches I have analyzed some key concepts of Fascist politics on the one hand and of the Slovenian national defense movement between the two wars on the other. Through semantic analysis of individual words and analysis of the discourse strategies associated with these meanings, I compared the semantic keywords and discourse strategies of Fascism and the Slovenian national defense

---

1 The chapter is the result of research conducted within the research programme "Slovenianhood Dimensions Between Local and Global at the Beginning of the Third Millennium" at the Science and Research Centre of Koper (ZRS Koper) and the Institute of Ethnic Studies in Ljubljana, 2019–2024, head: Dr. Vesna Mikolič, and two basic research projects at ZRS Koper, namely: "Border fascism – social and cultural history of fascism in Primorska", 2013–2016, head: Dr. Egon Pelikan, and "Antifascism in Julian March in a transnational perspective, 1919–1954", 2018–2021, head: Dr. Jože Pirjevec, all funded by the Slovenian Research Agency (ARRS). The first results of this research were published in Mikolič's scientific monograph in Slovenian *Izrazi moči slovenskega jezika* (Intensity Modification in the Slovenian Language) (Koper, Ljubljana: Annales ZRS and Slovenska matica, 2020). This text is an adapted version of the Historical Overview chapter (221–90) of the monograph.

movement, paying particular attention to the change in the intensity of the language.

Intensity modification can be considered as one of the discourse strategies within the critical discourse analysis (CDA) model,[2] while Bowers[3] defines it as the ability of language to mark the degree to which the communicator's relation to reality differs from the neutral relation. It is thus an escalation, a strengthening of illocutionary meanings on the one hand and a weakening on the other. In recent studies, Australian linguists Martin and White[4] have given prominence to graduation as part of their concept of evaluation or appraisal. In his work *LTI – Lingua Tertii Imperii* (The language of the Third Reich), Klemperer[5] defined the escalation of the intensity of language leading to exaggeration, to hyperbole, as one of the main discourse strategies of Fascist and Nazi rhetoric.

The texts of the elected parliamentarians were analyzed according to Mikolič's model of language intensity analysis,[6] which involves the analysis of intensifiers, mitigators and neutral elements at all levels of language, and reveals the main vocabulary they used. The corpus of analyzed texts included their parliamentary questions, their participation in parliamentary debates and their political speeches mainly in the years 1921 to 1924, when Vilfan, Giunta, and Pogatschnig sat in parliament at the same time; only Besednjak joined in 1924, when Pogatschnig left the parliament. The object of analysis was a collection of speeches and articles by Francesco Giunta in his book *Un po' di fascismo* (A little fascism)[7] and a collection of parliamentary speeches by Josip Vilfan and Engelbert Besednjak, collected and edited by Egon Pelikan.[8] Another textual source was the digitized collection of stenographic transcripts of speeches in the Italian Parliament on the his-

---

2 See Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer, eds., *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2001), 72–73.

3 John Waite Bowers, "Language intensity, social introversion, and attitude change," *Speech Monographs,* Vol. 30 (1963): 345–352.

4 James R. Martin and Peter R. R. White, *The Language of Evaluation: Appraisal in English* (Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2005).

5 Viktor Klemperer, *LTI. Lingua Tertii Imperii* [The language of the Third Reich] (Ljubljana: Založba, 2014).

6 Vesna Mikolič, *Izrazi moči slovenskega jezika* (Koper, Ljubljana: Annales ZRS and Slovenska matica, 2020), 66–67.

7 Francesco Giunta, *Un po' di fascismo* (Milan: Consalvo editore, 1935).

8 Egon Pelikan, *Engelbert Besednjak v parlamentu. Discorsi parlamentari dell'on. Engelbert Besednjak* (Trieste: Krožek za družbena vprašanja Virgil Ščck, 1996); and Egon Pelikan, *Josip Vilfan v parlamentu. Discorsi parlamentari dell'on. Josip Vilfan* (Trst – Trieste: Krožek za družbena vprašanja Virgil Ščck, 1997).

torical portal *Atti Parlamentari* (Parliamentary documents),[9] where I reviewed the speeches of four MPs over the years.

Most of the texts in question are in Italian. Some parliamentary speeches by Slovenes Josip Vilfan and Engelbert Besednjak were translated into Slovenian for publication in the *Edinost* and *Goriška straža* newspapers. For this chapter I have chosen an extract from one of the speeches of four deputies which I have analyzed. These are excerpts from the parliamentary debates that were held in response to Vilfan's first parliamentary speech on 22 June 1921. On the same day, Pogatschnig replied with his speech, then Giunta addressed Vilfan on 23 June, and finally Vilfan took the floor again on the same day and replied to their remarks. As an example of Besednjak's speech, I have selected an excerpt from his first speech in Parliament on 4 June 1924. The excerpts, which are an example of the typical discourse of each of the four MPs, were translated from Italian into English and analyzed in terms of typical vocabulary and discourse strategies, with particular attention paid to language intensity.[10] In the examples analyzed, intensifiers are italicized, mitigators are underlined, and metadiscursive explanations of the language style itself are shaded in gray. Before reporting on the analysis of the texts, we should take a look at the broad outlines of the historical framework in which they were written.

Historical Picture

After the armistice between Austria-Hungary and the Entente forces on 3 November 2018, Italy was authorized to take over the territories defined in the secret London Pact of 1915. The final demarcation took place on 12 November 1920 with the Treaty of Rapallo between the Kingdom of Italy and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, on the basis of which Italy annexed the Julian region in January 1921. Thus, the entire western part of the Slovenian territory, which constituted one third of Slovenian territory, fell to Italy. The discriminatory policy toward the

9 *Atti parlamentari – Camera dei deputati. Portale storico*, at https://storia.camera.it/ [accessed on 12 March 2021].

10 In analyzing the texts translated into English, I did not take into account possible interlingual and cultural differences in the expression of intensity. However, in the translation I have tried to follow as far as possible the way intensity is expressed in the original text.

Slovenian community in this area began already in the period before and during the First World War, and the Treaty of Rapallo did not contain any guarantees for the Slovenian (and Croatian) population. After the Fascist takeover, denationalization measures, Italianization of the territory, and physical violence increased.

The first Fascist units, i.e., *Fasci di combattimento* (Combat divisions), were formed in Milan in March 1919, and then the movement quickly spread to other Italian cities and the countryside. Only a year later, even before the Fascist party took power at the national level, anti-Slavic or anti-Slovenian attitudes had reached their peak in Trieste on 13 July 1920 with the burning of the *Narodni dom* (the Slovenian National House).[11] Two members of the Italian Parliament, discussed below, were also involved in the attack on the *Narodni dom*; the arson was the work of Francesco Giunta, and the *Narodni dom* was the home of Josip Vilfan; after the 1921 elections, both were elected to the Italian Chamber.

The political life of the Slovenes in Italy was dominated mainly by two parties, the Catholic-oriented Slovenian People's Party and the liberal National Progressive Party. On 3 August 1919, the parties merged into a single Political Society Edinost. The Edinost Political Society contested the first elections to the Italian Parliament on 15 May 1921, under the name, Yugoslav National Party, representing the Slovenian and Croatian minorities. The Italian nationalist bloc, led by Fascists, had two opponents in the Julian March—the "Slavs" and the Communists. Four Slovenes and one Croat were elected: Dr Josip Vilfan, Virgil Ščck, Dr Karol Podgornik, and Josip Lavrenčič, together with Croat Ulikse Stanger. Despite the pressure, the Slovenes in the Julian March ran successfully also in the 1924 parliamentary elections, which were marked by brutal pre-election violence in Istria and the Julian March in general. In the changed electoral system, only two deputies, Dr. Josip Vilfan and Dr. Engelbert Besednjak, were elected from the Slavic List, while Jože Srebrnič was elected as a deputy on the Communist List. Vilfan and Besednjak remained in parliament even after all political parties were dissolved in November 1926 by an extraordinary law for the protection of the state, and remained in parliament until the end of their mandates

11 Gorazd Bajc and Egon Pelikan, "Od konca prve do začetka druge svetovne vojne (1918–1941)," in *Na oni strani meje. Slovenska manjšina v Italiji in njen pravni položaj: zgodovinski in pravni pregled 1866–2004,* ed. Gorazd Bajc (Koper: Univerza na Primorskem, Znanstveno-raziskovalno središče, Zgodovinsko društvo za južno Primorsko), 64.

in December 1928.[12] Their speeches ensured that the problems of the Slovenian community were heard at the highest political level.

Analysis of the Political Texts of the Elected Members of the Roman Parliament between the Two World Wars

Francesco Giunta (1887, Florence – 1971, Perugia/Rome)

Francesco Giunta had been a member of Benito Mussolini's party since May 1920. Soon after joining the party, he was sent to Trieste as a "Segretario del Fascio." Until 1923 he served as secretary and high commissioner of the Fascists in Julian Region, founder of Fascist organizations in the country, organizer of criminal expeditions of Fascist squads against Slovenian and Communist establishments, and on 13 July 1920 led Trieste Fascists and Nationalists in the attack on the Slovenian National House in Trieste. Between 1920 and 1923 he was the founder and director of the Fascist newspaper *Popolo di Trieste*.[13] He was a member of the Italian Parliament throughout the period of Fascist rule until the capitulation of Italy, namely: 11 June 1921–25 January 1924, 24 May 1924–21 January 1929, 20 April 1929–19 January 1934, 28 April 1934–2 March 1939, 23 March 1939–2 August 1943.

As an example of the analysis of Giunta's style, I quote a paragraph from Giunta's parliamentary debate of 23 June 1921. It was addressed to the Slovenian MP Josip Wilfan/Vilfan, who two days earlier, on 21 June 1921, had spoken in parliament about the difficult situation of Slovenes and Croats in Italy. Here is an excerpt from Giunta's reply to Vilfan:

> This is documented *evidence that has gone down in history* and that *you cannot* forget, *Mr. Wilfan*. *I have nothing more to say to you.* It has *only* pleased me that, *in the name of Italian Trieste, deeply, immeasurably, irreducibly Italian, in the name of all the Italian people who have given blood and substance to realize a dream which the force of things or the course of destiny or the will of men has brought to fruition, I have endeavored to raise aloud the*

12 Bajc and Pelikan, "Od konca prve do začetka druge svetovne vojne (1918–1941)," 60–88.
13 PSBL Primorski slovenski biografski leksikon, Giunta, Francesco, at https://www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi1011080/ [accessed on 14 March 2021].

> *voice of the representative of Trieste and of an Italian citizen* here, so that there would not be a feeling out here, or *even* in *your* parts, that *we* are subject to *your arrogance*, or that *we are forced to rebuke you* and thus *surround you with a crown of thorns which* would *best suit your Nazarene face, Mr. Wilfan, in order to be a Yugoslav martyr in the national parliament*.[14]

As in other Giunta's texts analyzed, this parliamentary speech is dominated by all sorts of intensifications (printed in italics here) and elements of the Fascist imaginary. At the semantic level we find lexical intensifiers, namely the indefinite pronoun with the maximum degree meaning "all" (*all the Italian people*) and the adverb "only" in the sense of exclusive (*It has only pleased me*); internally intensified words, such as the noun (*destiny*), the adjective (*Italian Trieste*), the verb (*have endeavored, are forced to rebuke*), the adverb (*deeply*); semantic superlatives, such as the adverb (*immeasurably, irreducibly*); insults (*your arrogance*); conventional metaphors (*evidence that has gone down in history; realize a dream; brought to fruition*); nationalist metaphors related to earth and blood, national symbols (*the whole Italian people who have given blood and substance to realize a dream; national parliament*); religious metaphors (*crown of thorns; Nazarene face; Yugoslav martyr*). On the morphological level there is the superlative of the adverb (*best)*, while on the syntactic and textual level we find many rhetorical figures: sayings, idioms (*I have nothing more to say to you; we are forced to rebuke you*), gradation and hyperbole (*deeply, immeasurably, irreducibly Italian*), direct address or apostrophe in the second-person plural as a formal form at the beginning of the speech (*you cannot forget that, Mr. Wilfan. I have nothing more to say to you.*) and at the end of the speech (*your Nazarene face ... Mr. Wilfan*), repetition or iteration of words, phrases, syntactic patterns (e.g., *in the name of ... in the name of; Italian ... Italian; deeply, immeasurably, irreducibly*), accumulation (e.g., *the force of things or the course of destiny or the will of men has brought to fruition*). At the level of discourse, there are many arguments and motives, types of speech acts and discourse strategies that are closely related to Fascist ideology, namely: a) nationality, national symbols, blood, religion and land, praise for the Italian nation and its identification with Fascism (*all the Italian people who have given blood and substance to realize a dream*), b) division we–you, our–your (*even in your parts,*

14 Giunta, *Un po' di fascismo,* 139.

that we are subject to your arrogance, or that we are forced to rebuke you and thus surround you), c) creation of heroes and martyrs, ironically when it comes to the Slovenian parliamentarian (*all the Italian people who have given blood and substance; to be a Yugoslav martyr*), d) creation of the enemy, internal and external (*we are subject to your arrogance*).

Indeed, Giunta's style is sublime, resolutely elevating, very direct and deliberately shaped by the speaker, as can be seen in the metadiscursive utterances (shaded gray in the text) in which the speaker explicitly mentions the style or the reason for the speech, in this case his determination, his speaking resolutely and loudly (*I have nothing more to say to you.; I have endeavored to raise aloud the voice*). We find no neutral statements in this text and only two mitigations (underlined in the text) formed by a conditional "would," which apparently softens the coarseness of many intensifiers, but in fact has a more ironic function, as the speaker politely expresses a rough division between ours and yours, between the Italian people and their enemies.

Thus, the analysis of the intensity of Giunta's discourse shows that intensification prevails in all the texts and that even the rare mitigations do not appear as places of doubt and reflection, but as false modesty, irony, rhetorical figures with the clear aim of convincing the addressee of the correctness of the Fascist political orientation. The high intensity of Giunta's language is often perceived as indecent, grandiose, and violent, his violence sometimes culminating in explicit insults and vulgarities. However, the great variety of Giunta's expression essentially reflects the high communicative ability that allows Giunta to adapt to the addressee and the speech situation, which is also characteristic of all populist political movements.

Antonio Pogatschnig (1866, Poreč – 1924, Poreč)

Antonio Pogatschnig was at home in Poreč, where he was born and died. He was a lawyer, historian, one of the founders of the Italian National Party and a member of the Parliament in Rome for a term running from 11 June 1921 to 25 January 1924. In my research I have analyzed Pogatschnig's parliamentary debate, in which he too, like Giunta, reacted to Vilfan's performance. On 22 June 1921, he addressed a speech to his colleague from Trieste in which he drew a parallel from the past and portrayed the Slavs as a wild, barbaric people who, on the occasion of the

last election in 1921, had killed two innocent Fascists in the Istrian village of Marezige (Maresego). Here is an excerpt from that speech:

> The Istrians *have been fighting* with *slaves (Slavs) since the time of Charlemagne,* when the first *hordes* invaded *our* territories. ... There, in the year 804, they complained *against the strangers, against* the Slavs, *the usurpers* of *our* lands, and *raised their voices* to implore *aid and defense* against *the harassments, the violence, the depredations, and the assaults* of the Slavs. ... *But, honorable colleagues*, Istria *indisputably bears the signature of its Italianness,* and it is *useless* for me *to show you the proofs and monuments* which *all* honored colleagues *already* know. The Slavs in our province *were received as guests and now seek to be masters*. ... Hoping *to have something to do with a race* capable of gratitude, they (Italians, AN) treated them with *all* respect, *even* with *too much long-suffering. ... I said that there were no riots during the elections, but I must correct* myself. There was *only one event, a serious event, a really serious event. Two young fascists, two promising lives, two ardent Italians, were cruelly attacked, barbarically massacred, slaughtered with stones, sticks, billhooks and axes, murdered and thrown into the ditch. This was perpetrated by the electors of Wilfan, was done by the Slovenes of Maresego,* and you will have read *the solemn and moving tribute* paid by the citizens of Koper to these two *innocent victims*. This is *the only event* that took place during the election. ... Now I would not have said these things if Mr. Wilfan *had not provoked us* with his speech. I would have preferred to reach an agreement. *But an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.*[15]

The analysis of the intensity of language shows that the mitigators in Pogatschnig's speech are mainly just expressions with which he makes his appearance, his view, dependent on his opponent. In the metadiscursive utterances in which Pogatschnig explicitly states the reason for the speech, it is a kind of false modesty and the role of the victim, expressed by a conditional (*would*): he would not make a speech, but because his opponent behaves badly, he has to react (*Now I would not have said these things if Mr. Wilfan had not provoked us with his speech., I would have preferred to reach an agreement. But ...*).

15 Atti parlamentari – Camera dei deputati. Portale storico (22 June 1921, 161–162), at https://storia.camera.it/ [accessed on 14 March 2021].

However, intensifiers predominate. Besides lexical intensifiers (e.g., *already, all, every, really, only, must*) and internally intensified words (e.g., *slaves, hordes, strangers, usurpers, harassments, depredations, slander, assaults, race, useless, ardent, innocent, have been fighting, were attacked, massacred, slaughtered, murdered, perpetrated, provoked, indisputably, cruelly, barbarically*), the most common or typical Pogatschnig intensifier is the repetition of words, phrases, sentence patterns (*against the strangers, against the Slavs; only one event, a serious event, a really serious event; Two young fascists, two promising lives, two ardent Italians,* etc.), which often escalate and accumulate (*the harassments, the violence, the depredations, and the assaults; stones, sticks, billhooks and axes*, etc.), resulting in a dramatic style. There are also some metaphorical expressions, religious (*an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth*) and especially nationalistic (e.g., *the usurpers of our lands*; *Istria bears the signature of its Italianness*), but they are quite conventional (like *raised their voices; guests, masters*), there are also some sayings and idioms (e.g., *were received as guests and now seek to be masters; eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth*). His speech does not focus on Fascist ideology, but is mainly interested in the national question. Nevertheless, some nationalist accents can be discerned, identifying with Fascism at one point (Two young Fascists, two promising lives, two ardent Italians).

The whole speech is framed by the idea that the Slavs are inferior newcomers in the history and modernity of Istria, barbarian invaders of the hospitable Italians. What is interesting here is Pogatschnig's personal attitude regarding Italy and the Slavs. In this division, i.e., our homeland, our province on one side and the Slavs, slaves, ungrateful guests, bandits, murderers on the other, he sees himself as one of "ours," but at the same time he speaks of Italy and the Italians in the 3rd person (*they* (Italians, AN) *treated them with all respect*). Although Pogatschnig was one of the founders of the Italian National Party, as a man from Poreč he was obviously expressing his, probably unconscious, multi-layered ethnic identity and the discomfort associated with it.

Josip Vilfan (1878, Trieste – 1955, Belgrade)

Josip Vilfan, also Wilfan, born in Trieste, is considered one of the most important public figures in Primorska. He was a lawyer and, after studying in Vienna, worked in Trieste, where in 1906 he was elected secretary of the political association of Trieste Slovenes Edinost. In 1921 and 1924

he was elected to the Italian Parliament and later became chairman of the permanent working committee of the Congress of European Minorities, based in Vienna, where he informed the European public about the situation of the Slavic ethnic groups in Italy.

As Egon Pelikan noted in a monograph concerning Vilfan's collected parliamentary speeches, which is the subject of our analysis, Vilfan's politics were characterized by an extremely cultural attitude, which he represented both in the Italian Parliament and later in his work in the Congress of European Minorities. In his political actions and appearances, he was always careful not to resemble his ideological and political opponents in terms of the methods used, ruthlessness or primitivism.[16]

At the same time, however, his stance was resolute. His first appearance in Parliament on 21 June 1921 provoked the far-right MPs, as evidenced by numerous interjections and the slowing down of the debate by the Speaker of Parliament. After the reactions of some MPs of the nationalist and Fascist right, including Pogatschnig (22 June 1921) and Giunta (23 June 1921) (see the analysis of the extracts from these two speeches above), Vilfan spoke again on 23 June 1921:

> I must say something first. Speaking in *such* a large room is a difficult thing. I am not fortunate enough to have the—I would almost say—*Herculean lungs* of my colleague Cao. So *I have to* force myself to speak out loud, and this act *not only* messes up my physiological supply, *but* almost logically my psychological supply *as well*. I might also get upset. I will try the best I can to speak calmly and objectively. I am *all too aware* that my humble personal concern has significance beyond myself. It is about a relationship that is just emerging between two nations, namely between a nation that is *master* of this country and part of a nation that *also* has its own nation state outside it and forms a small minority here. /.../ If I interpret your statement correctly and relate it to *indisputable* facts, I must consider *you at least* the moral initiator of this event. It is said – because I was not in Trieste that day – that *you* made a speech in the Square of the Unity of Italy which *caused the crowd to go* in front of the Hotel Balkan (the Slovenian National House) and attack it. If this is true, I must admit that perhaps I should not have spoken out, because *this house* was *my home* and in *this house my* children were born. *My fondest* memories are asso-

16 Pelikan, *Josip Vilfan v parlamentu*, 75.

> ciated with *this house*. You set *the house* on fire! … I think I can also say, on behalf of those who sent me here, that what *we* have to say to each other, and what needs to be resolved between *us,* cannot be resolved by *swearing,* by *attacking each other*, or by *tournament duels*.[17]

Vilfan shows his rhetorical skill by using some intensifiers and in this way emphasizing the focus of his discussions, which is always the striving for the equality of Slavic life in Trieste. Besides lexical intensifiers (*such, only, as well, all, also, at least*), internally intensified words (*home, swearing, attacking*) and metaphors (*Herculean lungs, master, (speech) caused the crowd to go, tournament duels)*, he occasionally uses semantic and formal superlatives (*indisputable*, *too aware, my fondest memories)*, sayings and idioms (such as *is master of this country*), as well as some rhetorical figures such as antithesis (e.g., *not only messes up my physiological supply, but almost logically my psychological supply as well),* exclamation *(You set the house on fire!)*, apostrophe (e.g., *I must consider you)*, repetition *(this house was my home and in this house my children were born. My fondest memories are associated with this house. You set the house on fire!*) and accumulation (*by swearing, by attacking each other, or by tournament duels).*

It can be quickly observed, however, that there are far fewer intensifiers in Vilfan's speech (far fewer words marked in italics in the text) compared to those of Giunta and Pogatschnig, and that intensifications and mitigations alternate fairly evenly. Apart from many morphological and lexical mitigators and internally mitigated words (such as *would, almost, might, humble)*, the most characteristic mitigation in his case is the frequent use of verbs and other expressions of saying, thinking, mental states, which limit the content of the statements only to the communicator's own knowledge or perspective (e.g., *I think I can also say, on behalf of those who sent me here*). Also interesting here is the use of the modal verb "must" (*I must say something first; I must consider you),* which does not function as an intensifier, but rather as a mitigator in the sense that the speaker is forced by the facts to say something.[18] He also proves his

17 Parliamentary Acts, 23 June 1921, Item 186, in Pelikan *Josip Vilfan v parlamentu,* 130–133.

18 It seems that Vilfan uses sentences like *I must say* as a consequence of certain facts and not like Pogatschnig, who uses similar linguistic devices, e.g. *I must correct myself*, as a reaction to the opponent's misbehavior. In Vilfan's case, it is a rather rational justification of one's own communication which depends on certain indisputable facts or circumstances, whereas Pogatschnig emotionally reinforces the role of the victim in this way.

responsible approach to communication with frequent metadiscursive utterances with which he explicitly describes or even justifies his style of expression (e.g., *I will try the best I can to speak calmly and objectively*.). In addition to the objective information in parts of several sentences, there is also a neutral statement in the role of the objective frame of his speech (*It is about a relationship that is just emerging between two nations*).

It can be said that Vilfan was a sober, rational speaker who did not give in too much to emotion, even on the most sensitive issues related to Fascist pressure, and did not stoop to the level of insult, which he explicitly rejected. The strength of his statements stemmed precisely from this composure, credibility, and strengthening of arguments, which he formulated on the basis of his theoretical legal knowledge, his own experience, and the objective analysis of concrete events, not even applying the relations between the Italian nation and the Slovene ethnic group in Italy to the fan relationship we–you, ours–yours, but remaining on an analytical level.

Engelbert Besednjak (1894, Gorica – 1968, Trieste)

Engelbert Besednjak was a lawyer, politician, and publicist. In 1913–1914 he was secretary of the Gorizia Christian Social Union. In 1919, he was appointed editor-in-chief of *Slovenec*, in 1920 he became editor-in-chief of the Trieste *Edinost*, and between 1922 and 1924 he took over the editorship of the weekly *Goriška straža*. In 1921, he was appointed a member of the extraordinary provincial committee for Goriška and Gradiščanska. From 24 May 1924 to 21 January 1929, he was a member of the Italian Parliament, where he fought for the ethnic and economic rights of the minority.

I have analyzed his first parliamentary speech of 4 June 1924, in which he had already demonstrated his determination and other oratorical skills:

> *Gentlemen*, I have taken the floor to make my first public speech in Italian. Italian is not my mother tongue; I *never* learned Italian, *neither* at a folk high school *nor* at a college, and therefore my words are a little uncertain and hesitant. /... / What surprised me *the most* when I arrived in Rome was the *complete* ignorance of *our* nation *wherever* I introduced myself as Slovenian. /... / *But I maintain*, and *I maintain* it *with all my strength*,

> that the policy toward the Slovenian minority is *not only* about the interests of our nation, *but* about *the highest* interests of the *whole* state and about the future development of Italian state policy. With my speech I would like to *underline* the *great* importance of the policy towards minorities for the mission of Italy in the world. /... / *You, honourable colleagues*, are *firmly convinced* that Italy will expand. *But be aware, honourable colleagues*, that in doing so Italy *will have to* come into contact with other peoples. *You will have to* deal with *people who speak different languages, who have different characters, different histories, and different customs. Often the most* difficult thing is not to adopt new landscapes, *the most difficult and important* task is to deal well with the foreign population and win them over. *The most difficult* policy, but *also the most* profitable, is to make people happy.[19]

Unlike Vilfan's speech, there was no such alternation of intensifications and mitigations in Besednjak's text; there were also fewer neutral elements, intensifiers predominated. These are found at all linguistic levels, at the semantic level we find mainly lexical intensifiers (*never, whole, often)* and inherently intensified words (*complete, underline, great, firmly, convinced, difficult, important)*, but there are fewer metaphorical expressions, especially in comparison with Vilfan's sometimes poetic or Giunta's sublime style. On the morphological level, one sees intensifiers such as the conjunction 'neither–nor' (*I never learned Italian, neither at a folk high school nor at a college)*, the imperative (*be aware),* the superlatives (*the most, the highest),* and the modal verb 'to have' (*will have to)*. The rhetorical figures on the syntactic and textual level are also not very diverse; there are some direct addresses to the deputies (e.g., *You, honourable colleagues)* and antithetical sentences (e.g., *is not only about the interests of our nation, but about the highest interests of the whole state)*, only repetitions and the accumulation of important information and images are more frequent (e.g., *people who speak different languages, who have different characters, different histories and different customs).* The latter is very obvious in Besednjak's speech, because by focusing on the idea he wants to convey, all information and thoughts revolve around it and similar thoughts are repeated several times. The metadiscursive utterances that

19 Egon Pelikan, *Engelbert Besednjak v parlamentu. Discorsi parlamentari dell'on. Engelbert Besednjak* (Trieste: Krožek za družbena vprašanja Virgil Ščck, 1996), 63–83.

Besednjak uses mainly to describe his determined style of expression also function as intensifiers (e.g., *I maintain, and I maintain it with all my strength)* rather than justifications and thus mitigators as in Vilfan.

Besednjak's style was thus direct, without distortions or embellishments, concrete, with great intensity, sometimes even emotional. Besednjak emphasizes his clarity by expressing his belief in his own knowledge and drawing on his own experiences. This does not mean, however, that he gave in to his emotions uncontrollably or expressed himself offensively. Rather, with his direct style, the speaker wanted to approach the opposing side pragmatically, the Fascist deputies and the government, to put himself in their shoes and in this way try to convince them that deviations from legal and civilizational norms were harmful primarily to them.

Discussion and Conclusions of the Discourse Strategies of Fascist and Anti-Fascist or National Defense Discourse

The analysis of the political speeches of four members of the Italian Parliament, Francesco Giunta and Antonio Pogatschnig from the Fascist and nationalist right and Josip Vilfan and Engelbert Besednjak representing the party and the interests of the Slovenian and Croatian minorities, in the early 1920s, when Italian Fascism was born and founded, has revealed differences in the style of each speaker in terms of different vocabulary and discourse strategies, especially the different levels of language intensity. This is undoubtedly a reflection of both their personality traits and their communication and rhetorical skills. Although the four MPs differ in their speaking style, we can also identify some related features of their public communication, which mainly connect the speech of the two fascist MPs on the one hand and the Slovenian MP on the other hand, which is undoubtedly due to their political orientation. It is thus possible to define some basic characteristics of the two discourses, the Fascist and the anti-Fascist or national defense discourse. This is already evident in the central theme of the political debates in which the MPs in question are involved, namely the national theme.

The Fascist discourse

The national question in both MPs of the extreme right is played out on the basis of the nationalist division we–you, ours–yours in terms of glorifying Italian high culture and underestimating or attacking Slavic cultures, which is not surprising when one knows that fascism is a rejection of fundamental values of the Enlightenment, especially the principle of egalitarianism.[20] But if in *Pogatschnig* the question of the conflict between the "barbaric" Slavs and the "generous" Italians remains mainly in a nationalist context, in *Giunta* this question is fully interwoven with fascist ideology, the nation is identified with fascism. The nationalist vocabulary includes the names of national symbols, strong, intensified words, metaphors and insults such as: *fatherland, nation, tricolour, Adriatic brothers, blood, slaves (ščavi, schiavi)* for the Slavs or Slovenes and Croats, *usurpers, hordes, arrogance, plunder, robbery, gangs, treacherous, barbaric* etc. To the nationalist vocabulary, Fascist ideology added some other keywords including Fascist neologisms (e.g., *aloglot, allogen, squadron)*, commonly used intensified words that became even more frequent in Fascist discourse (e.g., *blood, screaming, horrible, great, sharp, to swear, to hope)*, and words from various thematic areas that acquire new meanings or were used metaphorically in Fascist discourse. This is the case with words and metaphors from the fields of religion (e.g., *spirit, spiritual energies, martyr, saint, holy war)*, armies (e.g., *hero, enemy, battle, victory, foreign invasion, heroic, famous, betrayed, to progress*), economy (e.g., *forces of national production*), health (e.g., *eternal vitality, strength, energy)*. In general, both conventional and creative metaphors, personifications, and comparisons were quite common, especially in Giunta's texts. Also, at the level of discourse, the following Fascist themes were related to the central nationalist theme: a) Fascist ideology, politics, and praise of Fascism, b) national symbols, blood, religion, and land, praise of the Italian nation and its identification with Fascism, c) the division us–you or them, on the one hand the glorification of 'us' in relation to Italian high culture and on the other hand the underestimation of and attack on 'you' or 'them' in relation to inferior cultures, d) the creation of martyrs and heroes, and d) the creation of the enemy, internal and external.

---

20 Rok Svetlič, "Fašizem kot eksces nauka o nravni substanci," in *Acta Histriae*, Vol. 24, No. 4, 732.

All these intensified meanings, themes, ideas on the semantic and discourse levels are provided with additional phonetic or orthographic, morphological and syntactic intensifications. This communication works on the principle of all or nothing: the capital letters used for the keywords of Fascism *(Fascism, Fatherland, Religion)* and the use of all capital letters *(FASCISM)* gave the impression of shouting, the total pronouns, the superlatives of adjectives and adverbs, and the verbal imperative all act as intensifiers. On the syntactic level, Pogatschnig was content with repetition and accumulation, while Giunta mastered and used a variety of rhetorical figures, including antithesis, gradation, hyperbole, rhetorical question, exclamation, rhetorical question, exclamation, direct address, and various forms of repetition of words, phrases, and syntactic patterns.

But the mastery of rhetorical figures here was in the service of Fascist ideology. The purpose of this elevated, often emotionally charged communication was to convince the addressee of the undeniable greatness of Fascism. This was indicated by the frequent references to truth, the populist, misleading addresses to different target groups, the many metadiscursive statements in which the speaker explicitly justified his communication style, and last but not least the threats and insults towards political opponents. The high intensity of this language was evidenced by the fact that there were almost no mitigating or neutral statements. To the extent that there were, it was in the sense of irony or false modesty. To conclude the description of Fascist discourse, it should be said that it was an extremely exclusive discourse, which allowed the addressee only approval and nodding of the head and no contradiction.

Anti-Fascist or national defense discourse

The national question was also a central issue for the two Slovenian MPs, Josip Vilfan and Engelbert Besednjak, whose main objective in the Italian Parliament was to draw attention to the growing pressure on the Slovenian and Croatian communities in the Giulia region and to demand equality for national minorities. This intention was reflected in the frequent use of the words *nation* and *people*, the pronoun *our* and the phrases such as: *our national life, our cause, our language, our societies, our places, our country*. Vilfan and Besednjak, however, did not place the exposure of their own national community within the stereotypical nationalist

framework of 'ours' and 'yours', but used their legal knowledge to defend the rights of the minorities they represented. Both maintained a respectful attitude toward the Fascist authorities and MPs, *Vilfan* achieving this through his theoretical, professional approach and sometimes lyrical, metaphorical language, while *Besednjak* was more pragmatic and direct, approaching the addressee with very clear reasons why good governance with minorities is beneficial above all to the Fascist government and the state itself. This difference was well illustrated by the nature of Vilfan's and Besednjak's metadiscursive explanations and their use of verbs of saying, thinking, and mental states. In Vilfan's case, this involved mainly verbs of saying that constrained what was said within the limits of his cognition, so that in the first step they signified a weakening, a mitigation of the discourse that opened up the space for the addressee to think (e.g., *I think; I would say; I must admit)*. By contrast, Besednjak reinforced his clarity with numerous verbs of saying and metadiscursive utterances that acted as intensifiers because they expressed belief in the speaker's knowledge and justified the appropriateness of a direct approach to communication (e.g., *I maintain, and I maintain it with all my strength*).

In addition to word intensifiers, Vilfan's texts contained several internally and occasionally intensified words, metaphorical expressions, and rhetorical figures. However, in Vilfan's discourse intensifiers were fairly evenly exchanged with mitigators at various linguistic levels, including neutral parts of statements, whereas in Besednjak's discourse there were fewer such exchanges of intensifiers and mitigators and also fewer neutral elements, and intensifiers predominated. Among the intensifiers in Besednjak's texts, the most frequent are lexical intensifiers, superlatives, antithetic phrases, and iteration and accumulation of important information and images, the latter in particular indicating the speaker's desire for more clarity.

Historian Egon Pelikan wrote of the personal differences that were palpable in the of Slovenian MPs:

> But Besednjak was not only younger. Besednjak was a greater realist, a more politically skilled man and a pragmatist. Vilfan, on the other hand, was a greater idealist. He belonged to an older generation that had grown up in the cultural milieu of the former Habsburg monarchy and came from a higher (middle) social class. Besednjak, on the other

hand, was what the English call a "self made man," he knew life much more "closely."[21]

But irrespective of these personal differences between the two Slovenian speakers, which were also noticeable in their style of communication, it is striking at first glance that their discourse had a much lower language intensity compared to the speeches of Giunta and Pogatschnig, and that both tried in their own way to approach the addressee with a concrete justification without attacking or even insulting him. More than an attack on Fascist policy, it was in their case a staunch defense of the rights of the Slovene national community and an attempt to influence Fascist policy to include respect for national minorities in its program. Thus, the discourse strategies and style of Vilfan and Besednjak insisted on a policy of legality towards the Fascist authorities while there was still some hope that they could at least achieve a positive step with regard to the position of the Slovenian minority community.

However, since this defensive discourse attempted to fundamentally reverse the politics of fascism, it can also be understood as the beginning of an anti-Fascist discourse and an important anti-Fascist struggle within the parliamentary system. Unfortunately, this hope turned into a completely hopeless situation in the second half of the 1920s, so that toward the end of their term they gave up their parliamentary appearances and increasingly devoted themselves to the international work of the Congress of European Nations in Vienna and Geneva.[22]

Of course, Vilfan and Besednjak were not able to stop Fascism, nor to realize the vision of a united Europe that they developed in the context of the Congress of European Nations. Nevertheless, their achievements, both ideologically and communicatively, seem very visionary and set high ideals for today's Slovenian and European society and way of communication.

---

21 Pelikan, *Josip Vilfan v parlamentu*, 68.
22 Pelikan, *Josip Vilfan v parlamentu,* 54–55.

3

Fascism, Anti-fascism, and Ethnic Engineering in the Former Austrian Littoral [1]

BORUT KLABJAN

At the end of World War One, the Habsburg monarchy collapsed and parts of the now-defunct empire became areas of contention between successor states. Especially in multiethnic borderlands, states, armies, and civic organizations struggled in diverse ways to affirm their rights to one or another contested area. The Austrian Littoral, as the northern Adriatic region was called during Habsburg times, was no exception. After the war, it was claimed by both the Kingdom of Italy and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (the Kingdom of SHS, later on Yugoslavia). The political context of the Adriatic question is well known, and it shows how the area became one of the postwar "shatter zones" of the Habsburg empire.[2]

Despite a rapprochement between Italy and the Kingdom of SHS at the diplomatic level with the Treaty of Rapallo in November 1920, tensions continued to characterize the interwar years.[3] The ambiguity of the postwar settlement created a space without a clear, defined state authority and even after the region was annexed by Italy the transition

---

1 This research has received funding from the Slovenian Research Agency (ARRS) under the grant agreement n. J6-3121 *Decade of Decadence. Citizenship, Belonging, and Indifference to the State in the Northern Adriatic Borderland, 1914-1924*, and within the research programme P6-0272 *The Mediterranean and Slovenia.*

2 Omer Bartov and Eric D. Weitz, eds., *Shatterzone of Empires: Coexistence and Violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman Borderlands* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 2013).

3 Many works on the Adriatic question are available in Serbian and Croatian, Italian, and Slovene. In English a recent overview was offered by Massimo Bucarelli and Benedetto Zaccaria, "Encroaching Visions: Italy, Yugoslavia and the Adriatic Question, 1918–1920," in *Italy in the New International Order, 1917–1922,* eds. Antonio Varsori and Benedetto Zaccaria (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 229–54.

lasted for several years.[4] This period was characterized by extreme political instability and economic insecurity, and it became a sort of laboratory for new forms of military and paramilitary violence.[5] Political adversaries such as socialists, republicans, and anarchists, as well as ethno-national enemies (such as the Slovene and Croat communities) were the object of a top-down policy of subordination by Italian authorities and a target of Fascist violence. Indeed, owing to similar objectives and common enemies rather than just to a shared ideological platform, the Adriatic Fascist movement soon united various forms of local nationalism, irredentism, *squadrismo*, and *fiumanesimo*. The idea that Fiume (Rijeka, today in Croatia), and not only the Austrian Littoral, should be annexed to Italy, gained widespread support in postwar Italy, and many followed the Italian nationalist poet Gabriele D'Annunzio to occupy the city in September 1919. D'Annunzio himself was not an official member of the Fascist Party, but his charismatic rhetoric and publicity stunts fed the fervent nationalism of irredentists that were manifest during the spread of Fascist techniques.[6]

The Fascist movement was officially founded by Benito Mussolini in Milan in March 1919; however, it was in Trieste (Trst/Triest), the main city in the northern Adriatic, that it gained immediate and mass support. The local section was founded only two weeks after Milan and, in spring 1921, the Trieste branch had the most Fascists of any city in Italy, with almost 15 thousand members. Together with nearby Udine, the Trieste section alone represented 20% of the 80,000 Italian Fascists.[7] State authorities, militaries, nationalist organizations, and Fascist paramilitary units cooperated in the "pacification" of the Adriatic borderland. The list of homicides, acts of arson, and other aggressions is long and variegated, and with the support of the local nationalist press the Fascists promoted a self-image as guardians of the national cause. In the period of mass strikes and social unrest that characterized postwar It-

4 Ester Capuzzo, *Dall'Austria all'Italia. Aspetti istituzionali e problemi normativi nella storia di una frontiera* (Rome: La Fenice, 1996).

5 I have analyzed this aspect in my "Borders in Arms: Political Violence in the North-Eastern Adriatic after the Great War," in *Acta Histriae*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (2018): 985–1002.

6 Elio Apih, *Italia, fascismo e antifascismo nella Venezia Giulia (1918-1943)* (Bari: Laterza, 1966), 103–105; Raoul Pupo, "Attorno all'Adriatico: Venezia Giulia, Fiume e Dalmazia," in *La vittoria senza pace. Le occupazioni militari italiane alla fine della grande guerra,* ed. Raoul Pupo (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 2014), 73–160; and Luciano Monzali, *Gli italiani di Dalmazia e le relazioni italo-jugoslave nel Novecento* (Venice: Marsilio, 2015), 112–181.

7 Michael Mann, *Fascists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 106.

aly, in the Adriatic borderland they portrayed themselves as guarantors of order against "socialist chaos" and the apparent anti-national stance of the "Slavs."[8]

This policy was implemented after the Fascists came to power in Italy. In October 1922, King Victor Emmanuel III appointed Mussolini to form a government, which by 1925 became a dictatorship. If, on a state level, his totalitarian strategies were aimed at forming a Fascist Italian society, in the Adriatic borderland, this policy went hand in hand with plans of ethnic engineering. This was not a collateral aspect of Fascist politics, as demonstrated by a comparison of South Tyrol, where Italy annexed a large German community, and Libya.[9] In the former multiethnic Austrian Littoral as well in the South Tyrol, the nationalist aspect of the regime was central to the Italian notion of nation-building; although the number of Slovenes and Croats—around half a million—was relatively small in a state with approximately 40 million Italians, they represented the majority population in the new provinces. The Fascists felt an urgent need to subdue, if not convert, them, and mold them into proper ("buoni") Italians.[10]

The need to repress the presence of local Slovenes and Croats was not a Fascist invention or an Italian peculiarity. Coercive measures against other nationalities, emigration pressures, and programs of ethnic cleansing were part of a long-term historical process and were common to many disputed European regions.[11] At the local level, its roots can be traced back to the assimilatory practices in late-Habsburg Austria. However, while in Habsburg times this strategy of local Italian elites was contextualized in an imperial setting, after the war, Italian State authorities, in their desire to establish a homogeneous nation-state, cooperated closely with nationalist groups and individuals in a process of eth-

8 Milica Kacin-Wohinz, *Primorski Slovenci pod italijansko zasedbo, 1918–1921* (Maribor-Trst: Obzorja ZTT, 1972); and Angelo Visintin, *L'Italia a Trieste. L'operato del governo militare italiano nella Venezia Giulia, 1918–1919* (Gorizia: LEG, 2000).

9 Roberta Pergher, *Mussolini's Nation-Empire: Sovereignty and Settlement in Italy's Borderlands, 1922–1943* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

10 The Ufficio Informazioni Truppe Operanti (ITO), a military intelligence unit that after the war served as a meeting point of local nationalist and militaries for paramilitary activities, used this term for a list of 200 people who should be interned or expelled from the region because of the "impossibility to become good Italians in the redeemed territory" ["impossibilità che possano diventare buoni italiani in territorio redento"] (Archivio di Stato di Trieste [State Archive in Trieste], Regio Governatorato Generale Civile per la Venezia Giulia, Atti di Gabinetto (1919–1922), folder 72, Diario Storico-Militare, 3 novembre 1918 – 4 agosto 1919, Allegati. N. 501 di prot. 23 December 1918).

11 Philip Ther, *The Dark Side of Nation-States. Ethnic Cleansing in Modern Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014), especially chapters 1 and 2.

nic assimilation. This "bonifica etnica" (ethnic recovery) was not a linear and uniform strategy, but rather took the form of biased legal decrees, unwritten discriminatory attitudes, and unpunished physical violence. The relationship between the Slovene and Croatian minorities in Italy, Yugoslavia, and Italy seems to match the "triadic relational nexus" formulated by Rogers Brubaker's effort to establish a uniform analytical framework by which to study the links among minority communities, the states in which they live, and their external national "homelands."[12] Brubaker deconstructed the static image of these categories and offered a more *relational* rapport; while he concretized his theoretical findings by analyzing the role of the national question in the breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, this chapter uses the case of the "Yugoslav" minority in Italy after World War One to recover the heritage of early resistance to the spread of Fascism, and to reconsider the national dimension of anti-fascist resistance in interwar Europe. In fact, the Adriatic case not only suggests a temporal locus of anti-fascism in the 1920s, but also uncovers the transnational entanglements of national minorities and anti-fascism, demonstrating that national and transnational are not necessarily incompatible.

"The first anti-fascism in Europe"

In the first postwar years Italy was a theater of political instability, economic crisis, and mounting social demands. Violence engendered by both left and right left victims on all sides. Socialists and workers especially engaged in street fights with Fascists. In the Adriatic borderland, strikes and rallies held by the local socialist parties, well-organized and crowded, especially in port towns such as Trieste and Pula, were disbanded with increasing efficiency, while in the countryside Fascist expeditions were opposed by individuals and village communities. In Labin, a miners' strike evolved into the formation of an autonomous workers' republic and, even if it was short lived, popular forms of anti-Fascist resistance continued in many forms, especially during the campaign for the parliamentary elections in May 1921. In the villages of the

12 Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 55–56.

Osp valley, between Trieste and Koper/Capodistria, in Marezige, and in other small centers local inhabitants attacked trucks of Fascist "invaders." However, these actions were the result of improvised village initiatives of self-defense rather than politically organized forms of resistance. Usually, after being turned back, the Fascists returned, escorted by police and military units who imprisoned local villagers while Fascists took control of the villages. In some cases, they firebombed houses, a form of intimidation and revenge systematically used in the region during World War Two.[13]

However, the growing support for the Fascists and their practices helped them to prevail. The destruction of the Slovene and Croat centers (*Narodni domovi*) in Trieste and Pula in July 1920 might seem marginal, but the Adriatic question and slogans about a "mutilated victory" served to mobilize Italian masses all over the country. The heterogeneous Fascist movement raised the flag of national interests and their attacks in the Adriatic borderland signaled the start of organized Fascism, which spread from the new borderlands of the country to northern and central Italy.[14] As recently emphasized by Millan, violence was an integral part of the Fascist political project and, after Mussolini seized power, violent practices continued to characterize the everyday life of Fascist Italy in multiple forms.[15]

In the northern Adriatic, this Fascist state violence against ethnic and political opponents provoked organized forms of counterviolence. While many communists were already in exile or in prison, a younger generation of Slovene and Croat anti-Fascists became increasingly active after a series of laws disbanded their organizations in the mid-1920s.[16] They refused the loyalist attitude of traditional political representatives to the regime. While Josip Vilfan, a lawyer from Trieste, leader of the Yugoslav party representing the Slovene and Croat national de-

---

13 A project conducted by the Science and Research Centre in Koper in cooperation with local partners showed that more than 400 villages in the area were partly or entirely burnt down. See Gašper Mithans, "Burnt villages in the Julian March as memorial landscapes" in *Borderlands of Memory: Adriatic and Central European Perspectives*, ed. Borut Klabjan (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2019), 211–33.

14 Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario 1883–1920* (Turin: Einaudi, 1965), 624.

15 Matteo Millan, "Squadrismo e repressione: una via italiana alla violenza?" in *Il fascismo italiano. Storia e interpretazioni*, ed. Giulia Albanese (Rome: Carrocci editore, 2021), 25–44.

16 There is no recent comprehensive study in the English language on the Italian policy towards its Slovene and Croat minorities. For a general overview, Dennison Rusinow's *Italy's Austrian Heritage, 1919–1946* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1969) could be useful.

mands in Italy, believed in parliamentary discussions and established a dialogue with Mussolini, younger Slovene activists, decided to fight Fascist violence with violence. Milica Kacin-Wohinz, in her 1990 book, called this the first anti-fascism in Europe.[17]

The aim of this chapter is to investigate the genesis of this anti-fascism in a transnational dimension. Scholars have already shown its contacts with individual anti-fascist centers, including, among others, the British intelligence service SOE (Special Operations Executive), communist parties, and the Italian liberal-socialist exile group Justice and Freedom (*Giustizia e Libertà*).[18] A more coherent and inclusive analysis of multiple transnational connections, transfers, and networks has yet to be achieved. Recent historiographical trends have shown the potential of such approaches to study mutual influences, cross-cultural contacts and exchanges beyond national frameworks. In fact, not less than countries, institutions, and societies, underground anti-fascist movements observed and partially adapted foreign examples and transformed them for their own purposes. As Philip Ther has pointed out, especially "groups that perceived themselves as backward had a strong tendency to look over borders, to import and adapt cultural goods from abroad."[19] Until the breakup of the Habsburg monarchy, local Slovenes and Croats represented a flourishing community with a well-developed political, economic, and cultural environment. Ten years after the dissolution of Austria-Hungary, Slovenes and Croats in the annexed Italian provinces had seen their languages banned, their economic, cultural, and political organizations dissolved, tens of thousands of their people leave the region, and their leaders thrown in jail.[20] Their situation at the end of the

17 Milica Kacin-Wohinz, *Prvi antifašizem v Evropi. Primorska 1925–1935* (Koper: Lipa, 1990). On the life and work of Josip Vilfan, see Gorazd Bajc, ed., *Josip Vilfan. Življenje in delo primorskega pravnika, narodnjaka in poslanca v rimskem parlamentu* (Koper: Annales, 2005).

18 The great majority of this work is in Slovene. However some materials are available in English, such as Peter Pirker, "Transnational Resistance in the Alps-Adriatic-Area in 1939/40: On Subversive Border-Crossers, Historical Interpretations, and National Politics of the Past," in *Acta Histriae*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (2012): 765–88; John Earle, *The Price of Patriotism: SOE and MI6 in the Italian-Slovene Borderlands during World War II* (Sussex: Book Guild, 2005), especially 17–28; and Gorazd Bajc, "Collaboration between Slovenes from the Primorska Region, the Special Operations Executive and the Inter-Services Liaison Department after the Occupation of Yugoslavia (6 April 1941)," in *Annales, Series historia et sociologia*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2002): 363–84.

19 Philip Ther, "Comparisons, Cultural Transfers, and the Study of Networks: Toward a Transnational History of Europe," in *Comparative and Transnational History: Central European Approaches and New Perspectives,* eds. Jürgen Kocka and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 136.

20 Milica Kacin Wohinz and Jože Pirjevec, *Zgodovina Slovencev v Italiji 1866–2000* (Ljubljana:

1920s could match that described by Ther. Only clandestine newspapers could circulate, illegally. The anonymous author of a 1930 article in one of these, the anti-fascist *samizdat* periodical *Svoboda* (Liberty), claimed that Fascism had made them—half a million Slovenes and Croats in Italy—into a "very poor proletariat."[21] In fact, in addition to the destruction brought about by four years of war, this policy of subordination and ethnic discrimination resulted in widespread impoverishment.[22]

Svoboda was the voice of a clandestine, underground anti-Fascist movement which adopted the name of TIGR. Its initials indicated the cities and regions which in the view of its membership required liberation from the foreign, Italian, yoke—these were Trst/Trieste, Istra/Istria, Gorica/Gorizia, and Rijeka/Fiume. Together with other illegal organizations such as Borba (Fight) and the ORJUNA (Organization of Yugoslav Nationalists), TIGR members burned down Italian schools that had replaced Slovene and Croat schools in Slovene and Croat ethnic areas, attacked Fascists, distributed anti-fascist leaflets, smuggled Slovene and Croat books into the country, and ran illegal presses, distributing materials from, in particular, Italian anti-fascist presses from abroad. Although these organizations differed from one another in methods and territorial coverage, they were linked by a common goal: to oppose the measures of the Fascist regime and to "free" the Yugoslav minority.

Transnational Connectivity, Anti-fascist Memory, and Ethno-national Disillusions

In order to investigate their multiple connections, we should go back to *Svoboda*, when it emphasized the current situation of the Slovene and Croat minorities in Italy, "their proletarian condition". This was not meant in ideological terms, but as a result of the policy of deprivation of the local populations and at the same time a starting point for their redemption, and as an invitation to become aware of their hopeless condition and the need to join the struggle against Fascism. Therefore, *Svo-*

Nova revija, 2000).

21 *Svoboda*, III, No.4 (1930), "Odrivanje slovanskega delavstva," 1.

22 Milica Kacin Wohinz and Marta Verginella, *Primorski upor fašizmu* (Ljubljana: Društvo Slovenska matica, 2008), 45–51. See also Silva Bon Gherardi, Lucio Lubiana, Anna Millo, Lorena Vanello and Anna Maria Vinci, *L'Istria tra le due guerre. Contributi per una storia sociale* (Rome: Ediesse, 1985).

boda proclaimed, "We will fight as proletarian masses fought from the French revolution onwards,"[23] making a clear connection with the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity. The widespread and largely accepted ideas of the French revolution, its just goals, and the victory of its ideals, served to mobilize the Slovene and Croat masses. However, "we are different from proletarian masses, also from the Italian proletariat," they averred. How? In addition to being a poor proletariat, we are an "oppressed Slavic mass," they claimed. Slovene anti-fascists added an ethno-national character to their writings: their future salvation was to be not only a social struggle, but also a fight strictly connected to the demands of all nationally oppressed minorities. Bearing this in mind they looked at other cases. Among similar European ethnonationalist movements, they found a concrete example to follow in the Irish revolution. Their inspiration was the victorious Irish liberation movement, the Sinn-Fein, the "small Irish nation,"[24] which defeated the British Empire. Already local communists in their early fights with Fascists and militaries were inspired by the Irish model of a successful insurrectional fight, as emphasized by Vittorio Vidali, one of the leaders of the local communists.[25]

The Irish case was in some aspects similar to the Slovene one and thus also suitable for the demands of the Slovene ethnonational resistance. However, it was not only a matter of size; in interwar Europe many subaltern groups looked to the Irish example. As for many Basque antifascists, Catholicism was an appealing part of Irish revolutionary ideas and practices.[26] The Slovene and Croat anti-fascist revolutionaries were not particularly interested in religious questions; moreover, many of its members had leftist views. However, they were well aware of the importance of the Catholic Church among Slovenes and Croats. At the international level they had to neutralize the impact of the concordat between the Vatican and Italy, signed in 1929, while on the local level they had to consider the role of the clergy and its Churches, the last shelter for the Slovene and Croat languages that had been banned from public life by

23 Svoboda, III, No. 4 (1930), Odrivanje slovanskega delavstva, 2.
24 In original *narodič*, small nation.
25 Vittorio Vidali, *Orizzonti di libertà* (Milan: Vangelista, 1980). On the revolutionary path of Vittorio Vidali see Patrick Karlsen, *Vittorio Vidali. Vita di uno stalinista (1916-56)* (Bologna: Il mulino, 2019), especially 1–38.
26 Xosé M. Núñez Seixas, "El mito del nacionalismo irlandés y su influencia en los nacionalismos gallego, vasco y catalán (1880–1936)," *Spagna contemporanea*, No. 2 (1992): 25–58.

Fascist laws. Therefore, if the Irish case was to be used as a victorious example of "David against Goliath," emphasizing its Catholicism served to show how armed attacks were morally acceptable methods to achieve this goal.[27]

However, for Slovene and Croat rebels, anti-fascism was not only a question of morality, but also a choice for concrete action that should include a large international coalition. After the member of the anti-fascist Borba group Vladimir Gortan was sentenced to death by the Fascist *Tribunale speciale per la difesa dello Stato* in Pula and shot in October 1929, his fellows met in a cave above Trieste and urged the necessity of strengthening their anti-Fascist network through cooperation with other Italian ethno-national minorities, from the South Tyrol to the Dodecanese, as well as with Italian anti-Fascists.[28] In a period of growing support for the Fascist regime in Italy and abroad, coordinated multifaceted action was needed. Even more, violence appeared to be the last possible means of preventing complete ethno-national annihilation. In his unpublished memoirs written in 1953, Stanko Petaros, a member of this underground group, described how he started his violent revolutionary career at the age of thirteen—first, with the bombing of the local railroad that served the Austrian army during World War One and with smuggling weapons, later by firing at Fascists and Italian military units when he was a young worker on the docks of Trieste. His personal trajectory and those of his cohorts demonstrate intense cross-border ethno-national connection with individuals and Slovene and Croat exile organizations in Yugoslavia. However, it would be misleading to think that his anti-fascist activities found general support in neighboring Yugoslavia. Skepticism, if not overt aversion in his kin-country was reflected in the semi-clandestine construction of what Drago Žerjal, a young activist from Trieste and one of the founders of the Borba group, called the first anti-fascist monument in the world. It was erected in central Slovenia in Kranj to which he fled in the wake of a major police action against

27 For information on how churches in the region became shelters and at the same time showcases of Slovene national identity, see Egon Pelikan, "Uncovering Mussolini and Hitler in Churches: The Painter's Ideological Subversion and the Marking of Space along the Slovene-Italian Border," in *Austrian History Yearbook*, Vol. 49 (2018): 207–37.

28 Pokrajinski arhiv Koper (PAK) [Regional Archives Koper], f. 792 Arhivska zbirka Karla Kocjančiča [Archival collection Karlo Kocjančič], folder 3, unit 3.1. The collection includes the papers of Drago Žerjal, one of the founders and main organizers of the Borba. The Italian authorities Italianized his family and personal names to Carlo Zerial; this is how he is named in official registers.

the anti-Fascist movement in Trieste in the spring of 1930. Many other anti-Fascists were imprisoned in Trieste and Koper and tortured, and four of them were shot after another trial by the *Tribunale speciale*, this time in Trieste, in September 1930. By contrast with Petaros, they were not violent revolutionaries from youth. Instead, they were able students and often scrupulous office workers.[29] To remember them, Žerjal, himself an office worker, designed a wooden pyramid which the reluctant local priest allowed to be placed in the unconsecrated part of the Kranj cemetery, at night and without the permission of the Yugoslav authorities. It was not removed because it would have provoked great embarrassment and even more scandal at a time of growing internal tensions in Yugoslavia.[30]

Slovene and Croat exiles and members of their organizations, but also part of the local population gathered by the monument to commemorate their "martyrs," to reinforce their anti-Fascism and gain support in their territorial claims for a revision of the border with Italy. A year after that, the wooden construction was replaced by a more stable memorial, made of stone, with the names of the dead anti-Fascists inscribed on it and a chain around it to delimit the sacred space of anti-Fascism. Members of exile organizations and anti-Fascist individuals met there every year, on the anniversary of the shooting, and this meeting became one of the milestones on the anti-Fascist calendar of Slovenes and Croats in Yugoslavia and, with a somewhat different content, it is still commemorated today.[31]

Again, my aim is not to prove the primacy of this or of other memorials around the world, but to underline how Slovene anti-Fascists in Italy used memorials and commemorations to gain support for their struggle among their compatriots. However ethno-national ties seemed less strong than they had hoped. Both Žerjal and Petaros, as well as many other Slovene and Croat anti-Fascists were persecuted, and many others marginalized in what they considered their motherland. While the Yugoslav government allowed the activity of certain groups of Italian exiles and even supported them in acts of espionage, it disapproved of the activities of those groups and individuals whom it was unable to con-

29 Milan Pahor, *Tajna organizacija Borba 1927–1930* (Trst: ZTT, 2020).
30 PAK, 792, f. 2, unit 2.2., Prvi protifašistični spomenik na svetu.
31 Egon Pelikan, "Komemorativne prakse slovenskih emigrantov iz Julijske krajine v Dravski banovini," in *Acta Histriae*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (2010): 453–70.

trol. Anti-Fascism was strictly persecuted and heavily punished in Italy, but it would be misleading to think that it was accepted in neighboring Yugoslavia—both because of the growing cooperation between the two countries in political and economic relations, and because many anti-Fascists were communists. Furthermore, after the coup of King Aleksandar I Karađorđević in January 1929, Yugoslavia became an authoritarian state under his control and many organizations were banned, including the ORJUNA. Belgrade could not afford bad relationships with Rome. Particularly after Hitler's victory in Germany, Mussolini's international reputation grew, and many European offices viewed him as a mediator with the Nazi regime. Officially, then, Belgrade had no interest in stirring up the minority issue and squelching impulses that could harm the orientation of the state, preferring, in the second half of the 1930s, increasingly to rely on collaboration with Berlin and Rome. Since this collaboration was strengthening among their respective police and security forces, Slovene and Croatian anti-Fascists fleeing across the Italian border to Yugoslavia often experienced significant problems with the local authorities. Some were forced to hide in Yugoslavia just as in Italy; others were even imprisoned and not infrequently their dossiers were forwarded to the Italian secret police (OVRA – Opera Vigilanza di Repressione Anti-fascista). Those who resisted, refusing to follow the official policy line, even within exile organizations, often continued on the paths of refugees and victims of political persecution after fleeing to Yugoslavia. Petaros claimed that in September 1931, after he had fled to Yugoslavia from his native village in Italy, Ivan Marija Čok and Albert Rejec, two of the leading members of TIGR, who did not approve of Petaros leading independent operations, joined other anti-Fascist guerrilla fighters to have him confined to a Ljubljana prison, from which he and his comrades were exiled to the agrarian colony in Bistrenica (today in the southeast of the Republic of North Macedonia). Yugoslav politicians envisaged Slovene refugees from Venezia Giulia/Primorska who had left Italy "Yugoslavizing" the Macedonian borderland near the Greek frontier. In Skopje, the capital of the Vardar Banovina, Petaros was brought before Ban [Governor] Živojin Lazić who told him that the reasons for his transfer lay in purely practical international political circumstances:

> [Lazić] explained to me that the time was not right to go plotting assassinations in Italy. That such actions could lead to a war between Yugo-

> slavia and Italy, which would be very inopportune as Yugoslavia was neither ready nor armed for a war. I, on the other hand, told him that we, the youth of the TIGR organization, wanted the war to break out so that we could liberate the Venezia Giulia region as soon as possible.[32]

Anti-fascist guerrilla fighters did not agree with the foot-dragging of official exile representatives. Nor did they approve of the Yugoslav government's tactical maneuvers nor agreed to submit to the wish of the Yugoslav army to spy for it, deeming such behavior dishonorable. Certain anti-Fascists undoubtedly did so, for espionage was likely a constant on both sides of the border to the advantage or detriment of both countries. But anti-Fascists of Petaros's run believed that only through an active struggle could they defeat the Fascists. Thus Petaros escaped from Macedonia and after months of hiding throughout Yugoslavia was captured and expelled again, this time to Austria, from where he fled, ultimately finding refuge in Czechoslovakia. We do not know what he did there, and this period is not mentioned in his autobiographical notes. During the 1930 Trieste trial against anti-fascists, the Czechoslovak press and public had repeatedly spoken out against Italy and its regime, but apparently the Czechoslovak anti-fascist engagement somewhat abated in the following years.[33] From the memories of another Slovene anti-Fascist from Trieste, Slavko Tuta, we learn that Czechoslovakia rejected groups of Slovene anti-Fascists, especially those who were heading towards Spain to join the Republicans in the Civil war.[34]

Petaros chose Czechoslovakia because of the language. Without formal education, Czech and Slovak, two Slavic languages, were easier for him to pick up, as opposed to German, of which he only knew a few words. The linguistic aspect is interesting as it seems, for many other exiled revolutionaries, that Paris was the center and the meeting point for Slovene anti-Fascists from Italy. In many cases, they used their underground networks in Yugoslavia, Italy, France, and Switzerland to get there (and eventually back). Ivan Škerjanec, who was in charge of anti-Fascist activities for the Borba group in Basovizza/Bazovica, on the out-

---

32 PAK, 792, f. 3, unit 3.4., Stanko Petaros, 22.

33 I have analyzed the impact of the process on international public opinion and the role of Czechoslovakia in: "Češkoslovaško-italijanska mala vojna. Mednarodne razsežnosti prvega tržaškega procesa in reakcije na Češkoslovaškem," *Annales. Anali za istrske in mediteranske študije, Series historia et sociologia*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (2006): 15–30.

34 Slavko Tuta, *Cena za svobodo* (Gorica: Goriška Mohorjeva družba, 1999), 75.

skirts of Trieste, describes how they relied on the help of Italian socialists in Paris. In previous years they smuggled Italian anti-Fascist press, such as *Avanti, Il becco giallo,* and *La libertà*, but in spring 1930 he and his comrades had to leave and they used this channel to escape first to Ljubljana, then to Kranj, Zagreb, Belgrade, Maribor, Austria, Switzerland, and France.[35] In Paris, Škerjanec met with several other anti-Fascists with whom he used to cooperate in Trieste. Among others, with Anton Ukmar, member of the Italian communist party, later a combatant in the Spanish Civil War, a guerrilla instructor in Ethiopia after Italy's invasion of that country, and a partisan leader in Genoa during World War Two.[36] Not only communists but also figures such as Lojze Černač, Danilo Zelen, Albert Rejec, Dorče Sardoč, Slavko Tuta, Radovan Šepić, and many other liberal and socialist Slovene and Croat activists were in direct contact through various means with the leaders of Italian anti-fascism in Paris, such as Carlo Roselli, Giuseppe Saragat, Cipriano Foschiatti, and Palmiro Togliatti.

This was the basis for subsequent close cooperation between various anti-Fascists in a sort of transideological fluidity. It was not uncommon for individuals to pass from one organization to another, from the dissolved ORJUNA to TIGR or the communists. Some would use personal contacts and illegal channels of others, particularly when crossing borders or carrying mail. The leader of the Trieste communists, Ivan Regent, who participated in the founding of the Communist Party of Italy in 1921 and fled to Ljubljana in 1927, wrote in his memoirs that TIGR members did many favors for the communists.[37] At the same time, many Slovenes and Croats from Italy made use of the communist underground system of organization and relied, especially outside Yugoslavia, on well-established illegal channels. But the Slovene and Croatian national issues were a concern for Italian communists as well as for underground socialist and democratic anti-Fascists around the Giustizia e Libertà group. Italian anti-Fascists condemned the oppressive treatment that Rome meted out to Slovenes and Croats, and acknowledged and supported their struggle. Their support was manifest in the pact into which the Association of Slovene and Croat Émigrés entered with the *Concentrazione*

35 *Primorski dnevnik* (Trieste/Trst), 3 November 1983, 9.
36 Rastko Bradaškja, *Revolucionar Miro. Življenjska zgodba Antona Ukmarja* (Trieste: ZTT, 1981).
37 Ivan Regent, *Spomini* (Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 1967), 187. See also the chapters in Aleš Gabrič, *TIGR v zgodovini in zgodovinopisju* (Ljubljana: Založba INZ, 2017).

anti-fascista (Italian Anti-Fascist Concentration) in 1931 in Paris, and in the publication *Il fascismo e il martirio delle minoranze* (Fascism and the martyrdom of the minorities) produced within this circle in 1933. Still, they were not ready to agree to the demands of Slovene and Croat anti-Fascists for a redefinition of the border. For the Slovenes and Croats, it was the opposite: Fascism condemned minorities to extinction but, in truth, no Italian government showed any understanding with regard to the Slovene or Croat national issues. They argued that their efforts were only a piece in the world struggle of the humiliated against oppressive fascisms, and that the national struggle was part of the general struggle for a more just world. But in relation to the question what to do once Fascism was defeated, everyone had his or her own vision of the future. Some maintained that the Slovenes and Croats should be granted a great measure of autonomy; yet a redefinition of the border was out of the question. Others, like some socialists such as Gaetano Salvemini, for example, were less hardline. Salvemini corresponded, among others, with Lavo Čermelj, who ran the Minority Institute in Ljubljana.[38] He was the author of the book *Life and Death Struggle of a National Minority (The Jugoslavs in Italy)*. Written in English to inform a global audience about the repressive measures of the Italian government against Slovenes and Croats, this book figured as part of an array of actions to popularize their situation under Fascist rule. The text was published in 1936, when Italy annexed Ethiopia and Mussolini announced the creation of the Italian Empire, while in Spain the Civil War broke out. In the international context, these events further stimulated the formation of anti-fascist Popular Fronts, while at the local level this orientation was reflected in the pact between the TIGR organization and the communists. Frequently they would continue together with their outlaw campaigns, which, with the outbreak of war, included acts of sabotage even in the Third Reich.[39] This cooperation between national and communist resistance mirrors the intertwinement of national and social demands, characteristic of many resistance movements during World War Two.

38 Archivio dell'Istituto storico della Resistenza in Toscana [Archive of the Historical Institute of the Resistance in Tuscany], Gaetano Salvemini papers, section III, box 40, f. 4.

39 Tone Ferenc, *Akcije organizacije TIGR v Avstriji in Italiji spomladi 1940* (Ljubljana: Borec, 1977).

Conclusion

Strict biographical approaches might be reductionist; however, following these personal trajectories demonstrates that ethno-national activists did not necessarily conceptualize the nation in its integralist nationalistic version. Instead, they saw national rights as part of a more just and equal world. "Our struggle against Italian Fascism," *Svoboda* declared in 1936, "is the struggle of German, Austrian, Hungarian, and other peasants and workers against their fascisms." The periodical added: "We are all fighters for the same ideas, for the same rights, we are soldiers of a great world army fighting against fascism."[40]

As demonstrated by Núñez Seixas, many ethno-nationalist activists in interwar Europe were not anti-fascists.[41] In their integralist vision of the nation they even looked at Fascism as a possible ally. This could not be the case for Slovene and Croat minorities in Italy. The rhetoric and practice of their anti-Fascist groups rather than nationalist exclusion exhibited entanglements and overlappings between the ethno-national and the transnational. As emphasized by Brubaker, the relationship between the national and the transnational should be understood within their syncretism and not as antithetical to one another.

40 *Svoboda*, IX, No.1 (1936), "6. IX.1930 – 6. IX. 1936," 2.

41 Xose M. Núñez Seixas, "Unholy Alliances? Nationalist Exiles, Minorities and Anti-Fascism in Interwar Europe," *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (2016): 597–617.

4

Persevering on the Ramparts of the Nation

The Anti-Fascism of Educated Women, Feminists, and Female Activists in the Littoral in the 1920s[1]

MARTA VERGINELLA

Anti-Fascism as a Concept

In historical dictionaries, anti-fascism is, as a rule, defined as a political and ideological opposite of fascism. The entry *Italian anti-fascism* in *Dizionario di Storia*, which was published by Mondadori in 1993, offers a twofold understanding of anti-fascism in the inter-war period. At first, anti-fascism was identified with the resistance of the workers' movement and left-wing parties—although compromised by uncertainties and inner conflicts—to squad Fascist violence, while after 1922 decisive anti-Fascist attitudes emerged also among members of parliament of the liberal-democratic parties and with the withdrawal of the People's Party ministers from Mussolini's government.

In *Beyond Revisionism: Rethinking Antifascism in the Twenty-First Century*, where we can find one of the most recent explanations of the concept of anti-fascism and re-examinations of its essence; anti-fascism is, inter alia, mentioned as a response to the crisis of liberal democracy and global capitalism after the outbreak of World War One: "antifascism [was] the most ambitious response to the challenge to come up with new relations between liberty, equality and justice, civil rights and social rights, state and market, and political and social representation."[2] The book's

---

1 This chapter was researched and written within the framework of the EIRENE project (full title: Post-war transitions in gendered perspective: the case of the North-Eastern Adriatic Region), founded by the European Research Council under Horizon 2020 financed Advanced Grant funding scheme (ERC Grant Agreement n. 742683).

2 Hugo García, Mercedes Yusta, Xavier Tabet, and Cristina Clímaco, "Introduction: Beyond

editors and authors of the Introduction—Hugo García, Mercedes Yusta, Xavier Tabet, and Cristina Clímaco—argue that understandings of the phenomenon were often muddied by its equation with communism: "Perhaps the greatest obstacle to understanding anti-fascism as a historical phenomenon is the persistent tendency of historians to identify it with communism."[3] Such an understanding of anti-fascism contributed to disregarding its complexity and, most of all, to ignoring its variations or specific orientations and supporters.[4] Hugo García underlines the necessity to consider the "common ground for various strategies, visions and discourses" that included slogans, gestures, and an "aesthetics of resistance."[5] Enzo Traverso is likewise convinced of the importance of historicizing anti-fascism in all its varieties and contradictions.[6]

Building on these findings, the conceptualization of the so-called "first anti-fascism"[7] in Europe, which will be addressed in this treatise mostly from the gendered perspective or in its female variant, ought to be re-examined as well. Thanks to studies conducted by Milica Kacin Wohinz, a Slovene historian engaged in the most systematic and long-lasting research of Fascism and anti-Fascism in the Julian March in the interwar period, the opinion that Slovenes in the Littoral were the first to put up resistance to fascism in Europe became established in Slovene historiography and, consequently, in the Slovene imaginary. They were determined opponents of the Italian Fascist movement and, later on, of

---

Revisionism—Rethinking Antifascism in the Twenty-First Century," in Hugo García, Mercedes Yusta, Xavier Tabet, and Cristina Clímaco, eds., *Rethinking Antifascism: History, Memory and Politics, 1922 to the Present* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Berghahn Books, 2016), 4.

3 García, Yusta, Tabet, and Clímaco, "Introduction: Beyond Revisionism," in García et al., eds., *Rethinking Antifascism,* 3.

4 Michael Seidman, "Was the French Popular Front Antifascist?," in García et al., eds., *Rethinking Antifascism,* 43–44.

5 Hugo García, "Transnational History: A New Paradigm for Anti-Fascist Studies?," in *Contemporary European History, Vol.* 25, Special Issue No. 4 (November 2016): 566, cited after Mattie Fitch, Michael Ortiz, and Nick Underwood, "Editorial Introduction: The Global Cultures of Antifascism, 1921–2020," in *Fascism, Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies*, Vol. 9, Issue 1-2 (21 December 2020).

6 Enzo Traverso, *A ferro a fuoco. La guerra civile europea (1914–1945)* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2007), 17.

7 See Milica Kacin Wohinz, *Prvi antifašizem v Evropi: Primorska 1925–1935: bazoviškim žrtvam ob šestdesetletnici* (Koper: Založba Lipa, 1990). The problematic nature of the definition that refers to anti-Fascism in the Littoral as the first one in Europe manifests itself in the operation of Italian anti-Fascists is taken into consideration, both socialists and communists that were the main target of squadristi from 1919 onwards. Much like elsewhere in Italy, Trieste, and Gorizia saw armed units being organized to fight Fascist groups. See also Almerigo Apollonio, *Dagli Asburgo a Mussolini. Venezia Giulia 1918–1922* (Milan, LEG Edizioni, 2001), 367–71, 505–15.

Mussolini's regime, against which an illegal anti-Fascist movement operated, seeking to stand up to the Fascistization of the Julian March.[8] "The beginning of illegal, underground resistance against the Italian authority in the Slovene and Croatian part of the territory of the Julian March can be dated back to the moment of this territory's Italian military occupation. Throughout their existence, Slovene and Croatian political national organizations bowed to the military governor and, subsequently, expressed their loyalty to the new overlord and kept their promises through their members of parliament; meanwhile, individuals refused to obey the authorities [from] the very first day of the occupation."[9] The Italian Fascist government took office in 1922; this was preceded by a more rapid rise of Fascism after the Triestine Narodni Dom was set ablaze on 13 July 1920.[10] The rise of Fascism was facilitated by the support of the liberal-national camp that saw Fascism as the only organized power available to crush the pro-Yugoslav and socialist or communist movement. Antonio Mosconi, the general civil commissioner in Trieste, believed that only the Fascist organization could stand up to socialism or Bolshevism.[11] Both in Trieste and in Istria, the wave of Fascist violence in January and February 1921, perpetrated by armed action squads led by Francesco Giunta, was aimed at workers' halls, print shops, and the headquarters of Slovene and Croatian organizations or cooperatives and peaked in April and May, i.e., before the elections in which

8 On Slovene anti-fascist organizations in the Julian March and their operation see Milica Kacin Wohinz and Marta Verginella, *Primorski upor fašizmu* (Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 2008).

9 Milica Kacin mentions different forms of disobedience, ranging from raising the Yugoslav flag, the distribution of Slovene-language press and anti-Italian propaganda, conducting acts of sabotage and conflicts with soldiers, which became a constituent part of the operation of Orjuna, an organization of Yugoslav nationalists that was established in Split on 23 March. Its goal was to expand the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes to territories inhabited by Yugoslav minorities in Italy, Austria, Aegean Macedonia, and Bulgaria. In the interior of the Yugoslav state this organization worked against national minorities, separatism and communism. Its operation was modelled after that of Fascism despite the organization's distinct anti-Italian orientation. In the Julian March and in the Zadar area this organization "demonstrated merely anti-Italianism and anti-Fascism" (Kacin Wohinz and Marta Verginella, *Primorski upor fašizmu*, 20–21). For further insight into Orjuna and Orjunavit, the organization's nationalist essence, see Vasilije Dragosavljević, "Irredentist Actions of the Slovenian Organisation of Yugoslav Nationalists (ORJUNA) in Italy and Austria (1922–1930)," *Contribution to Contemporary History*, Vol. 59, No. 3 (6 December 2019): 31–52.

10 The background of the arson that is one of watershed moments in Trieste's history and in that of the broader border area Borut Klabljan and Gorazd Bajc, *Ogenj, ki je zajel Evropo: Narodni dom v Trstu (1920–2020)* (Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 2021).

11 Milica Kacin Wohinz, *Narodnoobrambno gibanje primorskih Slovencev v letih 1921–1928,* Vol. 1 (Koper-Trst: Založba Lipa, 1977), 216.

Italian Fascists secured their victory. Meanwhile, the Slovene-Croatian membership in the parliament was reduced significantly, as was the communist contingent.[12] In late 1921, Fascism was already a constituent part of the system that maintained public order and carried out a radical national transformation of the multi-ethnic Julian March, and, in that capacity, restricted the power of socialist- and communist-oriented workers.[13] As announced by Benito Mussolini in Trieste on 20 September 1920, a comprehensive Italianization of the Slovene and Croatian population was a priority of Fascism in the border region: "Italianism is the first foundation of Fascist action: we are proud of being Italian ... And this must be repeated here, on our borders, which are populated by tribes that bark unintelligible languages and demand solely by virtue of their number that our wonderful civilization, which has resisted for two millennia and is about to persevere for a third one, be suppressed and obliterated."[14]

The political society Edinost, that represented liberally and socially Catholic oriented Slovenes and Croats in the area of Gorizia, Trieste, and in Istria persisted in the loyalist politics not only after the first wave of Fascist violence but also when Fascists began to dissolve legally elected Slovene municipal councils in Sežana, Postojna, and elsewhere in November 1922.[15] International recognition of any Italian government, even though it was Fascist, was understood as a self-evident prerequisite for recognition of the minority's minimal national rights. Despite the lack of trust enjoyed by the Fascist Party and its supporters in the border area, the dominant belief was that "the recognition of our loyalty to the constitution, total adherence to state laws, and fulfilment of our duties to the state" is the only real solution and that "strict, ruthless struggle in compact and disciplined ranks for one's national and civil rights" was

---

12 Tone Ferenc, Milica Kacin Wohinz, and Tone Zorn, *Slovenci v zamejstvu. Pregled zgodovine 1918–1945* (Ljubljana: DZS, 1974), 51–52.

13 Annamaria Vinci, *Sentinelle della patria. Il fascismo al confine orientale (1918–1941)* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 2011), 60–90.

14 Benito Mussolini, "Discorso di Trieste, 20 settembre 1920," as quoted in Giulia Albanese, David Bidussa, and Jacopo Perazzoli, *Siamo stati fascisti. Il laboratorio dell'antidemocrazia. Italia 1900–1922* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2020), 179–82. On the fusion of Italian nationalism and Fascism and the importance of Mussolini's speech on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the breach of Porta Pia, see Giulia Albanese, "La costruzione delle pratiche fasciste e la nuova politica," in *Siamo stati fascisti. Il laboratorio dell'antidemocrazia. Italia 1900–1922*, 40–47. See also Giulia Albanese, *Alle origini del fascismo. La violenza politica a Venezia 1919–1922* (Padova: il Poligrafo, 2001).

15 Kacin Wohinz, *Narodnoobrambno gibanje*, 233.

necessary.[16] Undoubtedly, highlighting this struggle facilitates an identification of forms of anti-Fascist activities on the part of specific segments of the Slovene population in the Littoral, as well as of the Croatian population in Istria.[17] These anti-Fascists found a common goal in national-defense activities. Cultural activities, particularly in the 1920s, represented a crucial aspect of the mobilization against Fascism.

The Anti-Fascism of Women in the Littoral

Identifying and demarcating the anti-Fascism of the Slovene population of Italy's border area after November 1918 appears to be a simple objective; however, this task turns out to be a difficult one, particularly when the focus is turned to women. Its importance was contingent upon the "autobiographical entropy," the ego atrophy of women, and the male-dominant discourse. In the case of women's anti-Fascism in the Littoral, we are faced with similar methodological and epistemological questions as those pointed out by Patrizia Gabrielli and Isabelle Richet.[18] Owing to modest sources, I focused my research on women's Slovene periodicals published after 1918 or in the period of increased Fascist violence and introduction of Fascism in the border region. I scrutinized three women's periodicals, viz., *Slovenka*, which was published in Gorizia between January 1922 and December 1923, *Jadranka*, which was published in Trieste between 1921 and 1923, and *Ženski svet* (Women's world), which was published in Trieste by the women's charitable association Žensko Dobrodelno Udruženje from 1923 to 1928. *Slovenka* was edited by Gizela Belinger Ferjančič (1887–1976) and *Jadranka* by Marica Gregorič-Stepančič (1874–1964);[19] both of the editors were teachers by profession, nationalist activists, and writers.

Slovenka and *Jadranka* addressed mostly Slovene middle-class women; meanwhile, the project of *Ženski svet* was a more ambitious one,

16 *Edinost* (7 November 1922), 1.
17 Darko Dukovski, *Fašizam u Istri 1918–1943* (Pula: C.A.S.H., 1998).
18 Patrizia Gabrielli, *Col freddo nel cuore. Uomini e donne nell'emigrazione antifascista* (Rome: Donzelli Ediotre, 2004), 8–13; and Isabelle Richet, "Women and Antifascism: Historiographical and Methodological Approaches," in *Rethinking Antifascism*, eds. García et al., 45–166.
19 Marica Gregorič Stepančič published her prose and poetry on many occasions even before 1918 in *Vesna*, *Edinost*, *Rdeči prapor*, etc. See Marica Gregorič and Stepančič Marica in Martin Jevnikar, ed., *Primorski slovenski biografski leksikon* (Gorizia: Goriška Mohorjeva družba, 1974–1994), Vol.1, 495–96.

with 2,500 copies printed and 2,000 subscribers in its first year. In the second year, the number of subscriptions increased to 4,000, and 1,500 copies were sold abroad, chiefly in Yugoslavia. 12,000 copies were published in its fifth year, which demonstrates the periodical's weight in the broader Slovene space, on both the Italian and the Yugoslav side of the border, and that it reached the Slovene female public of all social strata. Consequently, in 1929, the periodical relocated to Ljubljana, following the ban of Slovene press in the Julian March. These women's periodicals were a reflection of women's increased activities in the post-war Julian March; it is noteworthy that the beginning of their publishing activity coincided with the escalation of Fascist violence and the expansion of the network of Slovene women's associations. The society Goriško splošno slovensko žensko društvo (Gorizian General Slovene Women's Society) was established in Gorizia in September 1922. The society Žensko dobrodelno udruženje (Women's Charitable Association) was founded in Trieste on 8 November 1922; it was in operation up to mid-1928. Prosvetna zveza (the Cultural Association) was established in Gorizia in 1920, with its girls' section launching operations in 1924. The main goal of the expedited formation of girls' and woman's circles throughout the Littoral was to include girls and women in the national-defense activities. Slovene women's theaters and choirs, which intensified efforts to socialize Slovene women and in parallel also increased their national consciousness, presented a key alternative for performing national activities at the time when Slovene societies, schools and other institutions were rapidly closing down.

Along with the three aforementioned women's periodicals, I analyzed also *Učiteljski list*, a gazette published by Zveza jugoslovenskih učiteljskih društev v Trstu (the Association of Yugoslav Teachers' Societies in Trieste) between 1921 and 1926. It took up the question of the representation of women teachers in the union with articles dealing with "the woman question" as the issue of women's place in society was called.

Even though women teachers were not involved in the most important ideological debates, with editorial standards, for example, remaining the exclusive prerogative of men, it can be gathered from reports drawn up by commissions and sections of the Association of Slavic Teachers' Societies that their importance increased. This was confirmed by the growing number of their representatives. It is evident from indi-

vidual reports that women's underrepresentation caused friction in elections to the association's bodies and provoked increasingly firm demands for equal representation. The ratio of elected women to men in teachers' societies varied between one-quarter and one-third of all representatives; however, the proportion of women grew on a yearly basis, which is particularly noticeable in 1926, when women outnumbered men in a few societies, e.g., in Idrija. The reason should not be sought solely in women members' ardency but also in Fascist school policy, which was initially directed against the most active male teachers and only with a delay against active women teachers, although the most active pro-Yugoslav oriented women teachers were subjected to strict control from as early as November 1918 onwards.

In the period when authorities encroached on Slovenes' national rights in the Julian March, Marica Gregorič Stepančič encouraged women in the pages of *Jadranka* to become publicly active: "We must start from scratch. We were degraded to the lowest point that a nation can reach. Let us show them that we can rise from the lowest depths."[20]

The main goal of women's activities was the prevention of the assimilation and the "drowning of the Slovene, or better still, Yugoslav minority." We must not look outside, we must go within. They were guided by joint action, care for their education and for young people.[21] The main points of *Jadranka* did not differ greatly from those of *Slovenka*, although they were more elaborate in places. With the ban on public activities and the gradual removal of all national rights, the home became the center of Slovene life and the periodical was tasked with turning the hearth and home into a source of love for the Yugoslav nation.[22]

An analysis of the first five years of *Ženski svet* shows that the periodical followed the guidelines indicated by its editorial board in the first issue, viz., "to fight against the neighbour's voracity" and to address Slovene women of all social strata.[23] Excessive competition in men's fields and overly radical feminism became undesirable in the new situation. This is evident from the organizational instructions of Slovene and Croatian women's societies in Trieste, Gorizia, and Opatija that were cited

---

20 Marica Gregorič Stepančič, "Tržačanka. O ženski volilni pravici," *Jadranka,* Vol. 2, Year 3 (1922): 25–24.
21 Stepančič, "Tržačanka. O ženski volilni pravici," 24–25.
22 "Naše ognjišče," in *Slovenka,* Year 1, No. 1 (15 December 1922), 1.
23 Uredništvo, "Naše poljane," *Ženski svet,* Year 1, No. 1 (January 1923), 1.

by Milka Martelanc (1885–1966) in her article "Naša ženska društva" (Our women's societies). Charity, education, teaching women's handicrafts, and the promotion of women's folk art became the main priorities.[24]

The most feminist-oriented educated women found it difficult to give up the emancipatory discourse; however, with the suppression of Slovene national rights and the persecution of the Slovenian language in public, this was a price they were willing to pay. By using vague metaphors, such as "hard days," the editors of *Ženski svet* avoided referencing brutal attacks and the actions of Fascists in the Julian March; they also avoided any mention of the escalation of Italy's anti-Yugoslav policy.

Between 1923 and 1927, *Ženski svet* did not address the Italian political situation, reporting only on the International Women's Congress, which took place in Rome, and on the introduction of women's suffrage for the administrative election in 1925. Women's right to vote was abolished the following year.

A more explicit mention of Fascist pressure, "the policy of violence" directed at the Slovene population, was present in Vera Albrecht's article on the International Women's League for Peace and Freedom, which mentioned women's joint work for the protection of national minorities and maintains that Yugoslav pacifists pointed out that "the unjust government measures violated minority rights in schools in the Julian March."[25] The slightest critical reference to the First Women's Congress in Rome, Mussolini's promises regarding the suffrage of Italian women and the nationalist mood on the pages of *Slovenka* provoked the censor's disapproval and caused problems. The introductory article of the next issue was censored, but, for the time being, *Ženski svet* escaped any censorship.

The difficult nature of documenting anti-Fascism and the concrete expression of opinions on Mussolini's policy and, similarly, Fascist policy on the border, is repeated also in the analysis of *Učiteljski list*, which was more receptive to somewhat more politically radical content. In this periodical, which was edited by communist, socialist, and liberal writers, criticism of the regime remained, as a rule, unspoken or wrapped in metaphorical language:

---

24 Milka M., Naša ženska društva, *Ženski svet*, Januar, Year 1, No. 1, 36-37.

25 Vera Albrechtova, Ženska dela za zaščito narodnih manjšin, *Ženski svet*, December, Year 1, No. 12, 285.

"We are fighting a fierce struggle that not only those who live for themselves but also those who see the ideal face of life can join...But we have only the will, not the power to resist, we have only common human ideals, which are ignored because they do not belong to the class of superpowers. We silently judge and condemn as much as possible those who condemn a nation that stares at messengers' backs and who wait to speak on the nation's behalf."[26]

Učiteljski list shows the politicization of women teachers, their growing representation in the teachers' organization, and their increasing participation in meetings, as well as the demand for equal female representation. In many articles, women are understood as part of a common front against "evil and the post-war debauchery."[27] Can *evil* and *debauchery* be understood as metaphors for Fascism? Possibly yes, but not necessarily. The teachers' public political discourse remained cautious, particularly after 1923, when the number of dismissed and arrested Slovene and Croatian teachers in the Julian March increased significantly.

For fear of being suppressed or censored and similarly to other women's periodicals, *Učiteljski list* refrained from expressing political opinions clearly and explicitly; as a result, we lack an important source for the analysis of women's anti-Fascist discourse. However, in early 1924 *Učiteljski list* published "Nekaj misli o ženskem gibanju" (A few thoughts on women's writing).[28] In this article, Mara—it is not clear who is behind this pseudonym—stressed the importance of class affiliation that impacted women's position in society. Women, regardless of their class affiliation, "feel deprived of human dignity." However, noting that the women's movement was limited to operating at the theoretical level and that violence was ever-present, the author concluded that women should "react to violence with violence."[29] This is a radical appeal, supported by the young and most politicized women who joined the illegal anti-Fascist movement in the period of Mussolini's regime and the national-liberation movement during the war and who were completely ignored by historiography until recently.

---

26 Osamljeni, *Učiteljski list* (1 October 1925), Year 4, No. 19, 148.
27 R., Ženski svet, *Učiteljski list* (10 December 1922), Year 3, No. 35, 280.
28 Nekaj misli o ženskem gibanju, *Učiteljski list* (10 January 1924), Year 5, No. 2, 11-12.
29 *Učiteljski list* (10 January 1924), 12.

Anti-Fascism of Women in the Littoral in Autobiographical Sources

Rare available autobiographical sources, memoirs, and correspondence, provide a significant insight into women's response to the Fascistization of the society and into the orientation of Slovene women's movement in the post-war circumstances. In this regard, Pavla Hočevar's (1889–1972)[30] memoir is particularly valuable due to a detailed depiction of the post-war situation in Trieste and consequences of the impact of the rise of Fascism on the intelligentsia and the most poverty-stricken swathes of the Slovene population. As a teacher and intellectual, she was very active in the teaching milieu, in unions, and in women's circles, as well as in the ranks of socialists, particularly in the workers' association Ljudski oder (People's stage). In her memoirs, she mentioned the turbulent post-war period, forms of disobedience when the Italian military authorities discontinued Slovene-language schools, and the organization of charitable activities for the benefit of poverty-stricken children. It is evident from her writing that, initially, she regarded anti-Slovene violence as an expression of Italian nationalist powers, as she argued in the case of the devastation of Ljudski oder's library in August 1919. She maintained that the ravages caused by the Arditi[31] and their destruction of the "greatest library in the occupied area" crushed the ideas of "co-existence in equality."[32] "Our organizations attempted a careful restoration of the former operation. They were encouraged by official statements and solemn promises that all citizens would be equal in Italy and that nationality would make no difference. These promises soon vanished into thin air. As early as in the spring of 1919 Trieste saw the establishment of the Fascist Party, a sinister harbinger of a grim fate!"[33] In the further course of her text she mentioned the sense of bitterness and betrayal due to the deprivation of basic rights, but also that "Deceit, financial loss or loss of personal freedom cannot be reflected within a person with such enormous primal power, which is awakened merely in moments when one's nation is affected."[34] The ultimacy of her

30 Pavla Hočevar, *Pot se vije. Spomini* (Trieste: Založništvo tržaškega tiska v Trstu, 1969).
31 Arditi were formed as an elite special force of Ithe talian Army in the summer of 1917 and were assigned the tactical role of shock troops. They were demobilized by 1920. Many Arditi participated in D'Annunzio's coup in Fiume and joined the Fascist movement.
32 Hočevar, *Pot se vije,* 111.
33 Hočevar, *Pot se vije,* 112.
34 Hočevar, *Pot se vije,* 114.

sentiments can be better understood from additional references to her involvement in the publication of *Ženski svet* and in the operation of Žensko dobrodelno društvo, a society that united Slovene and Croatian women in the Julian March. To spread and preserve the Slovene national consciousness, the society organized help for poverty-stricken Slovene and Croatian families and children, holiday camps, lectures, sewing and tailoring courses. In the 1920s, the Fascist authorities did not resolutely oppose Slovene charitable initiatives and sewing courses; consequently, women's anti-Fascist activity emerged within the framework of cultural and care activities.

Pavla Hočevar, who wrote about subjects related to women in *Njiva*[35] and, subsequently, in *Učiteljski list*, appeared in public as a feminist writer. In 1923, when she began working in the editorial board of *Ženski list*, which was established mostly by liberally oriented women, she had to give up her feminist and socialist views on behalf of the "middle ground" and "Yugoslav unity": "I listened to such and similar instructions, got lost in thought and remained silent. A cold shadow fell on my brow, which was once so daring, on my grand plans and independent outlook. I could not contradict the others, our people's position was too bleak and a look into the near future too dark—I had to give up ... And, well, what did Fascism do to us? Is that progress? And even to Italian women? She was pushed back, her progress destroyed, their movement crushed, [women] were restricted to the kitchen and nursery and told to teach children to sing the praises of Italy!"[36] She directed her activism entirely to national work. "It was difficult for me at times because I did not have the courage to publish a more daring piece of writing, but I was placated by the thought of there being many simple readers; in their letters they expressed their gratitude for being able to read tales, educational articles, the supplement, etc."[37]

In the 1920s, Fanica Obid (1905–1940), who was younger than Hočevar, successfully resisted the latter's deviation from the political to the national. However, in the 1930s she adjusted to the situation as well. As a student of the teachers' training college in Tolmin, she was a leading member of the communist circle that encouraged fellow students to rebel

35 *Njiva*. *Kulturni vestik* was in 1919 (17 issues) published by the Higher Cultural Council, which was established by the socially and communist oriented Slovene intelligentsia in Trieste.
36 Hočevar, "Pot se vije," 123.
37 Hočevar, "Pot se vije," 132.

against Fascism and Italianization. We learn of her temperament in her correspondence with the poet and university student Srečko Kosovel, where she identified as "a communist and a republican."[38] Even though she published articles in *Jadranka* and *Ženski svet*, she was critical of the operation of "national ladies and young misses."[39] In her letters to Srečko Kosovel, she wrote of the considerable difficulties with which she was faced as a woman and political activist: "You see, as much as I dislike to admit it, our boys do not have any consideration whatsoever. One must (almost!) have a fight with them if one is to get one's own way. But things have somewhat improved. A leader is needed. I am being controlled by the police and a woman."[40] She wrote clearly about the efforts that she made to be accepted as a leader of secondary-school students and a politically thinking being: "In the past, when I had my own organization, we had disagreements on several occasions: I do not know how they cannot picture an independent girl; nowadays, they are better trained, so I can discuss different problems with them. I am not a girl, Fanica Obid, in these arguments, I am a strict surgeon. For the sake of our common people I must have a command of many things, of agriculture, medicine for animals and people."[41]

The correspondence which has been preserved demonstrates also that she studied Fascism because she refused to "blindly despise everything associated with the opponent" and to be intoxicated by Yugoslav nationalism and Orjuna-related organizations.[42]

Along with her classmate Ivanka Iva Volarič, she published *Pika in britev* (A dot and a razor), a gazette written by hand; she edited the ga-

---

38 "Tolmin, 12. vinotoka 1922, 'Pozdravljeni!'", in Tatjana Rojc, ed., *Dragi Srečko. Neobjavljena pisma Srečku Kosovelu* (Gorizia: Goriška Mohorjeva družba, 2007), 214.

39 Rojc, "Tolmin, 12. vinotoka 1922, "Pozdravljeni!," 249. In a letter dated 22 May 1925 she used even harsher words about the re-traditionalization occurring in Slovene women's circles in Trieste: "It is my aim to establish a new front, a women's front, to uncover Triestine "charitableness," their empty gestures, to outline a detailed, clear program, to which we shall adhere and, subsequently, pick a fight with such a foolish skeleton as *Ženski svet*. The woman in its title is not there, because it does not have a program and has yet to produce a real article on womanhood, since its two women editors do not have a clue about real, unconventional life and are not familiar with social or other questions that bother alien women such as Bevk's *Ubožica* and Zorec's *Romilda*. Even girls in the countryside cannot digest this subject matter, they find it too stupid. I believe that authors pull *Ženski svet*'s leg quite splendidly. And its editors fancy themselves to be "modern, emancipated, freethinking ladies!" I cannot make any use of it, even though I am in dire need of useful texts in women's circles." Rojc, "Tolmin, 12. vinotoka 1922, "Pozdravljeni!," 241–43.

40 Rojc, "Tolmin, 12. vinotoka 1922, "Pozdravljeni!," 214–15.

41 Rojc, "Tolmin, 12. vinotoka 1922, "Pozdravljeni!," 245–46.

42 Rojc, "Tolmin, 12. vinotoka 1922, "Pozdravljeni!," 252.

zette *Naše delo* (Our work), which she published with a group of her classmates. She left school because she did not agree with the Fascist-oriented leadership of the teachers' training college; in her native village she established a women's circle, spreading Marxist ideas and the cause of women's equality. It is evident from her letter to Srečko Kosovel of 9 November 1924 that she was constantly followed by agents: "In the past I could not handle everything that I put up at the present, this brutal political fight: gendarmes, agents, surveillance, the sword of Damocles, the sword of Damocles at all times! All this aggravates me, provokes revolt and resistance within me, challenges me, and I offered my hand, signalling that I accept the fight. I know today that I am not weak because they are afraid of me, ha ha, an anti-state element!"[43] After having relocated to Gorizia, she organized women's associations and the operation of cultural associations with even more zest, without giving up her study of Marxist and sociological literature. She discussed her political ideas predominantly with Vladimir Martelanc (1905–1944), a young intellectual and communist activist,[44] and the poet Srečko Kosovel, with whom she was in correspondence between June 1922 and January 1926. In one of Kosovel's letters to Fanica we can read about the necessity to give up ideological needs for the benefit of efforts on behalf of the Slovene nation.

"Different people are needed to take the edge off the unnecessary fights when our common cause is at stake. We need men whose word will be valuable again and whose ideal will be selfless work. I think that many a good young man or woman will come from the Tolmin teachers' training school, with willingness to work and zest for life, for we cannot give in, we want to live."[45] As seen in memoirs of Zorko Jelinčič,[46] whom she married on 18 July 1929,[47] her political activism turned to illegal anti-Fascist work, "although the rule book did not allow her to be a member of TIGR."[48]

---

43 Rojc, "Tolmin, 12. vinotoka 1922, "Pozdravljeni!," 228.

44 Žarko Rovščak, *Pod rdečim svinčnikom. Pisma Zorka Jelinčiča iz ječe* (Triest: Sklad Dorče Sardoč, Založništvo tržaškega tiska, 2005), 54.

45 Anton Ocvirk, *Srečko Kosovel, Zbrano delo, Vol. 1* (Ljubljana: DZS, 1977), 368.

46 Zorko Jelinčič (1900–1965) discontinued his studies in Padua to focus on national activities, in 1924 he became secretary of Zveze prosvetnih društev [the Association of Cultural Societies] in Gorizia, he founded and led the illegal revolutionary organization TIGR. More on his activities in Zorko Jelinčič, *Pod svinčenim nebom. Spomini tigrovskega voditelja* (Triest: Založništvo tržaškega tiska, 2017).

47 Jelinčič, *Pod svinčenim nebom,* 167.

48 For more about her life and the time she spent in jail and internment, see in Marta Verginella, "Political Activism of Slovene Women in Venezia Giulia after World War I and the Rise of Fascism. From Autonomy to Subordination," *Acta Histriae*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (2018): 1041–59.

The dissolution of Slovene and Croatian societies in the Julian March, as well as the ban on any Slovene public activity, alienated her from the Italian Communist Party, directing her focus even more to Slovene-defense work that used weapons to fight the Fascistization and Italianization of society in the Littoral. Much like Fanica Obid, other women in the area of Gorizia and Trieste joined the illegal anti-Fascist women as well.[49] As attested by documents of the Fascist police, they were treated as Slavophiles and opponents of Fascist Italy. Despite their arrests, imprisonment, and internment they were overshadowed by male-dominated discourse and historiography, remaining an unacknowledged part of the "first anti-Fascism."

49 On the establishment of the secret organization Tigr and its operation, see Kacin Wohinz and Verginella, *Primorski upor fašizmu*, 86–350. On Tigr's female membership, see Ana Uršič, *Ženske v uporu: Članice ilegalne organizacije TIGR*, Unpublished MA thesis, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana 2021.

5

The Anti-Fascism of Slovenian and Croatian Clergy in the Julian March during the Interwar Period – A View from the Vatican [1]

EGON PELIKAN

This chapter presents the perceptions and opinions held by the Vatican and Pope Pius XI (1857–1939; reigned 1922–1939) about the antifascist national defense activities of the Slovene and Croatian clergy and Christian socialists in Venezia Giulia in the period between the two world wars.

The Vatican had been closely monitoring the situation along the eastern border since the Italian occupation of Venezia Giulia in 1918 and the first Treaty of Rapallo (1920), i.e., since the annexation of over half a million Slovenes and Croats, who thus became the "Slavic" minority in the Kingdom of Italy. The Holy See's interest in this matter is evinced by the extensive archival material in the Vatican's collection "*Sacra Congregazione degli affari ecclesiastici straordinari*," which presents in astonishing detail the events in Venezia Giulia between the two wars. Most revealing are the documents concerning secret visitations on the part of high-ranking papal legates to Venezia Giulia: under the guise of tourists or curious "butterfly hunters," they wrote detailed reports on the situations of the Slovene and Croatian populations in Venezia Giulia. These visitors met with both the lay population and the lower clergy and, of course, with all the important representatives of the Church hierarchy, in particular the bishops of Venezia Giulia. This chapter presents two such reports, the first written in 1928 and the second in 1931. Finding their way

1 This research was funded by the Slovenian Research Agency (ARRS) under Grant Agreement No. J6-3121 Decade of Decadence; and under Research Programme P6-0272 The Mediterranean and Slovenia.

to the desk of Pius XI, they had direct and undoubtedly important consequences for the Slovene and Croatian minorities in Fascist Italy.

The Situation in Venezia Giulia in the Twenties

The Italian eastern border had been in turmoil since the Italian occupation in 1918 and its annexation under the first Treaty of Rapallo to the Kingdom of Italy two years later. The situation was even worse in June and July 1928, when, a good six months before the signing of the Concordat, a secret visitation was carried out by Gaetano Malchiodi, and in the spring of 1931 when, more than two years after the signing of the Concordat, a secret visitation was carried out by Luca Pasetto. In the first decade after the occupation (1918–1928), the Holy See was still willing to express its concern and intercede on behalf of the Slovene and Croatian clergy of Venezia Giulia, who were subjected to outbreaks of violence on the part of local fascists: invasions of churches, vandalism in parishes, and beatings of Slovene and Croatian priests, some resulting in casualties.

In a pastoral letter written on 21 May 1921, the then-Bishop of Trieste, Angelo Bartolomasi, condemned these events, stating, among other things:

> It is with great sadness that we learned from various sources of some instigators inflicting torture and terror on those Istrian priests who care for the faith of Croatian and Slovene believers,...even though they might be accused of only one crime—of being of the same nationality and language as the faithful handed into their care by the lawful ecclesiastical authority...[2]

As evident from Bartolomasi's report (and a report by Frančišek Borgia Sedej, the Archbishop of Gorizia), Pope Benedict XV (1854–1922; reigned 1914–1922) publicly opposed the persecution of the clergy in Venezia Giulia. The Pope's reply of 2 August 1921 was also read out in all the churches in Venezia Giulia.[3] The Slovenes and Croats could therefore rightly take the Pope's speech as proof that the Vatican had not for-

2 Lavo Čermelj, *Slovenci in Hrvatje pod Italijo med obema vojnama* (Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 1965), 198.
3 Klinec Rudolf, *Primorska duhovščina pod fašizmom* (Gorica: Goriška Mohorjeva družba, 1979), 20.

gotten them, the persecuted "foreign-born" in the Italian state. The Assembly of the Priests of St. Paul, an ecclesiastical organization of the Slovene and Croatian clergy in Venezia Giulia, which united all Slavic Catholic clergy in the country, sent a letter of appreciation to Pope Benedict XV in the name of "the entire clergy, the Catholic literati and the Slovene and Croatian people in Venezia Giulia."[4]

Organization of the Slovene and Croatian Clergy in Venezia Giulia

In the face of increasing oppression by the Fascist regime, the clergy developed a system of strategies to preserve the Slovene and Croatian character of Venezia Giulia through vigorous anti-Fascist cultural activities within the Church. The so-called "national defense Church" emerged, in which nationalism was combined with Slovene irredentism and anti-Fascism. This was a reaction to the Vatican's concessions to the Fascist government, which pursued a policy of assimilation of the "foreign-born" population in Venezia Giulia. In the turmoil of the 1930s, a secret organization was founded on the basis of two former legal Slovene organizations operating in the twenties, i.e., the Edinost Political Association from Gorizia and the Assembly of the Priests of St. Paul. This meant, in effect, a rebellion against the laws of Fascist Italy. The 1926 Provisions for the Defense of the State forbade the formation of secret associations and organizations in Italy prescribing a prison sentence of 5 to 10 years for violators. The activities of the Slovene and Croatian clergy within the Secret Christian Social Organization were undoubtedly in violation of this law, as the Assembly of the Priests of St. Paul, in collaboration with the now banned Christian Social Party, undertook anti-regime activities with substantial secret financial support from the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

The first document about this secret organization and its financing by the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was lost in 1930 by the Archbishop's nephew Ciril Sedej in front of the Church of St. Ignatius in Gorizia. It was picked up by a police agent who had been following him. It is one of five

4 Archivio centrale dello Stato (ACDS), Ufficio Centrale per le Nuove Provincie (UCNP), Folder No. 81, A letter from Civil Commissioner Mosconi to the Central Office for New Provinces dated 23 September 1921.

annexes to Luca Pasetto's visitation report from 1931, as it was given to him by the Prefect of Gorizia to take to the Vatican. With this document, visitor Luca Pasetto documented his allegations regarding the anti-regime and anti-Fascist activities of the Slovene and Croatian clergy.

Fragmentation of the Secret Catholic Organization, its Strategies, and Circumstances of Operation

The declared target of the anti-Fascist activities undertaken by the Assembly of the Priests of St. Paul was the annexation of Primorska (a territory inhabited by Slovenes and Croats, annexed to Italy after World War One) to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The secret anti-regime organization carried out its Slovene irredentist activities, which were intertwined with anti-Fascist resistance, in a systemic manner. The archives of Engelbert Besednjak, the head of this secret organization, hold extensive material on its activities. It shows the intricate branching of the organization: in each of the provinces, i.e., Trieste, Gorizia, Istria, and Veneto, its activities were divided into individual sections. In 1937, the Supreme Council of the organization included a total of 53 members. Most of them, 36 members, were priests, members of the Assembly of the Priests of St. Paul. The individual sections in the provinces were:

- the political organization (i.e., the political leadership);
- a student organization (for scholarships and the planned education of future intellectuals—in 1936 alone, over 300 students were financed in Venezia Giulia from secret funds from the Kingdom of Yugoslavia);
- clergy (the Assembly of the Priests of St. Paul and an additional body of internal control);
- the printing press (in particular the secret printing press);
- music and singing (here we should mention the tragic fate of the choirmaster Lojze Bratuž, who headed this section and trained about 20 young organists every year to replace elderly organists in the villages, as otherwise they would have been replaced by Italian organists, which would have meant that the hymns would have been sung in Italian instead of Slovene. Bratuž died in agony after Fascists forced him to drink motor oil);

- public libraries (in 1934 there were already 82 libraries throughout Venezia Giulia);
- institutes (housekeeping schools); and
- social work (including financial loans and care for endangered farms, etc.).

The advantages of this secret Christian social organization over, for example, liberal and other Slovene anti-Fascist organizations in Venezia Giulia stemmed from the fact that its activities encompassed the entire structure of Catholic organizations which were still in Slovene hands. This enabled the Secret Christian Social Organization to spread its network over the entire territory of Venezia Giulia and to involve both the clergy and many lay confidants in individual villages as the smallest cells of the organization—of whom there were over a thousand.[5] Such an effective use of the organizational structure of the Catholic Church for secret anti-regime activities is well illustrated by Janko Kralj's report from 1937. The report contains a list of priests "sent to work by our organization between 1932 and 1936, of whom there are 43. They provide care for 65,000 Slovene and Croatian believers in 52 localities and educate them in the spirit of national consciousness." Below is a description and analysis of the national defense and anti-regime work of these priests.

Throughout the 1930s, the activities of the organization were financed by the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (from a secret fund of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) with substantial annual sums. A part of the organization (consisting of both lay people and priests) was also involved in supplying military intelligence to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

Although the Italian police harboured strong suspicions, police investigations had to take into account the great sensitivity of relations between the Church and the State. The activities of the secret organization took place precisely on the edge of what was forbidden and what was still permitted. Since the police were unable to find any explicit and large-scale irredentist activities, such as secret financing of the organization by the

5 If we consider only the data indisputably provable with the materials from the Besednjak Archives, which speak of, for example, 400 funded students, 300 organized priests, a few dozen Christian- and social-oriented lay people, and a few hundred confidants (mentioned in relation to individual local gatherings), the numbers far exceed 1,000. It is not possible to determine the exact number of people working within the organization as this number fluctuated: whenever the pressure of the regime eased, the organization's operation intensified.

Kingdom of Yugoslavia or espionage, police measures struck more generally, targeting more exposed priests, especially after the 1929 Concordat. From one of the documents from the Gorizia Office of the Quaestor it appears that in the period between August 1933 and June 1934 alone (in a single year and only from one archdiocese, the Archdiocese of Gorizia!) no fewer than 31 Slovene priests were designated for police surveillance, interrogation or expulsion from the province, representing more than 10% of the entire Slovene clergy in Venezia Giulia. Nevertheless, the secret operations of the organization and its illegal financing were not disclosed.

As the terror of the regime escalated, rebel activities shifted more and more to institutions and organizations operating under the auspices of the Catholic Church (such as the Marian Society, which in 1943 had over 10,000 members in the Archdiocese of Gorizia alone). When the pressure eased (for example, in the period following the signing of the Ciano-Stojadinović Pact in March 1937 between the Kingdom of Italy and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia), the Christian social network of political trustees was reactivated. From this point of view, in Venezia Giulia the interwar period can be divided into the pre-Concordat and the post-Concordat periods: the Concordat between the Holy See and the Fascist regime undoubtedly represented a decisive turning point for the Slovene and Croatian minorities.

The Pre-Concordat Period: Visitation Report by Msgr. Gaetano Malchiodi (1928)

The first visitation report can be understood in the "pre-Concordat" spirit. It was written by Msgr. Gaetano Malchiodi in August 1928. He had conducted a secret visitation in June and July 1928. In the accompanying letter, he stated that he had received the order for the secret visitation directly from Pius XI. The report was addressed to Pietro Gaspari, the then Vatican Secretary of State. It was submitted under the official title "Report of the Secret Visitation to the Dioceses of Trieste, Poreč and Pula, Rijeka and Zadar, in Light of the Situation of the Slavic Population of these Places."[6] In the introduction, Malchiodi stated:

---

6 See: Archivio Segreto Vaticano (ASV) - Collection Affari ecclesiastici straordinari (AES), P. Italia, 689 f. 141 Trieste, Poreč, Pula 1928, Visita del Rev. Malchiodi per verificare la condizione dell'assistenza religiosa degli slavi. The secret visitation report consists of 40 typed pages.

> I have the honour to present to Your Excellency the report of my secret visitation, which I performed upon the order of the Holy Father, in the dioceses of Trieste, Koper, Poreč and Pula, Rijeka, and Zadar, in order to examine the situation of the Slavs in regard to their religious care...I carefully guarded the secret of my mission from other Church dignitaries in Venezia Giulia and let them believe that I was there on vacation as a tourist...[7]

The report contains over 40 pages of a detailed outline of the situation of the Slovenes and Croats in Venezia Giulia, where the visitor spent a good two months ("on vacation"). The report gives specific praise to the Bishop of Trieste, Luigi Fogar.

The visitation of Msgr. Gaetano Malchiodi in 1928 in fact confirmed what had triggered the aforementioned reaction of Benedict XV in 1921, as the Fascist regime pursued a policy of denationalization of the "Slavs" while (also) persecuting members of the Slovene and Croatian clergy, without regard to the consequences this would have on the religious lives of the parishioners in Venezia Giulia. Visitor Malchiodi recorded in detail the individual incidents and attacks on Slovene and Croatian priests, which often ended in their deaths, and was horrified by these events. The concluding chapters of the reports on the situation in individual dioceses end in a characteristic assessment:

> The Slavs of Venezia Giulia have never caused any problems to the governments to which they have been subject, but will not let themselves be deprived of what is most sacred to them—their religion and the Slavic language.[8]

The Vatican must also have received hints about the secret activities of Slovene and Croatian priests. This question was obviously one of the reasons for the visitation, but the visitor's answer reads: "It has not been proven in any way that the priests have joined together in any conspiratorial or anti-regime activities..."[9]

---

7 Ibid., 1.
8 Ibid., 3.
9 Ibid., 38.

Malchiodi was thus unable to uncover any anti-regime activities on the part of the Slovene and Croatian clergy. At the end of his report, he defended the Slovene and Croatian clergy and condemned the policies of the regime. At the same time, he also foresaw equal and even harsher measures on the part of the Fascist government, which the regime would extend from Istria and Trieste to the entire province and from there to South Tyrol.

The Post-Concordat Period: A Visitation Report by Msgr. Luca Pasetto (1931)

The second visitation report in question entitled "Report on the Apostolic Visitation to Venezia Giulia" can, however, be understood in the "post-Concordat" spirit. It is addressed to Pius XI and was written by Msgr. Luca Pasetto. His visitation to Venezia Giulia took place from 28 December 1930 to 22 March 1931. This report is very extensive (more than 50 pages). In comparing the contents of the two visitation reports it is important to consider the time of their creation: although they are separated by a period of less than three years, the Concordat was concluded between the Holy See and Fascist Italy during that time.

The introductory part of the report written by Luca Pasetto is relatively similar to that of his predecessor; it describes the situation in Venezia Giulia:

> Government authorities harass the clergy and persecute them by every means in their power—through the press, by shameful campaigns, espionage, incrimination, investigations, interrogations, fines, warnings, reprimands, acts of violence and exile...Such deplorable acts of violence prove that even priests are not spared from the pressures on Slavic minorities, ranging from moral oppression to physical violence.[10]

The visitor also clearly recognizes the intention of the regime's policy on the border:

---

10 ASV-AES, Italia (III e IV periodo), Italia Pos. 856–857, Folder 552, Report on the Apostolic Visitation to Venezia Giulia 28 December 1930–22 March 1931, 4.

> To this end, they are relentless in their efforts to break the six bonds sustaining Slavic nationalism: the press, schools, cultural associations, Christian and economic cooperatives, their mother tongue, and the influence of the clergy.[11]

This visitor, too, finds no evidence of any anti-state activities on the part of the "Slavic" clergy or is rather not convinced of the existence of any links between Slovene political Catholicism in Venezia Giulia and the centers of power in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. However, unlike his predecessor Malchiodi, he comes much closer to the hidden truth:

> We cannot claim with certainty whether this form of peaceful (or violent) reaction emanates from a center located in Yugoslavia and whether this center is represented by Church people. For the moment, all we can say is that the proximity of the newly formed Yugoslav nation state, which unites a vast majority of Slovenes and Croats, exerts a strong pull on the 600,000 Slavs who have remained in Venezia Giulia and feel torn from their roots and do not wish to understand why the Italian state, which already has a population of over 45 million subjects, would want to assimilate them.[12]

Unlike his predecessor (the "pre-Concordat" secret visitor), Pasetto, speaks explicitly about the political dimension of the positions held by the Primorska clergy and no longer has any sympathy for these (national-defense) positions. On the contrary, he strongly condemns them:

> Meanwhile, the Slavic clergy—the political representative of the foreign masses—claims that only the Holy See can save the non-native population from the Italian government's compulsion to assimilate them by issuing a formal public document, i.e., an encyclical, clearly defining the rights of minorities and the ways to implement them. If the Holy See does not wish to do its job, the Slavic clergy threatens to provoke a schism as an almost lawful act of denial by a mother who has sided with those who threaten the lives of her children. I believe that it will never be pos-

11 Ibid., 2.
12 Ibid., 6.

sible to condemn to a sufficient degree the irreverence, disrespect, and bad faith of this attempt at extortion on the part of the Slavic clergy.[13]

Following such a general condemnation of the Slovene clergy, the report specifically (negatively) singles out the highest Slovene representative of the Church hierarchy in the border area, namely Slovene Archbishop Frančišek Borgia Sedej, followed by a devastating verdict on his alleged anti-Concordat activities:

Archbishop: His Excellency Mons. Frančišek Borgia Sedej, a Slovene by birth who has lived under Austrian rule, a very honest and pious man of broad and solid culture, strives, under an Austrian robe, for the most original Slavic practice and is thus an entirely anti-Italian man...If a sheep is not of Slavic origin, he is only relatively interested in it...[14]

The fate of this Slovene archbishop in Gorizia, and consequently the loss of this high "Slavic" representative within the ecclesiastical hierarchy, was probably decisively influenced by the following statement by Pasetto:

They strike him through those members of the clergy who are most loyal to him. They harass him in every possible way to wear him down and make him renounce his office. However, he remains Archbishop—despite suffering greatly—insistently chained to his episcopal see and not ceasing in the least from his conduct, in which he blindly trusts, and declares that *he will not yield unless he receives an explicit order from the Holy See*. The situation is quite dangerous. There is no hope of improvement,

---

13 Slovene and Croatian priests apparently threatened to cause a schism on a number of occasions. This also occurred later, when the Vatican deposed the Bishop of Trieste, Fogar. I have, however, not found a written document with such content. Trieste historian Franco Belci does cite a strictly confidential letter written by Italian Ambassador to the Holy See Bonifacio Pignatti Morano di Custoza to Secretary of State Gaetano Ciano on 8 August 1936. In this letter, he cites the words of Cardinal Pacelli, according to which "the Slovene clergy threatened to cause a schism if Fogar were to leave his post, so Fogar should influence the appeasement of spirits in the diocese." Otherwise, a schism (according to the Italian ambassador to the Holy See) would be a real blessing to the regime, as "rebellious priests could then be thrown across the border in 24 hours" (Franco Belci, "Chiesa e fascismo a Trieste: storia di un vescovo solo", in *Qualestoria*, Vol. XIII, No. 3 (December 1985): 81.)

14 ASV-AES, Italia (III e IV periodo), Italia Pos. 856–857, Folder 552, Report on the Apostolic Visitation to Venezia Giulia 28 December 1930–22 March 1931, 7.

> both due to the usual growing reluctance of state authorities and due to the intransigence of the Archbishop.[15]

And this very thing, an explicit order of the Pope, soon followed through the same intermediary, visitor Luca Pasetto.

Consequences of Luca Pasetto's Visitation

Along with Luca Pasetto's report, this folder of the Vatican Archives also contains a letter of appreciation from Secretary of State Eugenio Pacelli (later Pope Pius XII (1876–1958; reigned 1939–1958), which states:

> I have received a detailed report sent to me by His Venerable Excellency with regard to your visit to the dioceses of Venezia Giulia. I have conveyed your assertions to the Holy Father and am pleased to inform you that His Holiness has expressed his paternal satisfaction at the enthusiasm and diligence with which you have carried out the delicate task entrusted to you.[16]

Visitor Pasetto not only gave a description of the situation, like his "pre-Concordat" predecessor, but also proposed a solution to the complex question: What changes had to be made within the Church in Venezia Giulia in order for the tensions between the Fascist authorities and the Church to cease and for an atmosphere of cooperation to be established? At the same time, talks were already being conducted between the Fascist government and Vatican diplomats on the situation in the Church within the new provinces (*province nuove*) along the eastern border, especially in the province of Gorizia.[17] This is evident from the correspondence between the secretary of the Fascist party in the province of Gorizia, Pino Godino, and the Secretary General of the Fascist Party

15 Ibid., 8 (my emphasis).
16 Ibid., appendix to the report.
17 It was as early as August 1930 that the Minister of Justice, Alfredo Rocco, through the Italian ambassador to the Holy See, Cesare Maria De Vecchi di Val Cismon, demanded changes, i.e. measures directed towards "resolving the complex situation in the province of Gorizia." The then Vatican Secretary of State Eugenio Pacelli promised to "*immediately write a letter to inform Archbishop Sedej of the government wishes*." Matta Tristano, "Come si sostituisce un Vescovo. Aspetti dell'italianizzazione nella Archidiocesi di Gorizia (1929–1934)", in *Qualestoria*, Vol. XI, No. 3 (November 1983), 45–66 at 49.

(PNF), Augusto Turati.[18] The contradictory conclusions of the "pre-" and "post-Concordat" visitations were thus apparently also based on explicit instructions to the respective visitors. However, the conclusions and consequences of their visitation reports were diametrically opposed to one another. The answer to the question of what measures the Vatican should take after the Concordat to appease the situation and the question of who would pay the price soon followed.

The Period after the 1929 Concordat: The Pogrom

If to the Church, the Concordat of February 1929 meant the end of more than a half century of conflict with the state, and an important consolidation of power in the Italian State vis-à-vis the Fascist regime, it meant a disaster for Slovenes and Croats in Venezia Giulia. While, as already mentioned, the Holy See usually defended both minorities until the adoption of the Concordat (cf. the intervention of Pope Benedict XV in 1921), this was no longer the case after the Concordat was signed. In the early 1930s, the Fascist state implemented increasingly repressive denationalization measures that reached the Church. The obvious fact that no one within the Church would defend Slovenes was also noted by the Archbishop of Gorizia Frančišek Borgia Sedej: "The Church is now dependent on the government. For Slovene and Croatian priests, the situation is now worse than before..."[19] What did all this mean, in concrete terms? Among other things it entailed:

- the abolition of all Catholic periodicals (1930);
- the forced resignation of the last Slovene archbishop in Venezia Giulia, Frančišek Borgia Sedej (1931);
- the appointment of Italian nationalist and philo-fascist Giovanni Sirotti as head of the Archdiocese of Gorizia in the same year;

---

18 "Finché a capo dell´Archivescovado di Gorizia vi sarà mons. Francesco Borgia Sedej; finché non si sarà provveduto ad arginare energicamente l´opera irredentistica dei preti sloveni e non si potrà provvedere a risolvere la questione del seminario teologico di Gorizia, l´azione di assimilazione degli alloglotti a mezzo della scuola e dell´", *O. N. B., dell´O. N. D., dei Fasci Femminili, ecc. verrà sempre neutralizzata e non darà che scarsi e non duraturi risultati..."* (Ibid., 45.)

19 Ivo Juvančič, "Dr. Frančišek B. Sedej in fašizem," in *Goriški letnik: zbornik Goriškega muzeja*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1974), 103.

- a ban on the use of the Slovene language in churches in Veneto in 1933;
- the policy of denationalization led by Giovanni Sirotti, administrator of the Archdiocese of Gorizia (1931–1934);
- the policy of denationalization of his successor Carlo Margotti (1934);
- replacement of the monks of the Slovene and Croatian monasteries in Venezia Giulia by Italian monks by 1934;
- in 1936, the forced resignation of the Bishop of Trieste, Alojzij Fogar, who opposed collaboration with the regime in denationalization of the minority;
- pressure from the Church hierarchy (i.e., Bishops Carlo Margotti, Antonio Santin, Giuseppe Nogara, et al.) on Slovene and Croatian priests to cooperate with the regime, to teach religion in Italian, etc.

All this, of course, did not just happen on the basis of the information contained in Luca Pasetto's visitation report. His visitation only confirmed the arguments for the measures which were being considered in the Vatican on the basis of reports and the concrete demands of Fascist authorities. The Slavic minorities, including the clergy, reacted with resistance, which the visitor Pasetto (correctly) described as resistance to Italianization and thus to the Fascist regime: "It should be noted, however, that all these priests are against Italy and do not conceal their opposition with the slightest caution."[20]

The Removal of Slovene Archbishop of Venezia Giulia, Frančišek Borgia Sedej

Pius XI obviously recognized the visitor Luca Pasetto as the right choice for an even more demanding task which was soon to follow: Pasetto came unannounced to Venezia Giulia for the second time in October 1931, this time as an "enforcer," armed with direct powers from Pius XI, which allowed Pasetto to apply "extreme measures," i.e., to speak on behalf of the Holy Father. His task was to force the Archbishop of Gorizia, Francis Bor-

20 ASV-AES, Italia (III e IV periodo), Italia Pos. 856–857, Folder 552, Report on the Apostolic Visitation to Venezia Giulia 28 December 1930–22 March 1931, 11.

gia Sedej, to resign and at the same time to inform the Slovene and Croatian clergy that any resistance to the regime was futile and unnecessary. The following phrases are repeated in the documents and correspondence: *L'interesse superiore*, *il papa lo voule*, *minus malum, l'interese supremo della chiesa,* etc. In Pasetto's vocabulary there is also a contemptuous reference to Slovenes using the pejorative word "*sciavo/ščavo,*" which he uttered—perhaps by mistake—to the priest Božo Milanović, who reported on this in a letter to Engelbert Besednjak: Ogni sacerdotte italiano capisce quali dificolta ha la S. Sede, soltanto lei, sciavo, no! (In English: Every Italian priest understands the difficulties of the Holy See, except him, a slave!) He pronounced the word "sciavo" very clearly.[21]

The apostolic visitor Pasetto seems to have learned the contemptuous term for Slovenes from the Italian priest Giovanni Sirotti and, unaware of its pejorative connotation, began to use it himself. (As we shall see, Sirotti seems to have had a strong influence on Pasetto.)

When Sedej finally realized the visitor's intentions, he at first resolutely refused to resign. One of the reports of the Secret Organization mentions these events:

> When the apostolic visitor realized that Sedej had refused to resign, he became furious. "The Archbishop must decide either to become a coadjutor or to resign!" These were the words he uttered, if I'm not mistaken, to Dr. Janko Kralj.[22]

There is no detailed information on how Pasetto finally succeeded in persuading Archbishop Sedej to resign, as Sedej did not confide to anyone what had really happened. One of the reports by Janko Kralj, who was in constant direct contact with the Archbishop, reads:

> Clearly forced by Luca Pasetto, who was in Gorizia at the time, he submitted his resignation to the Pope without anyone knowing anything about it. On 28 October (a national holiday), Cardinal [Raffaele Carlo] Rossi issued a decree that the Pope had accepted his resignation.[23]

---

21 Besednjakov arhiv (BA), Doc. No. 53, Letter dated 13 February 1931, Comment made by the apostolic visitor Luca Pasetto addressed to Božo Milanović in Trieste, January 1931.
22 Pokrajinski arhiv v Novi Gorici (PANG), Besednjakov arhiv (BA), Doc. No. 40.
23 PANG, BA, Doc. No. 328.

Reports state that Sedej's consent to resign was essentially prompted by Pasetto's promise on behalf of the Pope, namely, that, according to Pasetto's assurances, Sedej's successor would treat Slovenes and Croats fairly. The same report by Janko Kralj states:

> On the evening of 31 October, I went to see the Archbishop... On this occasion, I asked him to name a successor and to write a firm letter to the Pope. At first he resisted, saying that he would tell them if asked, but then he conceded and told me to arrange a courier to Rome. I also told him that no one believed he had resigned voluntarily and that people would lose confidence in the Vatican—"I am not allowed to speak and I have not spoken—people draw their own conclusions!" He told me that Luca had assured him "le precise direttive dell S. Padre" that his successor would be fair and fully proficient in Slovene... With these words he crossed out "princeps" on his name card, saying: "Sic transit gloria mundi! You see what they do to an old man!" He was very heavy-hearted.[24]

It seems clear that the Slovene Archbishop Sedej was compelled by Luca Pasetto and finally (on 23 October) forced to resign. This opinion was also shared by the entire clergy of Venezia Giulia:

> His lamentations that he was "thrown away" and "deceived" mean that he was forced to resign and that a grave injustice had been inflicted upon him. Among the clergy of Venezia Giulia there is no doubt about this, and the people who have direct knowledge of the situation are all certain that Sedej was intentionally and deliberately sacrificed by the Vatican. This was clear from the first moment. When the first priests visited the Archbishop after his resignation, the grey-haired bishop was so distraught he could hardly speak, and almost burst into tears. [25]

Luca Pasetto's visitation report on the situation in the Archdiocese of Gorizia led not only to the removal of Archbishop Sedej, but also to the appointment of his successor. It seems that it was owing to Pasetto that the priest Giovanni Sirotti, an Italian nationalist and ardent supporter of the Fascist regime, was plucked from obscurity and shortly thereaf-

---

24 PANG, BA, Doc. No. 328.
25 PANG, BA, Doc. No. 340.

ter promoted to the vacant post of apostolic administrator of the Archdiocese of Gorizia. Archbishop Sedej spoke about his successor at his final reception (shortly before his death, i.e., on 3 November 1931) to Janko Kralj, saying:

> I will now give you the sad news. A great misfortune has befallen the Archdiocese. Sirotič [Giovanni Sirotti] has been appointed its head. I was shocked and could not believe what I was hearing. The A. [Archbishop] was absolutely devastated and sighed, almost weeping, "I have been deceived." That was all he managed to say. From what I know, I am convinced that Luca had promised him a just successor who would be fluent in Slovene... The next day he lay down, got up again, in his last week he was already feeling dazed but was still able to carry out some of his duties as bishop, and this afternoon he died. Having heard what he confided to me, I can say that his heart broke in terrible disappointment with the Vatican, for he was its most faithful servant.[26]

Speculation that the removal of the Slovene archbishop was a conspiracy on behalf of the "higher interests of the Church" was apparently also voiced by Ermenegildo Pellegrinetti, a shrewd papal nuncio in Belgrade. He addressed Vatican Secretary of State Eugenio Pacelli asking for an explanation of the reasons for Sedej's resignation and also wrote several letters reporting on the repercussions of Sedej's resignation in Belgrade, i.e., the capital of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia:

> I am sending you a translation of an article about the resignation of Archbishop Sedej of Gorizia, which was published in the daily newspaper *Politika*, the most widely circulated daily in Yugoslavia...In his sharp attack on the Holy See, the author claims that the resignation was forced in order to appease the Fascist persecutors of the minority and its bishop.[27]

Finally, the nuncio also asked a discreet question about the real reasons for Sedej's resignation, in a manner which sheds much light on Vatican diplomacy of the time:

---

26 PANG, BA, Doc. No. 328.
27 ASV-AES, Italia (III e IV periodo), Italy Pos. 856–857, Folder 552, Doc. 32.

> It would really interest me personally (to have material for a response or to order a response) whether Sedej's resignation was indeed spontaneous and prompted by age or other personal motives, or whether the procedure was enforced by coercion to serve higher interests of the Church (sic!).[28]

In his reply, Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli, enclosed Sedej's letter of resignation to the Pope and assured him:

> The resignation was spontaneous and prompted by age, illness, and difficulties in the management of the diocese: it was with great appreciation to the Holy Father that the letter of resignation was accepted. I enclose the letter of appreciation by Archbishop Sedej addressed to the Holy Father.[29]

The Removal of the Bishop of Trieste, Alojzij Fogar

The removal of Archbishop Sedej was followed by the deposition of Bishop Fogar of Trieste. This was also "*il vescovo silurato*": this expression originates in the terminology of submarine warfare and was adopted in the field of intra-Church relations. In his secret visitation report to Pius XI, Luca Pesetto wrote about Bishop Fogar:

> It is clear that a diocese with so much turmoil and full of problems needs a prudent and determined bishop, a good shepherd capable of transcending any political party. It seems that in the eight years of his episcopal ministry, Bishop Msgr. Luigi Fogàr has not proven to be such a person... Immediately after his appointment as Bishop of Trieste, he thought (and so did the Slavs) that his double identity as an Italian on the outside and a Slav on the inside would serve him well in benefitting from the Italian authorities, whom he would then skillfully turn entirely in favor of the Slavs and Slavism.

Pasetto is also critical of the influence of the Bishop's advisers:

---

28 Ibid., Doc. 35.
29 Ibid., Doc. 45.

> The Bishop is accompanied by his three advisors, one of whom is an enthusiastic theorist [Jakob Ukmar], another has no common sense [Andrej Gabrovšek], and the third works completely dishonestly [Božo Milanović]... To this one must add the Bishop's characteristic gullibility, possibly influenced by a progressive nervous weakness that torments him. He spends his days smoking, chatting, making and receiving visits, talking endlessly. He does not know how to keep secrets, he says that he has the ecclesiastical and civil authorities in his hand and that he does with them as he pleases...The people of Trieste popularly call him "il mulòn"—a scallywag. The Archbishop of Gorizia, Msgr. Sedej himself confided to me that Msgr. Fogàr is "too childish to ever accomplish anything."[30]

However, the conclusion of the visitation report mentions all the bishops of Venezia Giulia and sounds like a concrete proposal for a post-Concordat "settlement" of the complex situation in Venezia Giulia:

> As far as I have been able to ascertain, it is generally accepted that the only people who could rectify the situation at this stage and act as a link between the two sides are the bishops of Venezia Giulia, *but not the current bishops*. We would need bishops who are not involved in politics... men who act in such a balanced way that they never go beyond the golden mean outlined by the "Concordat", men who have such a pastoral conscience that they care for sheep from both nations with the same zeal, so that they might feel all the beneficial unifying power of the Church, to which all nations – without changing their physiognomy—are drawn as parts of a whole. But such men are hard to find.[31]

Judging from this proposal, the deposition of the pro-Slovene Bishop of Trieste, himself a native of Friuli, Luigi Fogar, had evidently already been decided upon by this time.[32] According to Italian historian Franco Belci, the Vatican secured its apparent autonomy and did not act with regard to Fogar until 1936, since a simultaneous replacement of both the Archbishop of Gorizia and the Bishop of Trieste would have all too

---

30 ASV-AES, Italia (III e IV periodo), Italia Pos. 856–857, Folder 552, Report on the Apostolic Visitation to Venezia Giulia 28 December 1930–22 March 1931, p. 18.

31 Ibid., 22 (my emphasis).

32 Ivo Juvančič, "Fašistična ofenziva proti dr. A. Fogarju, škofu v Trstu," in *Goriški letnik: zbornik Goriškega muzeja*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1975): 113.

clearly implied cooperation between political and ecclesiastical authorities.[33]

The procedure was just as "discreet" as in the case of Archbishop Sedej: through a special papal envoy, the Vatican also succeeded in obtaining Fogar's "voluntary resignation." This time the emissary for his removal was the aforementioned Cardinal Rossi, an important member of the Congregation of Bishops (*Congregatio pro episcopis*), i.e., the body responsible for appointing new bishops. Behind the scenes, Cardinal Rossi had already been involved in the removal of Archbishop Sedej and was clearly one of the key figures in the settlement of the situation within the Church in Venezia Giulia. On a "chance" trip to Bassano del Grappa in September 1936, he sent a written invitation to Bishop Fogar to join him there. These events are documented in a report from the Secret Organization:

> When Fogar arrived there on 14 September, Cardinal Rossi said to him, "So, Your Excellency, as one can see from the complaints of the Italian clergy, the situation in your diocese is bad." Fogar replied that he would respond to any accusations he wished to put forward. However, it seems that this motivation only served as a ruse to cover an agreement between the government and the Vatican. Rossi then told Fogar, "The Holy Father wants you to renounce the diocese; and if you do not resign, you will be deposed ('sara deposto')." Fogar asked if that was really the Pope's wish. Rossi replied, "Si."
>
> Fogar then said that by his training and spirit, he was willing to comply with the Pope's wishes. Fogar then signed a declaration addressed to the Pope that he "was renouncing the diocese" at the Pope's request.[34]

Conclusion

Documents from the Vatican archival collection *"Sacra Congregazione degli affari ecclesiastici straordinari"*, available since 2006, show that the Concordat between the Vatican and Fascist Italy resulted in a radical restriction of the national rights of Slovenes and Croats in the Church.

---

33 Belci Franco, "Chiesa e fascismo a Trieste," 43–99, 87.
34 BA, Doc. No. 417, Letter from Božo Milanović to Jože Biteznik dated 9 October 1936.

Evidently, the Vatican participated in the policy of assimilation of minorities and, as a rule, reacted with silence to the repressive denationalization measures of the civilian authorities in the border area. In the case of the Slovene and Croatian populations of Primorska in the 1930s, this was a typical case of Vatican "silence" in the interwar period—such was its "silence" during the persecution of Jews in Germany during this period, its "silence" in the adoption of racist legislation in Italy in 1938, its "silence" during the Nazi occupation of the Czech Republic, and its "silence" or failure to express an (albeit intended) authoritarian rejection of fascism.[35]

After the Concordat of 1929, we can trace a distinctive phenomenon of the merging of two ideological strategies and the resulting practices in Venezia Giulia, which historiography describes in specific terms: "fascismo di frontiera" on the part of the regime—and "romanizzazione" on the part of the Catholic Church. What happened in Venezia Giulia was a kind of "Cuius regio eius religio."

Last but not least, if we try to see things from the Vatican's perspective: Who could have guessed—given the geopolitical situation of the time—that these territories would not actually belong to the Italian State "forever"? As a rule, the Holy See has always sought to reconcile its political and diocesan boundaries. And Fascist Italy was no longer the Italy of the 19th century, stringing together one military and political defeat after another and watching political and military developments in Europe and the world "from the back row." Who could have predicted that the borders of a country which celebrated victories in Spain and Africa and represented one of the political, military and diplomatic superpowers of Europe would ever change? What place would a handful of irredentist and nationalist priests and bishops supporting them have here on its eastern frontier, with their ideas of a separate "Slavic" Catholic action, with their desire to teach religion in Slovene, with their demands to appoint Slovene priests among the Slovene population, to distribute books in Slovene, and so on? Pius XI himself could not have foreseen that imperialism—as one of the main ideological premises of Fascist ideol-

35 On this topic, see: Georges Passelecq and Bernard Suchecky, *The Hidden Encyklical of Pius XI*, trans. from the French by Steven Rendall (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1997); or Janko Pleterski, "Vatikan o svojem "molku" v 1941 letu", in *Senca Ajdovskega Gradca* (Ljubljana: samozal., 1993), 97.

ogy—would eventually "lose" its territories along the eastern border which Italy had acquired through a geopolitical bargain via the London Agreement during World War One.

Epilogue

Despite their resistance, the national defense and anti-Fascist stance of the Slovene and Croatian clergy in the interwar period was not recognized after 1945, as the monopoly over anti-Fascism was usurped by the Communist Party. As a supposed pillar of reaction, the clergy of Primorska was also physically persecuted and convicted in rigged trials.

In socialist Yugoslavia, the clergy of Primorska was bound by a Marxist definition coined by leading Slovene politician and Marxist theorist Edvard Kardelj about the subjective-objective historical role of the social subject. According to this definition, the non-Communist anti-Fascists subjectively deserved praise for anti-Fascism, but objectively caused harm because their anti-Fascist efforts strengthened the role of the bourgeois parties and the Church, thus consolidating the undesirable role of "conservative social forces" within the Slovene nation.

Part Two

THE DIVERSITY OF ANTI-FASCISM

6

The Anti-Fascism of Hans & Sophie Scholl

Intellectual Sources of the White Rose

SABRINA P. RAMET, WITH CHRISTINE M. HASSENSTAB

On 22 February 1943, anti-Nazi activists Hans and Sophie Scholl together with their friend Christoph Probst were found guilty of treason by a Nazi court and beheaded by guillotine a few hours later. The three—medical students at the University of Munich—were members of a small nonviolent group called the White Rose, which had been formed the previous year. Their crime was to have distributed by post or in person five leaflets calling on Germans to embrace passive resistance as a means to destabilize and topple the Nazi regime. In the wake of their execution, three more persons associated with the White Rose (Alexander Schmorell, Kurt Huber, and Willi Graf) were taken into custody. All three were sentenced to death on 19 April 1943; Schmorell and Huber were executed three months later. The Gestapo spared Graf's life for the time being in the hope of extracting the names of other White Rose collaborators from him. Graf did not give anything away and, after the Gestapo gave up its efforts to break him, Graf was guillotined on 12 October 1943. Eleven more White Rose activists were subsequently rounded up, including eight from a Hamburg affiliate. All of these died, whether by execution or by suicide or in a concentration camp. Many others were sent to prison.

The anti-fascism of the White Rose group was inspired by conservative Christian principles. But anti-fascism comes in various strains, whether inspired by liberalism, social democracy, communism,[1] mon-

1 Hermann Weber has estimated that approximately 150,000 communists were imprisoned in the Third Reich. See H. Weber, *Kommunistischer Widerstand gegen die Hitler-Diktatur, 1933–1939* (Berlin: Gedenstätte deutscher Widerstand, 1990), 3, as cited in Mary Nolan, "Antifascism under Fascism: German visions and voices", in *New German Critique,* No. 67 (Winter 1996): 41.

archism, anarchism, or, as in the case of the White Rose, Christian conservatism.[2] What is striking about the White Rose activists is the extent to which they were reading and drawing inspiration from Christian writers. The most important sources of inspiration and reinforcement for them were St. Augustine of Hippo (354–430 CE), St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), Blaise Pascal (1623–1662), and Cardinal John Henry Newman (1801–1890). However, their reading was not confined to these classics. Indeed, they were also reading the works of Plato, Aristotle, Heinrich Heine, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Friedrich Nietzsche, André Gide, Thomas Mann, and Jan Maria Rilke. In addition, they had long discussions with Professor Kurt Huber (1893–1943), who was conversant with the writings of Benedictus de Spinoza and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz.[3]

In what follows, we will say something about how the ideas of Augustine, Aquinas, Pascal, and Newman were reflected in the letters, diaries, and leaflets of the White Rose. Rather than taking up these sources in chronological order, we will discuss them in what we consider to be a logical progression. We therefore start with John Henry Newman, who wrote about the nature of God and how we can affirm God's existence and goodness. These were topics of intense interest for the young Scholls and especially for Sophie. From there, we move on to St. Augustine, whose ruminations about evil and war were reflected in the written legacy of Hans and Sophie Scholl. We turn next to Pascal, who drew a distinction between reason and "the heart," by which he meant one's intuitive faculty, arguing that people had an intuitive ability to understand the moral content of actions (or inaction). And finally, we close the discussion of the most important source of the moral thinking of Hans and Sophie Scholl by considering the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas Aquinas. It was St. Thomas who provided a guide to assessing to what extent any given state might be judged to be just or unjust. And it was St. Thomas who insisted that the state must promote the common good and, in connection with a state's failure to do so, discussed the right to overthrow tyrannical rule. In the final section, we provide a brief overview of opposition activity in the Third Reich, noting that some groups sought to

2 See James Donohoe, *Hitler's Conservative Opponents in Bavaria 1930–1945: A study of Catholic, monarchist, and separatist anti-Nazi activities* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1961).

3 See Hans Maier, "Christliche Widerstand im Dritten Reich," in *Die Weiße Rose und das Erbe des deutschen Widerstandes* (Munich: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1993), 121.

overthrow Hitler, others to assassinate Hitler, and still others to arrange a nonpunitive peace with the Allies.

John Henry Newman

John Henry Newman started his life as an Anglican, gaining the prestigious post of Vicar of St. Mary's at the University of Oxford in 1828, at the age of 27. In 1845, he shocked his Anglican colleagues by converting to Catholicism. He left Oxford, moving to Birmingham, where he served as Oratorian, likewise an influential post and one which did not require taking priestly vows. The vows came a year later when, in 1846, he was ordained in Rome. He was elected to the College of Cardinals in 1879 at the age of 78. He has been described as "the most illustrious of English converts to the Church" and credited with "genius of the first rank, with a deep spiritual temper," presenting sermons and composing writings rich "in irony, in humour, in eloquence, [and] in imaginative force."[4] When he died in 1890, at the end of a long career as a man of God, "[h]is funeral was a great public event."[5] He was canonized in 2019.

In *Tracts of the Times* (1836), Newman distinguished between objective truth and subjective truth, and asserted that religion consisted in acceptance of the latter. He distinguished further between objective certainty and subjective certainty, arguing that a form of reason he called *prudentia* was sufficient to determine whether a proposition can be the object of subjective certainty, even while conceding that it might not be worthy of objective certainty.[6] In seeking objective certainty, one marshals evidence and reaches a decision by *inference;* it is by its nature conditional. By contrast, one achieves subjective certainty by *assent*, which is by definition absolute and unconditional.[7] The central proposition to which Christians give assent is the existence and goodness of God.

Newman was clearly awed by the Supreme Being, writing, "My God, the thought simply exceeds a created nature [such as] mine. I cannot at-

---

4 "John Henry Newman," *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia,* at https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10794a.htm [accessed on 15 November 2020], 1 and 7 of 14.
5 *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia.* 13 of 14.
6 Eric Steinberg, "Newman's Distinction between Inference and Assent," in *Religious Studies,* Vol. 23, No. 3 (September 1987): 352.
7 Steinberg, "Newman's Distinction between Inference and Assent," 356, 357.

tain to it; I can but use the words, and say 'I believe', without comprehending. But this I can do. I can adore Thee, O my great and good God, as the one source of all perfection."[8] Compare this with what Sophie Scholl wrote in her diary on 29 June 1942:

> My God, I can only address you fa[u]ltingly. I can only offer you my heart, which is wrested away from you by a thousand desires...If I could only once call you Father, but I can hardly address you as 'You' ['Du', the informal usage]. I do so [as one that speaks] to a great Unknown. I know that you'll accept me if I'm sincere, and that you'll hear me if I cling to you. Teach me to pray.[9]

Even more striking is Sophie's admission, in a draft of a letter to her sister Inge (never sent):

> ...when I try to pray and reflect on whom I'm praying to, I almost go crazy, I feel so infinitely small. I get really scared, so the only emotion that can surface is fear. I feel so powerless in general, and doubtless I am. I can't pray for anything except the ability to pray.[10]

Newman urged that "it is never lawful to go against our conscience;... conscience is the voice of God."[11] In the same context, he added: "'Conscience,' says St. Thomas, 'is the practical judgment or dictate of reason, by which we judge what *hic et nunc* [here and now] is to be done as being good, or to be avoided as evil."[12] Compare this with Sophie's assertion, in a letter to Fritz Hartnagel (23 September 1940) that it is "wrong for a German or a Frenchman, or whatever else a person may be, to defend his nation doggedly just because it is his."[13] In other words, conscience must always take priority over loyalty to one's nation. This moral commit-

---

8 Newman, "The Infinite Perfection of God," in *A Newman Reader,* ed. Matthew Muller (Hurtington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor, 2019), 108.
9 Sophie diary (29 June 1942), in *At the Heart of the White Rose: Letters and Diaries of Hans and Sophie Scholl,* ed. Inge Jens, trans. from German by J. Maxwell Brownjohn (Walden, N.Y. and Robertsbridge, England: Plough Publishing House, 2017), 228.
10 Sophie letter to Inge (drafted November or December 1941), in Jens, ed., *At the Heart of the White Rose,* 192.
11 Newman, "A Letter to the Duke of Norfolk" (1875), in Muller, ed., *A Newman Reader,* 30.
12 Newman, "A Letter to the Duke of Norfolk" (1875), in Muller, ed., *A Newman Reader,* 34.
13 As quoted in Paul Shrimpton, *Conscience Before Conformity: Hans and Sophie Scholl and the White Rose resistance in Nazi Germany* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2018), 56.

ment was clearly stated in the third leaflet distributed by the White Rose, where the authors wrote:

> ...our present 'state' is the dictatorship of evil...[W]ith every new day that you hesitate, failing to oppose this offspring of Hell, your guilt, as in a parabolic curve, grows higher and higher. Many, perhaps most, of the readers of these leaflets do not see clearly how they can [mount] an effective opposition...We want to show that everyone is in a position to contribute to the overthrow of the system. It is not possible through solitary withdrawal, in the manner of embittered hermits, to prepare the ground for the overturn of this 'government' or bring about the revolution at the earliest possible moment. No, it can be done only by the cooperation of many convinced, energetic people—people who are agreed as to the means they use to attain their goal. We have no great number of choices as to these means. The only one available is *passive resistance.* The meaning and the goal of passive resistance is to topple National Socialism...At all points we must oppose National Socialism, whenever it is open to attack. We must soon bring this monster of a state to an end. A victory of fascist Germany in this war would have unmeasurable, frightful consequences.[14]

Augustine of Hippo

Augustine of Hippo has been called "the greatest Christian philosopher of Antiquity and certainly the one who exerted the deepest and most lasting influence."[15] Augustine was born in Thagaste, North Africa, and his early education was "surprisingly meager"; he was "the only Latin philosopher in antiquity to be virtually ignorant of Greek" and this blind spot would impact his later work.[16] He set up a School of Rhetoric in Tha-

---

14 Extract from the full text of the third leaflet in Shrimpton, *Conscience Before Conformity,* 158 (emphasis as given).

15 Christian Tornau, "Saint Augustine," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* First published 25 September 2019, at https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/augustine/#:~:text=Augustine%20was%20perhaps%20the%20greatest,deepest%20and%20most%20lasting%20influence.&text=Because%20of%20his%20importance%20for,as%20the%20first%20medieval%20philosopher [accessed on 17 November 2020].

16 Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 24.

gaste before moving to Milan where he eventually accepted a job as Professor of Rhetoric at the Imperial court in Milan.

Augustine experienced the great uncertainty and instability produced by the breakdown of the Roman Empire. After Augustine's conversion to Christianity and his return to Africa, he also lived through religious rioting between Donatist Christians[17] and other Christians, motivated by the question of what was heretical and what was not. Donatism had flourished in North Africa in response to the persecution at the hands of Emperor Diocletian. Perhaps because there had been a relatively lenient atmosphere there before the Decree of Constantine (313) legalizing Christianity, Donatists adopted a harsher examination of other Christians after the Decree. Augustine also witnessed—and wrote against –another heresy called Pelagianism which posited that the mainstream Church's attitude toward original sin was similar to Manichaeism; simply put, a monk and theologian called Pelagius (c. 354–418) held that a person's sheer will was the primary factor in winning spiritual salvation. Pelagius was excommunicated in 416 and his views were declared heretical at the Council of Ephesus in 431.

Despite the controversies emerging in early Christianity and changing societal norms, or perhaps because of these developments, Augustine was attracted in succession to Manichaeism and neo-Platonism, before his conversion to Christianity. The soul, Manichaens argued, was a battleground in which the forces of light and darkness contended.[18] They argued that the reason evil existed was that God's creation was somehow imperfect. Augustine left the religion after about 10 years, thinking it was not robust enough and from this experience, he came to his own understanding of evil. He rejected three Manichaean ideas: first, "the notion that God created evil as a full-fledged malignant principle"[19]; second, that evil was not a "vague substance but as an actual bodily substance"[20]; and third, that God was some "bodily substance extended

---

17 Concerning the Donatists, see Maureen A. Tilley, "Dilatory Donatists or Procrastinating Catholics: The trial at the Conference of Carthage," *Church History,* Vol. 60, No. 1 (March 1991): 7–19.

18 See "Manichaeism," in *The HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, ed. Richard P. McBrien (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995); also "Manichæism," *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia,* at https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09591a.htm [accessed on 17 November 2020].

19 Jean Beth Elshtain, *Augustine and the Limits of Politics* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1995), 79.

20 Elshtain, *Augustine and the Limits of Politics,* 79.

in space."[21] In his earliest writings, Augustine argued that, in order for people to be free, they had to be able to sin. This came to be known as the free-will defense of the existence of evil (at least of evil committed by humans). Later, Augustine abandoned the free-will defense *in toto*, arguing instead that God allows evil in order to produce a higher good not attainable in any other way.[22]

Augustine's Major Works

Augustine was prolific and his work is extensive. His five major works are *The Confessions* (circa 397 – 398 C.E.), the *City of God* consisting of 22 books (after 410 C.E.), *On Christian Doctrine* (386 – 426 C.E.), *Soliloquies* (386 – 387 C.E.), and *Enchiridon* (after 420 C.E.). In addition, we have a large number of letters which Augustine wrote on many subjects that often implicated political issues. Here, it is possible to mention only Augustine's *De Ordine* and his *De libero arbitrio*.

One of the subjects Augustine addressed was what has come to be called "just war" theory. Augustine's views concerning war shifted over time. Yet the Bishop of Hippo never characterized killing in the context of war as inherently evil; instead, in a just war, it should be seen, Augustine argued, as serving to promote a higher good.[23] Indeed, in *De Ordine* (386 CE), Augustine proposed that, in a just world, evil might even be necessary. Throughout his post-conversion years, he steadfastly insisted that evil was a necessary part of the divine order.[24]

While performing her obligatory work service *(Arbeitsdienst)* starting in April 1941, Sophie read from an anthology of St. Augustine's writings. She was impressed with Augustine's ideas about legitimate authority, free will, and faith. Hans too found inspiration in Augustine, noting in particular the saint's "conviction that the barbarians would not prevail against the truth of God."[25] The new barbarians had con-

---

21 Elshtain, *Augustine and the Limits of Politics,* 80.

22 Jesse Couenhoven, "Augustine's Rejection of the Free-Will Defence: An overview of the late Augustine's theodicy," *Religious Studies,* Vol. 43, No. 3 (September 2007): 280. See also Adam M. Willows, "Augustine, the origin of evil, and the mystery of free will," in *Religious Studies,* Vol. 50, No. 2 (June 2014): 255–69.

23 James Turner Johnson, "Can a Pacifist Have a Conversation with Augustine? A response to Alain Epp Weaver," *The Journal of Religious Ethics,* Vol. 29, No. 1 (Spring 2001): 91.

24 Kevin Carnahan, "Perturbations of the Soul and Pains of the Body: Augustine on evil suffered and done in war," *The Journal of Religious Ethics,* Vol. 36, No. 2 (June 2008): 273, 274.

25 Shrimpton, *Conscience Before Conformity,* 72. Regarding Sophie, see 71–72.

structed a state in open repudiation of God's law, whereas for Augustine, as he argued in *De libero arbitrio,* human law, indeed the state itself, "is right [only] if it is in conformity with the eternal law of God."[26] The White Rose had clearly concluded that the Nazi state had repudiated divine law and, hence, that the so-called 'German Christians', a Nazi trojan horse,[27] were, in fact, anti-Christian. The group's fourth leaflet, whose principal author was Hans Scholl, cast the struggle against the Nazi regime as a showdown between God and the Devil.[28] This provoked a discussion within the group concerning whether Hitler should be assassinated, as Huber suggested. But to Hans, Sophie, and Alex Schmorell, recourse to murder, even of the Nazi 'devil.' would have entailed not merely the abandonment of the group's commitment to nonviolence, but also the embrace of means not "in conformity with the eternal law of God."[29] Hence, the group continued with its protests of Nazi "gangsterism," calling in the fifth leaflet (January 1943) for "the moral regeneration of Europe."[30]

Blaise Pascal

Blaise Pascal is remembered today almost entirely because of his posthumously published *Pensées de M. Pascal sur la religion et sur quelque autres sujets* or *Pens*ées (Thoughts) for short. Pascal was born in Clermont (now Clermond-Ferrand) in France in 1623, dying 39 years later in Paris. He was sickly his entire life and accordingly was schooled at home by his father. Among the subjects he mastered were mathematics and classical languages. From age 24, he could not ingest any solids and, with the death of his mother, he had to rely on his sisters to take care of him. During the night of 23 November 1654 he had a dreamlike experience

---

26 Couenhoven, "Augustine's Rejection of the Free-Will Defence," 276.

27 See Doris L. Bergen, *Twisted Cross: The German Christian Movement in the Third Reich,* 2nd ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1996); also Sabrina P. Ramet, *Nonconformity, Dissent, Opposition, and Resistance in Germany, 1933–1990: The Freedom to Conform* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), chap. 2 ("Nazi Germany, 1933–1945: Nonconformity as degeneration").

28 Frank McDonough, *Sophie Scholl: The Real Story of the Woman who Defied Hitler* (Stroud, Gloucester: The History Press, 2009), 101.

29 McDonough, *Sophie Scholl,* 102.

30 McDonough, *Sophie Scholl,* 112.

which he understood as having a religious nature.[31] From then, his interest in religion increased and he began assembling notes which would eventually be published in *Pensées*. On his death, he was buried in the church of Saint Étienne du Mont in Paris.

Pascal was convinced that God performed miracles, rejected the notion that one could harness rational arguments to prove the existence of God, and argued that there was no salvation for anyone outside the Catholic Church.[32] Contrary to St. Thomas, Pascal rejected the idea that reason was adequate to understand Natural Law. In his view, one could speak sensibly of objective justice independent of power and force.[33] He also believed that people could intuit the basics of the moral law. But as for deriving it by reason, Pascal wrote that "if one submits everything to reason, our religion will contain nothing that is mysterious or supernatural."[34] "As if reason were the only way we could learn!," he mused. "Would to God that we never needed it and knew everything by instinct and feeling."[35]

In a letter to his mother dated 13 August 1941, Hans Scholl noted that he had received a copy of Pascal's *Pensées* and that he had great respect for the French writer. Indeed, he looked to Pascal for daily sustenance. Both Hans and Sophie were influenced or were reinforced in their inclinations by Pascal's emphasis on feeling. Indeed, in a letter to Hartnagel dated 18 November 1942, Sophie divulged that she was struggling to sense the presence of God, not through reason but through feeling.[36]

Like other writers who influenced Hans and Sophie Scholl, Pascal distinguished between reason and "the heart," as he called the intuitive ability to grasp the moral value of some particular action or inaction. He believed that self-deception was the most potent factor leading people to behave immorally.[37] The activists of the White Rose believed that many Germans had been deliberately deceiving themselves. "Now, when in re-

---

31 Desmond Clarke, "Blaise Pascal," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* First published 21 August 2007; substantive revision 22 June 2015, at https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pascal/ [accessed on 15 November 2020], 3 of 13.

32 Clarke, "Blaise Pascal," 5 of 13.

33 See A. J. Beitzinger, "Pascal on Justice, Force, and Law," *The Review of Politics,* Vol. 46, No. 2 (April 1984): 224.

34 As quoted in Clarke, "Blaise Pascal," 5 of 13.

35 Pascal, *Pensées,* as quoted in William D. Wood, "Axiology, Self-Deception, and Moral Wrongdoing in Blaise Pascal's 'Pensées'," *The Journal of Religious Ethics,* Vol. 37, No. 2 (June 2009): 359.

36 Jens, ed., *At the Heart of the White Rose,* 283.

37 Wood, "Axiology, Self-Deception," 357.

cent years our eyes have been opened," they wrote in the second leaflet (distributed in July 1942), it was time for Germans to stop deceiving themselves and confront the truth of the horrors and atrocities inflicted by the Nazis on Jews, Poles, Russians, and members of other nations. Accordingly, they continued,

> ...it is high time to root out this brown horde. Up until the outbreak of the war the larger part of the German people were blinded...But now, now that we have recognized them for what they [the Nazis] are, it must be the sole and first duty, the holiest duty of every German, to destroy these beasts.[38]

Rationalization can provide a cover for self-deception and for refusal to confront evil. Accordingly, as Pascal had warned,

> We know the truth not only through our reason but also through our hearts. It is through the latter that we know first principles, and reason, which has nothing to do with it, tries in vain to refute them....Principles are felt, propositions proved, and both by certainty though with different means.[39]

St. Thomas Aquinas

Medieval thought was based on a conception of Natural Law and no one is more routinely associated with that concept than Thomas Aquinas. St. Thomas Aquinas was born into a family belonging to the lesser nobility in the Kingdom of Naples sometime between 1224 and 1226, and was educated at the Benedictine monastery of Monte Cassino and the University of Naples. In 1242 or 1243, Aquinas entered the Dominican Order and subsequently studied under St. Albert the Great in Cologne and Paris. By 1256, he had a post at the University of Paris, teaching also in Orvieto

---

38 Extract from the full text of the second leaflet in Shrimpton, *Conscience Before Captivity,* 155. See also McDonough, *Sophie Scholl,* 99; and Gordon Thomas and Greg Lewis, *Defying Hitler: The Germans who Resisted Nazi Rule* (New York: Caliber, an imprint of Penguin-Random House, 2019), *passim;* Peter Hoffmann, *German Resistance to Hitler* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988); and Francis R. Nicosia, "Introduction: Resistance to National Socialism in the Work of Peter Hoffmann," in Francis R. Nicosia and Lawrence D. Stokes, eds., *Germans Against Nazism: Nonconformity, Opposition and Resistance in the Third Reich – Essays in Honour of Peter Hoffmann* (New York and Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1990).

39 As quoted in Wood, "Axiology, Self-Deception," 359.

and Rome. In 1272, he moved back to Naples, and in December 1273, he suffered a breakdown of some sort and died the following year. Three years later, his teachings were condemned by the Church, but the Church soon reversed its position and canonized him as a saint in 1323.[40] Between the late medieval period and the Counter-Reformation, Aquinas' influence declined, but St. Ignatius Loyola (1491–1556) revived Aquinas' writings for use in the seminary curriculum for the Jesuit Order. By the end of the nineteenth century, his teachings had been declared the official teachings of the Church.

Aquinas' major work is *Summa Theologica* (also known as *Summa Theologiae),* which he began writing in 1266; the work embraces theology, ethics, and political philosophy. Characteristic of Aquinas' method is the use of rational argumentation to demonstrate the existence and goodness of God and to establish the existence of a universally valid moral law. He also aspired to define the relationship of Natural Law to Divine Law, and to outline a theory of justice.

Justice

In considering the question of justice, Aquinas urged that its "proper function…is to direct man in his relations with others…[For] that which is right in a work of justice is constituted over and above its relation to the agent, by its relation to others."[41] But justice is more than simply a relationship between people since the "chief function of justice is to make a man subject to God…But right, *[ius]*[42], does not pertain to things Divine, but only to things human; for Isidore, in the book *Etymologies,* says that '*fas* is the Divine law, but *ius* the human law.'"[43] Human law could be just or unjust and Aquinas did not entertain any idea such as the modern concept of an individual right or of a right as against someone or something else.

"Ius" in Roman law had embraced this idea; "ius was a "thing," a "ius incororalis."[44] But, as Brian Tierney reminds us, "all language is context

40 Brian Davies, "Thomas Aquinas," in John Marendbon, ed., *Medieval Philosophy,* Vol. 3 of the *Routledge History of Philosophy* (London & New York: Routledge, 1998), 241–42.
41 St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* in T. Aquinas, *Political Writings,* ed. & trans. by R. W. Dyson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 159 (IiaIIae 57).
42 "Ius" is also spelled "jus."
43 Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* 159 (IiaIIae 57).
44 Brian Tierney, *The Idea of Natural Rights* (Atlanta: Scholars Press), 16.

dependent" and even Roman Law interwove ideas of "potestas," "dominium," and "ius" so that one can glimpse there the beginning of what we now call "individual rights."[45] So what, then, was justice for Aquinas? Aquinas began an argument on justice by referring to both Roman Law and Aristotle in order to answer this question. Here, he said that it "seems that justice has been unsuitably defined by the Jurists as a 'constant and perpetual will to render to each his right'." But, immediately after this, he drew upon Aristotle's *Ethics* to assert that "justice is a habit by which someone is disposed to do what is just, and to be just in act and in intention.'"[46] Aquinas also referred to St. Anselm of Canterbury, who believed that "justice is righteousness" and also to St. Augustine of Hippo, who had equated justice with "love serving God alone."[47]

Extending his analysis to the socio-political level, Aquinas identified a just state with its operation for the common good—again, an Aristotelian principle. Injustice, it follows, consisted in "contempt for the common good," which, for Aquinas, was contrary to the moral law and hence, a "sin" against God's law.[48] Moreover, "...since injustice always consists in doing harm to another, it is clear that it is of its kind *(ex genere)* a mortal sin."[49]

But this argument seems a bit inconsistent when one considers the "ius" of Roman Law and Gratian, or when one considers the idea that "ius" is "objective" and must conform to God's law. What happened is that Aquinas often used the word "ius" to refer to Aristotle's doctrine of natural right and his own doctrine of natural law.[50] St. Thomas used "the word *ius* (not to mention *naturalis*) in several different senses without always explaining carefully the various meanings intended in different contexts."[51]

This understanding of justice and injustice closely follows Aristotle, in applying the criterion of governance in the interest of the community as the measure of good government. But, unlike Aristotle, Aquinas sees a greater danger for tyranny to develop in a republic ("the rule of many")

---

45 Tierney, *The Idea of Natural Rights,* 17.
46 Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* 168 (IiaIIae 58).
47 St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* Vol. 37, *Justice*, trans. by Thomas Gilby, O.P. (Cambridge: Blackfriars, 1975), 19, 21.
48 *Ibid.,* 55.
49 *Ibid.,* 65.
50 Tierney, *The Idea of Natural Rights*, 25.
51 Tierney, *The Idea of Natural Rights*, 25.

than in a monarchy. This consideration in turn reinforced Aquinas' conviction that monarchy is the best form of government.[52] But Aquinas' notion of monarchy included a heavy emphasis on the monarch's duties to his subjects, and his theory has often been considered to be one favoring a mixture of monarchical, aristocratic, and democratic features.[53] In treating tyranny, Aquinas sounds very modern. His approach is cautious and practical, and he advises that hasty action against a tyrant might, if unsuccessful, "succeed only in provoking the tyrant to even greater savagery" while the rebellion in and of itself might "give rise to many very grave dissensions in the populace, either during the rebellion against the tyrant or because, after the tyrant has been removed, the community is divided into factions over the question of what the new ruling order should be."[54] He also warned against the presumption on the part of some individual to judge the ruler to be tyrannical and thereupon to slay the ruler. At the same time, Aquinas recognized that there could be a right of rebellion, a right to depose a tyrant.[55] At the same time, in his insistence that the state should serve not only to promote the common good[56] but also to dispose people to be good,[57] Aquinas stressed a theme which places more emphasis on morality than one would ordinarily expect to find in contemporary political thought. Likewise, his insistence that "human law, if it is to be righteous, must be in harmony with the natural and Divine laws"[58] strikes a note which one would not expect to find outside ecclesiastical circles today.

Clearly, if the proper function of justice, for Aquinas, is "to make a man subject to God," then it cannot be to make people subject, in the first place, to a *Führer.* Moreover, if the purpose of government is to promote the *common* good, then anti-Semitic laws and the organized violence orchestrated and promoted by the Nazis, most famously but not solely in *Kristallnacht* (9–10 November 1938), can only be seen as *obviously* contrary to the common good. Hans gave voice to this point without any

52 St. Thomas Aquinas, "De regimine principum," in T. Aquinas, *Political Writings,* 17; confirmed in Morrall, *Political Thought in Medieval Times,* 77.
53 K. Pennington, "Law, legislative authority and theories of government, 1150—1300," in J. H. Burns, ed., *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought, c. 350-c. 1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1991), 448.
54 Aquinas, "De regimine principum," 18.
55 Aquinas, "De regimine principum," 20.
56 Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* Dyson trans., 138 (IaIIae 96).
57 Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* 97 (IaIIae 92).
58 Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* 155 (IaIIae 97).

qualification and, in a letter to his sister Inge (21 October 1938), he confessed,

> Only when you're compelled to wonder if the Fatherland still means as much as it may once have done—only when you've lost all faith in banners and speeches because prevailing ideas have become trite and worthless—does true idealism assert itself.[59]

Sophie, in a letter to Fritz Hartnagel written two years later (23 September 1940), noted, "To me, justice takes precedent over all other attachments, many of which are purely sentimental."[60]

On the eve of being drafted into the *Wehrmacht,* Hans found himself in the company of friends, taking up the question of whether there was a right to resist a dictatorship; as they conversed, they pointedly brought the ideas of Thomas Aquinas into the discussion.[61] In other words, they looked to the thirteenth-century saint for validation. As early as Autumn 1941, Hans "received confirmation of the rumours circulating about the mass murder of Jews in Russia and Poland, and [heard credible reports] that the killing was on a truly monumental scale."[62] Hans recoiled in horror. Later, in the first White Rose leaflet (distributed in May 1942), Hans Scholl and Alexander Schmorell, the authors of that leaflet, called for resistance to the Nazi regime.

Natural Law (Right Reason)

The centerpiece of Aquinas' ethical and political philosophy is the concept of Natural Law, of which—he says—the "first precept...is that 'good ought to be done and pursued, and evil avoided.'"[63] He argues further that "truth or rightness is the same for all men, and is equally known to all," at least where the "general principles of reason" are concerned. But he concedes that, where "the particular conclusions of practical reason [are concerned], truth or rightness is not the same for all, nor, where it

59 Jens, ed., *At the Heart of the White Rose,* 14.
60 Jens, ed., *At the Heart of the White Rose,* 162.
61 Jens, ed., *At the Heart of the White Rose,* 174.
62 Shrimpton, *Conscience Before Conformity,* 90.
63 Aquinas, *Summa theologiae,* Dyson trans., p. 117 (IaIIae 94, articulus 2).

is the same, is it equally known to all."[64] For Aquinas, the moral law has its own value and does not depend on God's authority for its validity; the moral law is not binding because God wills it, rather God wills it because it is binding. This, in turn, suggests for Aquinas that right reason is a window on the eternal moral law, thus "natural." But can the Natural Law change or is it frozen in time? Aquinas readily admits that Natural Law can and does change:

> The natural law can be understood to be changed in two ways. In one way, by addition; and in this sense nothing prohibits the natural law from being changed, for many things advantageous to human life have been added over and above the natural law, both by the Divine law and by human laws. In another way, a change in the natural law can be understood to occur by subtraction, so that what was formerly according to the natural law ceases to be a part of the natural law.[65]

Thus, although the *first* principles of Natural Law *are* immutable and universal, "[t]he general principles of the natural law cannot be applied to all men in the same way because of the great variety of human circumstances; and hence arises the diversity of positive laws among various people."[66]

The State and Natural Law

From the foregoing, it will already be clear why, for Aquinas, the measure of a state's legitimacy was its respect for the moral law. There was, in fact, no instance in which the state might be authorized to adopt legislation which conflicted with the moral law. "[E]very human law has the nature of law in so far as it is derived from the law of nature," according to Aquinas. "But if it is in any respect at odds with the law of nature, it will then no longer be law, but a corruption of law."[67] For Aquinas, law is the codification of the dictates of reason and, to be valid, laws should promote the common good—although he recognized that laws could vary

64 Aquinas, *Summa theologiae,* 121 (IaIae 94, articulus 4).
65 Aquinas, *Summa theologiae,* 123 (IaIae 94, articulus 5).
66 Aquinas, *Summa theologiae,* 131 (IaIae 95, articulus 2).
67 Aquinas, *Summa theologiae,* 130 (IaIIae 95, articulus 2).

considerably from one society to another and still be valid.[68] Moreover, since Natural Law presumed human freedom, respect for the liberty of citizens became an additional criterion of legitimate government for Aquinas.[69] Thus, although Aquinas anchored temporal authority in something like divine grant, citing "the order of natural and Divine law" as mandating obedience to superiors, he nonetheless also held that subjects were not bound to obey the monarch when what he commanded exceeded his authority or was in conflict with Natural Law.[70] Further, "if princes have a ruling power which is not just but usurped, or if they command that which is unjust, their subjects are not bound to obey them, except perhaps accidentally, in order to avoid scandal or peril."[71] This, in turn, laid the foundation, at least implicitly, for a theory of legitimate versus illegitimate authority. The third leaflet distributed by the White Rose activists included this striking passage:

> The state should exist as a parallel to the divine order, and the highest of all utopias, the *civitas dei,* is the model which in the end it should approximate...Every individual human being has a claim to a useful and just state, a state which secures the freedom of the individual as well as the good of the whole.[72]

Although the third leaflet talked of passive resistance, this was expansively defined to include a call for Germans to sabotage armaments plants and other war-related industries.[73]

The White Rose in Historical Context

Nazism, as a species of fascism, promoted an ideology of racial inequality and gender inequality and sought to remake the political culture of Germans by suppressing (i) any notion of individual rights or fundamental human equality, (ii) any expressions of nonconformity or indepen-

---

68 Antony Black, *Political Thought in Europe, 1250-1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 39.
69 Black, *Political Thought in Europe,* 30.
70 Aquinas, *Summa theologiae,* Dyson trans., 57 (IaIae 104, articulus 1), 69 (IaIae 104, articulus 5).
71 Aquinas, *Summa theologiae,* Dyson trans., 71–72 (IaIae, 104, articulus 6).
72 Extract from the complete text, as reproduced in Shrimpton, *Conscience Before Conformity,* 156.
73 See McDonough, *Sophie Scholl,* 99–100.

dent thinking, and (iii) cultural pluralism and liberalism, now presented as decadent. Ultimately, the Nazis, like other fascists, intended to reshape human nature, employing violence to that end and crushing all organizations the Nazis did not control. Nazism, thus, was profoundly revolutionary in intent and in practice, and even celebrations of events in the past and historical figures were twisted to harness reconstructed memories to the task of constructing a new "alternative modernity."[74] The Third Reich absolutely deserved to be denounced as totalitarian: it liquidated an estimated 5,933,900 Jews[75] together with an additional two million Poles, Gypsies, homosexuals, alleged tramps, persons defined as "asocial," mentally infirm, physically disabled, and any other persons the Nazis deemed "unworthy of life."[76]

Fascism (including Nazism) is anti-liberal *par excellence.* Where liberalism champions the rule of law and respect for cultural differences, fascism is built on the rule of the leader and, in the case of Nazi Germany, on a demand for cultural uniformity.[77] Where liberalism advocates human equality and social tolerance, fascism denies human equality and prides itself on intolerance in the racial, ethnic, religious, gender, and aesthetic spheres. And where liberalism defends the principle of the neutrality of the state in the religious sphere and the centrality of individual rights, Nazis sought to instrumentalize religion, among other things by insinuating Nazi notions into Christianity, and mocked notions of in-

---

74 See Sabrina P. Ramet, *Alternatives to Democracy in Twentieth-Century Europe: Collectivist Visions of Modernity* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2019), 139–142, 144–48, 206–209, and *passim*. See also Roger Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Emilio Gentile, "Fascism, Totalitarianism and Political Religion: Definitions and critical reflections on criticism of an interpretation," in *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions,* Vol. 5, No. 3 (Winter 2004); Richard J. Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004); and Woodruff D. Smith, *The Ideological Origins of Nazi Imperialism* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

75 Lucy S. Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews 1933–1945* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975), 403.

76 See, *inter alia:* Hans Mommsen, "Die Realisierung des Utopischen: Die 'Endlösung der Judenfrage' im Deutschen Reich," in *Geschichte und Gesellschaft,* Vol. 9, No. 3 (1983); Guenter Lewy, *The Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Jeremy Noakes, "Social Outcasts in the Third Reich," in Richard Bessel, ed., *Life in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986; reissued 2001); Richard Plant, *The Pink Triangle: The Nazi War against Homosexuals* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1986); and Ramet, *Nonconformity, Dissent, Opposition, and Resistance in Germany,* chap. 2.

77 Fascist Italy respected a range of differences in the arts. On this point, see Marla Stone, "Staging Fascism: The Exhibition of the Fascist Revolution," *Journal of Contemporary History,* Vol. 28, No. 2 (April 1993): 216; and Victoria De Grazia and Luisa Passerini, "Alle origini della cultura di massa. Cultura popolare e fascismo in Italia," in *La Ricerca Folklorica,* no. 7 (April 1983): 19–25.

dividual rights. Emblematic of Nazi thinking about individualism is a comment by Walter Gross, a member of the Nazi party: "People think of themselves as individuals, and don't even realize they [are] merely single links in a great chain of life."[78]

Anti-fascism, thus, is—or can be—about values. But among the plethora of anti-fascist groups in the Third Reich, one can identify a range of motivations, strategies, and even goals. There were those such as Arvid Harnack (executed on 22 December 1942) and Mildred Fish-Harnack (executed on 16 February 1943), who passed along information to the Allies, in hopes of undercutting Hitler's war effort, and those associated with the Kreisau Circle, led by Helmuth James Graf von Moltke (executed on 23 January 1945), who discussed plans for a post-war, post-Nazi Germany.[79] There were serious discussions among *Wehrmacht* generals in the resistance of staging a coup to remove Hitler from power or, alternatively, of assassinating Hitler. Included in the discussions were: General Ludwig Beck (executed on 20 July 1944); Colonel-General Wilhelm Ritter von Leeb (d. 1956); German diplomat Hasso von Etzdorf (d. 1989); Admiral Wilhelm Canaris (executed on 9 April 1945); German diplomat Hans Bernd Gisevius (d. 23 February 1974); Carl Friedrich Goerdeler (former mayor of Leipzig, executed on 2 February 1945); Major General Friedrich Olbricht (executed on 21 July 1944); Lt. Col. Hans Oster (executed on 9 April 1945); Colonel Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg (executed on 21 July 1944); and Colonel Henning von Tresckow (committed suicide on 21 July 1944), among others. The best known of the plots to kill Hitler involved Colonel Stauffenberg, chief of staff to the Reserve Army Command, who carried a briefcase loaded with explosives to a meeting at which Hitler would be present; Hitler escaped with only minor injuries.[80] There were also some in the military opposition who wanted to negotiate a peace treaty which would allow Germany to retain its borders of

78 As quoted in Anson Rabinbach, "Introduction: Legacies of Antifascism," in *New German Critique,* No. 67 (Winter 1996): 3.

79 Thomas and Lewis, *Defying Hitler,* xii, 173, 233, 298, 444; and Hans Rothfels, *The German Opposition to Hitler: An Appraisal,* trans. from German by Lawrence Wilson (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1962; second printing 1963), 109–124.

80 Harold C. Deutsch, *The Conspiracy against Hitler in the Twilight War* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1968), 11–12, 29–30, 35–36, 175–176; Peter Hoffmann, "Ludwig Beck: Loyalty and Resistance," in *Central European History,* Vol. 14, No. 4 (December 1981), 332–350; Harold C. Deutsch, "The German Resistance: Answered and unanswered questions," in *Central European History,* Vol. 14, No. 4 (December 1981): 322–331; and Leonidas E. Hill, "Towards a New History of German Resistance to Hitler," in *Central European History,* Vol. 14, No. 4 (December 1981), 369–399.

late 1938, which to say to include Austria and the Sudetenland. And some, such as Goerdeler, Tresckow, and Stauffenberg were motivated, in part, by the hope of bringing about "the restoration of ordinary human decency."[81]

Films have been made to honor the White Rose activists; streets have been named for Hans and Sophie Scholl in Berlin, Stuttgart, Hamburg, Eppendorf, Hildesheim, and elsewhere; and a bust of Sophie Scholl was placed in the Valhalla hall of German heroes outside Regensburg on 22 February 2003. Indeed, although there were a number of Germans prepared to risk their lives in the effort to bring an end to the Nazi regime, the White Rose activists stand in a class by themselves because of their articulate grounding in Christian philosophy, their declared effort to be faithful to divine law, their commitment to nonviolence, and their fiercely independent thinking. The courage of Hans and Sophie Scholl in the face of evil can still inspire us. They fully embodied the spirit of Pascal when he wrote, "Just as it is a crime to disturb the peace when truth reigns, it is also a crime to remain in peace when the truth is being destroyed."[82] And knowing the truth about evil, brings responsibility. Thus, in the second White Rose leaflet, already cited above, the authors stressed, "...when in recent years our eyes have been opened, when we know exactly who our adversary is, it is high time to root out this brown horde...[N]ow that we have recognized [the Nazis] for what they are, it must be the sole and first duty, the holiest duty of every German to destroy these beasts."[83]

---

81 Carl Goerdeler, in interview with Harold Deutsch in Leipzig, 1936, as quoted in Deutsch, "The German Resistance," 324.

82 As quoted in Beitzinger, "Pascal on Justice," 233.

83 Extract from the complete text of the second leaflet, as quoted in Shrimpton, *Conscience Before Conformity,* 155.

7

The Committee against Neofascism and Racial Prejudices

Nordic Anti-Fascist Organizing and International Solidarity in the 1960s

PONTUS JÄRVSTAD

> **Greece must today be counted as a fascist dictatorship. It poses a danger to peace, progress, and democracy. It is especially serious that this fascist dictatorship has arrived in Europe more than 20 years after the Second World War, with its aims of obliterating fascism and Nazism. This is even more disconcerting since Spain and Portugal have not yet been freed from their fascist dictatorships and new fascist movements are arising in other European countries.**
>
> [The Nordic Conference for Democracy in Greece, April 27–28, 1968.] [1]

In the decades following World War Two, anti-fascist articulations in the Nordic countries were most prominent within solidarity organizations that opposed authoritarian regimes in southern Europe, such as those of General Francisco Franco (1892–1975) in Spain and the military junta in Greece. Although historians of fascism would today not define these regimes as truly fascist,[2] anti-fascist activists at the time did. This speaks to the significance and continuity of anti-fascism as a lens through which to view the world, even at the height of the Cold War.

In this chapter, I will provide an overview of events that shaped the use of anti-fascism—in the 1960s—in Sweden, in particular, and the Nordic

---

1 Kjell E. Johanson, ed., *Solidaritet: antifascistisk årsbok. 1968–69* (Staffanstorp: Cavefors, 1968), 75. Translated from the original: "3. Grekland måste idag räknas till de diktaturer av fascistisk typ, som utgör en fara för fred, framsteg och demokrati. Det är särskilt allvarligt att denna fascistiska diktatur kunnat tillkomma i Europa mer än 20 år efter det andra världskriget där målsättningen var att utplåna fascism och nazism. Detta är så mycket mer oroande som Spanien och Portugal ännu inte befriats från sina fascistdiktaturer och nya fascistiska strömmningar gör sig breda i andra europeiska länder."

2 Robert O. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (New York & London: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 149–150; Roger Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning Under Mussolini and Hitler* (New York: Palgrave, 2007), 6, 267, 355–356; and Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Routledge, 1993), 26–29, 35–36.

region, more broadly. Already in the early postwar years, there had been an anti-fascist mobilization in the Nordic countries, especially Norway, opposing the normalization of external relations with Francoist Spain. The Spanish regime was conceptualized as fascist, a term that was even used in Resolution 39 adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1946.[3] This event led to the rebirth of anti-fascist solidarity organizations—the so-called Spanish Committees in the Nordic countries—that had lain dormant since the end of the Spanish Civil War.[4] Rising Cold War tensions, with the Soviet-sponsored communist coup in Czechoslovakia 1948 and Stalin's isolation of Berlin in 1948–1949, meant that those who saw a normalization of relations with Spain as a necessary step in the struggle against communism gained popularity. Spain was admitted to the UN in 1955 after the Eisenhower Administration had concluded the 1953 Pact of Madrid with the Franco regime, providing it with substantial economic and military support in return for U.S. air and naval bases on Spanish territory. Nonetheless, together with Denmark, Norway was instrumental in keeping Spain out of NATO until the death of Franco in 1975.[5]

The early 1960s witnessed a resurgence of anti-fascist mobilization. What sparked it was a global spread of Nazi-inspired anti-Semitic graffiti attacks and vandalism in 1959 dubbed the "swastika epidemic." In response, activists used an anti-fascist framework to highlight several issues: the legacy of the Holocaust; the existence of neo-Nazis and neo-fascist groups; a failed denazification of West Germany, and the still existing fascist regimes in Southern Europe.

Here I will explore this anti-fascist agitation by focusing on the activities of the Swedish *Committee against Neo-fascism and Racial Prejudices*[6]

---

3 Hilde Haraldstad, "Norsk nei til Franco i NATO," Forsvarsstudier 4/1995, Institutt for forsvarsstudier, 5–9: General Assembly resolution 39, "Relations of Members of the United Nations with Spain: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly," A/RES/39(I) (12 December 1946), available from https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/671249?ln=en.

4 Edgeir Benum, *Maktsentra og Opposisjon: Spaniasaken i Norge 1946 og 1947* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1969), 35–36.
"Spanienkommittén startar på nytt," *Svenska Dagbladet* (13 January 1947), 10.

5 Stefán Svavarsson, "Frá saltfiski til sólarferða Stjórnmála- og viðskiptatengsl Íslands og Spánar 1939–1959," MA thesis University of Iceland, 36; Hilde Haraldstad, "Norsk nei til Franco i NATO," 9–11, 12–20, 52–54; Anders Dalsager, "Framing anti-fascism in the Cold War: the Socialist Youth International and Franco's regime after the Second World War," in Kasper Braskén, Nigel Copsey, and Johan A. Lundin, eds., *Anti-fascism in the Nordic Countries: New Perspectives, Comparisons and Transnational Connections* (London & New York: Routledge, 2019), 233.

6 This is how the group's name was translated from the original Swedish: *Kommittén mot nynazism och rasfördomar.* Boycott [Flyer, 1963], Politiska aktioner, SWE/RA/721126 – 3/3a/1, Kjell E Johansons arkiv.

(CNR), which was formed in 1963. Apart from exploring its transnational links with other Nordic groups and individuals and the networking between solidarity movements, I will show how these groups conceptualized fascism and how they tried to popularize anti-fascism. Thus, the purpose is to show how a heritage of anti-fascism was claimed within the CNR and affiliated groups and individuals. I will show that anti-fascism continued to be used as a political framework, with the participation of individuals who had been politically active in the 1930s and 1940s. Still, the anti-fascist framework and attempts to create new popular fronts were constantly challenged by the political realities of the Cold War. A key question discussed here is how anti-fascists tackled this tension.

Recent historical research into anti-fascism tends to emphasize two aspects previously overlooked. First, it has been argued that anti-fascism was far more diverse than previously understood and that it cannot be reduced to the state ideology of the Soviet Union.[7] Anti-fascists came from the whole political spectrum, whether viewed from the perspective of Nigel Copsey's anti-fascist minimum[8] or that of Michael Seidman's counterrevolutionary-revolutionary binary.[9] The second aspect is the enormous influence of anti-fascism, not only as part of memory politics but also as an embodiment, in the words of Seidman, of "perhaps the most powerful Western ideology of the twentieth century."[10] In the immediate post-war era, anti-fascism became an important concept for newly liberated states that wanted a clear break with a fascist past. Yet, anti-fascism was also an essential part of communist ideology; communists portrayed themselves as the true anti-fascists, sometimes excluding all other political formations from their narrative, using anti-fascism to justify their dictatorial rule in Eastern Europe. Thus, during the Cold War, the anti-fascist framework captured the imagination of multiple political actors.[11]

---

7 H. Garcia, Yusta Mercedes, Xavier Tabet, and Christina Clímaco, *Rethinking Antifascism: History, Memory and Politics, 1922 to the Present* (New York & Oxford: Berghahn, 2016); and Braskén, Copsey, and Lundin, eds., *Anti-fascism in the Nordic Countries*.

8 Nigel Copsey and A. Olechnowicz, eds., *Varieties of Anti-Fascism. Britain in the Inter-War Period.* (Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

9 Michael Seidman, *Transatlantic Antifascisms: From the Spanish Civil War to the End of World War Two* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 2–3.

10 Michael Seidman, *Transatlantic Antifascisms*, 1.

11 Arnd Bauerkämper, "Marxist Historical Cultures, 'Antifascism' and the Legacy of the Past: Western Europe, 1945–1990," in Stefan Berger and Christoph Cornelissen, eds., *Marxist Historical Cultures and Social Movements During the Cold War* (Cham: Springer International Publishing AG, 2019), 33–34.

The "Swastika Epidemic" of 1959–1960

Under the cover of darkness on Christmas Eve 1959, two members of a West German neo-Nazi party, the *Deutsche Reichspartei,* painted two huge swastikas, with the words "Juden raus," on the newly opened synagogue in Cologne. The West German government and state television reacted by encouraging all citizens to help to put an end to such vandalism that threatened the Federal Republic's image internationally. The two perpetrators, who were quickly caught by the police, confessed and were denounced by their own party.[12] Instead of being an isolated incident, it was only the beginning of a far wider trend: hundreds of cases of Nazi anti-Semitic graffiti and vandalism occurred all over the globe, with only a few countries spared. West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer told the press that if people caught vandals in the act, they should give them a good thrashing. Using a pandemic metaphor, U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower declared that the virus of bigotry should not be allowed to spread. In West Berlin, 40,000 people took part in a protest march against anti-Semitism.[13] The West German government accused the East German government of orchestrating the acts, even if it provided only circumstantial evidence to support its allegation.[14] Much later, seven KGB defectors to the West gave accounts of Soviet agents hiring people to vandalize Jewish places of worship and homes. The plan was to weaken the international standing of West Germans in the eyes of their allies. The defectors claimed that the KGB had set up a trial run of the operation in a Moscow suburb; yet, as it happened, it spread among the population outside the control of the KGB.

It is still not entirely clear if the KGB had initiated the "swastika epidemic," or whether it had merely contributed to something that was already happening. In his book, *Active Measures*, political scientist Thomas

---

12 "Attentat mot synagoga väckte västtysk storm," *Svenska Dagbladet*, 27 December 1959, 8; and Thomas Rid, *Active Measures: The Secret History of Disinformation and Political Warfare* (London: Profile Books, 2020), 123–124.

13 Rid, *Active Measures*, 125–127.

14 "Tysk vitbok om hakkorsdåden LO-aktion mot historieböcker," *Svenska Dagbladet*, 18 February 1960, 8; "Nazistagitator österttysk agent," *Svenska Dagbladet*, 17 January 1960, 8; *Die antisemitischen und nazistischen Vorfälle. Weißbuch und Erklärung der Bundesregierung*, Bundesregierung (Bonn: H. Köllen, 1960), at https://archive.org/details/1960-weissbuch; and Peter Maxwill, "Hakenkreuze in der Bundesrepublik: Die Stunde der Schmierfinken," *Spiegel Geschichte* (9 December 2014), at https://www.spiegel.de/geschichte/hakenkreuz-antisemitismus-in-der-nachkriegszeit-a-1006236.html—both last accessed on 15 November 2021.

Rid argues that the KGB orchestrated the "swastika epidemic" from the start. He bases this conclusion, among other things, on his 2017 interview with former KGB general Oleg Kalugin. Rid admits, however, that the true reach of disinformation operations in general is hard to measure and that agents involved often exaggerated their success. Furthermore, what was engineered and what were organic developments were difficult to disentangle.[15]

Yet, from a broader perspective, the "swastika epidemic" raised questions of whether Europe was truly free from fascism and whether denazification had been successful. In the early 1960s, the West German government was rocked by scandals, involving officials who were accused of participating in war crimes and who had participated in the drafting of the 1935 Nuremberg Laws.[16] The West German labor movement was also quick to point out the inadequate history education about Nazi crimes in the school system.[17] The English scholar Christopher Vials has argued that another related event—the sensational Eichmann trial in 1961—generated profound changes in anti-fascist agitation in the United States by focusing public attention on the extermination of the European Jews. Before this, the main expression of anti-fascism had been a class reductionist popular front narrative.[18]

The Nordic countries were also affected by the swastika epidemic, which received considerable press attention. It was reported that Oslo had experienced anti-Semitic vandalism already months before the Cologne incident.[19] At the beginning of January 1960, it spread to Sweden, Denmark,[20] and Iceland. Icelandic journalists were horrified that anti-Semitism, fascism, and Nazism had now reached the shores of their country. The Social Democratic Party newspaper argued that a communist connection could not be ruled out and noted how the East German newspapers were instrumentalizing the incidents of vandalism to besmirch West Germany's reputation.[21] The media seem to have reveled in disseminating theories about the origins of the vandalism. The Swed-

15 Rid, *Active Measures*, 130–132, 430.
16 Christopher Vials, *Haunted by Hitler: Liberals, the Left, and the Fight against Fascism in the United States* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2014), 127–128.
17 "Tysk vitbok om hakkorsdåden LO-aktion mot historieböcker," *Svenska Dagbladet*, 18 February 1960, 8.
18 Vials, *Haunted by Hitler*, 127–29.
19 "Hakkors målat på Oslohus långt före Kölnhändelsen," *Svenska Dagbladet,* 5 January 1960, 7.
20 "Judefientliga aktionen spreds till Stockholm," *Svenska Dagbladet*, 4 January 1960, 3.
21 "Hakakrossar í Reykjavík," *Alþýðublaðið,* 9 January 1960, 1–3.

ish fascist leader Per Engdahl, who had helped many Nazis escape prosecution after the war, was targeted and accused of being an instigator. He was active in a pan-European fascist network, involving the most prominent post-war fascist leaders, ranging from Oswald Mosley in the United Kingdom to the successful neo-fascist party the Italian Social Movement (MSI). The network aimed at reinventing fascism by replacing the concept of race with that of culture.[22] Engdahl denied all involvement in the vandalism and used anti-Semitism to blame it on a Jewish conspiracy.[23] He accused his main Swedish competitor on the far-right, the Swedish Nazi party *Nordiska Rikspartiet* (NRP), of being behind the episode.[24] This accusation took hold, and in 1960 the Swedish printers union (*Typografförbundet*) refused to print material from the NRP in an attempt to prevent the party from disseminating its political message on a broad scale.[25] Later, in 1963, *The Committee against Neo-Fascism and Racial Prejudices* (CNR) received a letter from a former NRP member, pointing out the new printshop that the party used. He argued that the best way to fight Swedish Nazism was to make sure that the party could not print its propaganda material.[26]

It worked, because the print shop stopped producing material from the NRP, which later claimed that the CNR was behind the action. That may be true, but the CNR never publicly claimed responsibility for this action. Historian Heléne Lööw argues that the actions against the printshops were probably a response to the swastika epidemic.[27] At the time, there were several Swedish neo-Nazi activists who distributed flyers in schools and posted letters containing anti-Semitic propaganda. This activity and the swastika epidemic culminated in a public outrage in the early 1960s. Social movements became involved, and there were calls for educational reform to meet the neo-Nazi challenge.[28] Many young people also protested the neo-Nazi activities. In 1961, there were mas-

22 Elisabeth Åsbrink, "When Race Was Removed from Racism: Per Engdahl, the Networks that Saved Fascism and the Making of the Concept of Ethnopluralism," *Journal of the History of Ideas*. Vol. 82, No. 1 (2021): 133–51.
23 Heléne Lööw, *Nazismen i Sverige 1925–1979: Pionjärerna, Partierna, Propagandan* (Stockholm: Ordfront, 2016), 60–61.
24 Lööw, *Nazismen i Sverige 1925–1979,* 468.
25 Lööw, *Nazismen i Sverige 1925–1979,* 185.
26 Letter from Göran Lundberg (7 October 1963), Föreningshandlingar, SWE/ARAB/R/72/J/7 – 5285/2, Kommittén mot nynazism och rasfördomar.
27 Lööw, *Nazismen i Sverige 1925–1979,* 185–186.
28 Lööw, *Nazismen i Sverige 1925–1979,* 363; and "Avslöjande rapport till skolöverstyrelsen," *Svenska Dagbladet*, 7 September 1961, 31.

sive protests at two public neo-Nazi meetings in Stockholm organized by Per Engdahl that led to unrest.[29] There were reports in the press about insufficient history education concerning the Holocaust and in 1962 the Swedish School Board issued recommendations for supplemental reading material for teachers.[30]

The increase in antisemitism, which had started with the "swastika epidemic," raised questions of race and the Holocaust in the Nordic countries. It led to vocal calls for improvements in education but also to the revival of anti-fascist organizing in Sweden.

A New Political Formation against Neo-Fascism and Racism

In January 1963, a new anti-fascist committee, *The Committee against Neo-Fascism and Racial Prejudices* (CNR), was established in Stockholm. Its purpose was to counter neo-Nazi activity in schools, to educate people, and to declare solidarity with victims of fascism and racism. The core founding members were mostly communists and social democrats from middle-class professions. But among the 70 people who signed the manifesto of the group, there were also famous writers, a theater director, a professor, several artists, and an actress. Some had been outspoken in their fight against Nazism during World War Two.[31] This new attempt at forming an elite anti-fascist popular front group did not escape criticism. In February, two of the main founders, Kjell E. Johanson and Bror Liljefelt, were interviewed in the Syndicalist newspaper *Arbetaren*. The former revealed that the committee wanted to engage with the question of the status of—and prejudice against—the Roma people in Sweden (*Zigenarfrågan*). As Johanson put it: "All racial prejudice is a hotbed for Nazism and fascism."[32] It is worth mentioning that the CNR tried to engage with a vibrant Roma civil rights movement at the time in Sweden. The famous Roma civil rights activist Katarina Taikon became a CNR board member in 1968 but left it in the same year without offering any

29 "Kaos på nynazistiskt möte Polisen tvingades avbryta," *Svenska Dagbladet,* 16 September 1961, 24; and "Tusentalet ungdomar i protest vid Nyssvenska rörelsens möte," *Svenska Dagbladet*, 25 November 1961, 9.
30 "Rekommendationer till lärarna om undervisning om nazitiden," *Svenska Dagbladet*, 10 May 1962, 29–30.
31 "Kommitté mot nynazism bildad av sex svenskar," *Svenska Dagbladet*, 22 January 1963, 16.
32 "Här presenteras en ny kommitté," *Arbetaren*, 7–13 February 1963, nr. 6, 8.

explanation—which disappointed the committee.[33] This shows how the swastika epidemic had raised questions about race within anti-fascism. The CNR claimed that it was nonpolitical and unaffiliated with any political parties and that its goal was to attract key individuals in the youth services, arts, and culture. The journalist, Armas Sastamoinen was curious to know why Ture Nerman, one of the big names of wartime Swedish anti-fascism, was not a member of the committee. Johanson responded by saying that the idea was to draw in new people.[34] Nerman was a social democrat and ex-communist, having abandoned the Communist Party after Joseph Stalin became the ruler of the Soviet Union. He criticized the New Left and the student movement during the 1960s and even supported the American war in Vietnam.[35] The syndicalist newspaper *Arbetaren* also had an editorial line that was left-wing and anti-totalitarian, which initially supported the U.S. war in Vietnam.[36] Just as had happened elsewhere, the communist coup in Czechoslovakia in 1948 brought about a split between the social democrats and the communists in Sweden, with the former harkening back to their interwar view of seeing the latter as a force of dictatorship.[37] The article in *Arbetaren* argued that since Kjell E. Johanson was a communist, the committee needed a new secretary, for only democrats should lead the anti-Nazi work.[38] This criticism was echoed in other newspapers.[39] One of the syndicalist journalists, Sven-Erik Handberg, made the point that communists could not be trusted, reviving memories of how they had betrayed the syndicalist forces in the Spanish Civil War.[40]

Yet, the committee proved very active and received positive media attention as well. Teachers and youth leaders contacted the group, requesting information about fascism and racism. Indeed, the swastika epidemic and Nazi propaganda in the schools opened the discussion

---

33 "Kommittén mot nynazism," *Svenska Dagbladet,* 20 April 1968, 11. Letters from: Sten Cederqvist, 30 October 1968, SWE/ARAB/R/72/J/7 – 5285/1, Kommittén mot nynazism och rasfördomar.

34 "Här presenteras en ny kommitté," *Arbetaren,* 7–13 February 1963, nr. 6, 8.

35 Ture Nerman, *Sverige på glid* (Stockholm: Adromeda, 1967), 58–59, 74.

36 Alexander Ekelund, (C-uppsats), "Syndikalismen och den nya vänstern: En studie av tidskriften Zenits utveckling och debatten inom den syndikalistiska rörelsen under 60-talet" 2001 Södertörns högskola, 13–14.

37 Ture Nerman, *Clarté: En Studie i Studentpolitik* (Stockholm: Ronzo Boktryckeri, 1962), 95–101.

38 "Här presenteras en ny kommitté," *Arbetaren*, 7-13 February 1963, nr. 6, 8.

39 "Att blunda med ena ögat," *Göteborgs tidningen*, 11 December, 1963.

40 "Bordsdebatt om kommunismen och Demokratisk Ungdom," *Arbetaren* Nr. 21, 1964, 5.

on these questions in an unprecedented way. Beyond these efforts, the CNR did much to put pressure on what it saw as actually existing fascist regimes. It was not long before these international concerns would dominate the committee's practical work.[41] It signified a shift away from fascism as an internal issue to be fought with education to fascism as an international phenomenon exemplified by certain regimes. Historian Kjell Östberg argues that in the 1960s and 1970s, the international solidarity movements played one of the dominant roles in political culture in Sweden, more so than in most other countries. When the continental European student movements began fighting for the democratization of higher education, such reforms were already well under way in Sweden. Toward the end of the 1960s, there were bulletins and journals that stood in solidarity with—and informed about—almost every liberation movement in the Third World.[42] The CNR was very much part of this trend, even if its defining character was much more anti-fascist than "Third-Worldist." In 1963–1964, it organized a campaign, together with 300 local unions, demanding the release of political prisoners in Portugal and Spain. The CNR was financed mainly from donations from the unions, and it utilized its connections among cultural figures and politicians.

One campaign in particular, which took place in 1963, had a big impact in the Nordic countries. The Spanish regime had planned a PR-campaign, which was called Spanish Week, with the aim of exhibiting Spanish culture to improve relations and encourage tourism.[43] Already in 1962, when a similar event had been held in Oslo, there were protests outside the venue, ending with a police dog attacking the crowd. The surprisingly harsh use of force by the Norwegian police had offended public opinion, forcing the police chief to express regret at the use of dogs.[44] In April the following year, the Danish foreign minister Per Hækkerup informed the Spanish government that Denmark did not want the planned week to take place; this was shortly after the Franco regime had

41 Verksamhetsberätterlse för tiden januari 1963 – maj 1964, Stockholm May 1964. SWE/ARAB/R/72/J/7 – 5285/1, Kommittén mot nynazism och rasfördomar, 1–4.

42 Kjell Östberg, "Sweden and the Long '1968': Break or Continuity?" *Scandinavian Journal of History,* Vol. 33 No. 4 (2008): 342.

43 Verksamhetsberätterlse för tiden januari 1963 – maj 1964, Stockholm May 1964. SWE/ARAB/R/72/J/7 – 5285/1, Kommittén mot nynazism och rasfördomar, 2–3, 5.

44 "Unødig å bruke hunder mot fredelig demonstrasjon," *Friheten,* 30 May 1962, 1, 6. "Sjefen for ørdenspolitiet: Hunden burde ikke blitt SLUPPET LØS på demonstrantene," *Arbeiderbladet*, 30 May 1962, 5.

executed the communist Julián Grimau, an act that had provoked an international uproar.[45] In Finland, the Spanish Week was also cancelled.[46] In Sweden, the CNR organized a mass gathering to shut down the event. The committee sent telegrams to the King of the Sweden and to the Mayor of Stockholm—as well as to famous business magnate Marcus Wallenberg and Film director Ingmar Bergman—pleading with them not to participate in the event. In addition, 62 cultural personalities signed a letter protesting the event. The venues were put under blockade by the CNR, and thousands of flyers in different languages were distributed, describing the political situation in Spain. In the end, all the events were cancelled except for one.[47]

In one of the CNR flyers, Denmark is specifically mentioned as an example of an instance in which public opinion managed to exert pressure, leading to the cancellation of the events.[48] The CNR was conscious in its efforts not to be seen as a communist front group, as its critics would have it. It interacted with and attracted the support of large segments of society for its demands. The committee also levelled criticism against the Soviet Union and East Germany. It sent a telegram to Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, urging him to abolish capital punishment on the grounds that it was barbaric and useless for the purpose of rehabilitation. Even Walter Ulbricht, the East German leader, received a telegram from the CNR, protesting the imprisonment of a labor organizer.[49] Although the neo-Nazi antisemitic vandalism and propaganda had been the catalyst for the emergence of the CNR, anti-Semitism was not dealt with specifically, except perhaps indirectly in the educational campaigns against Nazism. The CNR stated that it would not exclude any important issue, for example the persecution of Jews in the Soviet Union.[50] But there is nothing that indicates that it focused, specifically, on anti-Semitism.

The CNR was aware of the tensions involved in using an anti-fascist framework during the Cold War and faced criticism for doing so. It raised

45 "Danskene vil ikke ha 'spansk uke'," *Nordlands Framtid*, 24 April 1963, 8.
46 "Ikke spansk uke," *Arbeiderbladet*, 20 May 1963, 2.
47 Verksamhetsberätterlse för tiden januari 1963 – maj 1964, Stockholm May 1964. SWE/ARAB/R/72/J/7 – 5285/1, Kommittén mot nynazism och rasfördomar, 2-3.
48 Blockad [Flyer, 1963], Politiska aktioner, SE/RA/721126 – 3/3a/1, Kjell E Johansons arkiv.
49 Verksamhetsberätterlse för tiden januari 1963 – maj 1964, Stockholm May 1964. SWE/ARAB/R/72/J/7 – 5285/1, Kommittén mot nynazism och rasfördomar, 4-7.
50 "Här presenteras en ny kommitté," *Arbetaren* (7-13 February 1963), nr.6, p. 8.

the question of whether such contradictions were visible in the committee's definition of fascism and whether its political activity represented a break when viewed from the broader contours of the anti-fascist tradition.

Who Were the Fascists? Anti-Fascist Interpretations in the 1960s

Kjell E. Johanson's 1963 book *Fascism, Nazism, Racism* was co-published with the CNR, with an extended version coming out three years later. In the introduction, Martin Koff argues that fascism was not truly defeated in 1945. Small, but loud, neo-Nazi and neo-fascist groups were responsible for the spread of anti-Semitism, which should be a reminder of the Nazi extermination of the Jewish people. Further, he pointed out that a new generation was growing up without proper knowledge about these events. Koff expressed the hope that the CNR could be part of a growing popular aversion to fascism and racism and of a broader movement against small neo-Nazi groups in Sweden as well as the repressive regimes in Spain, Portugal, and South Africa.[51] Even though the form of fascism varied over time and place, Johanson argued, its content remained the same. In the 1966 edition of the book, the fascist states listed were Spain and Portugal, while Greece occupied a space between fascism, reactionary conservatism, and democratic development. This was before the Greek military junta seized power, which led to political repression. Outside Europe, Johanson claimed that apartheid South Africa was sometimes included as a fascist state based solely on its racial politics.[52] As for the content of fascism, Johanson built on an interpretation put forward in the 1930s by political scientist Herbert Tingsten, who argued that fascism was essentially nationalistic and bourgeois. It was nationalistic in that all society was subordinated to the sense of togetherness within the nation state. It was bourgeois by maintaining capitalist social relations and private property as well as being brought to power by the anti-socialist bourgeoisie. Early anti-capitalist tendencies within Fascist and Nazi propaganda were of little significance in later practical politics and ideology. However, Johanson argued that this

51 Kjell E. Johanson, *Fascism, Nazism, Rasism,* 1st ed. (Karlstad: Tryckeribolaget, 1963), 3-4.
52 Kjell E. Johanson, *Fascism, Nazism, Rasism,* 2nd ed. (Malmö: Cavefors, 1966), 14-15.

did not mean that all segments of the bourgeoisie were behind fascism. To him, fascism also combated those in the bourgeoisie who defended bourgeois democracy against the fascistic bourgeois terror-dictatorship. He was critical of comparisons between dictatorships in the Soviet bloc and those of the interwar fascist states. To him, Fascism was different because it was a reactionary minority dictatorship that preserved capitalism.[53] Although the interpretation is built on non-communist theories of fascism, stemming from Swedish thinkers associated with social democracy, it stills bears the resemblance to the "agent of capitalism" theory that became the official policy of the Comintern in the 1920s.[54]

Nonetheless, Johanson transcended this interpretation when including issues of race. Racists were defined as those who ascribed the most importance to people's racial heritage and who propagated a separation of races, often with violence. The attempt by Nazi Germany to exterminate the Jews was understood to have been the most extreme expression of racism. Johanson denounced racism and any purported inferiorities or superiorities among races. He viewed the concept of race itself as a falsehood used to spoil and undermine relations between peoples.[55] Racism was dehumanizing, for it reduced the individual to his or her race.[56] What is more, as he put it: "Racism is always a breeding ground for fascism. Racial prejudices of all kinds, even though they don't lead to physical oppression, create an ideological situation, that is favorable for fascism."[57] He mentioned examples of racism in South Africa, the Portuguese colonial empire, and even the American South. He also pointed to the treatment of the Roma people in Sweden, which he saw as being racist. Moreover, he provided a description of the Holocaust and of how Jews were made scapegoats by the linkage of anti-communism with anti-Semitism. He also linked this discourse with the suppression of black liberation struggles in Southern Africa. Demands for justice for the black

53 Kjell E. Johanson, *Fascism, Nazism, Rasism* (Karlstad: Tryckeribolaget, 1963), 7-9.
54 Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914-1945* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 441–444; .and *The Communist International: 1919-1943 Documents*, edited by Jane Degras, Volume III 1929-1943, at https://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/documents/volume3-1929-1943.pdf [accessed on 23 June 2023], 296.
55 Kjell E. Johanson, *Fascism, Nazism, Rasism,* 1st ed. (Karlstad: Tryckeribolaget, 1963), 9.
56 Kjell E. Johanson, *Fascism, Nazism, Rasism,* 2nd ed. (Malmö: Cavefors, 1966), 24–25.
57 Johanson, *Fascism, Nazism, Rasism,* 26. Translated from: "Rasism är alltid en grogrund för fascism. Rasfördomar av alla slag, även om de icke leder till fysiskt förtryck, skapar en ideologisk situation, som är gynnsam för fascismen."

population were written off by the apartheid government as the result of communist propaganda.[58] In Johanson's words: "Anticommunism as well as racism are pillars in the present fascist propaganda … they seek to turn the population's attention away from the real questions by constructing problems."[59]

The book also accounts for the different neo-Nazi and neo-fascist groups that were currently active in Sweden.[60] Johanson believed that there was no imminent threat of fascism in Sweden. Yet, fascism might blossom if people remained apathetic toward the suffering of colonized peoples, and if there was a proliferation of racial prejudices against Roma, Sami, and black people. He viewed the situation in Southern Europe in stark and dire terms. He even saw the incomplete denazification in West Germany as problematic and viewed the United States as a threat to democracy because of its foreign policy and imperialism. To him, an appeasement of the regimes behind these injustices only helped fascism to spread, just as it had done during the interwar period.[61]

As part of its anti-fascist project, the book argues for far-reaching social change, an expansion of democracy into the economic sphere as a precondition for an effective fight against fascism. Johanson argued that, in essence, democracy was a radical ideology that had been diluted. It entailed (and still entails) a promise of equality. In this regard, he criticized not only conservative democrats but also the Soviet Union and European Social Democracies. To him, democratic parliamentarianism was preferable to proletarian dictatorship. But Social Democracy betrayed its promises by not expanding democracy into the realm of the economy.[62]

Although Johanson's democratic outlook was heavily influenced by his communism, he distanced himself from Soviet communism in his New Left-inspired perspective on this issue. Nevertheless, his book attracted considerable criticism from the media. In one newspaper review, entitled "Education with a hidden purpose," the CNR was accused of be-

58 Johanson, *Fascism, Nazism, Rasism,* 2nd ed., 24.
59 Johanson, *Fascism, Nazism, Rasism*. 25. Translated from: "Såväl antikommunism som rasism är hörnpelare i fascisternas dagsaktuella propaganda. Med dessa metoder söker man vända bort befolkningens uppmärksamhet från de verkliga frågeställningarna och problem konstrueras."
60 Johanson, *Fascism, Nazism, Rasism,* 2nd ed., 43–47.
61 Johanson, *Fascism, Nazism, Rasism,* 56–58.
62 Johanson, *Fascism, Nazism, Rasism,* 8–9, 13.

ing deeply communist. The reviewer found it objectionable that Johanson defended some dictatorships in the East, while being consistently critical of others in the South.[63] Yet, the book was widely read and positively received by many, with the CNR receiving letters of appreciation from readers in Norway and Denmark.[64]

In the mid-1960s, the CNR activities declined due to preoccupation with opposition to the Vietnam war.[65] As it turned out, anti-fascism and the Vietnam war were, to some extent, considered two separate issues. The CNR became more active again following the 1967 military coup in Greece. In 1968-1969, the CNR published two anthologies about anti-fascism and solidarity movements.[66] They were filled with articles and poems written by members of different solidarity movements and political refugees, ranging from Spain and Greece to Vietnam, Indonesia, and South Africa. Even the Roma issue in Sweden was dealt with. The social democratic chairman of the CNR, Sten Cederqvist, described the books as following the educational tradition of anti-fascist texts written in the 1930s by drawing attention to fascism and encouraging resistance and solidarity with its victims. He used as examples campaigns to free political prisoners in Nazi Germany and the solidarity work during the Spanish Civil War. He had been active in these movements in the 1930s. Cederqvist wrote that fascism lived on in military dictatorships supported by financial interests all over the world, with the Greek military junta being the latest one.[67]

Kjell E. Johanson continued to call for a united popular front on the model of the one in the 1930s. This one could be successful if the broad Left united with liberal progressives in such an alliance. He believed, further, that there were new possibilities for a fascist revival after the Greek military coup. And he saw a danger of right-wing authoritarian influences in the politics of West Germany, Italy, and France. Johanson confessed to having problems differentiating between imperialism and fascism because, in his mind, both served big business. He believed that

63 "Upplysning med dolt syfte," *Göteborgs-Tidningen*, 3 November 1966, 2.
64 Letters from: Peter Bergen Jeppesen, 30 September 1969 and Oivind Pedersen (2 February 1970), SWE/ARAB/R/72/J/7 – 5285/1, Kommittén mot nynazism och rasfördomar.
65 Johanson, *Fascism, Nazism, Racism*, 7.
66 Kjell E. Johanson, ed., *Solidaritet: antifascistisk årsbok. 1968–69* (Staffanstorp: Cavefors, 1968); and Kjell E. Johanson, ed., *Solidaritet: antifascistisk årsbok 1969–70* (Uddevalla: Cavefors, 1969).
67 Johanson, ed., *Solidaritet: antifascistisk årsbok. 1968–69,* 7–8, 192.

the United States was in the "process of fascistization" due to its wars and discrimination against racial minorities.[68]

Nordic Anti-Fascist Solidarity with Greece in 1968

In April 1967, Greek army officers had disposed of democracy in Greece in a military coup. Polls had indicated a leftist victory in the upcoming elections and Colonel Georgios Papadopoulos and the other officers sought to prevent this. A state of emergency was declared and thousands of political opponents were imprisoned. As historian Kim Christiaens has shown, the coup generated broad-based political and transnational protest movements on both sides of the iron curtain, involving solidarity movements, radical students, and human rights NGOs. There were calls for a tourist boycott and for the removal of Greece from the Council of Europe, the European Economic Community (EEC), and NATO. Christiaens argued that the solidarity movement was characterized by ideas of anti-fascism, East-West détente, and world-peace rather than frameworks of anti-totalitarianism that were to become common after the fall of the Greek junta in 1974.[69]

The role of communist-led campaigns against South European dictatorships in both the West and the East has been underappreciated. Already during the early 1960s, there were protests against political repression in Greece. Anti-fascist activists, who had also been involved in the struggle in the interwar period, regularly linked them to the political situation in Portugal and Spain. One of the most prominent was Hans Göran Franck, a Swedish social democrat and lawyer. He was the chairman of the *Swedish Committee for Democracy in Greece* and also of the Swedish chapter of the *Amnesty International*.[70]

In April 1968 Franck, together with other CNR members, organized a Nordic conference in Stockholm for democracy in Greece, with participants from all the Nordic countries except for Iceland. Both unions and liberal politicians attended. Much of the Greek opposition movement

68 Johanson, ed., *Solidaritet: antifascistisk årsbok. 1968–69,* 11, 15–16, 12–13.
69 Kim Christiaens, "'Communists Are No Beasts': European Solidarity Campaigns on Behalf of Democracy and Human Rights in Greece and East-West Détente in the 1960s and Early 1970s," *Contemporary European History,* Vol. 26, no. 4 (2017): 621–46, especially 623, 630, 621–622.
70 Kim Christiaens, "'Communists Are No Beasts'," 621–627.

was also represented as well as observers from solidarity groups in the Soviet Union, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Even social democratic government officials spoke at the conference. A collective conference statement, which was published in one of the CNR's books, demanded that Greece be excluded from the EEC and that the ambassadors from the Nordic countries be recalled. The military regime was portrayed as being a fascist dictatorship that threatened peace and democracy in Europe; this was a worrying development since Spain and Portugal had still not been liberated from fascism. The statement also denounced the military and financial support for the junta provided by NATO, the United States, and West Germany.[71]

Around the same period an Icelandic communist activist, Ragnar Stefánsson, travelled to Sweden, Denmark, and Norway in an attempt to attract Nordic participation in protests against the NATO Ministerial meeting, which was to be held in Reykjavik in June 1968. He met up with Hans Göran Franck, who put him in contact with ten Greek political refugees who were currently living in Sweden and active in the solidarity movement.[72] Together with 14 other activists from the Nordic countries, they travelled to Iceland for the protest. Among them was author and activist Theodor Kallifatides who had been active in the same solidarity organization as Franck.[73] Both Kallifatides and Franck published texts in the CNR's anthologies. Kallifatides argued that the military regime's anti-parliamentarism, anti-communism, restructuring of the education system to serve to promote political indoctrination, and establishment of concentration camps constituted clear evidence of its fascist nature.[74] Franck claimed that the junta's takeover was based on the NATO readiness plan Prometheus and supported by the United States.[75] The demonstration in Reykjavik developed into minor scuffles with the police when the protesters blockaded the main building of the University of Iceland, where the ministers were supposed to meet. These events

71 Johanson (ed.), *Solidaritet: antifascistisk årsbok. 1968-69,* 74–77; and "Manifestation för Grekland," *Svenska Dagbladet,* 28 April 1968, pp. 3, 11.

72 Meeting protocol 15 May 1968, Félags og Aðalfundagerðarbók Æskulíðsfyklingar Kópavogs 1968-1972, ICE/ÞÍ/E.51.12; Ragnar Stefánsson, *Það skelfur endurminningar* (Reykjavik: Skrudda, 2013), 229.

73 "Svenskar demonstrerar på Island," *Svenska dagbladet* (23 June 1968), 8; Letter from "Jón" to "Frans", Æskulýðsfylkingin – Bréf o. Fl. 1960-1968, ICE/ÞÍ/E.51.8; and Telegram from "kommitte foer greklands demokrati," Æskulýðsfylkingin – Bréf o. Fl. 1960-1968, ICE/ÞÍ/E.51.8.

74 Johanson, ed., *Solidaritet: antifascistisk årsbok. 1968–69,* 69–70.

75 Johanson, ed., *Solidaritet: antifascistisk årsbok. 1969–70,* 73.

gave birth to an Icelandic solidarity organization with Greece that was to cooperate with its Nordic counterparts.[76]

Kim Christiaens argues that solidarity and amnesty campaigns in regard to Greece obscured the conventional fault lines of the Cold War in its focus on a united European struggle against fascism. When Augusto Pinochet toppled Chilean democracy in 1973, Chileans exiles linked their struggle with that of Southern Europe and portrayed the situation in Chile as "another Greece."[77] The work of the Nordic solidarity movement with Greece pressured the governments of Sweden, Denmark, and Norway to push for the suspension of Greece from the Council of Europe. In 1967-1968, these governments accused the Greek junta of using torture and of violating the European Convention on Human Rights. In late 1969, the Greek military government realized there was a majority for suspension and withdrew from the Council of Europe. A resolution against Greece was, nonetheless, adopted in 1970.[78]

Historian Federico Romero argues that with the end of the right-wing authoritarian regimes in Greece, Portugal, and Spain in 1974-1975 and the beginning of their transition to democracy, the appeal of anti-fascism was deprived of its relevance. Moreover, a new master narrative of human rights became dominant with powerful NGOs, such as Amnesty International. Romero claims that this coincided with the rise of neoliberalism that undermined the Left's dependence on the state as a force for progressive change. New left-wing political movements questioned the role of the state in this regard. He argues that this trend had already started after the Soviet suppression of the Prague Spring; it was the nail in the coffin for a shared future between socialist regimes in the East and the Western Left. The regimes in the East became the sole remaining dictatorships in Europe.[79]

---

76 Ragnar Stefánsson, *Það skelfur endurminningar,* 229–33; "Þokunni hefur létt," *Dagfari*, Vol. 3, No. 33 (2007): 20–22.

77 Christiaens, "'Communists Are No Beasts'," 627, 644.

78 Kristine Kjærsgaard, "Confronting the Greek Military Junta Scandinavian Joint Action under the European Commission on Human Rights, 1967–70 -- *The 'Long 1970s"* in P. Villaume, R. Mariager, and H. Porsdam, eds., *Human Rights, East-West Détente and Transnational Relations* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 51, 64–65; and Hanne-Hagvedt Vik and Skage Alexander Østberg, "Sweden, Amnesty International and Legal Entrepreneurs in Global Anti-Torture Politics, 1967-1977," *International History Review* Ahead-of-print published online: (9 Aug 2021), 1-2, 5.

79 Federico Romero, "Cold War historiography at the crossroads," *Cold War History,* Vol. 14, No. 4 (2014): 701–703.

This shift was also seen in the writings of the CNR in 1969, which expressed solidarity with the Prague Spring and forcefully denounced the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia on the grounds that it aggravated the efforts of a popular anti-fascist front against Spain, Portugal, and Greece. With the invasion, "reactionaries" were able to draw attention away from the issue by pointing to the brutal Soviet suppression of Czechoslovak democracy. The CNR claimed that after the military intervention, the Soviet Union could no longer be seen as an example of socialism, because socialism needed democracy and had to be anti-authoritarian.[80] The last minutes of a CNR meeting date back to 1970, when there was a discussion about its financial debts and of the possibility of having the CNR merge into the peace or anti-apartheid movement. Nothing came out of this idea.[81] It is not entirely clear why the CNR ceased its activities. One could argue that the increased sectarianism amongst the radical left at the time was probably not conducive to ideas about a broad anti-fascist popular front. Nevertheless, other anti-fascist organizations continued their work in solidarity with Greece and Spain.

Conclusion

The CNR is a fascinating case of anti-fascism at the crossroads of history. In the aftermath of the "swastika epidemic," it tried to deal with the legacy of the Holocaust, which embodied the most extreme manifestation of racial politics. At the same time, it was built on traditions and experiences of solidarity work against authoritarian regimes that were considered fascist. In this sense, it claimed a stake in the heritage of anti-fascism as well as in inventing a new one. It was incredibly ambitious in its longing to build a popular front, which CNR's members hoped would succeed this time. It also managed to draw broad support from, and networked with, other organizations, the labor movement, and the government. This ambition was always severely constrained by the political realities of the Cold War. The CNR's sincerity would always be contested as another communist front organization. But there was also an inde-

80 Johanson, ed., *Solidaritet: antifascistisk årsbok. 1969–70*, 56–57, 67.
81 "Protokoll" 24 September 1970, SWE/ARAB/R/72/J/7 – 5285/1, Kommittén mot nynazism och rasfördomar.

pendence of action involved here: the groups hoped for peaceful relations between the West and East to avoid a new war, but they also opposed expressions of authoritarianism within the Eastern bloc. The CNR was anything but nonpolitical when expressing its views of what was needed to combat fascism. Just as it had been conceptualized in the 1930s, the root of fascism was still capitalism, although this time more emphasis was placed on the role of racism.

Despite the swastika epidemic where fascism was seen as an internal threat, for example in the form of a lack of education on the history of fascism, its core focus was on facing the external threat of fascism stemming from dictatorships in Southern Europe. For the anti-fascist activists, this was the clearest image of a fascist continuity dating from the 1930s. This anti-fascism was a defense against the worst possible future, a fear that was heightened by the Greek military junta. It was an expression of fear that fascists could again come to power in Europe. Informed by a heritage of anti-fascism, the solidarity movement networked in the Nordic region and cooperated in protests and statements. In some cases, it influenced government action on the demands it raised. With the fall of the authoritarian regimes in Southern Europe and the crushing of the Prague Spring, the anti-fascist framework that had been built up around external issues lost its relevance. Yet, with the campaign over Greece, it played a role in the birth of a new master narrative of human rights, championed by influential NGOs.

With the rise of new neo-Nazi movements in the 1990s, a new anti-fascism arose that would once again conceptualize fascism as an internal threat. Yet, in contrast to the activities of the CNR and other movements, it was centered more around activism and militancy and inspired by anarchism than around ideas reminiscent of the interwar popular front.

8

Anti-fascism in the Land of Holy Water Blessed by the Swastika

The Case of the Slovak State[1]

MAREK SYRNÝ AND ANTON HRUBOŇ

At the time of its establishment on 14 March 1939, it had been clear for several months that the Slovak State would be neither democratic nor independent. On the contrary, following the Munich conference at the end of September 1938, an authoritarian regime with increasingly strong fascist elements started to form in the Czech lands and particularly in Slovakia, where—following the declaration of autonomy on 6 October 1938—power was seized by Hlinka's Slovak People's Party (Hlinkova slovenská ľudová strana – HSĽS).[2] The accession of new power in Slovakia was accompanied by an almost immediate ban on left-wing and Jewish parties. The other political parties gradually had to unite, or rather merge, with the HSĽS. The elimination of democratic "holdovers" from the interwar First Czechoslovak Republic (1918–1938) continued. In the first election to the Slovak autonomous assembly, taking place on 18 December 1938, voters could vote only for or against a single list of candidates put forth by Hlinka's Slovak People's Party, which presented itself as the sole lawful representative of the Slovak nation. During the regime's fascistization (in what is called "an era of Slovak National Socialism") starting in the summer of 1940, the role

---

1 This work was supported by the Slovak Research and Development Agency under the Contract no. APVV-19-0358.

2 For details on the nature and dynamics of the HSĽS regime in Slovakia (1938–1945), from authoritarian nationalism on a Christian-corporate basis to revolutionary National Socialism, and on its transformations at the end of the war, see Anton Hruboň, "Slovenský fašizmus," in *Fašizmus náš slovenský. Korene, podoby a reflexie fašizmu na Slovensku 1919–1945,* ed. Anton Hruboň et al. (Bratislava: Premedia, 2021), 83–142.

of the parliament was gradually downgraded, political and public pluralism completely eliminated, and finally, in October 1942, the leadership ("Führer") system was introduced. Initially, this process was accompanied merely by a verbal pillorying of the former Czechoslovak governing parties and their political agendas; anti-Jewish, anti-Czechoslovak (anti-Czech), and generally anti-democratic propaganda; the forced eviction of most Czechs from Slovakia; and the regime also took measures to suppress the anti-regime sentiment in the Evangelical (Lutheran) Church, which had a reserved, even oppositional attitude to the Catholic HSĽS. In Slovakia, the anti-fascist public politics from the era of the First Czechoslovak Republic was replaced with an almost unlimited collaboration with Nazi Germany, including Slovakia's participation in a campaign against Slavic Poland and, in particular, against the Soviet Union.

Hlinka's Slovak People's Party Regime and Slovak society in the First Years of the War

Initially, conditions for creating a suitable breeding ground for organized anti-fascism in Slovakia were not particularly favorable. The attitude of the country's inhabitants to the HSĽS regime (colloquially referred to as "the Ľudák regime") and to the new state and its collaboration with Nazi Germany depended on individual preferences, destinies and experience of different people and population groups. As with any regime and after any political coup or major milestone, Slovak society too had a small group of convinced and determined adherents of the regime, represented largely by the political and social elite of the Slovak State. Against it stood another small, but equally convinced and determined group of opponents of the Ľudák regime and pro-German collaboration, mostly focused on the restoration of the "pre-Munich" Czechoslovak Republic. Apart from these distinctive groups of regime adherents and resistance fighters there was the largest (and, ultimately, the most important) "grey mass," which, depending on their current personal and social situation, sometimes inclined toward the regime and at other times toward the resistance and anti-fascism. The relationship of this most important part of the population with the regime was mainly formed by their daily experience with it, i.e., how much the new

state was able (or unable) to solve people's basic social (personal, family, group) needs. Their enthusiasm, hopes, and illusions alternated rather quickly and dynamically with feelings of disappointment and tragedies of war reality.[3]

At first glance, there was no reason why the Slovak State should provoke concerns or disapproval among the decisive mass of the population. For many members of the Slovak majority, the politics of Hlinka's Party, which completely controlled the state, was an acceptable mixture of Slovak traditionalism, nationalism, Christianity, and emphasis on family life, confronted with the ideas of the "new man" and "spiritual revolution." On the one hand, emphasis was laid on compliance with the principles of Christian life, collective submission and diligence "for the benefit of the national entity"; on the other, there was a call for a radical reckoning with the nation's "enemies" and "pests." All this was happening against the background of an initial euphoria at the birth of the state, which was accompanied by a nation-building sentiment and the related official propaganda. The image of Slovakia as "an island of peace" in "a stormy sea" of wartime Europe blended with the vision of a prosperous Slovakia alongside victorious Germany. The initial positive mood was naturally reinforced by the regime's traditional rituals such as the celebrations of the establishment of the state, May Day celebrations, manifestations, parades, etc.[4] HSĽS propaganda tried to gain the support of each and every social group in a clever way. It underlined the group's importance and position in society—in particular that of the Slovak peasant, worker and soldier, in this way giving inhabitants, along with the material expression of this interest (in the form of wages, social benefits, various discounts etc.) the feeling that the new regime cared about their fortunes.

Practical life, however, saw a classic destruction of the ideal of the pure, industrious and innocent Slovak society led by the HSĽS state elite. The "warping of characters" was caused by both so-called Aryanization and a desire for fast careers leading to quick fortunes, corruption, and nepotism. On the other hand, as the war continued, society was gradually "sobering up from a beautiful dream." People felt

3 Ivan Kamenec, *Spoločnosť – politika – historiografia* (Bratislava: Historický ústav SAV, 2009), 43–45.

4 See, for example, Jaroslava Roguľová et al., *Pramene k dejinám Slovenska a Slovákov XIIIa. Slováci a druhá svetová vojna* (Bratislava: Literárne informačné centrum, 2015), 31–35; 49–53.

more and more afflicted by problems of everyday life, in particular privation, persecution, and situations endangering their lives, families, property, etc.[5]

While most people did not necessarily perceive the HSĽS regime as radically oppressive (initially, the war encroached little upon the lives of most people, battles took place outside Slovakia, the economy was booming thanks to war, and persecutions were aimed mainly at Jews), the first thing most people started to dislike was the country's subjection to German interests. These were advanced through the relatively numerous minority of Carpathian Germans in Slovakia (counting 130,000 members or around 5% of the population) and the German embassy in Bratislava, as well as both direct and indirect pressure on the Slovak government by Berlin, without whose will the Slovak state would not have emerged at the time it did.

Due to the influence of Nazi Germany, the social status of Slovak Germans was disproportionately strengthened soon after the Munich Agreement; already in Jozef Tiso's first autonomous government, they had their own state secretary (Franz Karmasin *Volksgruppenführer* of the minority party, the Deutsche Partei) with a de facto position at ministerial level. The German minority and its chief representatives played a role as "controllers" or a kind of "gear lever" for Berlin's interests vis-à-vis the Slovak government.[6] The intelligence and security reports of Slovak authorities increasingly contained information about obvious tensions between local Germans and Slovaks, resulting mainly from the sense of superiority the Germans had over the Slovaks in "Germany's gigantic struggle for the salvation of European civilisation" during the war. In other words, Slovaks had their own state and were frustrated by its unsovereign position, exemplified by the local Germans' interference in the operation of Slovak state authorities, pressure exerted on Slovak institutions and offices, etc. The population's irritation at the "ubiquitous" Germans (including, for instance, the German *Kinderlandverschickung* camps), which the Slovak State authorities which naturally had to keep

---

5 Kamenec, *Spoločnosť – politika – historiografia*, 46–49.

6 Compare, for example, Michal Schvarc, "Pozícia Karmasinovej Deutsche Partei vo vnútropolitickej kríze na jar a v lete 1940," in *Slovensko medzi 14. marcom 1939 a salzburskými rokovaniami. Slovenská republika 1939–1945 očami mladých historikov VI.*, eds. Martin Pekár, Richard Pavlovič (Prešov: Filozofická fakulta Prešovskej univerzity v Prešove – Universum, 2007), 77–79.

the lid on,[7] boiled over with the approaching front and the outbreak of the Slovak National Uprising in the summer of 1944. Many Germans living in Slovakia, including innocent children and women, did not escape violence then (though it should be noted that besides native Slovaks, the repressions were also—and to a greater extent—carried out by Soviet partisans).[8]

Another factor that contributed to the generally negative view of the German "protection" of Slovakia was the economic sphere. The Ľudáks thought (and propagandists employed massive propaganda in an effort to persuade the population about it) that once Slovak society rid itself of Jewish and Czech influence, the means of "national wealth" that these population groups controlled, would automatically end up in the hands of Slovak entrepreneurs, tradesmen, and peasants, and, naturally, come under the control of the Slovak State. Also for the HSĽS regime it was sad to find out that the "golden eggs" of the Slovak economy (e.g., strategic enterprises such as ironworks, arms factories, the oil industry, and even wood processing plants) had come under German control. The previous dominance of non-Slovak capital in industry was thus replaced with an unambiguous hegemony of German concerns.[9]

Over time, however, the German military advance started to "lose its breath." This also changed Slovakia's economic position. Germany now paid little attention to the country's economic interests, and abandoned its efforts to present Slovakia as an ideal model state of a small nation under Nazi protective wings. As resources were diminishing to the ben-

---

7 See, for example, incidents provoked by *Waffen-SS* members of "native" Carpathian-German origin (*Karpathendeutsche*), who were released on vacation. Martin Lacko, ed., *Situačné hlásenia okresných náčelníkov, január – august 1944*. (Trnava: Katedra histórie FF UCM, 2005), 19–20.

8 Ján Stanislav, "Poznámky k represáliám na Slovensku koncom druhej svetovej vojny," in *Slovensko na konci druhej svetovej vojny,* eds. Valerián Bystrický, Štefan Fano (Bratislava: Historický ústav SAV, 1994), 207–220.

9 The share of German capital in Slovak businesses increased from 4% in 1938 to 51.6%. By contrast, the Czech share of capital in production, transport and trade decreased from 84% to 8% according to some calculations. See Richard Marsina, Ľubomír Lipták, Dušan Kováč, *Slovenské dejiny* (Martin: Matica slovenská, 1992), 250–251. Germans controlled especially the largest and most productive companies. German capital owned nearly 100% of the Slovak mining industry and metal production; its share capital was 60% in the metalworking industry and 76.5% in the chemical industry. Germans exerted influence and pressure also on other businesses, either through cartels controlled by German companies, or through a complete dependence of Slovak businesses on German supplies. Moreover, 27 large and most strategic businesses for war waging in Slovakia were under German military control, yet their construction and preferential sales to Germany had to be financed by the Slovak government from a special account. Ľubomír Lipták, *Slovensko v 20. storočí* (Bratislava: Kalligram, 1998), 198–199.

efit of the German and Slovak armies (i.e., in favor of the Hitler-led war) and prices of industrial and agricultural products and of scarce commodities soared on the black market, the generally good mood of the first two years of the state's existence subsided.[10] Suddenly, the war was becoming unpopular, lasting for too long and without an end in sight, to say nothing of expectations as to its victorious end.

Anti-fascist Resistance in Slovakia: Its Forms and Motivations

The suppression of political freedom, support for Nazi Germany and increased repressions against real or imaginary opponents of the regime led to the gradual formation of a resistance movement in the Slovak State (as in other occupied and satellite states under the fascist-Axis influence). Initially, during the period of autonomy (October 1938 – March 1939) and in the first weeks after the definite breakup of Czechoslovakia, the movement was made up of small oppositional groups, within which further political steps and possible activities against the HSĽS regime were discussed. Genuine anti-fascist resistance groups started to form later, following the first minor "preventive" repressions by the pro-regime radicals of the Slovak State (e.g., members of the fascist Hlinka Guard) against former representatives of the Czechoslovak governmental politics and against communists, and with the approaching outbreak of a war between the democratic West and Hitler's Germany in September 1939. These groups were comprised mainly of adherents and former politicians of the banned Slovak parties (in particular the Agrarian Party, the Slovak National Party, the Social Democratic Party, and the Communist Party), Czechs living in Slovakia, and Lutherans clearly inclining toward the "Czechoslovak idea" and nostalgically mourning the interwar democratic state that corroded shortly after the eventful autumn of 1938. These platforms had their own political resistance program and goals, a wider organization, and also a more sophisticated concept of anti-regime activities.

Politically, the anti-fascist resistance groups were divided primarily according to their ultimate goal. The largest part of the resistance in Slo-

10 For more on the turbulences of the wartime Slovak economy, see Peter Mičko, *Hospodárska politika Slovenského štátu* (Kraków: Spolok Slovákov v Poľsku, 2014), 314.

vakia fought against the HSĽS regime and its collaboration with Nazi Germany with the aim of achieving the restoration of democratic Czechoslovakia. The communist resistance strove—sometimes openly, at other times indirectly and secretly—for an immediate or gradual instalment of its dictatorship. Thus, in the first four years (1939–1943), there was a clear-cut line between the non-communist (pro-Czechoslovak and democratically oriented) resistance and the communist one. One of the reasons was that Slovak Communists were largely inactive in the fight against the HSĽS regime until Germany's attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941 (i.e., at the time when the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact was in force); they engaged mostly in party propaganda and regarded France and the United Kingdom as no less "war-mongers" than Germany.[11] The Czechoslovak democratic resistance in Slovakia always comprised a number of groups, which, though generally more numerous and initially also more active than the communists, was far from that well organized. So, while the communists managed to keep underground with a relatively extensive organizational structure with central leadership, the non-communist resistance was dispersed in tens of politically, organizationally, regionally and programmatically distinguished groups.

One of the most significant pro-Czechoslovak and anti-fascist democratic resistance groups soon after the breakup of Czechoslovakia was *Obrana národa* (Defence of the Nation), which comprised a large number of soldiers and former members of Czechoslovak legions from the First World War, many of them Czechs who were allowed to stay in Slovakia after 1939. Another group active in 1939–1940 was the one around Ján Lichner, a former leading politician of the Agrarian Party (and briefly a minister of the autonomous Slovak government). Later there was the *Demec* group, led by agrarian Michal Zibrín, and *Justícia* of the prominent doctor of Czech origin Karel Koch. *Flóra*, a widely branched organization named after Kvetoslava Viestová (*flóra* meaning flower), sister-in-law of general Rudolf Viest, who was minister in Edvard Beneš's Czechoslovak government-in-exile in London, was active from the sum-

11 For more on the program of the Communist Party of Slovakia (KSS) before the invasion of the Soviet Union, see Marek Syrný, "Program a propaganda ilegálnej KSS do napadnutia Sovietskeho zväzu," in *Odvaľujem balvan. Pocta historickému remeslu Jozefa Jablonického,* eds. Norbert Kmeť, Marek Syrný et al. (Bratislava – Banská Bystrica: Ústav politických vied SAV – Múzeum SNP, 2013), 141–59.

mer of 1941 until the establishment of the illegal Slovak National Council (Slovenská národná rada – SNR) in December 1943.

To see the same resistance activists or pro-resistance representatives of the HSĽS regime, or even people from the structures of its police and military forces appear in various non-communist groups was nothing unusual. One may recall, for example, the resistance activities of the former first Czechoslovak minister for the administration of Slovakia, Vavro Šrobár. In his plans for an uprising in the summer of 1943, Šrobár involved the leading personalities of the Slovak economy, Imrich Karvaš and Peter Zaťko, as well the chairman of the Slovak parliament, Martin Sokol, and the chairman of the Supreme Court, Martin Mičura. The non-communist resistance focused mainly on socio-political and military intelligence for the Czechoslovak exile centers in Paris and London, and on providing care to refugees from the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and from Slovakia, who escaped along the Balkan route and joined the services of the Western exile government.[12]

The illegal Communist Party of Slovakia (Komunistická strana Slovenska – KSS), which separated from its Prague headquarters in May 1939, had formally 3,000 to 5,000 members, but how many of them were actually active in the resistance movement is questionable. The communists were undoubtedly the most proscribed political opponents of the HSĽS regime. Their resistance and anti-fascist activities were significantly expanded after the German invasion of the Soviet Union, in which the Slovak army also participated. Thus, after 22 June 1941, the communists were the first in Slovakia to initiate more violent forms of resistance, such as industrial sabotage, the destruction of infrastructure, and the creation of partisan groups. Until 1943, however, their activities were mostly unsuccessful, as they were directed only inwards into the illegal KSS structures, and their first four illegal leaderships were eliminated by either Slovak or German security authorities in due time.[13] In any case, compared with the non-communist resistance, the communists were much more active and successful (particularly in anti-regime propaganda), and managed to issue several illegal anti-fascist

12 For the most comprehensive discussion of the non-communist resistance in Slovakia, see Jozef Jablonický, *Z ilegality do povstania* (Banská Bystrica: DALI-BB, 2009), 14–260.

13 See Marek Syrný, "Sociálne nepokoje, sabotáže a partizánske hnutie v aktivitách ilegálnej KSS do roku 1943," in *Slovensko v labyrinte moderných európskych dejín,* Slavomír Michálek et al. (Bratislava: Historický ústav SAV – Prodama), 2014, 312–31.

magazines as well as a large number of leaflets in impressions of several hundreds or even several thousands of copies for many months.[14]

No matter what plans, motivations and determination the resistance fighters had, their wider acceptance in society (which was the prerequisite for a successful anti-regime and anti-German coup, the main goal of the resistance) depended primarily on the situation in international politics, in particular the events and shifts of the front lines of the Second World War. That is also why the initial oppositional debates on the future development of the HSĽS regime, the military defeat of Nazism, and visions of an ideal establishment of post-war Czechoslovakia were replaced, from September 1939 onward, by the reality of rapid German victories and the consolidation of fascist elements in the regime of the Slovak State. Following the formation of the Czechoslovak foreign resistance in Poland, and particularly in France, hundreds of Slovaks of anti-fascist conviction joined exile units to fight against Hitler's Germany.[15] In Slovakia, resistance activities focused mostly on sending situation reports to the Czechoslovak exile representation and on helping those who were joining foreign armies or tried to escape political and racial persecution.[16] Communists focused mostly on their anti-war campaign and the promotion of socialism.[17]

The resistance in Slovakia endured the hardest times after the fall of France, i.e., from the summer of 1940 until the spring of 1943, when the war started to turn in favor of the anti-fascist coalition. Initially, the only country left fighting against the Axis powers was the United Kingdom. Following the invasion of the Soviet Union and the Wehrmacht's failure to take Moscow, the resistance-anticipated defeat of Germany seemed out of sight. In connection with Slovakia's participation in the

14 Jozef Jablonický, *Samizdat o odboji 2* (Bratislava: Kalligram, 2006), 448–52; Oto Krajňák, *Komunisti bratislavskej oblasti v boji proti fašizmu v rokoch 1938–1942* (Bratislava: Slovenské vydavateľstvo politickej literatúry, 1959), 201. The most comprehensive collection of illegal press in: Archív Múzea Slovenského národného povstania (A MSNP) Banská Bystrica, fond (f.) I.

15 In early September 1939, around half of the nearly 900 members of the Czech and Slovak Legion in Poland were Slovaks. Similarly, Slovaks accounted for almost half of the approximately 11,000 men of the First Czechoslovak Infantry Division defending France, though the majority were Slovaks mobilized in France, who had already lived or worked there, and only some came to join the exile army directly from Slovakia.

16 Jablonický, *Z ilegality do povstania*, 66–104.

17 A MSNP Banská Bystrica, f. III, box 1. Material entitled *Do protiútoku za národné a sociálne oslobodenie Slovenska*; A MSNP Banská Bystrica, f. III, box 2. Material entitled *Smernice organizačnej a politickej práce*; *Preč s vojnou – ľud chce mier, chlieb a slobodu!*; "Proletári a pracujúci celého sveta!," in *Hlas ľudu*, 1940, No. 1.

eastern campaign against the USSR, the HSĽS regime stepped up security measures and Germany intensified its interference, including with raids on the Slovak anti-fascist resistance. The illegal KSS was almost completely eliminated while the democratic resistance had long been unable to identify its mobilizing goal. The situation started to change with emerging problems of the German, Italian, and Japanese war machines and with the first major victories of the Allies. Slovak society and army were slowly becoming disillusioned with the German campaign and repressions against the Slavic population in the Soviet Union, witnessed by returning Slovak soldiers.[18] Gradually, enthusiasm over the achievement of state independence in March 1939 subsided and was replaced by a latent discontent with the state and its restrictions, subjection to German military and economic interests, rampant corruption, the draconian solution to the Jewish question, etc.

The events of the breakthrough year of 1943 brought together the previously little cooperating communist and democratic resistance movements. After a definitive turn in the war on the Eastern Front, when it started to be clear that the territory of former Czechoslovakia would be liberated by the Soviet Union, president-in-exile Edvard Beneš signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation with the Soviet leaders. This long announced rapprochement of the government-in-exile in London with Stalin and with the Czechoslovak Communist government-in-exile in Moscow was an indication of where the domestic resistance was headed. In the summer of 1943, Communist official Karol Šmidke was sent from Moscow to Slovakia with the task of restoring the central leadership of the illegal KSS, following the extensive arrests executed by the Slovak State's security forces, and attuning it to cooperation with the Czechoslovak democratic resistance. At around the same time, similar sympathetic tendencies toward communists were expressed by Ján Ursíny, the former leading politician of the interwar Agrarian Party. These efforts to achieve a programmatic consensus and ensure more efficient joint

18 In 1943, 293 deserted or missing persons were recorded in the Security Division (Zaisťovacia divízia), with deserters constituting clear majority. Vojenský historický archív Bratislava, f. Zaisťovacia divízia, sign. I/114. For more on desertions to partisans or the Red Army, see, for example: Martin Lacko, *Dezercie a zajatia príslušníkov Zaisťovacej divízie v ZSSR* (Bratislava: Ústav pamäti národa, 2007), 141–176; Pavel Mičianik, *Slovenská armáda v ťažení proti Sovietskemu zväzu II.* (Banská Bystrica: DALI-BB, 2008), 196–261; Jiří Šolc, "K pokusům o přechod 1. slovenské pěší divize k Rudé armádě v roce 1943," *Vojenská história*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (1999): 30–53.

resistance activities on the part of both political camps (democrats and communists) resulted in the Christmas Agreement of December 1943. The agreement formed the basis for the creation of the illegal Slovak National Council, whose aim was to bring, at a suitable time, the Slovak resistance to a great armed insurrection against the HSĽS regime and against Hitler's Germany as well as for the recovery of democratic anti-fascist Czechoslovakia, in which Slovaks and Czechs would have equal status.

Thus, from the autumn of 1943 onwards, the idea of a nationwide uprising was gaining ground within the Slovak resistance—an uprising that would show the anti-fascist Allies outright "a different Slovakia" and "different Slovaks" from those of the reliable German satellite of a National Socialist spirit conserved by the HSĽS regime. After the political unification of the pro-Czechoslovak democratic and communist resistance movements on the platform of the banned Slovak National Council, and following the establishment of military resistance headquarters, wide-ranging preparations for the uprising began.

Initially, however, signs of the significant socio-political upheavals of 1944 were appearing very slowly. While a part of the population, either on principle or purposefully, started to sympathize with the resistance and condemn the previous imprudent politics of the HSĽS leaders, the majority felt anxiety when thinking about privation and the victims that the passage of the front across Slovakia would bring about.[19] In the spring of 1944, it was clear that the horrors of war were approaching, even though governmental propaganda had been telling people that the supposedly wise politics of the leading figures of the Slovak State would spare them any war suffering.

The first shock came on 16 June 1944, when the capital was bombed by American combat aviation with the aim of disabling Bratislava's oil refinery Apollo and the river port where oil and other raw materials were transshipped.[20] Hundreds of civilians who died in the bombing were the first real civilian victims of the war in the territory of Slovakia.[21] Tiso's

19 Ondrej Podolec, "Slovenská spoločnosť a pohyb frontu v rokoch 1944–1945," in *Karpatsko-duklianska operácia – plány, realita, výsledky 1944–2004,* eds. Miloslav Čaplovič and Mária Stanová (Bratislava: Vojenský historický ústav, 2005), 61–62.

20 Ján Stanislav and Jaroslav Švacho, "Bombardovanie rafinérie Apollo 16. 6. 1944," *Vojnová kronika*, Vol.1, No. 2 (2012): 24.

21 For reactions of authorities and the population to the bombing, see: Lacko, *Situačné hlásenia okresných náčelníkov*, 183–92.

government panicked and gave its immediate consent to the transfer of strategic supplies and financial reserves to the rear areas of central Slovakia.[22] Following a coordinated approach with economists Karvaš and Zaťko, central Slovakia had already been covertly used for preparations of the uprising, on which the communist and civic-democratic leaders of the anti-fascist resistance had agreed around Christmas 1943.[23] The quiet panic that seized the collaborationist regime manifested itself in pervasive defeatism, nihilism, and the loss of the last remnants of support among the wide public.

While in 1942 the communists found no support in society for their efforts to create a partisan movement,[24] in the summer of 1944 there were already hundreds of both native partisans and Soviet refugees in the Slovak mountains. In August 1944, after deploying paratroopers from the Soviet Union, entrusted with organizing partisan groups, the number of partisans in the mountains of eastern and central Slovakia amounted to thousands.[25] The government was thus forced to declare martial law. However, martial law and military-police actions against partisans were pointless, as neither the population nor the army nor the police were willing to actively oppose the resistance any longer. On the

22 The evacuation of people, mostly women and children, from the city to the countryside as a consequence of the bombing heavily disrupted the ration supply system, which had already functioned with problems. With evacuees, various rumors started to spread from Bratislava's political backroom to the Slovak countryside, rumors that had a markedly negative impact on the public's opinion on the incumbent regime. See Podolec, "Slovenská spoločnosť a pohyb frontu v rokoch 1944–1945," 65–66.

23 The Christmas Agreement constituted a common ideological and organizational platform for the democratic and communist resistance movements. The fundamental principles that governed the resistance, and which later became part of the post-war program of Slovak politics, were an active fight against Nazism and its domestic collaborators, and the restoration of the democratic Czechoslovak Republic—yet with an equal status for the Slovaks, extensive socio-economic reforms, and a dominant foreign policy orientation on the Soviet Union. See "Vianočná dohoda," in *Pravda,* 12 September 1944, 1.

24 For instance, the first more serious attempt to create a combat group, entitled "the Jánošík combat group of Janko Kráľ," ended already in its preparatory phase, when 13 young communists who had fled to the Little Carpathian Mountains (Malé Karpaty) failed to gain support from the inhabitants of the surrounding villages and settlements. Finally, after several weeks of struggling in the mountains, they were arrested by two policemen, as the concerned locals had denounced them as itinerant tramps. See Marek Syrný, *Slovenskí komunisti v rokoch 1939–1944* (Banská Bystrica: Belianum – Múzeum SNP, 2013), 101–105.

25 Among recent publications addressing the rise of the partisan movement in the said period, see Marian Uhrin et al., *II. slovenská partizánska brigáda M. R. Štefánika* (Banská Bystrica: Múzeum SNP, 2009), 182; Anton Hruboň, Juraj Krištofík, eds., *Partizáni a Slovensko* (Kraków: Spolok Slovákov v Poľsku, 2013), 333; Pavel Vimmer, *Partizáni Sečanského: história partizánskej brigády kpt. Jána Nálepku* (Banská Bystrica: Múzeum SNP, 2016), 276; Juraj Krištofík, *"Javorinu Nemci nikdy nedostanú!": Odboj a partizánske hnutie v podjavorinskom regióne 1939–1945* (Banská Bystrica : Múzeum SNP, 2017), 212; Helena Pažurová, *Jegorovova partizánska brigáda: Prvá čs. partizánska brigáda J. V. Stalina* (Banská Bystrica: Múzeum SNP, 2017), 158.

contrary, support for the resistance was growing by leaps and bounds, and there was a general wish to wash off the smirch of collaboration with Hitler and end the war on the other side of the barricade, alongside the international anti-fascist coalition, as soon as possible.[26]

These events were taking place at the time when the preparations for a nationwide anti-regime and anti-German uprising were fully underway. In the spring of 1944, the Czechoslovak government-in-exile in London, the illegal Slovak National Council as the supreme body of the domestic resistance, and part of army officers disposed to resistance initiated the creation of Military Headquarters around lieutenant colonel Ján Golian, tasked with the preparation of the military aspects of the uprising. The spring and summer of 1944 in the Slovak resistance were thus characterized by political, economic, and military preparations for an armed insurrection. A major restriction to the preparations was the necessity of maintaining secrecy in order to avoid detection and intervention by the HSĽS or German authorities. Though the preparations of the anti-fascist coup were kept secret, the conspiracy led to greater unclarity and ambiguity of competences among the organizers. Nor did they succeed in coordinating the military uprising in Slovakia with an offensive of the Red Army into Slovak territory, which was a key prerequisite for the military success of the insurrection.[27]

In the end, the armed uprising of the Slovak resistance had to begin, not as was originally planned, when favorable military conditions occurred for a rapid alliance of the insurgent army with the advancing Red Army, but at the moment German occupation of Slovakia started—on 29 August 1944. The German intervention in Slovakia was a reaction to the disintegration of the German defensive and allied system in the surrounding states (the uprising in Warsaw, the coup led by King Michael I in Romania) and to the rising activities of the large and uncontrollable partisan movement. Despite limits, personal mistakes and failures, Slovakia made its name in the history of European anti-fascist resistance.[28] The insurgent anti-fascist state that was established in central Slova-

26 See Jozef Jablonický, *Povstanie bez legiend* (Bratislava: Obzor, 1990), 64–174.
27 Jablonický, *Z ilegality do povstania*, 261–92.
28 For more on the Slovak National Uprising and anti-fascist coups and insurrections taking place at the time, see Marek Syrný, "Slovenské národné povstanie v kontexte podobných protinemeckých vystúpení v auguste 1944," in *Válečný rok 1944 v okupované Evropě a v Protektorátu Čechy a Morava*, ed. Pavel Zeman (Prague: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů, 2015), 50–68.

kia and lasted for two months (28 August 1944 – 27 October 1944) subscribed, under the political leadership of the Slovak National Council, to the Czechoslovak Republic. Through the insurgent 1st Czechoslovak Army in Slovakia it also rose against the occupational German army alongside the Allies. In this way, the Slovaks purged themselves of the label of collaboration with the expansionist and genocidal Nazism, repudiated the satellite HSĽS regime and the Slovak State created out of Hitler's will, and expressed themselves in favor of the recovery of freedom and political pluralism in a reformed post-war Czechoslovakia.

During the Slovak National Uprising (Slovenské národné povstanie – SNP), when in danger, democrats and communists were able to cooperate without greater conflicts as two components of a united anti-fascist platform. In the free insurgent territory, many classic economic and social functions of the state were maintained; there was vibrant cultural life, and the foundations of the new post-war establishment were laid. Despite this, the uprising was defeated militarily at the end of October 1944. Some of the insurgent soldiers and partisans continued to fight in the mountains until the liberation in the spring of 1945. Their fight during the SNP, as well as the later partisan war in the winter of 1944 – 1945, were marked by extensive repressions by the Einsatzgruppe H and the collaborating domestic emergency battalions of the Hlinka Guard (Hlinkova garda), which resulted in thousands of victims among insurgents, Jews, partisans, and civilians.[29]

Anti-fascism in Slovakia, which had enjoyed modest support among the population in the early years of the war, was gradually gaining strength through the mistakes of its own domestic regime, a regime that had fascist traits and which had been forced, by external influences, to join the war alongside Nazi Germany. By the end of the war, anti-fascism had won to its side the majority of the Slovak population, whose motives ranged from an idealistic conviction about the necessary defeat of both domestic and German fascism to the opportunistic or responsibility-evading "understanding of the necessity" of the new political orientation in the post-war reality following the collapse of the HSĽS regime and the fall of Nazi Germany.

---

29 Generally on the course and results of the Slovak National Uprising, see, for example, Stanislav Mičev et al., *Slovenské národné povstanie 1944* (Banská Bystrica: Múzeum SNP, 2009), 208.

9

Mussolini, Vilfan, and the Slovenian Minority

GIANFRANCO CRESCIANI

The Kingdom of Italy emerged victorious from the Great War and gained a new Eastern border, under the terms of a secret Pact, signed in London on 26 April 1915 with the Entente powers (Great Britain, France and Russia), and later confirmed by the recently established Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes with the Treaty of Rapallo (12 November 1920). This border cut deeply into Slavic lands, with Italy annexing more than a quarter of Slovenian ethnic territory and all of Istria with its mixed Croat, Italian, and Slovene population. The new Italian administration adopted a policy aimed at suppressing South Slav nationalism even before the rise to power of Fascism. On 13 July 1920, the *Narodni Dom* (the Nation's Home) in Trieste, which housed Slovenian cultural and political organizations, was burned by Fascist squads led by Francesco Giunta, the local leader of the newly created totalitarian party. The study and residence of Slovenian lawyer Josip Vilfan and the archives of the Edinost Association, a political body founded in 1874, of which Vilfan was President, were destroyed. In September 1921, Josip Vilfan and the editor of the *Edinost* newspaper, Edvard Slavik, were beaten up by Fascist squads.

By adopting a policy aimed at assimilating and de-nationalizing minorities, the liberal and later the Fascist regime progressively closed most Slovenian and Croatian institutions. The regime imposed the exclusive use of the Italian language at school, banned political parties, and prohibited the use of Slovenian in public, even in church. It reduced the employment of Slovenes in the public service and 'Italianized' the

names of streets, places, and people.[1] This policy was enunciated by the Italian Prime Minister, Benito Mussolini (1883–1945), on 17 November 1922 when he threatened the Slovenian minority: "either you adapt to the conscience of the nation, or you must disappear!...." [2] Some Italian parliamentarians even denied the so-called *allogeni* or *alloglotti* the right to be different.

In their opposition to Fascism, the Slovenian minority advocated the Austro-Marxist concept of national-cultural autonomy. One of the most influential Viennese thinkers and leaders of the Social Democratic party, Otto Bauer (1881–1938), theorized the "personal principle" as a way to bring together the geographically divided members of the same nation within the framework of the pluri-ethnic Habsburg monarchy. In his study on *Social Democracy and the Nationalities Question* (1907) he wrote: "the personal principle aims at organizing nations not into territorial bodies but into simple associations of people,"[3] thus radically separating the nation from the territory. This idea was also held by Josip Vilfan, one of the most outstanding Slovenian politicians and minority rights theorists of the first half of the 20th century. Vilfan was born on 30 August 1878 in Trieste in an upper-middle class family and studied law at the University of Vienna, graduating in 1901. Upon his return to Trieste he became a columnist for the *Edinost* newspaper, the most important Slovenian periodical in the Austrian Littoral, where he attacked Italian irredentism and called for the peaceful coexistence of nationalities within the North Adriatic area.. According to Vilfan, such coexistence could be ensured only by strong local autonomy, a liberal democratic reform of the state and clearly defined and enforced linguistic rights. In December 1917, during the traditional New Year's Eve feast in the *Narodni Dom*, Vilfan announced the end of Edinost's unconditional loyalty to Austria and advocated the unification of all Slovenes within their own national state.[4] At the end of the Great War, Vilfan was in Ljubljana, where he was one of the promoters of the unification of Serbs, Croats, and Slo-

---

1 Dossier Italia-Slovenia 1880–1956, published in: *Il Piccolo* (Trieste), 4 April 2001. See also Piero Parini, "L'emigrazione non italiana dalla Venezia Giulia dopo la prima guerra mondiale," *Qualestoria*, No. 1 (June 2000): 33–53.

2 *Atti Parlamentari, Camera dei Deputati* (17 November 1922), 330.

3 Otto Bauer, *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), The Personality Principle, 281.

4 Gorazd Bajc, ed., *Josip Vilfan: Življenje in delo primorskega pravnika, narodnjaka in poslanca v rimskem parlamentu* (Koper: Univerza na Primorskem, 2005), 181.

venes under the crown of the Karadjordjević dynasty. He strongly supported the annexation of Trieste by the newly established Kingdom (SHS) in spite of its mostly Italian population. His view was that the city was just an enclave in Slovenian territory. Things turned differently, considering that Italy was already occupying Venezia Giulia, as the Austrian Littoral was renamed, with its military forces. Vilfan reluctantly accepted the inevitable, and, after the Treaty of Rapallo, favored a policy of reconciliation with the Italian authorities. On 11 June 1921, he was elected to the Parliament in Rome representing the Slovenian and Croat population in the lower Chamber.

In his first speech to the Chamber, on 21 June 1921, Vilfan advocated the complete cultural, social, and economic autonomy of the Slovenian minority within the framework of the Italian Kingdom. "For us," he said with naïve courage, "the State is not the supreme entity, for us the supreme entity is the people, the Nation, I repeat, in the ethnic, historical sense...in this sense only are we nationalists, not nationalists...who don this name in this House. That nationalism, which I wholeheartedly repudiate, is not nationalism, it is not the love for one's own people, but is imperialism, it is hate, it is not love...Therefore, even if we feel in conflict with the Italian State, because it has annexed us against our will and against our aspirations, we do not feel in conflict with the people of Italy."[5]

Vilfan continued his indictment by noting that the Slavic deputies have the duty to...make a formal and solemn reservation, in the name of the Slavs of the new provinces, citizens of Italy, obedient to the laws, yes, but faithful to their ideals." He elaborated on the difference between the two concepts—of nationality and loyalty to the state:

> We entered the Italian family and every person of good will, regardless of national sentiment, should have wished this entry to have taken place under different circumstances... Since the first day of the occupation, after the promises...there was instead a regime of oppression, there was a regime that was crude, cruel, in sad contrast to what our people expected from the army and from the Italian people who came to our country as liberators ...Our national life began to be suppressed from the very beginning...Every manifestation of national sentiment, Yugoslav not in

5 *Atti Parlamentari, Camera dei Deputati* (21 June 1921), 117.

the political sense, but in the ethnic one, is considered a direct manifestation against Italy...[6]

Confrontation with the Italian deputies of the Right, in particular with Francesco Giunta, the Italian deputy of Trieste, and Mussolini, was stormy. During the session of 17 November 1922, Vilfan abandoned the conciliatory tone he had previously adopted to accuse the government of acting in bad faith with the promises made to the Slovene minority. "You speak," Vilfan said, "of quiet assimilation, and your *fascio* of Gorizia openly proclaims the urgent need for our prompt de-nationalization. How can one speak, holding one's head up, of a desire for peace when preparing for that people its national death... At least have the courage... to admit that you want to stop hearing Slovenian being spoken in this territory. Admit it. You may also have the right and you may also have your reasons, but do not disguise your hostile plans."[7] The members of the Parliament, and Mussolini in particular, were annoyed by the accusations of the Slovenian speaker, and rejected them sarcastically. Vilfan replied by accusing the government of collusion with *squadristi* violence and charged *il Duce* personally with opposing a policy of pacification with the minority.

Vilfan had four personal meetings with Mussolini: on 25 November 1922, on 7 March 1924, at the end of October 1926, and on 25 September 1928. After the first of those meetings, on 29 November 1922, Vilfan drafted thirteen memoranda for Undersecretary of State Giacomo Acerbo.[8] In the first one, entitled General Postulates, he detailed the policy of the Slovene minority towards the Italian State, rejecting de-nationalization and calling for "essential equality, not just formal equality" to include "equality in teaching, public administration and justice."[9] In the Vilfan Archive in Ljubljana there is no trace of the other twelve memoranda, or of their delivery to Acerbo, or of Mussolini's response to them. A search carried out by the author in the files of the Duce's Private Secretariat at the Central State Archives, Rome produced a negative result.[10]

---

6 *Atti Parlamentari, Camera dei Deputati* (21 June 1921), 118–120.
7 *Atti Parlamentari, Camera dei Deputati* (17 November 1922), 8459.
8 Archives of the Institute for Ethnic Issues, Ljubljana, Archives of Dr. Josip Vilfan, fascic. 17, folder III, Thirteen Vilfan Memorials to Mussolini, 25 November 1922.
9 Archives of the Institute for Ethnic Issues, Ljubljana, Archives of Dr. Josip Vilfan, fascic. 17, folder III, Thirteen Vilfan Memorials to Mussolini, 25 November 1922.
10 Archivio Centrale dello Stato (ACS), Rome, Superintendent to the Author (27 January 2021).

There is no evidence in Italian State archives of the government's intention to start a dialogue with Vilfan. On the contrary, beginning in April 1921 several reports from the Civil Commissioner-General and the Prefects of Venezia Giulia alerted the government to the attempt by *Edinost* "to artificially create an irreconcilable conflict between the new state of things and the Slovene population, with a marked tendency to reproduce the spiritual climate that gave rise to the Italian irredentist movement toward the end of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy."[11] In February 1923, the Deputy-Prefect of Gorizia requested that Slovene recruits of the Province "be indiscriminately posted for military service in the interior of the Kingdom" because, "given the active irredentist propaganda that Slovenian nationalists are carrying out... there have been several cases of desertion among Slovene soldiers." The same month the Trieste Corps Command gave instructions not to assign Slavs to Army groups stationed in Venezia Giulia.[12]

During the 1920s, the police, the carabinieri, and the Voluntary Militia for National Security (the military arm of the Fascist Party), spied on Vilfan. In their reports, they contemptuously, yet with undisguised admiration, described the Slovenian Deputy as an enemy and advised that authorities not lose sight of the danger he posed. Nevertheless, the authorities were quite optimistic regarding the final success of their repressive policy. A report of August 1925 by the MVSN on the situation in the "*allogeni* area" complained that, "from the beginning, the alien mass had been seen for what it really is, an amorphous aggregate of people without a national past of independence, without history, without tradition, accustomed to follow obediently every instruction and order issued by the constituted Authority," and suggested that, with a wiser policy, "the *allogeni* question could have been nipped in the bud."[13]

Undoubtedly, the most important issue for Slovenes was the restoration of their language in primary schools, abolished by the famous philosopher Giovanni Gentile on 1 October 1923. In his capacity as Minister

11 ACS, General Directorate of Public Security (DGPS), General and Confidential Affairs Division, General Archive, Annual Categories, 1921, envelope / file 10, Civil Commissioner Guglielmo to Civil Commissioner-General (5 April 1921).

12 Archivio di Stato, Trieste (AST), Prefecture of Trieste, Cabinet, (1923-1952), Vice-Prefect of Gorizia to Prefect of Trieste (1 February 1923); General of Army Corps Carlo Sanna to Prefect of Trieste (10 February 1923).

13 AST, Prefecture of Trieste, Cabinet, (1923-1952), 1926/91, Cavallotti, Report on the situation in the *allogene* area (14 August 1925).

of Education he arrogantly addressed Vilfan's protests by pointing out that "it is in the supreme interest of the citizens of the Kingdom to know well the language of the nation to which they belong...Italy wants citizens who speak the language of the State."[14]

In 1923, the Fascists were determined to secure for themselves a large majority in the new parliament which was scheduled to be elected shortly. This was the aim of the Acerbo Law, which came into force on 18 November of that year. When, at the beginning of 1924 the Chamber was dissolved, many liberals and some conservative Catholics agreed to run with the Fascists in the National List under the symbol of the *Fascio*. On 6 April 1924, Mussolini's victory was so large that it was not necessary to claim the majority prize. But in spite of all obstructions and difficulties, Vilfan and Engelbert Besednjak, a representative of Gorizia Slovenes, were elected to the 27th legislature.

Vilfan's speeches in the new Chamber show that he had become increasingly skeptical of reaching an agreement with the government. In his address on 15 July 1923, he accused Mussolini of duplicity, pointing to the disconnect between what he seemed to promise and the objective, daily reality of Fascist politics. Time and time again, Vilfan proclaimed his faith in *Staatsrecht* and in the rule of law, while reiterating his demand for autonomy for the Slovenes of Italy. It was precisely this autonomy that Mussolini neither could nor wanted to grant. In January 1923, Vilfan was charged with insulting a magistrate in Trieste when, having been asked to produce an Italian translation of a petition he had submitted in Slovenian, he protested that „this is Hottentot justice"—a justice meted out by a barbaric and crude people.[15]

At the opening of the 27th legislature, in his speech on 7 June 1924, Vilfan reminded Mussolini that, since November 1922, no progress had been made to satisfy his requests. During the parliamentary crisis that followed the assassination of socialist deputy Giacomo Matteotti on 10 June 1924 and the withdrawal of the opposition deputies to the Aventine, as the boycott of the Parliament was called, Vilfan did not join them, but expressed his loyalty to the government, hoping to have his demands met with this opportunistic policy. In *Edinost* he reiterated that Slovenes

14 ACS, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Cabinet, General Affairs, 1923 f. 1.1.6.2663, Gentile to Vilfan (18 October 1923).

15 Ibid.; Documents - Bills and reports, session of 7 February 1923, Application for authorization to proceed in court against Deputy Vilfan.

and Croats would not join any opposition group but added that he and Besednjak had only one duty: to defend the national interests of the minority regardless of which party was in government.[16] When, on 5 December 1924, Trieste's Prefect Amedeo Moroni prohibited the staging of theatrical performances in Slovenian, Vilfan sent a telegram to Mussolini, demanding „immediate revocation" of the order, to repair "the dignity of citizens affected in their intangible cultural rights."[17] He also met Moroni, who maintained that the Slovenes believed they had created a little Yugoslav state within Italy, which "has the Hon. Mr. Vilfan as its President and who, in the mentality of the *allogeni*, also acts as plenipotentiary to the Italian authorities." Moroni concluded that "the Hon. Mr. Vilfan with his lamb-like attitude is a very dangerous agitator...it is therefore wise never to forget that he is a bitter enemy." [18]

By 1925, Mussolini had realized that the failure of the de-nationalization policy was due partly to the inefficiency, conflict of interests, and lack of coordination of local Fascist administrators. On 1 November, he sent a memorandum to Ministers and Secretaries of State ordering them to achieve greater cohesion and determination in addressing the "*allogeni* issue." Mussolini offered nothing but a fake paternalism and a very real policy of brutal force.

On 24 May 1925, *Edinost* published an article encouraging Slovenes to join the newly formed Society of Slavs of Italy for the League of Nations, which soon attracted 180 members. The initiative, masterminded by Vilfan in order to internationalize the Slav minority question in Italy, alarmed Moroni, who reported to Rome what for him was "proof of the intention of Slovenian irredentists to report Italy to the Treaty for the protection of minorities." According to the Trieste Prefect, this showed two things: "how much caution needs to be exercised in public declarations about the problems of minorities...and how tireless is the malignant struggle that Slovenes wage against Italy."[19] In 1925, Vilfan

16 https://crsrv.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Milica-Kacin-Wohinz-Il-movimento-nazionale-sloveno-croato-durante-l-oppizione-dell-Aventino-1924- 1925.pdf [accessed on 1 March 2021].

17 ACS, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Cabinet, General Affairs, 1923, 1.1.6 / 2565, Ministry of the Interior to the Directorate-General of the P.S. (5 December 1924).

18 ACS, Ministry of the Interior, General Directorate for Public Security, General and Confidential Affairs Division, 1924, envelope 11, Prefect Moroni to the Ministry of the Interior (29 November 1924).

19 AST, Prefecture of Trieste, Cabinet, 1929/175, Prefect Moroni to the Ministry of the Interior (8 July 1925).

was elected President of the Congress of National Minorities of Europe, a body sponsored by the League of Nations, remaining in office until 1938. Surveillance on the Slovenian deputy increased of course when he went abroad. A report by the MVSN in Trieste signaled that Vilfan, during a trip to Yugoslavia, had several meetings with high-ranking political officers in Ljubljana, Belgrade, and Zagreb. On his return, he gave instructions to his followers to "consolidate [their] nationality in every field," and not allow themselves to be assimilated.[20]

In 1926, Vilfan handed Mussolini another memorandum, „in which he asked him for the umpteenth time to evaluate the negative effects of the assimilation policy."[21] This attempt was also doomed to failure. In spite of the courteous, even friendly welcome by Mussolini and his collaborators, Vilfan's persecution did not stop. On 7 December 1926, the new Prefect of Trieste, Giovanni Gasti, denied Vilfan a passport „by explicit order of the Prime Minister." Three days later, Gasti informed the Minister of the Interior that Vilfan's apartment and study had been searched and that "documents and notes relating to his professional and political activity, carried out on behalf the *allogeni*, have been seized...."[22] On 9 November 1926, the Chamber of Deputies revoked the membership of the 123 Aventinians and the two Slovene members of Parliament. The final episode that reflects the Fascist determination to eliminate every Slovene voice was the suppression, on 19 September 1928, of the *Edinost* Association. The Prefect of Trieste, decreed its dissolution because it was "the central governing body of an intolerable action of resistance to conciliation, to Italy and to the regime."[23]

Vilfan, the target of a failed assassination attempt, was jailed twice, in Rome in 1926 and in Florence in 1927. On 25 September 1928, he met Mussolini for the fourth and last time. In what turned out to be a surreal conversation, the dictator responded with a hostile silence to the arguments put forward by the Slovene representative. A few days later, Vilfan fled to Vienna, from where he continued his activity within the

20 AST, Prefecture of Trieste, Cabinet, 1928/151, Directorate General for Public Security, Division of General and Confidential Affairs to the Prefect, (26 March 1926).

21 Marta Verginella, *Il confine degli altri: La questione giuliana e la memoria slovena* (Rome: Donzelli Editore, 2008), p. 33.

22 AST, Prefecture of Trieste, Cabinet, 1928/151, Gasti to the Ministry of the Interior, General Directorate for Public Security (10 November 1926).

23 Central State Archives, Ministry of the Interior, General Directorate of Public Security, General and Confidential Affairs, 1920-1945, 1921, G 1, busta 139 (19 September 1928).

Congress of European Minorities. At the end of 1939, he moved to Belgrade and remained there until his death in 1955. According to his son Jože, life in Belgrade was very difficult for him. His vision was impaired and his relationship with his son, an important Communist functionary, was tense.

Although Vilfan left Italy in 1928, Mussolini had not forgotten him. The *Duce's* network of spies abroad and the Italian Embassies in Belgrade, Vienna, and Zagreb intensified surveillance on him. On 3 October 1933, a file on Vilfan was opened at the Central Political Records Office (CPRC) in Rome. Fortunato Locastro, OVRA's agent based in Trieste, wrote his biographical profile. He described the Slovenian politician as „intelligent, educated and cultured ...he does not have a bad reputation among people...workaholic, he behaves well in family... Frequents people of all kinds...is one of the strongest supporters of the Slavic cause."[24]

Surveillance on Vilfan continued. His CPRC file contains quarterly reports on his movements, as well as details of passport visa renewals. On February 28, 1930, OVRA telegraphed the CPRC that "Dr. Vilfan ... is absent from Vienna for the Christmas holidays. It is known that he was in Germany and currently should be in Yugoslavia. The hearsay that he had married again is not confirmed. From April to the end of September 1929 his son Giuseppe lived with him ..."[25] At the end of 1933, Carmine Senise, the future Chief of Police, signaled that „the two champions of the minority movement, Besednjak and Vilfan, were recently in Yugoslavia, to report to that Government and its political associations on the outcome of the Congress of Minorities, held in Bern on 16-19 September 1933."[26]

In 1935, OVRA's interest in Vilfan and Besednjak intensified at the time of the trade negotiations between Italy and Yugoslavia. On 9 May 1935, the Consulate-General in Vienna reported that "an examination of the border stamps affixed to his passport shows that Vilfan, from May 1934 to April 1935, made nine trips to Yugoslavia ... where he stayed for a few days each time, only one trip to England in May 1934 and three to Switzerland."[27] On 5 November 1936, an informer in Geneva related that

24 ACS, Ministry of the Interior, General Directorate of Public Security CPRC, busta 5482, fascic. 115688, Wilfan Giuseppe fu Giuseppe.
25 Ibid., OVRA to CPRC (28 February 1930).
26 Ibid., Carmine Senise to CPRC (October 1933).
27 Ibid., Italian Consul-General, Vienna to CPRC (9 May 1935).

Vilfan had sent a message from Ljubljana to Guglielmo Ferrero, a well known anti-fascist historian, and since 1929 professor at the University of Geneva, briefing him of "the increase in poverty and the resurgence of police brutality against *allogeni* from Istria and Venezia Giulia."[28]

While Besednjak always avoided going to any Italian Legation "to make it more difficult to control propaganda hostile to our country," Vilfan instead performed a ritual by making his presence known wherever he went. A telegram from the Consulate-General in Vienna on 12 May 1939 informed OVRA that Vilfan "had his Italian passport regularly renewed every year. On certain solemn occasions, he also made the point of presenting his business card to Legation officers."[29] On 11 August 1939 the Consul-Regent in Vienna wrote that Vilfan "still lives in Vienna. He often goes to Yugoslavia. About his intention to move definitively to Yugoslavia, for now, nothing is known here." In reality after the *Anschluss* Vilfan's stay in Austria started to be difficult. He decided to take refuge in Belgrade, where he died on 8 March 1955; he was buried in Ljubljana.

Josip Vilfan was not a diplomat but, despite his intentions, he became involved in international relations, his ultimate goal being to achieve at least minimal standards of protection for all people belonging to minorities in Europe. However, as Jože Pirjevec has written,

> in a situation where totalitarian states systematically violated the most elementary human rights, [his work] became more and more abstract, or, as he himself would have said, 'academic'. Son of another era, in which law and legal order were not meaningless words, he was unable to adapt to contemporary barbarism, and more and more closed himself in his world isolating himself in his studies, in the belief that it was necessary to put one's trust in the long-term, progressive evolution of the European community.[30]

Vilfan's relations with Mussolini remained conflictual and ambiguous. He steadfastly reiterated that Slovenes and Croats wanted to remain faithful not only to the Italian State, but also to their national identity.. For Mussolini this proposition was incompatible with his insistence that

28 Ibid., Unknown informer, Geneva, to CPRC (5 November 1936).
29 Ibid., Italian Consulate-General, Vienna to Ministry for Foreign Affairs (12 May 1939).
30 Jože Pirjevec, "Thought and activities of Josip Vilfan,"in Corsini and Zaffi, eds., *Le minoranze tra le due guerre* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1994), 234.

the State be under central control, which is to say that there could be no autonomous ethnic minorities.. There is irrefutable evidence of Mussolini's plan to violently assimilate Slovenes and Croats, as well as of his persistent lies aimed at giving false hopes to the Slovenian leader. With his apparent joviality, courtesy, and attention he repeatedly deceived Vilfan, making him believe that he was dealing with a traditional Mitteleuropean statesman. Instead the Slovene leader was facing a man who would turn out to be a bloodthirsty, unscrupulous criminal. Mussolini's policies and actions caused untold suffering during the years of the Fascist regime, and not only to Slovenes, Croats, and other minorities in the Italian colonial empire, but, first of all to his own nation. As demonstrated by historian Richard Bosworth, his ambition to emulate the Roman empire led to the premature death of over a million people.[31]

31 R. J. B. Bosworth, *Mussolini and the Eclipse of Italian Fascism: From Dictatorship to Populism* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2021).

10

From the Bauhaus to Buchenwald and to Berlin

Anti-fascism and Career in the Life of Franz Ehrlich[1]

KLAUS TRAGBAR

Franz Josef Ehrlich (1907–1984) was a German architect, one of the most distinguished in the now-defunct German Democratic Republic. He was also a communist and anti-fascist from his youth. He joined the Socialist Workers' Youth already as an apprentice and studied at the Bauhaus in Dessau from 1927 to 1930. After his diploma in 1930, he joined the Communist Party of Germany. He worked in Berlin in the studios of Walter Gropius and Hans Poelzig. For a short time, he ran his own studio together with two fellow students from the Bauhaus. In 1934 he was arrested as the editor of an illegal communist magazine and imprisoned first in the Zwickau penitentiary, then in the Buchenwald concentration camp. In the construction office there he designed, among other things, representative villas and residential buildings, a casino and other buildings for the concentration camp and the associated settlements for the SS; all in the nationalist architectural language of the Nazi regime. Together with other communists, he organized the camp resistance.

After the Second World War, he participated in the reconstruction of Dresden and Berlin, and designed and realized numerous public build-

1 The sources of my research are primarily the files on Franz Ehrlich alias GI Neumann from the former Ministerium für Staatssicherheit (Ministry of State Security), which are kept by the Bundesbeauftragten für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (Federal Commissioner for the Records of the State Security Service of the former German Democratic Republic; hereafter cited as BStU MfS) and his estate from the Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau (Bauhaus Dessau Foundation; hereafter cited as SBD), where a large number of personal biographical notes can be found. Of course, as they are written by Ehrlich himself, one has to be critic.

ings and furniture programs. As an anti-fascist and so-called victim of National Socialism, he was one of the role models of the still young German Democratic Republic, but in the context of the Formalism Controversy at the beginning of the 1950s, as a former Bauhaus student, he came under fierce attack. In 1954, he was recruited by the State Secretariat for State Security as a so-called "Geheimer Informator (GI)," secret informant, and also used this activity to further his career. Ehrlich died in Bernburg (Saale) in 1984.

State of Research

Through his work as an architect and furniture designer in the GDR, the critical, sometimes ideology-laden examination of Franz Ehrlich begins at the same time as his work;[2] he himself also repeatedly commented on current architectural issues.[3] In the literature on the Bauhaus, Ehrlich is already mentioned in the fundamental documentation by Hans Maria Wingler, in which one of his works from the sculpture workshop led by Joost Schmidt is shown.[4] In 1977, in the context of the re-evaluation of the Bauhaus, works by him, Marianne Brandt, Karl Marx, Reinhold Rossig,[5] and other Bauhäusler were exhibited at the Galerie am Sachsenplatz in Leipzig.[6] In 1980, the same gallery dedicated a solo exhibition to

---

2 See Hermann Exner, "Zu neuen Möbeln von Franz Ehrlich und Selman Selmanagic," *Bildende Kunst*, No. 2 (1958): 191–194.

3 Among others: Franz Ehrlich, "Kunstwerke fördern das Raumerlebnis," *Bildende Kunst*, No. 4 (1955), 306; Franz Ehrlich, "Aufnahme- und Studiogebäude des Staatlichen Rundfunkkomitees," *Deutsche Architektur*, Vol. 5, No. 9 (1956): 399–409; for a complete bibliography cf. Bauhaus Dessau, ed., *Franz Ehrlich 1907–1984. Kunst und Gestaltung* (Exhibition catalogue Bauhaus Dessau) (Dessau: Bauhaus, 1987), 17–18.

4 See Hans Maria Wingler, ed., *Das Bauhaus 1919–1933. Weimar, Dessau, Berlin* (Bramsche: Rasch, 1962), 396, fig. below right.

5 The curriculum vitae of Reinhold Rossig (1903–1979) shows some parallels to that of Ehrlich: Apprenticeship as a craftsman, member of the Communist Party of Germany in 1929, studied at the Bauhaus from 1929 to 1931, active in the communist resistance, arrest and imprisonment in Bautzen, later in the Strafdivision 999, only a post-war career similar to Ehrlich's was denied him. See SBD, I 11687 D, I 11691 D; Josipa Špehar, "Reinhold Rossig. Widerstand gegen den Nationalsozialismus," in Olaf Thormann, ed., *Bauhaus Sachsen/Bauhaus Saxony* (Exhibition catalogue Leipzig) (Stuttgart: arnoldsche Art Publishers, 2019), 149–50; Anke Blümm and Patrick Rössler, "Eine 'schulbildende' Wirkung des Unterrichts? Architekturstudierende unter Ludwig Mies van der Rohe 1930–1933. Eine quantitativ-qualitative Untersuchung," *architectura*, Vol. 48, No. 1/2 (2018): 56–74.

6 See Galerie am Sachsenplatz Leipzig, ed., *Bauhaus 2. Marianne Brandt, Franz Ehrlich, Carl Marx [...]* (Exhibition catalogue Leipzig) (Leipzig: Galerie am Sachsenplatz, 1977).

his early works from 1927 to 1938.[7] Lutz Schöbe's diploma thesis on Franz Ehrlich, submitted in 1983, still forms the basis for the study of Ehrlich today; the author also wrote the later published *catalogues raisonnés*.[8] In 1987, a few years after his death, the Bauhaus Dessau, where his estate is kept, paid tribute to him with a comprehensive exhibition.[9] The catalogue takes into account both the artistic and architectural work and the furniture designs.

In 1996, the German National Committee of ICOMOS also dealt with Ehrlich under the unfortunate title "Stalinist Architecture under Monument Protection?" Ehrlich was described as an architect between the Bauhaus tradition and GDR building doctrine;[10] another essay presented the Franz Volhard Clinic in Berlin-Buch, one of his major works.[11] The exhibition "Ostmoderne. Architecture in Berlin 1945–1965" also dealt with Ehrlich's buildings.[12] The special role Ehrlich played in recent architectural history due to his biography is the subject of a volume on his role in resistance and Concentration Camp published in 2009.[13] Finally, in the year of the Bauhaus anniversary in 2019, two anthologies are published that also pay tribute to Ehrlich,[14] as well as another on the Bauhaus in Saxony with more recent research on him.[15]

---

7 See Galerie am Sachsenplatz Leipzig, ed., *Bauhaus 4. Franz Ehrlich, die frühen Jahre. Arbeiten der Jahre 1927–1938. Aquarelle, Collagen, Malerei [...]* (Exhibition catalogue Leipzig) (Leipzig: Galerie am Sachsenplatz, 1980).

8 See Lutz Schöbe, *Franz Ehrlich. Beitrag zu einer Monographie* (2 Vols., Diploma thesis Humboldt-Universität Berlin 1983).

9 See Bauhaus Dessau, ed., *Franz Ehrlich 1907–1984*.

10 See Bernhard Kohlenbach, "Franz Ehrlich – Ein Architekt zwischen Bauhaustradition und DDR-Baudoktrin," in ICOMOS, Deutsches Nationalkomitee and Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Umweltschutz Berlin, eds., *Stalinistische Architektur unter Denkmalschutz?* (ICOMOS Hefte des Deutschen Nationalkomitees, Vol. 20) (Munich: Lipp, 1996), 45–48.

11 See Christina Czymay, "Die Franz-Volhard-Klinik, ein bedeutender Klinikbau der Fünfziger Jahre," in ICOMOS and Senatsverwaltung, eds., *Stalinistische Architektur*, 49–52.

12 See Andreas Butter and Ulrich Hartung, *Ostmoderne. Architektur in Berlin 1945–1965* (Exhibition catalogue Berlin) (Berlin: Jovis, 2004), 50, 98.

13 See Volkhard Knigge and Harry Stein, eds., *Franz Ehrlich. Ein Bauhäusler in Widerstand und Konzentrationslager* (Weimar: Stiftung Gedenkstätten Buchenwald und Mittelbau-Dora, 2009)

14 See Florentine Nadolni, ed., *Alltag formen! Bauhaus-Moderne in der DDR/Shaping everyday life! Bauhaus modernism in the DDR* (Exhibition catalogue Eisenhüttenstadt) (Weimar: M Books, 2019), 28, 96; Walter Scheiffele, *Ostmoderne Westmoderne. Mart Stam, Selman Selmanagić, Liv Falkenberg, Hans Gugelot, Herbert Hirche, Franz Ehrlich, Rudolf Horn* (Leipzig: Spector Books, 2019), 118–135, 369.

15 See Jens-Uwe Fischer and Friedrich von Borries, "Franz Ehrlich. Ein Bauhäusler im antifaschistischen Widerstand und im Konzentrationslager," in Thormann, ed., *Bauhaus Sachsen*, 387–390; Tanja Scheffler, "Messestände auf der Leipziger Messe," in ibid., 290–302.

Childhood and Youth

Franz Josef Ehrlich was born on 28 December 1907 in Leipzig-Reudnitz.[16] His father Franz was a mechanic, his mother Elisabeth a housewife; he had five siblings.

The Kapp Putsch in March 1920 was one of the strongest impressions of his childhood; he provided the workers on the barricades with food and news. In 1922 he began an apprenticeship as a machinist. Already as an apprentice he joined the German Metalworkers' Association and in 1924, in the second year of his apprenticeship, the Socialist Workers' Youth, founded in 1922. One year later he was a member of its Greater Leipzig executive committee. Politically and culturally he was also involved in the "Sprachrohr", a part of the agitprop movement. For further education he attended the Sunday and evening trade school of the Polytechnic Society in Leipzig as well as evening classes at the Higher Technical Training Institutes. In 1926 he graduated as a machinist, stoker, and mechanical engineer.

A visit to the Bauhaus exhibition in Weimar in 1923 left a deep impression on the then 16-year-old, and in the summer semester of 1927 Ehrlich began his studies at the Bauhaus, which had meanwhile moved to Dessau.[17]

Studies at the Bauhaus Dessau

Fritz Ehrlich studied at the Bauhaus in Dessau in the phase influenced by Hannes Meyer, in which scientifically based teaching and social re-

---

16 For the biography of Franz Ehrlich cf., if no individual references are given, his personal curriculum vitae of 20 August 1951 (BStU MfS AIM 6503/75, 000019–000020) as well as Lutz Schöbe, "Franz Ehrlich. Aspekte seines Schaffens," in Bauhaus Dessau, ed., *Franz Ehrlich*, 2–6; Holger Barth and Thomas Topfstedt, *Vom Baukünstler zum Komplexprojektanten. Architekten in der DDR. Dokumentation eines IRS-Sammlungsbestandes biographischer Daten* (Regiodoc, No. 3) (Berlin: IRS, 2000), 68–69; *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon. Die Bildenden Künstler aller Zeiten und Völker*. Vol. 32 (Munich and Leipzig: Saur, 2002), 470–471; Andreas Butter, "Die ostdeutsche Nachkriegsmoderne in Bauten des Verkehrs und der Telekommunikation," in *kunsttexte.de*, 2002, No. 2, 9 pages, at www.kunsttexte.de/download/denk/butter.PDF (accessed on 24 January 2021), 736; Günther Höhne, *Das große Lexikon. DDR-Design* (Cologne: Komet, 2008), 74–77; Knigge and Stein, eds., *Franz Ehrlich*, 12–13; Fischer and Borries, "Franz Ehrlich"; Scheiffele, *Ostmoderne Westmoderne*, 118, 369; recently Klaus Tragbar, "Die Bauhäusler Franz Ehrlich und Fritz Ertl. Zwei (unterschiedliche) Lebensläufe," in *architectura*, Vol. 48, No. 1/2 (2018): 76–117, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1515/atc-2018-1006.

17 See the enrolment list of students of the Bauhaus in Dessau and Berlin in the summer semester 1927, No. 165, in Wingler, ed., *Das Bauhaus*, 534.

Fig. 1. Franz Ehrlich, around 1932

sponsibility of the architects were in the foreground.[18] At the Bauhaus he attended Josef Albers' preliminary course, Wassily Kandinsky's course on form theory and drawing, and Joost Schmidt's lettering course. He also attended courses offered by Paul Klee, László Moholy-Nagy, and Oskar Schlemmer. He was the student representative on the Master Council.

In the workshop he worked on models for the Total Theatre project for Erwin Piscator by Walter Gropius[19] and the Federal School of the General German Trade Union Federation in Bernau designed by Hannes Meyer and Hans Wittwer. He was also involved in numerous exhibitions, including the Bauhaus exhibition "Einrichtung einer Volkswohnung" in 1929 at the Grassi Museum in Leipzig and the Bauhaus stand at the Werkbund exhibition "Wohnung und Werkraum" in Breslau in the same year.

Notwithstanding their similar world views, Ehrlich rejected Meyer's scientific approach and also criticized the separation of Klee's and Kandinsky's painting classes, which "had a negative effect on the compulsory teaching of the two."[20] Ehrlich decided to leave the Bauhaus; in No-

18 Wulf Herzogenrath, ed., *Bauhaus Utopien. Arbeiten auf Papier* (Exhibition catalogue Budapest, Madrid, Cologne) (Stuttgart: Edition Cantz, 1988), 24, refers to it as "the analytical, materialistically oriented and production-focused fourth phase (1928–1930)" (all translations are by the author). On the teaching of Hannes Meyer cf. Magdalena Droste, "Unterrichtsstruktur und Werkstattarbeit am Bauhaus unter Hannes Meyer," in Bauhaus-Archiv, Berlin, and Deutsches Architekturmuseum Frankfurt am Main (eds.), *Hannes Meyer 1889–1954. Architekt Urbanist Lehrer* (Exhibition catalogue Berlin, Frankfurt on the Main, Zurich) (Berlin: Ernst, 1989), 134–165, cf. also 166–178; Klaus-Jürgen Winkler, *Baulehre und Entwerfen am Bauhaus 1919–1933* (Weimar: Universitäts-Verlag, 2003), 58–111; recently Philipp Oswalt, ed., *Hannes Meyers neue Bauhauslehre. Von Dessau bis Mexiko* (Bauwelt Fundamente, Vol. 164) (Basle, Berlin, Boston: Birkhäuser, 2019).

19 See Franz Ehrlich, "Bauhaus und Totaltheater," in *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar*, Vol. 29, No. 5/6 (1983): 424.

20 Franz Ehrlich, Biographische Episoden, 1958, 1977, SBD, I 11634/6 D. In 1951 he wrote that he had left the Bauhaus in 1930 because he "no longer agreed with its development and the principle it advocated." (Curriculum vitae Franz Ehrlich, 20 August 1951, BStU MfS AIM 6503/75, 000019; cf. Curriculum vitae Franz Ehrlich, undated (mid 1950s), BStU MfS AIM 6503/75, 000072, with similar wording).

vember 1930, he received the Bauhaus Diploma. In 1927 he joined the Communist Youth League of Germany, and in 1930 the Communist Party of Germany.

After the Diploma

In 1931–32 Ehrlich worked in Berlin with Hans Poelzig, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and Walter Gropius. At the same time he founded, together with his former Bauhaus fellow students Heinz Loew and Fritz Winter, the design studio "Studio Z"—named after the last letter of each first name—which dissolved again at the end of 1932.

Ehrlich returned to Leipzig to work for the Otto Beyer publishing house. He also was editor and publisher of "Die Junge Garde," the central organ of the German Communist Youth League.[21] After the NSDAP came to power, socialists and communists were increasingly pushed into illegality, so that his studio was not only a place of creative work, but also became a place of resistance. On 15 August 1934 Ehrlich was arrested, and on 8 June 1935 he was sentenced to three years in prison and two years' loss of honour for "joint preparation of high treason."[22]

He was imprisoned in the Zwickau penitentiary, where he worked on the "Blätter aus der Haft" (Sheets from the detention), a series of around 50 mainly representational watercolors and drawings.

Immediately after his release in August 1937 he was taken to the Buchenwald concentration camp. There he joined a group of fellow communist prisoners who were employed as craftsmen in the various labor commandos and organized the camp resistance together with them. According to his records, he and other communist fellow inmates succeeded in ousting the so-called "professional criminals" from all functions within the camp intended for prisoners, thereby gaining considerable influence in the camp; it was also possible to replace the kapos,

---

21 "Die Junge Garde" was published from November 1918 to 1933, from 1933 to 1939 illegally and partly under the camouflage title "Schriftenreihe Junges Leben".

22 Oberlandesgericht Dresden, OStA III 189/34/20/7/35, quoted from Curriculum vitae Franz Ehrlich (undated copy, probably from 14 August 1946), BStU MfS AIM 6503/75, 000026; cf. Gerhard Franke, "Kommunistische und sozialdemokratische Bauhäusler für ein gemeinsames Ziel: Vernichtung der faschistischen Diktatur in Deutschland," in *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen A*, Vol. 33, No. 4–6 (1987): 325–327, here 327 fig. 3.

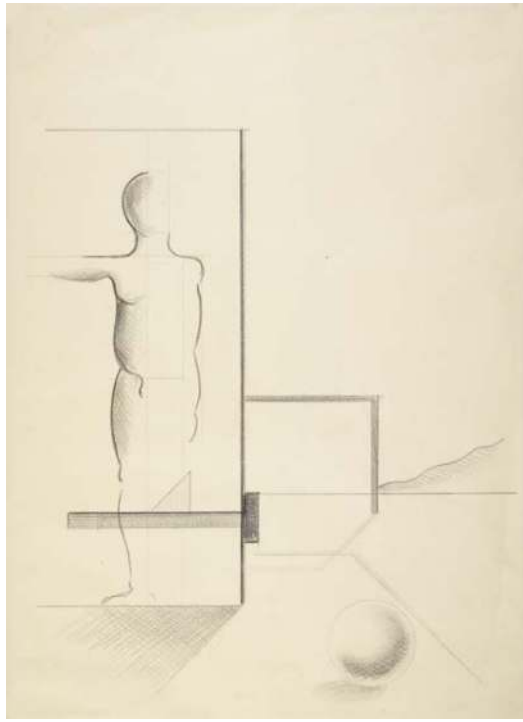


Fig. 2. Franz Ehrlich: "Blätter aus der Haft" (Sheets from the detention), sheet 41, undated, 1935–1937; pencil on paper, 35.0 × 25.3 cm

prisoner functionaries, of the work detachments with communist comrades. This succeeded in that Ehrlich's labor commando, led by comrade Ernst Grube, had carried out the order to furnish a flat in the camp, apparently to the great satisfaction of the SS, and was then given a second order to build an apartment building with complete furnishings, furniture, and lighting within only five weeks. This succeeded also in this, and so the comrades around Grube were able to infiltrate the camp's construction office;[23] Ehrlich himself managed to work as an architect in the camp's construction office.[24]

The head of the construction office, SS-Untersturmführer (Leutnant)[25] Robert Riedl[26] was apparently only rarely present; his deputy SS-Hauptscharführer (Oberfeldwebel) Pfaff[27] was not very involved, and so the prisoners assigned to the construction office had to work largely independently.

---

23 See Franz Ehrlich, Biographische Episoden, 1958, 1977, SBD, I 11634/19–33 D.

24 See Carsten Liesenberg, "Vom subtilen Einfluss der Moderne. Zum architektonischen Schaffen Franz Ehrlichs im System der 'absoluten Macht'," in Knigge and Stein, eds., *Franz Ehrlich*, 74–99.

25 For a better understanding of the SS ranks, which are characterised by the consistent use of the word ending '-führer', the corresponding ranks of the Wehrmacht are placed after them in brackets.

26 For the biography of Robert Riedl cf. Johannes Tuchel, *Konzentrationslager. Organisationsgeschichte und Funktion der 'Inspektion der Konzentrationslager' 1934–1938* (Schriften des Bundesarchivs, Vol. 39) (Boppard am Rhein: Boldt, 1991), 388–389; Jan-Erik Schulte, *Zwangsarbeit und Vernichtung. Das Wirtschaftsimperium der SS. Oswald Pohl und das SS-Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt 1933–1945* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2001), 279 notes 156, 157; Günter Morsch, "Gründung und Aufbau des Konzentrationslagers Sachsenhausen," in Günter Morsch (ed.), *Von der Sachsenburg nach Sachsenhausen. Bilder aus dem Fotoalbum eines KZ-Kommandanten* (Berlin: Metropol, 2007), 96.

27 See Franz Ehrlich, Biographische Episoden, 1958, 1977, SBD, I 11634/23 D.

Fig. 3. Franz Ehrlich: Design for a representative hallway with fireplace and staircase for the villa of a SS leader in the Buchenwald concentration camp, undated, 1938–1941; pencil and watercolour on watercolour paper, 38.0 x 41.0 cm

In the construction office, Ehrlich designed, among other things, representative villas for the SS leaders and smaller residential buildings, a commandant's casino, a forest restaurant, an SS home, an animal enclosure, and a falconry for the concentration camp, which was only finished in July 1937, and its ambitious commandant, SS-Standartenführer (Oberst) Karl Otto Koch. The falconer's house of the falconry, a simple half-timbered house with a gable roof, was relocated after the end of the Second World War and now stands as a privately used residential building not far from Weimar in Nohra, district of Ulla.[28]

For the buildings mentioned, he designed the interiors, including furniture, chandeliers and fittings. Ehrlich also worked on the SS-Siedlung I directly south of the camp,[29] which was destroyed in the course of the war, and the SS-Siedlung II Kleinobringen, today's Ettersbergsiedlung.[30]

His designs clearly did not follow the concepts developed at the Bauhaus, but rather the "völkisch" architectural ideas of his clients, which were determined by National Socialist ideology. He furnished the Falken-

28 See *Buchenwald-Spuren. Verflechtungen des Konzentrationslagers mit Weimar und Umgebung. Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, Professur für Denkmalpflege und Baugeschichte, Projektbericht WS 2016/17,* 85–88, 206–208, at https://docplayer.org/71349822-Buchenwald-spuren-verflechtungen-des-konzentrationslagers-mit-weimar-und-umgebung.html (accessed on 1 September 2020).

29 See Karina Loos, *Die Inszenierung der Stadt. Planen und Bauen im Nationalsozialismus in Weimar.* Diss. Bauhaus-Universität Weimar 1999, URN: urn:nbn:de:gbv:wim2-20040225-502, 265–269, 536; Buchenwald-Spuren 2017, 48–49.

30 See Loos, *Inszenierung*, 536–536; *Buchenwald-Spuren*, 50–51, 215–221.

hof in Buchenwald with "a large fireplace hall with an old Germanic chimney and old Germanic furniture."[31]

Only for the lettering on the camp gate "Jedem das Seine" ("To each his own") did he design typography based on the Bauhaus—a subversive act of resistance that apparently did not come to the attention of any of the SS leaders.

The construction office at Buchenwald concentration camp is also active for other SS offices. Among other things, Ehrlich designed a restaurant in the SS settlement near Sachsenhausen concentration camp, an SS training home near the Wartburg, and villas and flats for SS leaders in and around Berlin. Among them was the official villa for the head of the Inspectorate of Concentration Camps,[32] the then SS-Gruppenführer (Generalleutnant) Theodor Eicke.[33] Today the building is used as a youth hostel, named House Szczypioski, after a former Polish prisoner of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp.

Fig. 4. Franz Ehrlich: Weimar, Buchenwald Memorial, Gate, 1937/38

In October 1939 Ehrlich was released from Buchenwald concentration camp. Due to his prison sentence, he was classified as unfit for military service and excluded from military service. Just two weeks after his release, he was reassigned to the SS construction office at Buchenwald concentration camp as a civilian construction supervisor and continued to design for the SS settlements in and around Buchenwald.

---

31 Franz Ehrlich, Biographische Episoden, 1958, 1977, SBD, I 11634/28 D.

32 See Tuchel, *Konzentrationslager*.

33 For the biography of Theodor Eicke cf. Tuchel, *Konzentrationslager,* 128–141. In 2006, Eicke's former official villa was converted into an international youth meeting place and given the name of the Polish writer Andrzej Szczypiorski, who was sent to KL Sachsenhausen as a youth in 1944.

Fig. 5. Franz Ehrlich: Oranienburg, youth hostel Sachsenhausen "House Szczypiorski" (former Villa Eicke) from the west, 1938/39

In 1941, he was transferred to the SS-Hauptamt Haushalt und Bauten, Abteilung C II – Sonderbauaufgaben in Berlin.[34] Ehrlich designed, among other buildings, the conversion of the Comthurey mansion for the head of the SS-Hauptamt Haushalt und Bauten, SS-Gruppenführer (Generalleutnant) Oswald Ludwig Pohl.

In February 1943, he was assigned to Strafdivision 999,[35] which was deployed in the Peloponnese as an occupation force and for object security. According to his own statements, he was active in the resistance there and had contacts with the Greek partisans. At the end of the war, he was imprisoned in Yugoslavia, where he was again active in planning within the framework of reparations. In the prisoner-of-war camp Panjewo and in Belgrade he organized and led anti-fascist courses and was sent back to Germany in May/June 1946 "as an award for exemplary antifa work."[36]

---

34 MfS, notice by Franz Ehrlich from 12 February 1959, BStU MfS AIM 6503/75, 000131.

35 The Strafdivision 999 was a special army unit set up in October 1942 in which persons classified as 'unworthy of military service', ordinary criminals as well as opposition communists, social democrats and clergymen, were to prove themselves in war service. Many of the opposition members actively continued their resistance against the Nazi regime in the Strafdivision 999; cf. amongst others Hans Burckhardt, Günter Erxleben and Kurt Nettball, *Die mit dem blauen Schein*. Über den antifaschistischen Widerstand in den 999er Formationen der faschistischen deutschen Wehrmacht (1945–1942) (Berlin: Militärverlag der DDR, ²1986); Hans-Peter Klausch, *Die Geschichte der Bewährungsbataillone 999 unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des antifaschistischen Widerstandes* (Pahl-Rugenstein-Hochschulschriften Gesellschafts- und Naturwissenschaften, Vol. 245) (Cologne: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1987).

36 Personnel Record Card, 14 August 1946, BStU MfS AIM 6503/75, 000023.

Post-War Period

Franz Ehrlich returned to Dresden in 1946. In the Department for Reconstruction, he drafted reconstruction plans for the heavily destroyed city,[37] exhibition stands for the post-war fairs in Leipzig, together with other Bauhäusler such as Wils Ebert, Franz Herbert Hirche, Kurt Kranz, and Selman Selmanagić,[38] and a monument to Karl Marx.[39]

In 1946 he joined the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED). As a freelance architect, Ehrlich designed and planned numerous buildings, including police schools, printing works, and a university town in Leipzig. In 1950, he became the technical director of the "VVB = Vereinigung Volkseigener Betriebe Industrie-Entwurf" (United People's Owned Enterprises Industrial Development) Berlin, which designed, among other things, the ironworks combines in Calbe and Stalinstadt[40]—from 1961 Eisenhüttenstadt—the power station in Vockerode and shipyards in Wismar, Rostock and Stralsund.

In the context of the Formalism Controversy in the early 1950s, when the German Democratic Republic's government demanded that its artists distance themselves from Modernism, which was defamed as Western, bourgeois and decadent, and strove for a Socialist Realism modelled on what was practised in the Soviet Union, Ehrlich was also attacked. Kurt Liebknecht, president of the German "Bauakademie" (Building

---

37 On the reconstruction of Dresden and Ehrlich's role cf. Werner Durth, Jörn Düwel and Niels Gutschow, *Architektur und Städtebau der DDR* (2 Vols., Frankfurt on the Main and New York: Campus-Verlag, 1998), Vol. 1, 194–227, 302–355; Vol. 2, 443. A current catalogue raisonné is published in Knigge and Stein, eds., *Franz Ehrlich*, 168–169; cf. as well his own lists in Franz Ehrlich, "Franz Ehrlich über Franz Ehrlich," *Bauwelt*, Vol. 87, No. 26 (1996): 1540–1541.

38 See Scheffler, "Messestände auf der Leipziger Messe," 295–297.

39 This design for the co-founder of communism, a parabolic arch on the left bank of the Elbe, would have reached the height of the tower of the neighbouring Catholic Court Church, built by Gaetano Chiaveri between 1739 and 1755. It has models in the architecture of fascist Italy, namely in the monumental parabolic arch designed in 1938 by Adalberto Libera as a portal for the Esposizione Universale di Roma 1942 (cf. *Adalberto Libera. Opera completa* (Exhibition catalogue Trento) (Milan: Electa 1989), 162–163; Nicola Di Battisti, ed., *Adalberto Libera. La città ideale* (Exhibition catalogue Rovereto) (Milan: Electa, 2013), 88–89, 113), and in the Gateway Arch with which Eero Saarinen won the competition for the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial in St. Louis in 1946 (cf. Pierluigi Serraino, *Eero Saarinen 1910–1961. Ein funktionaler Expressionist* (Cologne: Taschen Verlag, 2005), 26–29; Tracy Campbell, *The Gateway Arch. A biography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013). The Gateway Arch was the only one of the three designs to be realised between 1961 and 1967.

40 Ehrlich's design for Stalinstadt is rejected as "formalistic," it would correspond to the "outdated terraced house character and the constructivist intentions" of its architect; undated manuscript by Kurt Leucht, probably written at the end of March 1953, quoted from Durth, Düwel and Gutschow, *Architektur und Städtebau der DDR*, Vol. 2, 503.

Academy) founded in 1951 and one of the most influential figures in the German Democratic Republic's architectural scene, publicly accused him, Mart Stam and Selman Selmanagić of still being "stuck in the Bauhaus traditions in their architectural work today."[41] The Formalism Controversy signified an enforced return to cultural heritage and the national building tradition.[42] Its beginning can be found in an article by the Soviet cultural officer Alexander Dymschitz, published in the *Tägliche Rundschau* in November 1948, in which he accused Western artists of "anti-realist tendencies" and "bourgeois decadence".[43] In January 1951, a certain N. Orlow—probably a pseudonym for Vladimir Semyonov, political adviser to the Soviet Control Commission in Germany[44]—demanded a change in architecture as well, where "the long-lasting rule of the tasteless-formalist direction has led to the predominance of a grey, dry, joyless, monotonous and untruthful architecture, so that expressionless and depressing boxes of houses have arisen ... It is clear that many ineffectual artistic traditions of imperialist Germany must be revised here."[45]

At the Vth meeting of the Central Committee of the Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands in March 1951, "the so-called 'Bauhaus style' and the constructivist, functionalist basic attitude of many architects" were officially denounced, both hindering the "development of an architecture that expresses the new social conditions in the German Democratic Republic."[46] In 1951, Walter Ulbricht, General Secretary of the Cen-

---

41 Kurt Liebknecht, "Im Kampf um eine neue deutsche Architektur," *Neues Deutschland* No. 36 from 13 February 1951, 3–4, reprinted in Durth, Düwel and Gutschow, *Architektur und Städtebau der DDR*, Vol. 2, 140–141; cf. ibid., Vol. 1, 262–263; Vol. 2, 165.

42 See Andreas Schätzke, *Zwischen Bauhaus und Stalinallee. Architekturdiskussion im östlichen Deutschland 1945–1955* (Bauwelt Fundamente, Vol. 95) (Braunschweig: Vieweg, 1991); Durth, Düwel and Gutschow, *Architektur und Städtebau der DDR* (both with numerous documents); on the "Nationale Bautradition" in particular see Alexander Karrasch, *Die 'Nationale Bautradition' denken. Architekturideologie und Sozialistischer Realismus in der DDR der Fünfziger Jahre* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann 2015).

43 Alexander Dymschitz, "Über die formalistische Richtung in der deutschen Malerei," in *Tägliche Rundschau* No. 271 from 19 November 1948, 11, and in *Tägliche Rundschau* No. 275 from 24 November 1948, 11, quoted from Elimar Schubbe, ed., *Dokumente zur Kunst-, Literatur- und Kulturpolitik der SED* (Stuttgart: Seewald, 1972), Doc. 18, 97–103, here 97.

44 See Günter Feist, "Allmacht und Ohnmacht. Historische Aspekte der Führungsrolle der SED," in Günter Feist, Eckart Gillen and Beatrice Vierneisel, eds., *Kunstdokumentation SBZ/DDR 1945–1990. Aufsätze, Berichte, Materialien* (Cologne: 1996), 56.

45 N. Orlow, "Wege und Irrwege der modernen Kunst," in *Tägliche Rundschau* No. 17 from 20/21 January 1951, quoted from Schubbe, *Dokumente*, Doc. 44, 159–170, here 161.

46 "Der Kampf gegen den Formalismus in Kunst und Literatur, für eine fortschrittliche deutsche Kultur. Entschließung des Zentralkomitees der SED, angenommen auf der V. Tagung vom 15. bis 17. März 1951," in *Neues Deutschland* No. 69 from 23 March 1951, 5–6, quoted from Schubbe, *Dokumente*, Doc. 46, 178–186, here 181.

tral Committee of the Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands, even called the "Bauhaus style an anti-people phenomenon,"[47] and Edmund Collein, Vice-President of the German Bauakademie—and Bauhaus graduate as Ehrlich—called the Federal School of the General German Trade Union Federation in Bernau, designed by Hannes Meyer and Hans Wittwer, a "poor formalistic [...] Bauhaus architecture."[48]

In February 1954 Ehrlich allowed himself to be recruited as a secret informant (GI)[49] with the code name 'Neumann.'[50] Another GI 'Attika' warned in 1954 before recruiting Ehrlich, saying that he was "a formalist, functionalist in his architectural work". These "often have the attitude that they were and are the only revolutionary architects, since they had already proved this before 1945 through their development at the Bauhaus and in their architectural work. They often had the attitude that they are the only revolutionary architects." A "certain arrogance also prevented him from seriously dealing with the questions of Marxist-Leninist aesthetics."[51]

From 1953 Ehrlich was commissioned by the State Broadcasting Committee and designed the studio building of the State Broadcasting Committee in Nalepastraße in Berlin Oberschöneweide (1951–1956).[52] Ehrlich

47 Walter Ulbricht, "Kunst und Wissenschaft im Plan. Rede vor der Volkskammer am 31. Oktober 1951," *Aufbau*, Vol. 7 (1951): 1071–1076, quoted from Schätzke, *Zwischen Bauhaus und Stalinallee*, Doc. 14, 143–145, here 144.

48 Edmund Collein, "Wo stehen wir in unserer Architektur-Diskussion?" *Neues Deutschland* No. 281 from 4 December 1951, 3, quoted from Durth, Düwel and Gutschow, *Architektur und Städtebau der DDR*, Vol. 2, 149; in this sense also the article printed on the same page by Hermann Henselmann, "Der reaktionäre Charakter des Konstruktivismus," in *Neues Deutschland* No. 281 from 4 December 1951, 3, reprinted in Durth, Düwel and Gutschow, *Architektur und Städtebau der DDR*, Vol. 2, 149, and in Schubbe, *Dokumente*, Doc. 59, 216–220.

49 From its foundation in 1950, the GDR Ministry (from 1953 to 1955 State Secretariat) for State Security used so-called "Geheime Informatoren (GI)," secret informants. The term "Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter (IM)," unofficial collaborator, or euphemistically informal collaborator was used only from 1968 onwards, cf. Helmut Müller-Enbergs, "Geheimer Informator (GI)," in Roger Engelmann et al., eds., *Das MfS-Lexikon. Begriffe, Personen und Strukturen der Staatssicherheit der DDR* (Berlin: Christoph Links Verlag, 2016), 103.

50 MfS, File review Reg.-No. 862/54 from 18 February 1954, BStU MfS AIM 6503/75, 000008. The aim of the recruitment was to obtain information "about the current situation in the building industry" as well as about the "leading functionaries of the Ministry for Construction and the German Building Academy who are being worked on by us [State Security]," MfS, Main department III/1, Unit III, report from 24 February 1954, BStU MfS AIM 6503/75, 000036f. Ehrlich is listed as (then) IM until 1975, MfS, decision from 17 April 1975, BStU MfS AIM 6503/75, 000430f.

51 MfS, Main department III/1, Unit III, report from 11 February 1954, BStU MfS AIM 6503/75, 000033.

52 Ehrlich, "Aufnahme- und Studiogebäude"; Dieter Hoffmann-Axthelm, "Eine Entdeckungsreise: Drei Bauten von Franz Ehrlich," in *Bauwelt*, Vol. 87, No. 26 (1996): 1518–1544; Landesdenkmalamt Berlin, Obj.-Dok.-Nr. 09020102. The television centre in Berlin Adlershof (1949–1951), long attributed to Ehrlich, was designed by Wolfgang Wunsch; cf. Butter, *Nach-*

Fig. 6. Franz Ehrlich: Cabinet from furniture programme 602, Volkseigener Betrieb (People's Owned Enterprise) Deutsche Werkstätten Hellerau, 1957

designed furniture for the VEB Vereinigte Werkstätten Hellerau, including the type furniture program 602, which was produced from 1957 and was very successful.

In 1956–1958, Ehrlich built the Institute for Cortico-Visceral Pathology and Therapy in Berlin—renamed the Franz Volhard Clinic in 1992, privatized in 2001 and vacant since 2007—one of his main works.[53]

From 1955 onwards, Ehrlich worked as an architect for the Ministry of Foreign Trade of the GDR and between 1967 and 1984 built trade representations and embassies in Belgrade, Prague, Helsinki, Bucharest, Budapest, New Delhi, Cairo and Düsseldorf, among others, as well as, as his last realized building, the representation of the Chamber of Foreign Trade of the GDR in Brussels between 1967 and 1973.[54]

---

kriegsmoderne, 5–6; Butter and Hartung, *Ostmoderne*, 28–30; Landesdenkmalamt Berlin, Obj.-Dok.-Nr. 09045245.

53 Architekten- und Ingenieur-Verein zu Berlin (ed.), *Berlin und seine Bauten* (Vol. 7.A, Berlin: DOM Publishers, 1997), 129, 206; Hoffmann-Axthelm, *Entdeckungsreise*; Czymay, "Die Franz-Volhard-Klinik"; Landesdenkmalamt Berlin, Obj.-Dok.-Nr.n 09066166, 09046072 (garden).

54 On the history of use cf. Thomas Grosse, "Von der Außenhandelsvertretung der DDR zum Zentrum der Regionen. Die Geschichte der Liegenschaft am Boulevard Saint Michel 80," in Wolfgang Renzsch and Thomas Wobben, eds., *20 Jahre ostdeutsche Landesvertretungen in Brüssel. Eine Bilanz der Interessenvertretung der Länder aus unterschiedlichen Blickwinkeln* (Schriftenreihe des Europäischen Zentrums für Föderalismus-Forschung Tübingen, Vol. 39) (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2013), 52–57.

Fig. 7. Franz Ehrlich: Berlin Buch, Institute for Cortico-Visceral Pathology and Therapy (Franz Volhard Clinic), entrance area from the east, 1956–1958

In 1982, on Ehrlich's 75th birthday, his socialist origins "as an unemployed locksmith" and his studies at the Bauhaus were acknowledged, where "he [made] his own the ideas of socially oriented functional building, as advocated in particular by Hannes Meyer," even if this view "was not in demand at all times."[55] His anti-fascism and his imprisonment in Buchenwald concentration camp were specifically mentioned.

Franz Ehrlich died in Bernburg (Saale) on 28 November 1984.

Three years after his death, an extensive exhibition was held at the Bauhaus in Dessau; his estate is also kept there.

Fig. 8. Franz Ehrlich at his drawing table, early 1960s

55 Gerhard Krenz, "Franz Ehrlich zum Geburtstag," *Architektur der DDR*, Vol. 31, No. 12 (1982): 765.

Conclusion

Franz Ehrlich had been an active socialist since his school and apprenticeship days in Leipzig. He had studied at the Bauhaus in the scientifically oriented phase influenced by Hannes Meyer, which focused on the social responsibility of the architect. His attitude toward National Socialism was clearly that of a resistance fighter—his design work in Buchenwald and later in the SS-Hauptamt Haushalt und Bauten was not done out of conviction, but was a survival strategy. On the other hand, his anti-fascism apparently did not prevent him from adapting the socialist ideals of youth to the harsh social reality and working as a GI for the Ministry of State Security of the German Democratic Republic.

I expressly do not want to make a moral judgement. But Ehrlich seems to me to be a good example for looking more closely into biographies and accepting that even radiant anti-fascists can have their dark sides.

Credits

Fig. 1. Galerie am Sachsenplatz (ed.), *Bauhaus 4: Franz Ehrlich – die frühen Jahre* (Leipzig: Galerie am Sachsenplatz, 1980), 4.

Fig. 2. Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, I 1156 G.

Fig. 3. Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, I 47420.

Fig. 4. Photo Martin Kraft, CC BY-SA 3.0 https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/legalcode.

Fig. 5. Photo Carolin Neubauer.

Fig. 6. Olaf Thormann, ed., *Bauhaus Sachsen/Bauhaus Saxony* (Stuttgart: Arnoldsche Verlagsanstalt, 2019), 298.

Fig. 7. Dieter Hoffmann-Axthelm, "Eine Entdeckungsreise: Drei Bauten von Franz Ehrlich", in *Bauwelt*, Vol. 87, No. 26 (1996): 1536.

Fig. 8. Bauhaus Dessau (ed.), *Franz Ehrlich 1907–1984. Kunst und Gestaltung*. (Dessau: Bauhaus, 1987), inner cover.

Part Three

ANTI-FASCISM AS A LEGITIMATING IDEOLOGY

11

Passing the Torch

The Challenges of Anti-fascism in Youth Ritual and Commemoration in the German Democratic Republic (GDR)

CATHERINE PLUM

> "There is nothing in North America that can even remotely match it—an entire nation turned inward in a week-long dedication to sport. Mass Sport [including]: recreational Workers' Sports Club finals...the Spartakiad, and elite international competition as well. An American might well try to imagine the Super Bowl, the World Series, the Mardi Gras, and New Year's Eve in Time Square thrown together with all of the NCAA championships in all sports being held in one city at one time. But only in the GDR would the opening ceremony to all of that take place in an erstwhile concentration camp (Buchenwald)—lest anyone forget the memory of the Communist sport officials who lost their lives there in the world's struggle against Fascism."
>
> Doug Gilbert[1]

A Chicago sports writer voiced his reaction to the 1977 torch lighting ceremony of the East German National Sports and Gymnastics festival, a television and news media event. Audiences in the GDR would not have been surprised that the opening ceremony took place on the historic site of Buchenwald. In their schools and workplaces, children, teens, and their families were accustomed to attending anti-fascist commemorative ceremonies given East Germany's anti-fascist movement and appropriated legacy, a core component of its self-definition used to contrast itself with the West.

Throughout four decades of socialist rule in East Germany, anti-fascist activists attempted to pass on the anti-fascist narrative and collective memory to new generations of youth not only in history and literature classes, but through a variety of educational forms including ritual and ceremony. Many of the forms of commemoration such as

---

1 Doug Gilbert, *The Miracle Machine* (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1980), 13–14.

school assemblies, youth group meetings, field trips, research projects, and *Namensverleihung* (namesake) campaigns were visible in the 1950s and stemmed from German or Soviet origins. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, the expansion of different commemorative practices to more schools, clubs, and youth groups coincided with a renewed emphasis on the martyred communist leader Ernst Thälmann. Following a high-point of anti-fascist activism in the 1970s, the 1980s witnessed administrators and many educators trying to sustain the energy of the campaign, despite a growing recognition of some of the inherent problems of the movement. The overly ritualistic nature of commemoration increased with time, and a minority of students played leading roles in the movement and its rites. Younger students were particularly interested in the often exciting adventure stories of resistance fighters, whereas significant numbers of older students lost their interest and questioned the form, if not always the content, of anti-fascist education and commemoration.

Scholars have studied extensively anti-fascist public policy, the anti-fascist narrative, and the memorial landscape in East Germany and beyond; however, they have devoted less attention to commemorative ritual and its reception by successive generations of Eastern European outside film and theater.[2] In the GDR and other countries of the Soviet Bloc, it is not surprising that latent Christian traditions including impressionistic songs, readings, oaths, and the laying of wreathes were common features of purportedly secular anti-fascist rituals. Among the political elite, an anti-fascist calendar replaced a calendar marked by religious inspiration and recent fascist influence, and anti-fascism took on a quasi-religious importance in East Germany, providing ethical values, a moral code, and martyrs especially for the nation's youth.

---

2 On anti-fascist drama and film in Eastern Europe, see Małgorzata Pakier and Bo Stråth, eds., *European memory? Contested Histories and Politics of Remembrance* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010); Benita Blessing, *The Anti-fascist Classroom: Denazification in Soviet-Occupied Germany, 1945–1949* (Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave, 2006); and Jeremy Hicks, *Victory Banner Over the Reichstag: Film, Document and Ritual in Russia's Contested Memory of World War II* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 2020). On anti-fascism in schools and extra-curricular organizations, see Catherine Plum, *Antifascism After Hitler: East German Youth and Socialist Memory, 1949–1989* (London & New York: Routledge, 2015); and Alan L. Nothnagle, *Building the East German Myth: Historical Mythology and Youth Propaganda in the German Democratic Republic, 1945–1989* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999).

Anti-fascist Commemorations

Educators and communist youth group leaders planned anti-fascist ceremonies and activities for a variety of occasions, many of which became annual celebrations. Anti-fascist anniversaries tied to key personalities and the end of World War Two featured prominently among these occasions, along with fieldtrips, visits from anti-fascist veterans and special events to confer new names on schools, clubs, and youth group troops and to dedicate memorial sites and so-called "tradition rooms" in schools and summer camps. Often school and youth group planners also integrated anti-fascist elements into ceremonies orchestrated for sporting competitions, science and research fairs (Messe der Meister von Morgen), conventions, induction ceremonies to a communist youth organization or club, and the *Jugendweihe* coming-of-age ceremony.

The remembrance calendar and major anniversaries afforded school and youth organization leaders and educators a number of opportunities to commemorate anti-fascist resistance over the course of a school year.[3] Beginning in 1949, the Ministry of People's Education provided schools with a list of celebrations to observe each year, typically about twenty-five different events, the majority based on a political cause or historical reference point. Berlin authorities included directives and goals for the festivities and required schools to report back on the events that took place for each occasion. Christmas and the German *Fasching*, or Mardi Gras, were not included.[4] Schools were to commemorate anti-fascism on occasions such as World Peace Day (*Weltfriedenstag*) and the first day of school in September.[5] Additionally, some schools and youth troops recognized the national Day of the Victims of Fascism (*Tag der Opfer des Faschismus*) celebrated on the second Sunday in September every year beginning in 1947.[6] Members of the Free German Youth Orga-

3 On school festivities in the Soviet-occupied zone and early GDR, see Sonja Häder, "Feiern und Feste im Schulalltag der SBZ und frühen DDR: Selbstbestimmte Kultur oder parteistaatliche Inszenierung", in *Die Schule als moralische Anstalt: Erzeihung in der Schule: Allgemeines und der "Fall DDR,"* eds. Achim Leschinsky, Petra Gruner and Gerhard Kluchert (Weinheim: Dt. Studien-Verlag, 1999), 203–219.

4 Häder, "Feiern und Feste im Schulalltag der SBZ und frühen DDR," 204–206.

5 Interview with Helmut Milke, 18 August 2001, Berlin. This essays utilizes evidence from a total of sixteen interviews conducted by the author a little over a decade after German reunification. Interview subjects include former GDR students, teachers and anti-fascist veterans.

6 Manfred Agethen, "Gedenkstätten und antifaschistische Erinnerungskultur", in *Der missbrauchte Antifaschismus: DDR-Staatsdoktrin und Lebenslüge der deutschen Linke*, eds. Manfred Agethen, Eckhard Jess and Ehrhart Neubert (Freiburg: Herder Verlag, 2002), 129.

nization (FDJ[7]), for ages 14–25, were more likely than their younger peers to participate in local ceremonies on this day.[8] By contrast, celebrations for Ernst Thälmann's birthday on 16 April included Young Pioneers and Thälmann Pioneers in grades 1–3 and 4–7 respectively. 8 May, the "Day of Liberation," (*Tag der Befreiung*) was one of the most significant days in the calendar year. This national anniversary recalled the role of the anti-fascist Soviet army in the defeat of Nazi Germany. Thus, school commemorations and discussions on or near 8 May were fitting occasions on which to renew the perceived partnership that united German and Soviet citizens.[9] In many parts of the GDR, Day of Liberation festivities ignored the role of the Western allies in the defeat of fascism. Only in the last few years of GDR did SED representatives allow for references to the anti-Hitler coalition, making the commemoration marginally more inclusive.[10]

One key feast day disappeared that had been part of the festival program in the early 1950s. In these early years, Pioneers were to celebrate Stalin's birthday in December by recalling his many historic deeds, including his victory over fascism. A district Pioneer house in Neuruppin, for instance, planned a special event to celebrate Stalin's birthday in 1953.[11] However, over the course of the 1950s, educators and youth group leaders devoted less and less attention to Stalin, particularly after news leaked of Khrushchev's partial critique of Stalin for crimes against communist party members.

In addition to informal commemorations and celebrations, youth group leaders also staged more formal induction ceremonies initiating youth into the communist youth organizations and sometimes clubs. In the following quotation, a Pioneer named Anna from Eberswalde-Finow recorded in an essay the moment when she was inducted into a club, the Young Military Historians[12]:

---

7 From the German: Freie Deutsche Jugend.
8 Interview with Horst Mitscher, 21 November 2001, Berlin.
9 Tara Magdalinski, "Traditionspflege and the Construction of Identity in the German Democratic Republic, 1970–1979", *Occasional Papers in German Studies* 14 (December 1997), 31.
10 Interview with Fred Löwenberg, 10 December 2001, Berlin.
11 December calendar for the Kreispionierhaus 'Grete Walter', *Das Pionier Echo* 3/53, 6, Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv, hereafter SAPMO-Barch, DR 2/5423, 162.
12 For more on the Young Historians Clubs, see Catherine Plum, "The Children of Antifascism: Exploring Young Historian Clubs in the GDR," *German Politics and Society,* Vol. 26, No. 1 (Spring 2008): 1–28.

The leader of our collective approached me and gave me my identity card and the sign of the club. My eyes filled with tears of joy and my heart began to beat ever louder. I was very happy to be a member of a club which looks at the life and works of antifascist resistance fighters...We walked again on the path which thousands of women and children walked upon—people who are no longer alive today. For a long time afterwards, this experience moved me, and I decided that all people must work together to protect freedom all over the world. The horrors of fascism must never return.[13]

Young people also learned about and practiced anti-fascism through the *Jugendweihe* program and ceremony. The *Jugendweihe*, or literally "youth oath," at the age of fourteen functioned as a rite of passage through which youth became young adult citizens of the GDR.[14] Historically, the *Jugendweihe* was a custom that originated in free religious communities in the mid-nineteenth century.[15] In 1954, the East German government took over formal control of the ceremony and its preparation.[16] Participation in this program became an important stepping stone for educational advancement. The Ministry of Education expected young people who applied to the university-preparatory secondary schools to have completed the *Jugendweihe*. As early as 1962, over ninety per cent of eligible East German youth took part in this rite of passage.[17] Devout Christians in East Germany often compared the program and celebration of the *Jugendweihe* to confirmation and dissuaded teens from participating. Scholars argue persuasively that the *Jugendweihe* underwent profound changes as it came under state control. The teens now pledged to

---

13 "Anhang 1: Abschrift eines Schulaufsatzes", "Die Tätigkeit der Arbeitsgemeinschaft 'Junge Miltärhistoriker' eine Möglichkeit zur Herausbildung wertvoller sozialistischer Charaktereigenschaften bei Kindern und Jugendlichen", 28 January 1982, SAPMO-BArch DY 57/K73/6, 2. I have chosen to use a pseudonym in place of the student's name.

14 Sterling Fishman and Martin Lothar, *Estranged Twins: Education and Society in the Two Germanys* (New York: Praeger, 1987), 36.

15 The first "proletarian" *Jugendweihe* took place in 1890 for youth in the Freidenker-Gesellschaft Hamburg. During the Weimar Republic the number of *Jugendweihe* celebrations increased substantially and socialist communities began to celebrate this ritual in smaller towns and cities as well as larger urban centers. See Rolf Gehring and Hartmut M. Griese, "Idee, Geschichte und Übergangsritual der Jugendweihe", in *Jugendweihen in Deutschland: Idee, Geschichte und Aktualität eines Übergangsrituals,* eds. Alexander Bolz, Christian Fischer, and Harmut M. Griese (Leipzig: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Sachsen, 1998), 18–19.

16 Zentraler Ausschuss für Jugendweihe in der DDR, *Handbuch zur Jugendweihe: Eine Anleitung* für *Mitglieder der Ausschüsse* für *Jugendweihe und Jugendstundenleiter,* (Berlin: Volk und Wissen, 1977), 11.

17 Zentraler Ausschuss für Jugendweihe in der DDR, 28.

uphold the values of their nation,[18] and the valorization of anti-fascism soon became a central component of the program. As Gregory Wegner's research reveals, many East German schools developed the tradition in which every *Jugendweihe* class would visit one of the three national former concentration camps and memorial sites.[19] Other *Jugendweihe* groups chose to visit memorial sites and museums devoted to local anti-fascist heroes.

Increasingly, many of the school-wide anti-fascist commemorations and activities grew out of the process of individual schools and youth groups selecting namesakes. School principals frequently petitioned for a name when a new school opened or when a school transformed into a polytechnical institution. The Pioneers led by example when in 1952 the national organization received the honorary name Ernst Thälmann with the permission of Wilhelm Pieck. The GDR practice of conferring the names of important leaders and resistance fighters on schools was not unique in and of itself, but the names chosen differed from the Weimar and Nazi periods.[20] Under socialism, most schools took on the names of deceased communist revolutionaries, and a majority of the namesakes were also veterans of the struggle against fascism. In this way, East German schools were similar to their counterparts in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, which were also taking on the names of noteworthy figures from the history of the working classes. For example, there were Bulgarian schools and youth groups named after Georgi Dimitrov, his wife Liljana and even Ernst Thälmann.[21] In East Germany typical namesakes included famous leftist politicians like August Bebel and Karl Liebknecht and anti-fascists such as Thälmann, Artur Becker, Hans Beimler and Hanno Günther. Indeed, by 1974 there were at least 112 schools named after Thälmann in East Germany and at least as many branches

18 Gehring and Griese, eds., *Jugendweihen in Deutschland,* 16.

19 Gehring and Griese, eds., *Jugendweihen in Deutschland*, 127-146.

20 For a discussion of school namesakes during the Weimar and Nazi years, see Ekkehard Meier, "'Stets deutsch und gegenwartsnah' Zur Namensgebung höherer Schulen in Neukölln," in *Schulreform, Kontinuität und Brüche: Das Versuchsfeld Berlin-Neukölln 1912–1945*, eds. Gerd Radde, Werner Kortkaase, Rudolf Rogler and Udo Gößwald (Leske und Budrich, 1993), 35, 45. For a more detailed discussion of the naming of schools in the GDR and Wende period, see Catherine Plum, "Contested Namesakes: East Berlin School Names under Communism & in Reunified Germany," *History of Education Quarterly* (Winter 2005/6): 625–635.

21 "Aus der Pionierorganisation Georgie Dimitroff: Balkan Geschichten," *Pionierleiter* 3 (1972), 12; and Liselotte Obst, "Treffpunkt Dimitroff-Kabinet," *Pionierleiter* 10 (1972), 8.

of the Pioneer organization carrying the name of the communist leader murdered by the Nazis.[22]

Varying in their formality, the sites of commemorative ceremony could be fieldtrip destinations, such as anti-fascist historical sites, a school "tradition room" used for communist youth group events or a simple classroom. The more affecting locations were tied to recent history, such as a cemetery, former concentration camp or the location of a World War Two-era death march. Common fieldtrip destinations included the three national memorials at the former concentration camps of Buchenwald, Sachsenhausen, and Ravensbrück, all of which contained areas where youth might gather for ceremonies. The broad plazas built up around the memorials at Buchenwald and the Treptower Park in Berlin, for example, provided sufficient space for thousands of people to participate in rituals and ceremonies, such as Pioneer and FDJ induction ceremonies and *Jugendweihe* celebrations.[23] Moreover, the East German Center for Pedagogy maintained that memorials, and especially the national memorials at former concentration camps, had a special emotional effect that was possible only there, on the very sites that had witnessed historic events unfold.[24]

Anti-fascist Commemorative Practices and Rituals

Anti-fascist ceremonies featured common elements such as marching, flag raising, special readings or poems, formulaic speeches, songs, and sometimes oaths or the laying of wreaths at graves or memorials. Overall, the rituals were quite standardized. Youth group leaders could access some suggested formats for group meetings to commemorate anti-fascist heroes. For example, in 1962 the magazine *Pionierleiter* published a sample ceremony to honor Thälmann, suggesting how to orchestrate a so-called "*Thälmannfeier*" or Thälmann fest. As with all school and youth organization assemblies, the event began with a roll call. Each in-

22 "Auswahl der Oberschulen und PF, die den Namen 'E. Thälmann' tragen", SAPMO-BArch DY 24/14.010.

23 Nadja Gargulla, *Orte des NS-Terrors: Zur Geschichte der Gestaltung ihrer Gedenkstätten in der ehemaligen DDR* (Berlin: Offset Druckerei Gerhard Weinert, 1993), 2.

24 Kurt Patzwall and Willi Ehrlich, *Wir Besuchen ein Museum: Handreichungen zur Bildung und Erziehung im Museum für Leiter von Gruppen* (Berlin: Volk und Wissen, 1976), 27.

dividual class would come to attention and announce its presence and reply to the question, "Are you ready?" with, "Always ready [for peace and socialism]." The ceremony consisted of songs about Thälmann and the anti-fascist movement and recitations from the anthology *Thälmann ist niemals gefallen*. If an actual ceremony followed this plan, the result would have been a rather long celebration, including six songs, a quotation from Thälmann, and several readings.[25]

Schools and youth groups could select songs from a growing genre of anti-fascist and communist-themed music. Beginning in 1969, the Russian funeral march "Immortal Victims" ("Unsterbliche Opfer") was added to the lesson plan for second graders.[26] A rather heavy melody, this piece could be used for Day of Liberation celebrations and ceremonies that remembered fallen resistance heroes and Soviet soldiers. For example, there were approximately 210 Pioneers and 1,500 members of the FDJ present when "Immortal Victims" was used to open an event remembering the twenty-fifth anniversary of the deaths of members of the Schulze-Boysen/Harnack resistance group in 1967 at the socialist cemetery in Berlin-Friederichsfelde.[27] A music curriculum manual states that students should gain an emotional impression of the music—a statement that represents the goals and content of anti-fascist education more broadly. In grades five through twelve students learned a broader repertoire of anti-fascist songs, which were often repeated as students progressed from one grade to another. Anti-fascist songs that appear frequently from the 1950s through the 1980s include "The Soldiers of the Moor,"[28] Paul Dessau's "Spain's Sky," and "Lilo Herrmann,"[29] among others. Many of the music curriculum manuals list some anti-fascist songs

25 W. Pröger, "Kultur Kalendar", Beilage *Pionierleiter* (1962), 20, SAPMO-BArch PO DY25/319.
26 *Lehrplan Musik: Klasse 2* (Berlin: Volk und Wissen, 1969), 11.
27 "Festlegungen zur Durchführung eines Gedenk- und Kampfappells aus Anlass der 25 jährigen Wiederkehr der Ermordung von Widerstandskämpfern der antifaschistischen Widerstandsgruppe Schulze-Boysen/Harnack, am 21.12.1967 an der Gedenkstätte der Sozialisten in Berlin-Friederichsfeld", 10 December 1967, SAPMO-BArch DY 24/5.685, 1. A German-language version of this song can be found on YouTube. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fb-yPnj8Aqw (accessed 17 January 2022).
28 Eberhard Schmidt, a survivor of Sachsenhausen, composed this song entitled "Heimatland, Reckt deine Glieder," for the 3rd. World Games for Students and Youth in Berlin in 1951. *Musik Lehrbuch für die Klassen 7 und 8* (Berlin: Volk und Wissen, 1987), 29.
29 During the Spanish civil war, Dessau composed "The Thälmann Column" commonly known as "Spain's Sky" for the German Thälmann brigade. *Musik Lehrbuch für die Klassen 7 und 8* (Berlin: Volk und Wissen, 1973), 26–27. The song "Lilo Herrmann" honored the resistance efforts of a young Berlin university student and mother executed by the Nazis.

as required, and others as recommended.[30] A curriculum manual for ninth grade students notes explicitly that the number of required songs increased in the 1967 edition to ensure that GDR students share a common repertoire.[31] School and youth group functionaries expected students to memorize all of the verses to songs in the canon because these songs would be sung at school assemblies and youth group functions. The 1972 fifth grade curriculum manual remarks:

> The songs worked on in class should be sung frequently in the after-school life of students. This requires that the songs be thoroughly practiced and committed to memory, such that students can sing them on their own at Thälmann Pioneer and FDJ functions and at flag ceremonies, while hiking, at summer camp and in the students' social lives.[32]

East German writers also developed a growing number of stories and some poems for educators and students to select for anti-fascist events for different age groups. Former GDR citizens still recall learning some of the most widely used stories involving the most famous anti-fascist figures like Thälmann and Erich Honecker, including stories from Thälmann's childhood helping other youth and references to his imprisonment under the Nazis. One example of an anti-fascist celebration was an event commemorating the birthday of the Thälmann Pioneer movement in an East Berlin school in 1985. A student named Katrin wrote the following description of the event in a memory book:

> On 13.12.1985 we conducted a membership session to honor Ernst Thälmann. Marion was in charge of the opening of the session. We also sang the song "Go forward Pioneer". Then several children read stories from the book *Memories of My Father*. Afterwards, we had a contest about the life of Ernst Thälmann, and prizes were given out. Three students had all the right answers: Marin, Katrin and Phillip. They received a gingerbread man. Then we ate cake and drank tea. At the same time we listened to worker songs.[33]

---

30 *Lehrplan Gesang: 5. und 6. Klasse: Mittelschule* (Berlin: Volk und Wissen, 1957), 8; and *Lehrplan Musik: Klassen 5 bis 10* (Berlin: Volk und Wissen, 1971), 48.

31 *Lehrpläne für den Musikunterricht der Vorbereitungsklassen 9 und 10 zum Besuch der Erweiterten Oberschule (Präzisierter Lehrplan)* (Berlin: Volk und Wissen, 1967), 7.

32 *Lehrplan für Musik Klassen 5 bis 10* (Berlin: Volk und Wissen, 1971), 18.

33 Entry from *Gruppenbuch Klasse 5a, 6a, 7a*, 1984/85-1987/88 (purple cover), unknown school in East Berlin, Museum für Jugend und Kindheit.

A common book in GDR classrooms and libraries, *Memories of My Father,* recounted Thälmann's life story from the perspective of his daughter Irma Gabel-Thälmann. It is important to note that a student opened up the session. Moreover, a number of students participated in this session by reading stories aloud. While the group's adult leader almost certainly planned and coordinated the trivia contest, the competition allowed students to remain actively involved. The session was a rather odd and macabre hybrid, a birthday party with cake, tea, and a trivia contest dedicated to a role model who had been brutally murdered by the Nazis. If we compare this commemorative event to educational units on historical figures such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., there may be some parallels, such as the reading of stories and songs, but teachers would not typically incorporate a birthday cake into the program.

Following a German tradition to lay wreaths at graves and memorial sites, school classes and youth group troops often visited anti-fascist historical sites and performed the ritual of placing a wreath or bouquet of flowers at the site. For instance, a fourth grade Pioneer group from East Berlin went on a fieldtrip to the Seelower Heights, a famous battlefield in the Soviet advance towards Berlin. In the group's chronicle, a student recounts their experiences:

> As we arrived, we were allowed to look at artillery launchers, panzers, and two cannon. Several students climbed around on top of the panzers. After that, we saw the exhibit. At the end, there was a film about the march of the Soviet army to Berlin...At the memorial we laid a wreath. This visit was an important experience for all of us. We will not forget it quickly.[34]

Out of all of the historical sites that this class could visit in the greater East Berlin metropolitan area, representatives from this school selected a memorial to Soviet World War Two soldiers, and introduced young students to a war film.

Not unlike religious ceremonies with statements of beliefs and pledges, the East German government endorsed youth pledges or oaths in certain settings. As noted above, by the early 1960s the state expected all students to participate in the *Jugendweihe* coming-of-age ceremony

34 Ibid.

as eighth graders, marking their transition into young adult citizens of the GDR and members of the FDJ. In the actual *Jugendweihe* ceremony, participants recited an oath that was a statement of belief and loyalty. In espousing the oath, youth people promised to "hold in high esteem the revolutionary heritage of the people," a heritage that included anti-fascist heroes. In the early years of GDR ceremonies, eighth graders received as a gift from the state a book entitled *Universe, Earth, People*, which emphasized the revolutionary role of the working class in world history. In this text, the Central Committee for Jugendweihe reminded young people that a final socialist victory could not be achieved without remembering revolutionaries and especially "the brown pest which murdered the party faithful."[35]

Similar to religious iconography, anti-fascist commemorations and memory sites employed images and symbolic objects such as pictures, sculptures, flags, and banners believed to be prized and sometimes sacred. Drawings and sculptures typically included images of resistance fighters. East German communist youth organization flags sometimes included the image of anti-fascist resistance heroes. For example, at the Central Pioneer Camp Soja Kosmodemjanskaja, named after a Soviet partisan fighter, different residential groups at the camp competed to obtain a red silk banner with the likeness of Kosmodemjanskaja through political-ideological work and sport and tourist activities.[36] This use of a banner mirrors the Soviet ritual application of the "Victory Banner," which became a sacred object prominent in the post-Stalinist era, according to Jeremy Hicks.[37]

Youth research and rituals linked to political and Jewish victims of the death marches became more common in the 1980s as more information became available, although the theme came up in earlier periods as well. A youth group at the Pioneer camp "Mitschurin" researched the so-called "path of suffering" of Buchenwald inmates as early as 1967.[38] East German historians and educators generally referred to these trails as

35 Ibid. Originally taken from Zentralen Ausschuss für die Jugendweihe in der DDR, *Weltall, Erde, Mensch* (Berlin: Neues Leben, 1954), 338–356.

36 "Abschlussbericht des Zentralen Pionierlagers 'Soja Kosmodemjanskaja'", 8; Stolberg/Harz, dated 9.9.1960, SAPMO-BArch DY 24/2553, 29.

37 Hicks, *Victory Banner,* 9.

38 See "Abschlußbericht des Zentralen Pionierlagers Mitschurin des VEB Carl Zeiss Jena Feriensommer 1967," p. 3, SAPMO-BArch DY 25/2.537, 81.

"*Leidenswege,*" paths of suffering, or "*Todeswege,*" to designate the death paths on which concentration camp inmates were forced to march.

Of course, ritual tours through historical sites and ceremonies often featured anti-fascist veterans themselves, and the veterans engaged with schools in a variety of ways. When invited to work with an individual class, the anti-fascist veteran might give a presentation, lead a question-and-answer session, offer assistance in a research or oral history project, or provide a tour of a historical site. As schools selected anti-fascist honorary names, school representatives sought out the friends and surviving family members of deceased resistance fighters for information, documents, and photographs of the school's namesake. They often strengthened their ties with these individuals by inviting them to all-school assemblies for various occasions throughout the school year, such as the anniversary of name conferral, the Day of Liberation, and World Children's Day. As the veterans increased in age in the 1970s and 1980s, there was a renewed emphasis on the need to support inter-generational meetings and to engage young people in the recording of historical eyewitness testimony. This trend is not at all surprising given that the aging of Holocaust survivors became a pivotal impetus to record survivor testimony in the United States in the 1990s.

Some anti-fascist veterans did not want to be idolized—one of the weaknesses of the youth anti-fascist movement. Historian Josie McLellan argues in her 2004 monograph that many of the veterans of the International Brigades in East Germany took on the role of "reluctant heroes," uncomfortable with the way the official anti-fascist narrative had co-opted their stories and valorized their deeds.[39] Compared to educators, anti-fascist veterans possessed a certain authenticity based on their personal knowledge of the resistance movement and their experiences in concentration camps, which went beyond information found in school textbooks. One can make the argument that historical eyewitnesses' "authority of person," based on experience and personal impressions of events, is just as important as a conduit for preserving memory as the authenticity of place that is said to permeate a historical site, a concept

39 Josie McLellan, *Anti-fascism and Memory in East Germany: Remembering the International Brigades 1945–1989* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2004). See chapter 4.

to which Sarah Farmer refers in her monograph on the World War Two commemorative landscape of Oradour, France.[40]

The political tone at schools varied in part based on the number and atmosphere of Pioneer and FDJ assemblies and flag ceremonies, which were pervaded by a militaristic undertone according to some former GDR citizens. Schools founded their own traditions in terms of the selection of these events, although just about every school had an all-school assembly at the beginning of the year and one or more award ceremonies for exemplary students and Pioneers or FDJ members. Award ceremonies might take place on the anniversary of *Namensverleihung*, the Day of Liberation on 8 May or at the end of the school year.[41] A Berlin-based teacher noted in an interview that the school at which she worked beginning in 1986 rarely had assemblies and flag ceremonies.[42] However, the school her son attended in Berlin had a flag ceremony every Monday morning. Similarly, among older students who participated in events tied to the annual celebrations for the Victims of Fascism day commemorated in September at Berlin Bebelplatz, some teens would attend if they were interested, while at other schools, FDJ members may have felt more pressure to participate.[43] These examples provide further evidence of the variation in political education and ritualistic practices at schools within the same local area.

In the GDR, many of the commemorative rituals founded in the 1950s provided a model for schools and after-school organizations in the 1960s and beyond. This principle holds for anniversary celebrations, Young Historians clubs, honorary name conferral, school museums, and fieldtrips. Youth leaders believed that indoctrinating children as early as possible, in a playful manner, was crucial to winning over youth in a period in the 1950s when the GDR was losing so many citizens to the West. Building on early experimentation and traditions, school, youth group and party administrators attempted to stage a revival of anti-fascist fervor in the 1970s. Along with his wife Margot, who served as Minister of Education from 1963 to 1989, Erich Honecker helped to revitalize the anti-fascist youth campaign as the new SED First Secretary in

---

40 Sarah Farmer, *Martyred Village: Commemorating the 1944 Massacre at Oradour-sur-Glane* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 10–11.
41 Interview with Heike Manstein, Berlin, 27 August 2001.
42 Interview with Hedy Mehlhorn, Berlin, 16 October 2001.
43 Manstein and Milke, interviews.

the 1970s and former head of the FDJ. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, the expansion of different modes of anti-fascist commemoration coincided with a renewed emphasis on the Thälmann legacy and anti-fascist resistance. Following what can be termed a highpoint of anti-fascist namesake campaigns and Young Historians' activities in the 1970s, the 1980s were marked by a continued attempt on the part of GDR administrators and many educators to sustain the energy of the anti-fascist campaign despite a growing recognition of some of the inherent problems of the youth movement. Meanwhile, in West Germany, some young people participated in commemorative rituals and events, such as visiting former concentration camps, laying wreaths at monuments or cemeteries or watching anti-fascist films, but this experience was less common especially before the 1980s and hence less ritualistic.[44] West German media and schools marginalized communist anti-fascist resistance and privileged humanitarian, civil and military resistance, with a special focus on religious figures, Claus von Stauffenberg, the Kreisau Circle, and the White Rose students, the focus of another chapter in this volume.

Youth Reception of the Anti-fascist Ritual

When a group of Thälmann Pioneers from Berlin visited the Seelower Höhen cemetery for fallen Soviet soldiers from World War Two, the youth not only laid a wreath to show their respect, they also engaged in a spontaneous act of deference: they placed the red bandanas that were part of their uniform on the graves of the war dead.[45] This story provides a glimpse of those students who were genuinely moved by anti-fascist ceremonies and rituals, but educators faced challenges maintaining youth enthusiasm, especially as students grew older. In assessing student reception, I identify a number of factors that affected student participation in anti-fascist activities, such as student age and personal interests. Youth considered some anti-fascist activities and aspects of the anti-fas-

---

44 See Herbert Marcuse's *Legacies of Dachau: The Uses and Abuses of a Concentration Camp, 1933–2001 (*New York & Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2001), which explores, among other themes, postwar memory work at the Dachau memorial site.

45 Marcuse, *Legacies of Dachau*.

cist narrative to be more compelling and stimulating than others, and a minority of students played starring roles in ritual ceremonies.

Compared to fieldtrips and discussions with historical eyewitnesses, school and youth group assemblies for historical anniversaries and celebrations were less popular. Few former GDR students have positive memories of these functions, particularly if long speeches were involved. In flag ceremonies, Pioneers and FDJ members often carried national flags and banners symbolizing the Pioneer and FDJ organizations. For example, FDJ officials planned a ceremony for the 25th anniversary of the murder of the resistance group Schulze-Boysen/ Harnack in December 1967 at the historic socialist cemetery Berlin-Friedrichsfelde. For an event with over 1,700 Pioneers and FDJ members in attendance, FDJ representatives planned to have some 90 flag bearers.[46] Columns of marching youth and the pomp and the traditional "fighting songs" at ceremonies of this sort reminded some observers of a military parade and the militarism of historic youth organizations such as the Hitler Youth. A former GDR student in the 1980s, Heinz Müller, maintains that there were too many assemblies at his school and that they were simply too long—sometimes lasting an entire hour.[47] Former teachers and *Pionierleiter* claim that most assemblies were normally much shorter in length,[48] but the very fact that former GDR students do not remember them fondly and remember them being quite long suggests that this form of political indoctrination clearly backfired and was not sufficiently child- or youth-oriented. Teachers also recall occasional problems maintaining student discipline and decorum at such events.[49]

Whereas the assemblies themselves were generally unpopular, some students enjoyed singing anti-fascist songs. Some former GDR students remember anti-fascist songs such as "Partisannen von Amur," "Thälmannkolonie," "Moorsoldaten," and the "Hans Beimler Lied." Former GDR students Heiko Mahler and Hilda Meierson noted in an interview

---

46 FDJ Department of Agitation and Propaganda, "Festlegungen zur Durchfuhrung eines Gedenk- und Kampfappells aus Anlass der 25 jährigen Wiederkehr der Ermoderung von Schulze-Boysen/ Harnack, am 21.12.1967 an der Gedenkstätte der Sozialisten in Berlin-Friedricksfelde", 1 SAPMO-BArch DY 24/5.685.

47 Interview with Heinz Müller, Berlin, 11 September 2001. See also Jana Hensel, *Zonen Kinder* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 2004), 97.

48 Interviews with Ursula Jeske and Hilda Meierson, Berlin, 28 November and 12 March 2001, respectively.

49 Miercke, Mehring and Mehlhorn, interviews, and interview with Käthe Miercke, Berlin, 1 September 2001.

that the "*Kampflieder*" or fighting songs had a good rhythm and melody.[50] Scholar Angela Brock's research also suggests that some of the anti-fascist songs had a good beat and made an impact on students.[51] However, if only a minority of students actually sang songs at all-school assemblies, the mood of the event suffered.[52] While some former GDR students can still recognize these songs, this does not mean that young people thought much about the lyrics they were singing.[53] On a regular basis, children were asked to sing a special song about a young communist Red Guard musician, who was killed by an enemy bullet in the mid-1920s. According to a child who was 10 years old when the Berlin Wall came down, this song, "The Little Trumpeter," was meant for adults and it always made his mother cry. The powerful, first-person lyrics speak of digging a grave and burying the hero's body.[54]

While not all anti-fascist material was appropriate for young children, younger students were often interested in the adventure stories of resistance fighters, whereas significant numbers of older students lost their interest and excitement for a variety of reasons.[55] Of course, the timing of students' maturation and personal development varied from person to person, but evidence supports the argument that age was a factor. Most scholars identify the middle school years as the point at which youth became more critical of their teachers and educational curriculum. Historian Angela Brock pinpoints the time period when students transitioned from Thälmann Pioneers to FDJ members—around age fourteen—as a stage when many teens began to increasingly question the ideological elements of their education.[56] Citing slightly younger

---

50 Meierson and Müller interviews. Additional interviews: Hans Maier (Berlin, 11 September 2001), Heiko Mahler (Berlin, 11 September 2001), and Hanna Marburger (Berlin, 30 September 2001).

51 Angela Brock, "Producing the 'Socialist Personality'? Socialisation, Education, and the Emergence of new Patterns of Behavior", in *Power and Society in the GDR 1961–1979: The 'Normalisation of Rule'?* ed. Mary Fulbrook (New York: Berghahn, 2009), 227.

52 Mehring, interview, and interview with Heinz Peter Mühlenbacher, Berlin, 14 December 2001.

53 Sabine Hädicke, *Lehrjahre: Erinnerungen an den sozialistischen Schulalltag* (Jena: Verlag Neue Literatur, 2000), 30.

54 Barbara Felsmann, *Beim Kleinen Trompeter habe ich immer geweint: Kindheit in der DDR—Erinnerungen an die Jungen Pioniere* (Berlin: Lukas Verlag, 2003), 31–32. The song was actually composed during World War One, and socialists simply changed a few words.

55 Hädicke, *Lehrjahre,* 60; and "Hinweis auf Probleme, die in der gemeinsamen Sekretariatssitzung des Zentralrates und der Zentralleitung am 13.1.1959 in Zusammenhang mit der Diskussion über Volksbildungsfragen beraten werden sollten", 3, SAPMO-BArch DY 24/5.886.

56 Brock, "Producing the 'Socialist Personality'," 250-251.

youth, Mark Fenemore zeroes in on sixth grade for the development of skeptical attitudes especially for male students and youth in working-class families where education was not less of an emphasis.[57] Christina Reich, former GDR teacher and school principal at the Mildred Harnack POS, differentiates student interest in GDR namesakes based on age: "[During] the first four years, one could still really get the children excited. In reading about Mildred Harnack, one could even make their eyes light up." The fact that they had permission to bear Harnack's name impressed the children, but later on the fascination lessened, and one could no longer inspire students to that extent by the eighth grade. In an interview Reich noted further, "I believe that the ability to critique also played a role ... younger children are easier to influence than older ones. And that is very normal. It is the same way today."[58]

Unsurprisingly, some anti-fascist activities tended to be more popular and spark greater interest than others. One activity that consistently inspired a fair number of students was the opportunity to listen to and talk to anti-fascist veterans. Evidence of meaningful experiences with former communist resistance fighters suggests that many of the veterans selected to talk to students were in fact able to convey their stories and the anti-fascist messages effectively. In her memoirs detailing her experiences as a student and then teacher and youth group leader in the 1980s, Sabine Hädicke recalls how interested her FDJ students were when they met a woman who had been active in a resistance circle with Magnus Posner. Whereas the students had been quite bored when they went on a city tour for their last FDJ activity, the students seemed to quite enjoy the discussion and emerged from the experience sympathizing with the resistance fighter.[59] Members of Young Historians clubs often commented on how much they enjoyed speaking with historical eyewitnesses.[60] One member of a Young Historians club from Cottbus made the following statement at a 1977 Young Historians conference: "The best thing in that is we not only rummage around in old files, newspapers and other documents. Sure we work with paper. But behind the paper

57 Mark Fenemore, *Sex, Thugs and Rock 'n' Roll: Teenage Rebels in Coldwar East Germany* [Monographs in German History Vol. 16] (New York: Berghahn, 2007), 63–64.
58 Interview with Christina Reich, Berlin, 15 November 2001.
59 Hädicke, *Lehrjahre,* 190.
60 For a more detailed discussion of the anti-fascist activities of Young Historians groups, see my article: "The Children of Antifascism: Exploring Young Historian Clubs in the GDR," *German Politics and Society* 26 (Spring 2008): 1–28.

stand people. They are filled with stories. Speaking with them sharpens your outlook, teaching you important things for the rest of your life."[61] Of course, as I and other scholars have emphasized, some anti-fascist veterans were more effective than others at sharing their stories and inspiring youth.[62] Films, museums and discussions with anti-fascist veterans were often something that students remembered long after the event, especially if they could contextualize the information based on a sound preparation and educational coverage before the visit or event, which was not always the reality.

Former GDR citizens often cite the frequency of anti-fascist activities as the primary cause for student disinterest, boredom and, in some cases, cynicism. Ritualistic motions and utterances do not necessarily lead to conviction and ideological adherence. In some cases, the more often students had to learn about Thälmann and other resistance fighters and World War Two veterans in a routine, passive manner, the less meaningful the experience.[63] Political scientist Herfried Münkler has described this process in GDR public culture more generally: "[Anti-fascist] Memory as a state doctrine, manifested in celebratory speeches, concerts and wreath ceremonies, gradually lost its liveliness.... It fossilized into ritual."[64] A number of factors contributed to the decline of the anti-fascist youth campaign over time. First of all, as time and the physical landscape continued to recede from the period of the 1930s and 1940s, students increasingly developed other interests and viewed the fascist era as part of the distant past. In the first two or three decades of the GDR, young people were familiar with the names of local and nationally recognized veterans of resistance because of the prominent political positions that many of these individuals held.[65] Toward the end of the GDR, most of the veterans were retired or had passed away. On the

61 "Arbeitsgemeinschaft 'Junge Historiker' Haus der Jungen Pioniere 'Philipp Mueller' Cottbus, "Erfahrungsbericht zum Treffen der 'Jungen Historiker' beim ''Fest des Roten Oktober" am 21.10.1977 in Berlin", 1, SAPMO-BArch DY 24/11.1977. A similar statement from another club (Fritz-Ehrlich-Oberschule) can be found in the same file.

62 Brock, "Producing the 'Socialist Personality'", 227.

63 Mitscher and Meierson, interviews, and interview with Heinrich Meyerhoff, Berlin, 27 May 2001.

64 Herfried Münkler, "Antifaschismus als Gründungsmythos der DDR. Abgrenzungsinstrument nach Westen und Herrschaftsmittel nach innen", in *Der missbrauchte Antifaschismus: DDR-Staatsdoktrin und Lebenslüge der deutschen Linke,* eds. Manfred Agethen, Eckhard Jess, and Ehrhart Neubert (Freiburg: Herder Verlag, 2002), 96.

65 Interview with Kurt Langendorf and Michael Horn, interviews, Berlin, 19 September and 12 December 2001.

other hand, by the 1980s, youth group leaders and teachers had access to more methodological training and handbooks with suggestions for planning after-school discussions, anniversary ceremonies and other activities related to anti-fascism. In the twilight years of the GDR, the leading Pioneer functionary Wilfried Poßner supported child-centered, age-appropriate and dynamic youth group activities, even if such goals were difficult to actualize given the traditions and climate that Erich and Margot Honecker established.[66]

The predictability and routine that characterized anti-fascist educational experiences and commemorative acts was not just a problem that affected East Germany. In her monograph on the cult of the Great Patriotic War in the Soviet Union, Nina Tumarkin describes a generation of young people growing up in the 1980s who grew cynical of commemorative ceremonies. Citing the 1987 documentary film *This is How We Live,* directed by Vladimir Oseledchik, among other examples, Tumarkin relays the story of a group of young people from Leningrad with their school teacher who came across a grave of World War Two dead on a school field trip. Mocking an anti-fascist ritual, the students divided their ranks into mourners and a chorus and pretended to place a ceremonial wreath on the grave—a wreath that consisted of a pile of leaves. The students engaged in this disrespectful, pretend ceremony despite the fact, or perhaps precisely because of the fact, that in the previous year they had visited multiple cemeteries, met with veterans, and been involved in mock paramilitary games. According to Tumarkin, the students did not really understand the rituals and did not like the fact that they were forced to participate in them.[67] This example is particularly noteworthy because Soviet functionaries and youth usually provided role models for their East German counterparts and were often seen as particularly committed to communist core values. Soviet youth also did not find themselves in the situation of the GDR where many families concealed Nazi pasts and a Western ideological twin promoted a different focus for German anti-fascism in its media presence.

66 Manstein, interview.

67 Nina Tumarkin, *The Living and the Dead: The Rise and Fall of the Cult of World War II in Russia* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 25, 193.

Concluding Thoughts

Over the four decades of communist rule, adult educators attempted to mold East German youth through a variety of anti-fascist commemorative rites from formal ceremonies to fieldtrips, tours, and discussions. The remembrance calendar and major anniversaries provided schools and the communist youth organizations with many occasions to commemorate anti-fascist resistance over the course of a school year. Not unlike religious services, rituals included music, readings, pledges, symbolic iconography and sometimes tributes to idolized anti-fascist figures. The young people marched through the Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen memorial grounds; and many other sites were meant to embrace and preserve anti-fascist values for their generation and their descendants. As the examples above suggest, older students in particular questioned the repeated emphasis on anti-fascist topics and the form of their education and commemorative practice.

Students responded to anti-fascist education and rituals with mixed emotions and reactions, from interest and empathy to lack of identification and rejection. The majority of students fell somewhere in-between these extremes. Many respected the sacrifices made by anti-fascist veterans, but selected as their own role models contemporary figures with different attributes. Meanwhile, tuning in to West German media exposed some youth to alternate anti-fascist heroes. Despite the numerous problems associated with youth anti-fascism, which were not unique to the GDR, the campaigns in schools and organized youth activities never degenerated into a completely "participation-less" movement as some scholars and observers have argued.[68]

68 Annette Simon, "Antifaschismus als Loyalitätsfalle", in *Der missbrauchte Antifaschismus: DDR-Staatsdoktrin und Lebenslüge der deutschen Linke,* eds. Manfred Agethen, Eckhard Jess, and Ehrhart Neubert (Freiburg: Herder Verlag, 2002), 146.

12

Memory Practices in Slovenia through the Lens of Public Opinion

VIDA ROŽAC DAROVEC[1]

Confrontations with history burst onto Yugoslavia's political scene almost immediately after Tito's death in 1980. In the political vacuum created by Tito's departure and filled by grave economic woes, a range of theatrical works, novels, political memoirs, and new historical accounts began to address both previously glossed-over crimes of Nazi collaborators in World War Two (the Croatian Ustashe, Serbian Chetniks, and the Muslim Handžar division) and previously unmentioned communist crimes. In the years that followed, further complicated by new wars, new violence, and new state crimes, battles over collective memory included the naming and renaming of streets, retouching of photographs and historical records, purges of public libraries and bookstores, rewriting of textbooks, cleansing and reconstruction of museum spaces, destruction and rebuilding of monuments.[2]

Although Slovenia has not undergone such radical change about memory politics as has happened with other Yugoslav successor states, it is no exception in terms of problems with facing the past.[3] In comparison

---

1 This research was funded by the Slovenian Research Agency (ARRS) under Grant Agreement No. J6-3121 Decade of Decadence; and under Research Programme P6-0272 The Mediterranean and Slovenia.

2 Aida A. Hozič, "It Happened Elsewhere: Remembering 1989 in the former Yugoslavia," in *Twenty Years after Communism. Politics of Memory and Commemoration,* eds. Michael Bernhard and Jan Kubik (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 253–57, 253.

3 Cf. Jelena Đureinović, *The Politics of Memory of the Second World War in Contemporary Serbia. Collaboration, Resistance and Retribution* (London: Routledge, 2019); Vjeran Pavlaković, "Memory Politics in the Former Yugoslavia," *Rocznik Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, Vol. 18, No. 2, (2020): 9—32; and Marta Verginella, "Political Remake of Slovenian History and Trivialisation of Memory," *Zeitgeschichte*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (2019): 189–204.

with its neighbors to the south and the southeast, Slovenia had a relatively painless exit from communism and from Yugoslavia. The liberalization of political life had begun in 1986, when the more dogmatic wing of the Communist Party of Slovenia stepped aside and gave way to the more liberal leadership of Milan Kučan.[4] Following independence and the democratization of memory, suppressed memories of war and postwar events started to emerge, leading to nurturers of these memories pressing for a revision of history. The ambivalence of Slovenian memories of World War Two reflects the complex Slovenian experience of that conflict. Occupation and liberation, collaboration and resistance, the suffering of the victims and the pride of the victorious, all this got muddled, producing an entanglement of ideas and emotions connected to the war and its legacy. Events have been interpreted in contrasting ways and the very facts are often contested. We could even say that it is impossible to arrive at an agreement about the past or about the ways to remember it. Individual events pertaining to the period of World War Two and its aftermath are perceived differently among the political left and right wings. The memory of the victory over the occupying forces—i.e., Nazism, Fascism, and collaborationism (treason)—under the leadership of the Communist Party holds the dominant role among the political left, while parties on the right are united by the remembrance of the victims of communism who died in the extrajudicial mass killings after the end of the war. In the opinion of the communists, the Slovenes would have been better off not actively resisting the overpowering invader, as in such case there would have been far fewer victims. Even the 1944 pledge of loyalty to Hitler made by Home Guard troops had been, according to right-wing politicians, dictated by patriotic interests. At the same time, it has been pointed out that no one has been punished for the crimes committed by the communists during and after the war.

Jan and Aleida Assmann, who expanded the basic terms in the field of memory studies to include cultural and political memory, no longer understand memory merely as a mental state or the act of remembering of an individual or a group, but as an external object, too. Important events from the past are written in or "memorized" through cultural artifacts, such as monuments, rituals, public celebrations, or commemo-

4 See Sabrina P. Ramet, *Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia at Peace and at War: Selected Writings 1983–2007* (Münster, Zürich, Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2008).

rations. Memory is objectified in the culture and institutionalized and transmitted at a symbolic level. Precisely through institutionalization it is possible to understand the integrative function of memory and its role in the constitution of social and national identities, which extends beyond personal communication. Cultural artifacts, such as monuments, rituals, films, photographs, and commemoration sites promote, trigger, and shape memory. Objectification, symbolic fixation, and institutionalization are the main transmitters of cultural memory as understood by Jan and Aleida Assmann.[5]

If we take a brief look at the purpose of the study of commemorative practices first, we can establish that commemorations and commemorative speeches are some of the most prominent events where the political elites can present their interpretations of the past and define their future political agendas. Commemorations and other political rituals are key elements of national cultural memory and identity. In his seminal study *How Societies Remember* (1989), Paul Connerton distinguishes between "inscribing" and "incorporating" memory practices. Inscribing is a deliberate act, while incorporating practices are those in which memory is constituted through repeated physical activities. Such practices become part of an individual's subjectivity and, according to Connerton, produce memories more effectively. Individual memory is thus just as complicated as collective memory, shaped through interaction of body, time, and space. It is also important to consider the relations of power and control over who and what is remembered and commemorated.[6]

In 2018, spurred by all the controversies that have marked the Slovenian public space for the past 30 years—i.e., since the very foundation of our own state—and as part of research projects conducted at the Science and Research Center, Koper (ZRS), by Borut Klabjan[7] and Jože Pirjevec, respectively, "Sites of Memory, Sites of Barrier," and "Anti-Fascism in the Julian March in Transnational Perspective," we conducted a survey

---

5 Aleida Assmann and Jan Assmann, "Memory, Individual and Collective," in *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis*, eds. Robert E. Goodvin and Charles Tilly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 210-24.

6 Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 72, 73.

7 Project J6-6833(B), Borut Klabjan, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Barrier: Memory and Identity in the Italo-Slovene Borderlands in the Long Twentieth Century*; and Project J6-9356, Jože Pirjevec, *Anti-Fascism in the Julian March in Transnational Perspective, 1919–1954*, are financed by Slovenian Research Agency (ARRS). Borut Klabjan, Blaž Lenarčič, Vida Rožac Darovec, Mateja Sedmak and Maja Zadel participated in the concrete research.

on the commemorative practices of Slovenes through the Public Opinion Research Center of ZRS Koper. The objective of the research was to find out how the inhabitants of Slovenia view the disputes concerning recent history and Slovenian society's divided memory, how much/little interest they have in such debates, how frequently they attend commemorations honoring recent history, and which sites of memory mean the most to them. We tried to establish the extent to which the conflicts and disputes about recent history are reflected in the views of the public and whether the public also considers the issues related to the past as important as could be assumed based on media and political landscapes of memory.

This chapter is concerned with the issue of divided memory in Slovenia, which emerged in the wake of the country's gaining independence. The effects of the heated public debates on this issue were gauged through a public opinion poll. This chapter presents the results of a telephone survey about commemorative practices in Slovenia, conducted by the Science and Research Center, Koper, in 2018. The telephone poll was conducted in September 2018 on a random representative sample of 613 participants from across Slovenia. The survey data were weighted by sex and age based on the population values obtained from the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia for the first half of 2018.

Given the numerous public controversies on the issue of the Slovenian past, we tried to establish through quantitative research conducted on a sample of the whole of population of Slovenia to what extent the memory cleavage at the political level affects the broad public and how relevant the public considers these topics. For this purpose, we examined closely the practice of commemoration, which is a sort of shop window for the collective memory of a community.

We had inferred from the literature that there were certain specific differences related to the issue of commemoration in Slovenia in comparison to other parts of the now-defunct common state. At this point, it would seem appropriate to mention the monograph edited by Michael Bernhard and Jan Kubik titled *Twenty Years after Communism: The Politics of Memory and Commemoration* (2014), which takes a comparative look at the ways 1989 or 1991 have been commemorated in seventeen European post-Communist countries and which factors influenced the type of memory regimes that emerged in these countries twenty years after the transition. The political actors could opt for one of the four different

strategies for confronting the past. The first is the strategy of the "mnemonic warrior," who believes that there is only one "real" interpretation of past events, and any other perspectives should be actively eradicated. The second strategy is that of "mnemonic pluralist," who allows for the possibility of several interpretations of the past and believes that many should be tolerated. The third is the strategy of "mnemonic abnegator," who for various reasons refuses to participate in the discussion about the past (Serbia, North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro). The last type of strategy, which has not been detected in these analyses, is that of "mnemonic prospective," which is mostly focused on a desired vision of a final situation and the belief that realizing such a vision will solve all the problems both from the past and in the future. Based on a comparative analysis, Bernhard and Kubik traced two sets of factors producing the phenomenon of fractured memory regimes in post-Communist countries. The first set consists of four elements: reformed state socialism, negotiated mode of extrication, a strong anti-Communist political party, and political cleavage. The countries that fell into this group were Poland, Hungary, and Slovenia. The second set consists of three elements: ideological or ethnic polarization, hardline state socialism, and collapse of the regime. Five countries were classified by the authors into this group: the three Baltic states, Romania, and Slovakia. The prevailing strategies were "mnemonic warrior" and "polarising cleavage."[8]

Analysis of the Results

Attendance at commemorations

In Socialist Yugoslavia, commemorations of World War Two and antifascism played an especially important role. They evoked feelings of pride in heroic state-building narratives, such as the veneration of Marshal Tito and other war heroes as well as of important battles of the Partisan resistance struggle. Slovenia seems to have preserved a greater continuity in this field compared to other Yugoslav successor states,

8 Michael Bernhard and Jan Kubik, "The Politics and Culture of Memory Regimes: A Comparative Analysis," in *Twenty Years after Communism,* eds. Bernhard and Kubik, 261–74, 273, 274.

something that may be attributable to political continuity/discontinuity. The question whether that was true also featured in our research project dealing with anti-fascism. After independence, in Slovenia, as in other Yugoslav successor states, contesting memories emerged, which made us wonder to what extent the controversies around the memory of World War Two are reflected in the collective memory. We investigated which commemorations respondents in the survey attend and how frequently, why they attend them, what feelings the commemorations arouse in them, and which are those places that can be called "sites of memory." Another objective was to find out how strong a top-down effect political disputes had on public opinion and people's attitude regarding these issues. The respondents' answers were crossed by gender, age, region, and political and religious affiliation.

How often do you attend commemorative events?	n.	%
Regularly	37	6.1
Occasionally	219	36.0
Never	352	57.9
Total	609	100.0

The results to the question how often the respondents participate in commemorations showed that the majority—i.e., 57.9%—do not attend them, 6.1% attend them regularly, and 36% occasionally. These results were then crossed by the gender, age, political affiliation, region, and level of education variables. A comparison of response rates of men and women suggests that the former attend commemorative events slightly more frequently (6.4% vs. 5.8%), with 57% of men and 58.5 % of women never attending such events. A comparison of responses from different age groups shows, quite expectedly, that commemorative events are most frequently (10%) attended by senior respondents (aged 62 or over), while the youngest respondent group (aged 18–39) is that with the largest percentage of non-attenders (60.7%).

Further, a comparison of answers by political affiliation[9] reveals that commemorative events are most frequently attended by left-oriented respondents (13.9%). In the group of right-oriented voters the majority (71.0%) never attend commemorations. The majority of center-oriented voters who participated in the poll attend commemorative events only occasionally (42.9%).

How often do you attend commemorative events?	Left	Center	Right
Regularly	13.9%	3.6%	3.7%
Occasionally	36.1%	42.9%	25.2%
Never	50.0%	53.6%	71.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

A comparison of answers by cohesion region shows that the eastern Slovenian cohesion region has the largest percentage of regular attenders of commemorations (7.5%) but also the largest share of non-attenders (60.8%), while the western Slovenian cohesion region has the largest share of occasional attenders (39.5%). The primary reasons for non-attendance are indifference to the past (57%) and lack of time (18.3%), as the respondents who answered that they never visit such events are mostly members of the younger working population.

Which commemorations the respondents attend

One of our research aims was to identify the sites of memory and commemorations that the respondents visit/attend. Among those receiving more media attention are the commemoration in Dražgoše, which takes place on the anniversary of one of the largest Partisan battles of the Cankar Battalion and is also attended by the leadership of Slovenian left-wing political parties, and the "Walk along the Path of Remembrance

9 Affiliation of the respondents was determined based on their statements regarding which political party they would vote for, in the following manner: potential SD, SNS, ZAAB, ZL, and LMŠ voters were classified into the "Left" group, DESUS and SMC voters into the "Center" group, and potential NSi, SDS, and SLS voters into the "Right" group.

and Comradeship" or "Walk along the Wire" around Ljubljana. This is a 32.5 km long memorial trail retracing the barbed wire fence that closed off the city during World War Two (between 23 February 1942 and 26 May 1945) and became a symbol of defiance and resistance against the invader. Among events commemorating post-war killings, we would highlight the annual ceremonies at the Teharje Memorial Park in Bukovžlak, one of the largest mass graves in Slovenia, and in the Chapel of God's Mercy in Kočevski rog at the Pod Krenom mass grave. The two events are organized by the New Slovenian Covenant (Nova Slovenska Zaveza) together with St. Martin's Parish in Teharje and the Kočevje Parish, respectively, with a mass traditionally offered for the victims of revolutionary violence. All these commemorations draw large crowds.

How do respondents from our survey identify with them? Do they view these places as their own "pilgrimage" sites?

If you do attend such events, please tell us which exactly.	n.	%
Commemorations of the National Liberation Struggle (Dražgoše, Osankarica, Pokljuka, commemorations organized by the World War Two Veterans Association, Day of Restoration of the Primorska Region to the Motherland, events commemorating the Partisan movement)	119	46.4%
Commemorations of post-war mass killings (Kočevje, Teharje)	14	5.3%
Festive days (public holidays, municipal/local festivals)	95	37.0%
Commemorations of World War One (Vršič)	6	2.3%
Commemorations of the War of Independence (TO, anniversary of Independence, veterans)	21	8.3%
Other sites of memory (local, unlisted celebrations)	38	14.8%
Does not know/No answer	33	12.7%
Total	325	126.9%

When asked to name the commemorative events they visit, 46.4% of the respondents answered that they attend celebrations/commemorations dedicated to the National Liberation Struggle (most frequently mentioning Dražgoše, Osankarica, celebration of the Day of Restoration of the Primorska Region to the Motherland, the Walk along the Wire, and

other Partisan memorial celebrations mostly organized by the World War Two Veterans Association (ZZB NOB). The answers to the question to which monuments they ascribe the most importance were quite heterogeneous, but the majority related to the National Liberation Struggle in various parts of Slovenia. The most frequently mentioned sites were Ljubljana (11), Dražgoše (8), and Kočevski rog, with the last of these being a site of memory related both to the National Liberation Struggle and to post-war mass killings (10). Celebrations dedicated to the Independence of Slovenia are attended by only 8.3% of the respondents, and commemorations honoring post-war killings by 5.3%, which is somewhat surprising, considering that the Slovenian political space is practically divided in half. Should the respondents who normally do not visit commemorations decide to be present at any of them, most of them (21.6%) would attend a celebration honoring the National Liberation Struggle, and only 1.3% a commemoration of the victims of post-war revolutionary violence (Teharje and Kočevski rog).

Reasons for and the importance of attending commemorative celebrations

In his book *Commemoration: The American Association for State and Local History Guide* (2017), historian Seth C. Bruggeman calls commemoration "the *lingua franca* of public memory." It encompasses the various ways—such as monuments, rites, festivals, pageants, fairs, museums, re-enactments, and others—that we have conceived to evoke deep respect for the past. Unlike history, which deals primarily with circumstance, commemoration resides almost entirely in feelings. This is why we all recognize a commemoration and largely understand it even when it does not directly address us.

According to Bruggeman, commemoration is characterized by emotivity, and "the incredible diversity of rituals, objects, and customs that we associate with commemorations are all intended to give public feeling to otherwise private memories."[10]

10 Seth C. Bruggeman, "Introduction: Conundrum and Nuance in American Memory," in *Commemoration: The American Association for State and Local History Guide,* ed. Seth C. Bruggeman (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2017).

Which feelings commemorative celebrations evoke in the respondents and how important these events are to them was another research question driving our study. Regardless of their frequency of attendance, the large majority of participants in the survey (81.3%) consider commemorations to be very important, 28.1% regard them as important, and only 5.9% find them unimportant. Eighty-two percent of the respondents see the importance of such events in the preservation of history, as well as culture, identity, patriotism, and statehood, while 17.2% of them see commemorative celebrations as ideological, and are dismissive of the past. The answers are slightly contradictory, for when the non-attenders were asked about their reasons for not attending commemorative events, as many as 57% of the 310 stated that past should be left in the past.

Which are the reasons for your attending commemorations/ commemorative events?	n.	%
I care about tradition/history very much	242	94.9%
I consider them social events	151	59.3%
Honoring the memory of the fallen, killed relatives, friends	206	80.6%
Political beliefs	53	20.7%
Patriotic motives	165	64.5%
Habit	67	26.1%
Respect for the people who died for our homeland	252	98.6%
National pride	163	63.9%
It is fitting	173	67.7%
Other	11	4.4%
Total	1,483	580.7%

What feelings do commemorative events usually evoke in you?	n.	%
Patriotic feelings	118	47.0%
Sadness	80	31.9%
Joy	34	13.5%
Feeling of belonging	133	53.1%
Pride	107	42.8%
Nostalgia	72	28.6%
No particular feelings	7	2.9%
Total	552	219.8%

The respondents attending commemorative events were asked open- and closed-type (yes/no) questions regarding the reasons for their visiting such events. The most frequent answers selected or provided by the respondents themselves were respect for the people who died for their homeland (98.6%); the importance of tradition (94.4%); honoring the memory of relatives or friends who died or were killed (80.6%); patriotism (64.5%); national pride (63.9%); political beliefs (20.7%); and socializing (59.3%). When asked what kind of feelings those commemorative events aroused in them, the respondents indicated loyalty/sense of belonging (53.1%), patriotism (42.8%), pride (47%), sadness (31.9%), nostalgia (28.6%), and joy (13.5%). A mere (2.9%) stated that commemorative events do not evoke any feelings in them.

A comparison of percentages of answers given by men and women reveals that men consider visiting commemorative events mostly as a matter of tradition, a social event, an expression of political beliefs, a habit, or an expression of national pride and proper conduct. Women's main reason for attending such events, on the other hand, is more intimate: honoring the memory of the fallen relatives/friends. Interestingly, in men, commemorative events are more evocative of patriotic feelings, loyalty, and pride, while women more often feel sadness and nostalgia.

A comparison of percentages of answers by political affiliation suggests that left-oriented respondents consider the visit of a commemorative event an opportunity to honor the memory of fallen relatives/friends,

often also a matter of political beliefs and respect for the people who died for the homeland. Centrist-oriented respondents more often view commemorative events as social events, which they attend out of habit or because it is fitting to do so. Respondents of right-wing political orientation more frequently attend commemorative events out of patriotic motives.

A comparison of percentages of respondents of different political currents indicates that left-oriented attenders more frequently feel sadness and pride at commemorative events, while right-oriented more often experience nostalgia and patriotic feelings.

Further, we inquired about the level of agreement or disagreement with some statements (rated from 1 to 5 on a Likert scale—i.e., from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*). The results show the average values of the level of agreement with the statements, which ranged from 1 to 5 on a Likert scale (from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*). The average values range from 2, which indicates agreement, to 4.3, which indicates strong agreement with the statement. At the same time, the standard deviation indicates the average departure from the mean value.

The respondents showed a high level of agreement (4.34) with the statement that their loyalty to Slovenia is very strong, while others agreed that commemorations and celebrations strengthen the sense of connection (3.69), that people visit commemorative events prompted by their personal beliefs (3.69), and that commemorative events help preserve the historical truth (3.60). All of the respondents also said they would be willing to take part in the organization of commemorative events and confirmed that their attitude regarding commemorations is influenced by the fact that they used to attend them as children, accompanied by their parents and other relatives. Conversely, they expressed their disagreement with the statements that commemorations and celebrations should be attended by all citizens (2.94), and that borderland areas, because of the frequent changes of regime there, would be less loyal to the Slovenian state (2.07).

Statement	n.	Average	Standard deviation
Commemorative events strengthen the sense of connection.	603	3.69	1.118
There are various entities behind the organization of commemorative events; they are not merely an expression of people's will.	587	3.32	1.209
People attend commemorations spurred by their intimate beliefs.	598	3.69	1.050
The commemorative celebrations that I was introduced to as a child in school are those that mean the most to me.	587	3.15	1.376
All Slovenian citizens should attend commemorative events.	596	2.94	1.280
Commemorative events help preserve the historical truth	593	3.60	1.261
I would be willing to take part in the organization of a commemorative event.	594	3.03	1.400
The commemorative events that I attended with my parents or other relatives are those that mean the most to me.	551	3.02	1.400
People from the borderlands, which experienced frequent change of regime in the past, are less loyal to the Slovenian state.	582	2.07	1.179
My allegiance to Slovenia is very strong.	604	4.34	0.895

The Case of Conflicting Memories: Reaction to the Interview with Dr. Jože Dežman on 22 July 2018 on the Television Show "Intervju" ["The Interview"]

During the time of our survey, the Slovenian public was drawn into a fierce controversy sparked by an interview that journalist Jože Možina conducted with Slovenian historian and museologist Dr. Jože Dežman, which was broadcast on Slovenian public television (RTV Slovenija) on 22 July 2018. Dežman is the president of the Commission on Concealed Mass Graves in Slovenia. In the interview, he spoke at length about recent Slovenian history and about the role of the Communist authorities and their responsibility for post-war mass killings, at the same time criticizing the views of the representatives of the World War Two veterans organization—the Union of Associations for the Values of the National

Liberation Movement in Slovenia (ZZB NOB)—and of some notable historians of these topics. Among other things, he pointed out that during World War Two most Slovenes did not fight on the Partisan side, as our forefathers, besides some anti-revolutionaries, were mostly mobilized into the German, Italian, and Hungarian armies. He underlined as critical the finding that the Partisan army, nominally fighting for freedom, killed more Slovenian people than did soldiers of the occupying forces. In addition, the revolutionaries killed most of their victims after and not during the war, murdering more unarmed than armed people.[11]

The interview provoked a furor among the leadership of the ZZB NOB. Its president, Tit Turnšek, addressed an open letter to the director of RTV Slovenija, Igor Kadunc, and to the president of its Program Board, Ciril Baškovič, in which he stated his expectation that the public broadcaster would remove that edition of "The Interview" from the program. According to his opinion, the broadcast of that show "transgressed any sense of decency." He noted that, in this edition, Dežman presented an array of value judgments and numerous falsehoods, and insulted prominent historians [Dr. Božo Repe, Dr. Jože Pirjevec, Dr. Nevenka Troha, and Dr. Damijan Guštin – author's note]. In Turnšek's opinion, the editions of *The Interview* produced by Jože Možina falsified the past and sowed the seeds of "discord and hatred," and therefore called on the management of RTV Slovenija to consider cancelling them. That, however, did not happen.

The various interpretations were further inflamed by a widespread debate about the contents of the interview on social media, Twitter in particular. Možina responded that in his work he is "committed to the truth and to the public," not to Turnšek, stressing that the facts exposed during the interview were accurate.

In a subsequent public statement, Dežman confirmed that he stood by his own words and that what he had spoken about in the interview was not news.

In response to the interview, the Koper Association of Anti-Fascists, Fighters for the Values of the National Liberation Struggle, and Veterans organized a protest march to RTV Slovenija in Koper on 2 August 2018. As they wrote in the announcement of the protest, they had had enough of the falsification of history, lies spread about the National Lib-

11 Jože Dežman, Intervju, RTV Slovenija (13 August 2018), at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7W0MoknDh7w [accessed on 2 December 2020].

eration Struggle, hate speech, and attempts to divide the Slovene nation. Spokesman Marijan Križman, a member of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), who was at the time of this event the president of the Koper Association of Anti-Fascists, Fighters for the Values of the National Liberation Struggle, and Veterans, and is currently president of the ZZB NOB Slovenia, pointed out at this protest march:

> Nowadays, various grovelers and hate-mongers only talk about the "civil war," as if there had not been a Nazi and Fascist occupation or World War Two going on. The term "civil war" is reiterated only to nullify the national liberation struggle and distort the history. The objective of this propaganda is still the same: to equate the Partisans with the Home Guard in the name of some long dead and buried "reconciliation" ... Not only is the reconciliation an excuse for rehabilitating the Home Guard, but it also serves as a justification and opportunity for duplicating state celebrations, composing and pasting together archival documents, dissimulating that the Home Guard did not swear allegiance to Hitler, but to some great German leader, and incidentally on Hitler's very birthday, to boot.[12]

The discussions point to an insurmountable gap between leftist and rightist political and social actors regarding the past, and there are no tendencies for a reconciliation anymore – on the contrary, the reconciliation is said to be long "dead and buried". Since our opinion poll was conducted amid this controversy, we also asked the participants about the conflicts concerning the interpretations of World War Two:

Have you been following the current controversies concerning World War Two Veterans Association and Dr. Jože Dežman?	n.	%
Yes	194	31.7
No	418	68.3
Total	612	100.0

12 Marjan Križman, "Speech at the Protest March in Koper," *Svobodna Beseda* (2 August 2018), at https://www.svobodnabeseda.si/marijan-krizman-v-kopru-2-avgust-2018/ [accessed on 11 October 2020].

Do you agree with the reaction of the World War Two Veterans Association?	n.	%
Yes, I do.	83	50.3
No, I don't.	82	49.7
Total	165	100.0

Do you agree with the reaction of the World War Two Veterans Association?	Left	Center	Right
Yes, I do.	81.6%	88.9%	7.8%
No, I don't.	18.4%	11.1%	92.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The majority of the participants in the survey (418) had not been following the controversies. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the respondents tended to express a positive view about the Partisans and the National Liberation Struggle, the opinions in regard to this concrete dispute about the past were more "balanced," as reflected by the left-right division of the electorate. Of the 194 respondents who confirmed that they followed these controversies, 83 (40.3%) supported the reaction of the World War Two Veterans Association (ZZB NOB) and 28 (49.7%) did not. As expected, these results crossed by political affiliation showed that voters of left-oriented and center-oriented political orientation supported the reaction of the ZZB NOB, while respondents agreeing with Dežman supported right-oriented parties. Nevertheless, as many as 18.4% of left-oriented and 11.1% of Center-oriented voters disagreed with the reaction of the ZZB NOB. One could say that the respondents were negatively disposed to the politicization of recent history. As many as 38.2% of the participants in the survey opposed the political abuse of the past, 16.5% advocated reconciliation, 15% were in favor of redressing the injustices committed in the war, 10.2% supported the efforts of the National Liberation Struggle, and nearly one third (32.9%) had no opinion about this issue.

What is your stance on political disputes about recent history?	n.	%
Positive opinion of the National Liberation Struggle	62	10.2%
Redress injustices	91	15.0%
Opposition to political use of history	232	38.2%
Ugly on either side	20	3.4%

Conclusion

Based on the results of this quantitative survey of public opinion we can establish that most respondents find commemorative events important for their role in strengthening national feelings, identity, and culture, and contributing to the preservation of historical consciousness. While the public discourse in formerly socialist countries has rehabilitated or even given precedence to silenced memories of the new elites, we find that the Slovenian cultural landscape of memory has not changed that drastically. The efforts of the right-wing politicians to revise history, since, in their view, mainstream politicians and media have largely withheld the truth about the crimes of the communists and was ideology-tinted, have not penetrated the memory practices of ordinary people. To understand this phenomenon, it is necessary to look at the still relatively unexplained relation between remembrance and tradition. On the one hand, we are dealing with public places and rituals of memory, and on the other, with ingrained patterns of thinking and acting that have long been preserved among individuals, families, and communities. So I believe that researchers should consider not only the changing policy of commemoration, but also the stubborn persistence of traditions and convictions, which can continue to exist even in opposition to historical facts or common sense.

Surely, this has to do with top-down politics, for no monuments have been pulled down in Slovenia, place names dedicated to prominent figures of the communist era have largely remained unaltered, schools still bear the names of the heroes of the National Liberation Struggle, and the main squares of Slovenian towns are still adorned by imposing statues of Josip Broz Tito and other Communist leaders. When in cer-

tain towns the civic authorities wanted to change the names of squares and streets, the public rose in opposition (e.g., in Koper and Velenje). While right-wing politicians are critical of these phenomena and interpret them as a sign of faulty democracy, left-wing politicians argue that the anti-fascist struggle is the foundation of Western Europe and that the Partisan resistance saved the Slovenian nation from the sure demise that would have occurred under Nazi-Fascist dominance. Leftist views are also reflected in the views of the respondents in our survey. Based on the results of the opinion poll we can conclude that most of the younger respondents do not attend state commemorations and that they are indifferent to the past. Those who do attend them give considerable precedence to commemorative events dedicated to the National Liberation Struggle over those celebrating the Independence of Slovenia. What they see as places of memory are World War Two sites (e.g., the Dražgoše battlefield, the Ljubljana "Walk along the Wire"), which they would visit as children during the times of socialism, while only a small percentage of respondents attend commemorations of post-war mass killings. We find that respondents of left- and center-oriented ideology attend commemorative events more frequently and are better organized than respondents of right-wing political affiliation. The World War Two Veterans Association (ZZB NOB) is very much involved in these ceremonies and responsive to media developments related to recent history, and one could say that it acts as a defender of the values of the National Liberation Struggle. Nevertheless, we can establish that the majority of the younger generations of respondents are indifferent to the issues of the past and do not follow public confrontations on this topic. Nor do they want the past to be exploited for political purposes, thereby dividing the nation.

The reasons for such a memory policy are manifold. The values of the National Liberation Struggle are deeply rooted in the collective memory, as they are related to the emancipation of the nation and its mythical "millennial" aspiration for independence. Thanks to the Partisan resistance we succeeded in defying millenarian invaders and gaining independence, which is also a source of national pride. During socialism, the collective memory was imbued with Partisan victories and reverence for national heroes, which undoubtedly left its mark on the older population. Also, Slovenia has not performed a lustration of its active holders of power from the period of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia and

has not been marked by such drastic breaks with the past as have other socialist countries. In the foreground of the process of independence were primarily the nationalization of the political landscape and secession from Yugoslavia, and less so a reckoning with communism, for the reformed Communists led by Milan Kučan also strove for a separation from Belgrade and took part in the activities leading to Slovenia's independence. Not least, the first democratically elected president of the independent Slovenian state was Milan Kučan himself, formerly the president of the League of Communists of Slovenia. As is often repeated, independence would not have been possible without political unity. In the period since independence, the reformed political left, ideologically based on anti-fascist resistance, has continued to hold power for most of the time and, consequently, shaped the policy of remembrance. Yet despite the declaratory efforts towards reconciliation and a redressing of post-war injustices it appears that new controversies concerning recent history keep emerging and deepening the "Slovenian divide". Although left- and right-wing politicians alike have declared themselves in favor of a reconciliation as a precondition for a peaceful and successful future, this increasingly appears to be a dead letter.

I would like to end my chapter with an observation by Jan and Aleida Assmann that concerns the idealist vision of transnational memory and is reflected in their model of "dialogic remembering," a sort of recipe for dealing with a problematic past. According to this model, two or more countries or, as in our case, social groups, that share a history of reciprocal violence, engage in a *dialogic memory* by "mutually acknowledging their own guilt and empathy with the suffering they have inflicted on others."[13]

13 Aleida Assmann, "From Collective Violence to a Common Future: Four Models for Dealing with a Traumatic Past," in *Conflict, Memory Transfers and the Reshaping of Europe,* eds. H. Gonçalves da Silva et al. (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 17.

13

A Note about the Collective Memory of Anti-fascism since World War Two and its Revision

BOŽO REPE

The historical revisionism that attempts to reshape the collective memory of anti-fascism in Slovenia and in the territory of the former Yugoslavia is only a part of historical revisionism. The other part relates to the dissolution of Yugoslavia and Slovenia's attainment of independence.

Historians from the area of the former Yugoslavia, have a great deal of experience with historical revisionism as one of the key pillars of today's authoritarian and fascistic regimes. Recently, we pointed out via the international project of the non-governmental organization Krokodil from Belgrade, "Historians against Revisionism," which ended with the declaration entitled "Defend History," that historical revisionism is an abuse of history. It deliberately and tendentiously misrepresents the past and adapts it to contemporary political demands. It eliminates and emphasizes the desired information, produces non-existent information, singles out historical sources and ignores anything that does not comply with the prevailing political ideas and programs. We also pointed out that the purpose of historical revisionism is to preserve old myths and create new ones, to strengthen stereotypes, and to incite prejudice and hatred. "We" are always the victims and "others" are to blame for everything. "We" are the heroes, others are "traitors." Through self-victimization a nation or a specific political group within it becomes homogenized, closes its ranks, and destroys plurality, while forcing individuals and social groups to drown in an imagined "biological" or

"spiritual" collective. The role of victims "cements" us in the past and hinders progress.[1]

However, things should be viewed in a much wider context, in which neither the Balkans nor Slovenia is unusual, although some want to portray them that way. The European Union is doing the same thing and with just as much distortion. Ever since the East European member states joined the EU in 2004, the memory of anti-fascism—sometimes contrary to the basic historical facts—is being adapted to current geostrategic alliances. Especially due to pressure from the East European member states, various resolutions are attempting to equate Nazism with Communism. Just as the Cominform claimed that the start of World War Two was the fault of both imperialist camps, that is, Germany and the West, the European Union now claims that Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union were equally to blame. The European Parliament resolution on the importance of European remembrance for the future of Europe, which was adopted in 2019, says, among other things: "...80 years ago on 23 August 1939, the communist Soviet Union and Nazi Germany signed a Treaty of Non-Aggression, known as the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, and its secret protocols, dividing Europe and the territories of independent states between the two totalitarian regimes and grouping them into spheres of interest, which paved the way for the outbreak of the Second World War."[2] Of course, this is not the first such resolution; European authorities have adopted many on this topic, whose purpose is to condemn all totalitarianisms and, simultaneously, to equate them. The part of the European political mythologizing of history before the aforementioned resolution was the European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism, which is commemorated on 23 August. It is to symbolize the rejection of "extremism, intolerance and oppression". Besides Europe Day, which celebrates "peace and unity in Europe" on 5 May (Council of Europe) and 9 May (European Union), the Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism is the only "official" holiday of the European Union. By celebrating the humble beginning of its integrations on 9 May 1950 (the so-called Schuman Declaration), the

1 "Defend History", *Krokodil* at http://www.yuhistorija.com/doc/Declaration.pdf [accessed on 24. October 2021].

2 European Parliament resolution of 19 September 2019 on the importance of European remembrance for the future of Europe, at https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2019-0021_EN.html [accessed on 24 October 2021].

EU elegantly integrated the victory over Fascism and Nazism in 1945 into the holiday, turning it into a remembrance of the end of World War Two. The unification of Europe was undoubtedly founded on the experience of totalitarianisms, especially of the Fascism and Nazism of the 1930s and later of World War Two, and certainly both Nazism and Stalinism or the Communist regimes produced many casualties, but that doesn't mean they should be equated by means of an ideological interpretation of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. We know that Hitler had planned to conquer the East even before assuming power, and that in the Thirties Germany was very committed to doing just that. Stalin saw the pact as a maneuver to protect the Soviet Union, which was isolated in terms of international relations. Of course, for the present-day EU such an ideological spin on the interpretation is convenient, especially because it covers up all the previous dirty deals the West struck with Hitler, including the Munich Pact of 1938, and pushes the Soviet Union out of the victors' circle, even though it had shouldered the weight of the war in Europe. This has gone so far that, for example, without any sense of history, not to mention the victims—for whom the European resolutions are allegedly intended—commemorations of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp have been held without Russia, the successor of the Soviet Union which had liberated the camp. Much the same can be said for victory celebrations throughout Europe, and especially in CEE countries.

Through the canonisation of the theory of twin—Nazi and Soviet—totalitarianisms in particular, CEE representatives and their allies have managed to dethrone the anti-fascist consensus that was so characteristic of the Western European mainstream until the early 21st century and reshape the European Union's understanding of the recent past.[3]

In Slovenia, today's views on the period of World War and on anti-fascism—among individuals and political groups and parties—differ greatly. Most of the revisionism of anti-fascism is taking place in politics, a part of it in the judiciary and in the "grey zone" between historiography and politics. In the latter case, a kind of semi-scientific revision is taking place. It is interfering greatly with the part of the profession that is di-

3 Ferenc Laczó, "Revisionism instead of reinvention. How CEE countries have impacted European remembrance and vice versa," *New Eastern Europe* (18 December 2019), https://neweasterneurope.eu/2019/12/18/revisionism-instead-of-reinvention/.

rectly or indirectly related to politics. Of course, the most powerful weapon in the political and ideological interpretation of World War Two is social networks.

Until the second half of the Eighties, judgments about World War Two were almost exclusively unambiguous. In politics, the National Liberation Struggle was uncritically glorified and was also equated with carrying out a revolution. In general, anniversaries and figures from the time of the Liberation Struggle were highlighted much more than other historical events; moreover, special importance was placed on events connected directly with the role of the Communist Party. The political emigration advocated the hypothesis that a civil war had been taking place during World War Two in Slovenia and that the Communist Party had taken advantage of the occupation to seize power, in the process abusing the liberation tendencies of the Slovene nation. The emigration viewed collaborationist units as a Slovene army fighting against Communism. They were referring to *Milizia Volontaria Anticomunista* under the Italians and the Slovene Home Guard—*Landeswehr*—under the Germans. The Home Guard swore allegiance to Hitler; a part of it was under the aegis of the Wehrmacht, while the other part was led directly by the SS. This interpretation of history either did not acknowledge collaborationism or considered it necessary. With the pluralization in the Eighties, and even more so after the first multi-party elections and the attainment of independence, it spread across Slovenia with full political, ecclesiastical, and media force.

The history of World War Two in Slovenia became an important element of political polarization before the first multi-party elections in the spring of 1990; this polarization is still present today. Some parties, especially right-wing ones, and social groups adopted an entirely negative stance toward the National Liberation Struggle because the Communist Party had emerged from it as the victor and then held onto power for the next forty-five years. They did not acknowledge the legitimacy of the post-war socialist system that was built on the power of the people created during the war; or they labelled it a criminal system due to the killings of Home Guard members and the repression in the first few years after the war. This was about establishing the dominance of the cult of the dead over the cult of the living, where death and the right of burial somehow cover up and blur what those people did while alive. Other parties and politicians tried to distinguish be-

tween the "pure" National Liberation Struggle and the actions they considered revolutionary.[4]

In some places Partisan monuments and monuments to the revolution were removed after 1990 by order of the local authorities, or were damaged or destroyed by unknown vandals. They renamed streets and schools, and changed holidays. Similar processes took place in other Yugoslav successor states.[5] Memorials dedicated to the Home Guard and other "victims of communist violence" began to appear. The Church was actively involved in this, even though, in principle, it strives for reconciliation—the "truth" was to liberate us from conflict. This "truth" takes the side of the Home Guard, viewing it as a Catholic army fighting against communism. Acceptance of this "truth" is the Church's precondition for reconciliation. It bases its argument on the view that the Home Guard fought for their country and religion, even though most Partisans were also religious. The Church was actively involved in propaganda in the religious press, in consecrating monuments to the Home Guard, and in holding services for the killed members of the Home Guard, and, above all, in the politicization of the post-war killings.

The parliamentary parties managed to agree to keep the day the Liberation Front was founded—called Resistance Day—a national holiday, but that was about it. As regards celebrations, individual politicians act almost exclusively according to their personal beliefs and political gain, attending celebrations that often contradict the function they perform. The main efforts of the right-wing parties up to now have always aimed at abolishing the Day of Resistance against the Occupiers.

The process of revision, which is relativizing anti-fascism, has also penetrated the judiciary. In 2009, the Catholic Church succeeded in legally rehabilitating Bishop Rožman, one of the chief collaborators with both occupiers, the Italians and the Germans. In 2019, the Supreme Court of the Republic of Slovenia annulled the verdict against General Leon Rupnik, who had been a sort of Slovene mini-Pétain. Rupnik had pleaded

---

4 Božo Repe, "Zakaj revizionizem? O prevrednotenju zgodovine v Evropi in Sloveniji / Why revisionism? On the revaluation of history in Europe and Slovenia", in *Koroški vestnik: Osrednjega odbora Skupnosti koroških partizanov v Ljubljani, Zveze koroških partizanov v Celovcu in klubov koroških Slovencev v Ljubljani in Mariboru*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (2006): 21–33.

5 Božidar Flajšman and Božo Repe, "Politika brisanja spomina in pot do nje / The politics of Erasing Remeberance and the path to it", in *Retrospektive. Znanstvena revija za zgodovinopisje in sorodna področja* Vol. III, No. 2–3 (2020): 207, at http://retrospektive-journal.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Retrospektive-III_23-06_recenzij.pdf [accessed on 2 November 2021].

guilty at the post-war trial. The courts are carrying out such rehabilitations—which aren't really rehabilitations—by abusing judicial proceedings. Indeed, they grant a request in the interest of the law claiming that the post-war trial was not held properly in one way or another, and refer the case to a retrial. By doing so, the judges are well aware that trying the dead or holding trials without the presence of the defendant is not permitted under Slovene legislation. And that is the end of the matter. That hasn't happened yet in Rupnik's case because he is an undisputed war criminal, which is why the Constitutional Court in 2020 has suspended the rehabilitation, but we do not know how it will rule in the end.

Conclusion

Slovenia gained republican statehood in Yugoslavia in 1945 based on the anti-fascist struggle. Thanks to its participation in the anti-fascist coalition, it was able to change its western border and secure access to the sea. In addition to the socialist revolution, anti-fascism was also a fundamental value until the death of Josip Broz Tito in 1980. The generation of the Partisans based the legitimacy of their rule on both the anti-fascist struggle and the socialist revolution. In the 1980s, with the Yugoslav crisis, anti-fascism as a value began to disappear, and the "historical truth" of the defeated collaborators began to come to the forefront of public debate. Since the independence of Slovenia, this "truth" has gained a strong and in certain periods of right-wing governments even the predominant influence. Its foundation was to equate the Partisan struggle with fascism, with the explanation that resistance was not really resistance, but a communist revolution. In the period of the last far-right government of Janez Janša, who is closely associated with Hungarian strongman Viktor Orbán, the matter escalated to a point where the honor guard of the Slovenian Armed Forces was laying wreaths at the monument to the members of collaborationist Home Guard, but not at the Partisan monuments. This domestic neo-fascism, called "Janšism," met with resistance from the majority of the population. Anti-fascism is once again becoming a value, and the red star is one of the main symbols at the weekly protests, which have been taking place regularly in several Slovenian cities since the beginning of 2020, when the current government took power and immediately began to corrupt the state's in-

stitutions. The red star as a symbol of anti-fascism and freedom was revived by the well-known poet, composer and singer, 82 years old Svetlana Makarovič with the song "I will wear a red star" and organization of mass concerts with the same title, featuring Partisan choirs and young, rebellious generation of artists.

In response, the Janša government employed police force and tried to pass a law that would have made criticism of the government illegal, and in particular, in addition to the red star, would have banned the word "Janshism" and the greeting "Death to Janshism," which is an updated version of the Partisan greeting "Death to Fascism!" (The response was "Freedom to the Nation!"). Slovenia thus—in terms of fascism and the fight against it—has returned to the 1930s. A series of mass protests, called "bicycle protests" because they began with bicycling due to the ban ongathering, that lasted 105 weeks brought down the Janša regime. In the 2022 elections, the newly formed Svoboda movement won, and the government now consists of three left-liberal parties. Thus, at the national level, attitudes toward anti-fascism and the national liberation struggle have changed, but division, alternative celebrations, and other forms of revisionism live on.

14

A Dire Warning to All Ethnic Minorities of Europe?

Fascist Repression in South Tyrol and the Formation of Swedish-Speaking Anti-fascism in Finland[1]

KASPER BRASKÉN

It has been argued recently that "Fascism was not a common enemy for ethnic minorities and nationalities all over Europe."[2] The relation between ethnic minorities, fascism and anti-fascism during the interwar period was indeed highly ambiguous, including both fascist and anti-fascist responses and sympathies. The complex relation between minorities and anti-fascism still remains under-explored and especially the analysis of the ways in which minority anti-fascism was articulated needs more scholarly attention. This chapter will contribute to the analysis of instances in which ethnic minorities in interwar Europe had a particular concern to criticize fascism and the Italian Fascist dictatorship during the 1920s. The history of anti-fascism has been dominated by accounts dealing with the international political left, including militant and direct responses from anarchist, communist, and social democratic parties and groups.[3] These important histories have been com-

---

1 The chapter was written within the research project Finland-Swedish Anti-Fascism based at Åbo Akademi University, Turku, Finland, and is funded by the Swedish Society of Literature in Finland. I would like to thank the participants at the "Antifascism in a Transnational and Comparative Perspective" conference in Koper, 27–28 May 2021, for their most helpful comments.

2 Xosé M. Núñez Seixas, "Unholy Alliances? Nationalist Exiles, Minorities and Anti-Fascism in Interwar Europe," *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 25, no. 4 (2016): 617. The article remains one of very few studies that generally deals with the relation between anti-fascism and national minorities, and forms, therefore, a pivotal starting point for the discussion.

3 See e.g. the latest international volumes: Nigel Copsey and Andrej Olechnowicz, eds., *Varieties of Anti-Fascism: Britain in the Inter-War Period* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Hugo García et al., eds., *Rethinking Antifascism: History, Memory and Politics, 1922 to the Present* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2016); and Kasper Braskén, Nigel Copsey, and Da-

plemented with new research on liberal and conservative forms of anti-fascism that have broadened the field and challenged the understandings of anti-fascism as a more variable phenomenon.[4] An additional way to deepen the understanding of the varieties of anti-fascism in interwar Europe is to include the perspectives of ethnic minorities. After all, all fascist movements were extremely nationalist and ethnicist and claimed an "inherent collective superiority for their nations," which could trigger anti-fascist responses from ethnic minorities.[5] Such minorities could thus be identified as crucial 'others' that were directly confronted by Fascist Italy and by fascist-inspired movements across the continent. Efforts to homogenize and nationalize the state were naturally not restricted to fascist states or movements, but they constituted nevertheless a sustained predicament for radical nationalists as the ideal of the nation-state did not correspond to the social reality within their state borders. This was particularly true in the successor states created after the fall of the Romanov, Ottoman, and Habsburg empires after World War One, when the founding idea of national self-determination nonetheless left the new independent state formations with complex nationalities problems.[6] It is important to note early on that national minorities were neither sharply bounded nor internally unified groups. They constituted complex and fluid constellations of groups, identities and political and economic interests that intersected class and ethnic boundaries in various and changing ways.[7] In Italy, this presence of ethnic others was publicly acknowledged by Benito Mussolini already in September 1920 when he underlined that *Italianità* (Italianness) was the "first fundamental pillar of Fascist action." This also meant in the Italian northern borderlands, from Julia Venezia to South Tyrol, that the non-Italians needed to become Italians through processes of Italianiza-

---

vid Featherstone, eds., *Anti-Fascism in a Global Perspective: Transnational Networks, Exile Communities, and Radical Internationalism* (London: Routledge, 2021).

4 Philip Williamson, "The Conservative Party, Fascism and Anti-Fascism 1918–1939," in *Varieties of Anti-Fascism,* eds. Copsey and Olechnowicz, 73–97; Vesa Vares, "From Allies to Opponents. Conservatives Facing Fascism in Finland in the 1930s," *Scandinavian Journal of History,* Vol. 46, no. 2 (2021): 224–247.

5 Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism 1914–1945* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1995), 11.

6 John Connelly, *From Peoples into Nations: A History of Eastern Europe* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2020), 362–89.

7 Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 62.

tion, which caused distinct counterreactions from the minorities living in the borderlands.[8]

Rather than looking directly at the peoples of these regions, I will implement a transnational minority perspective. The basic idea of this chapter is to investigate the reactions spurred by the *denial* and *oppression* of ethnic, cultural, and political rights—or even merely the fear of an impending suppression—among members of another ethnic minority community. The classic example of a transnational anti-fascist minority is the international Jewish community during the 1930s.[9] However, in Italy antisemitism was not initially a central part of the fascist movement's ideology. It first gained influence with the rise of National Socialism (Nazism) in Germany and the establishment of the Third Reich in 1933. The passing of the racial laws in Italy in 1938 finally made antisemitism an official part of Italian Fascism.[10] That said, Fascism remained from its origins a chauvinistic and racist construct that singled out the Italians as a people meant to rule over others in both Europe and Africa. For the study of interwar minority anti-Fascism it is therefore important to note that the first targeted ethnic minorities were not the Jews, but the people living in the Italian borderlands.

The chapter approaches the question from a case study drawn from the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland. Although, among the conservative parts of both the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland there was initially much understanding for Benito Mussolini's so-called 'righteous' fight against communism in Italy, the increasing levels of terror, the decay of democratic rights, and the treatment of ethnic minorities in the Italian borderlands became pivotal issues that challenged the positive assessment of Fascism among the Swedish-speaking minority. At the end of the chapter I will show how these observations from Italy affected the Finland-Swedish responses to the rise of a domestic Finnish fascist movement during the late 1920s and early 1930s that envisioned an ultranationalist, monolingual Finland. Thus, the Swedish-speaking

8 Roberta Pergher, *Mussolini's Nation-Empire: Sovereignity and Settlement in Italy's Borderlands, 1922–1943* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 1–2, 202.

9 Moshe R. Gottlieb, *American Anti-Nazi Resistance, 1933–1941: An Historical Analysis* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1982); Nigel Copsey and Daniel Tilles, "Uniting a Divided Community? Re-Appraising Jewish Responses to British Fascist Antisemitism, 1932–39," *Holocaust Studies: A Journal of Culture and History*, Vol. 15, no. 1–2 (2009); Anna Koch, "Exile Dreams: Antifascist Jews, Antisemitism and the 'Other Germany'," *Fascism*, no. 9 (2020).

10 Patrick Bernhard, "The Great Divide? Notions of Racism in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany: New Answers to an Old Problem," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, Vol. 24, no. 1 (2019).

minority's critical analysis of Italian Fascism can be seen as crucially entangled with its own fight against fascism in Finland too. Could one thus argue that the Italian example still offered a transformative forewarning to all ethnic minorities in Europe to resist fascism and to defend democracy instead? I will analyze articles in newspapers and journals from the 1920s that were published in Swedish in Finland, especially identifying stories showing how the Swedish speaking minority's press reported on the oppression of the German minority at the borderlands to Austria in South Tyrol.[11]

Finland and the Swedish-Speaking Minority

Finland, a country in northern Europe was for centuries an integral part of the Swedish Kingdom. As a consequence, a distinct Swedish-speaking population was concentrated along the coastal areas in Southern and Western Finland and the Åland Islands. The Napoleonic Wars resulted in the cession of the Eastern half of Sweden to Russia that consequently forged the autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland in 1809. A century later the dissolution of the Romanov Empire provided the Grand Duchy with an opportunity to break free. One month after the Bolshevik revolution, in December 1917, Finland declared its independence. In the decades before Finland's sovereignty, social and political turmoil in the Russian Empire, especially in 1904–1905, had resulted in new political privileges. In 1906, all men and women over 24 years of age in Finland gained voting and representation rights. However, the following decade was not characterized by progress, but dominated by an intensifying Russification drive that stalled all democratic and progressive developments. When the First World War commenced, the Grand Duchy of Finland initially remained outside the battles, but in the closing months of the war Finland was ultimately drawn into the conflict between the German Empire and Russia. Parallel to the Finnish declaration of independence in December 1917—followed by a short but extremely violent Finnish Civil War (from January to May 1918)—the new Soviet Russian government insisted on an immediate armi-

11 The newspapers have been consulted and searched through the digital database of the National Library of Finland, digi.nationallibrary.fi.

stice and peace with Germany and the Central Powers. Notably, Imperial Germany's long list of demands included the establishment of independent states in the Polish and Baltic territories that until then had been a part of the Russian Empire. On 3 March 1918, the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was finally signed which stipulated that the Bolsheviks withdraw all remaining Russian troops from Finland, ultimately making the new states in the North East a part of the German sphere of influence. A month after Brest-Litovsk, General Rüdiger von der Goltz of Germany's Baltic Sea Division landed in Southern Finland to aid the White side to a fast-track victory in the Finnish Civil War.[12]

While independent Finland as a society was marked by continued class divisions after the Civil War, it was also a state with inherited linguistic divisions. Until 1906, the Swedish-speaking elite had by historical legacy enjoyed a markedly powerful role in Finnish politics, but it was increasingly contested by a Fennomane cultural campaign. The language struggle between the two groups was closely entangled with Finnish nationalism and there was a perceived overrepresentation of Swedish speakers in the business elite, sciences, the arts, and cultural life. The situation was vexing for the advocates of a mono-lingual and mono-cultural Finnish Finland. Still, both Finnish and Swedish speakers were united in their joint struggle against the Russification of Finland, which facilitated crucial moments of collaboration and the joining of forces for the nation-building process in Finland. This cooperation has often been mentioned as a fundamental factor that contributed to the formation of Finland's democratic constitution of 1919 where it was declared that the country had two national languages: Finnish and Swedish. The language legislation approved in 1922 secured the official rights of the Swedish speakers, providing the same rights to both language groups that were interpreted as one and the same nation. In practice this meant the right to use Swedish in communication with all authorities and secured all their cultural and societal needs, such as schools and higher education. The Swedish speaking part of the country‘s population constituted at

12 The German troops left Helsinki in December 1918, after the collapse of Imperial Germany. See further in Pertti Haapala and Marko Tikka, "Revolution, Civil War, and Terror in Finland in 1918," in *War in Peace: Paramilitary Violence in Europe after the Great War,* eds. Robert Gerwarth and John Horne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); and Tuomas Tepora and Aapo Roselius, eds., *The Finnish Civil War 1918: History, Memory, Legacy* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

that time 11% of the population.[13] Linguistically Finnish and Swedish are, however, completely different. While Finnish belongs to the Uralic language group, Swedish is an Indo-European language and a part of the North Germanic branch of the language family.[14]

As a background to the "benevolent" treatment of the Swedish-speaking group one should note also the ambition of the League of Nations to secure the rights of all ethnic minorities, especially in relation to the successor states. By 1922–23, the League had agreed on guarantees for minority rights in Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes.[15] The multinational states were founded on the belief that assimilation and toleration of minorities would be guaranteed in accordance with the Wilsonian principles. However, the minorities treaties ended up being all too weak when confronted by increasingly intolerant ethnic majorities, that were often motivated by the desire to consolidate state power and to sacrifice the ideal of democracy in the process.[16] Among the successor states, Finland constituted an exception in this sense as democracy prevailed in the years of crisis in the late 1920s and early 1930s and stability was finally found through social democratic and peasant party alliances that formed the foundation of the later Nordic welfare state model.[17]

Finnish democracy was put under extreme pressure by the rise of the far right Finnish Lapua Movement in 1929 that, in the spirit of Mussolini's followers, organized a March to Helsinki in 1930. Due to the extra-parliamentary pressure brought to bear by the Lapua Movement Finland outlawed communism in 1930. A failed coup d'état by the right-wing radicals followed in 1932 after which the Lapua movement transformed itself into a far right party called the *Patriotic Peoples' Movement* (Isän-

13 See especially Henrik Meinander, *A History of Finland* (London: Hurst & Company, 2011), 133–35; and Henrik Meinander, *Nationalstaten. Finlands svenskhet 1922–2015, Finlands svenska historia* (Helsingfors: Svenska Litteratursällskapet i Finland, 2016), 9–18.

14 Besides Swedish, recognized minority languages are Saami, Karelian, and Finnish Romani. https://www.kotus.fi/en/on_language/languages_of_finland. On the history of minorities in Finland, see Mats Wickström and Charlotta Wolff, eds., *Mångkulturalitet, migration och minoriteter i Finland under tre sekel* (Helsingfors: Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland, 2016).

15 F. S. Northedge, *The League of Nations: Its Life and Times 1920–1946* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1986), 76.

16 Zara Steiner, *The Lights that Failed: European International History 1919–1933* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 256–260.

17 Nik Brandal, Øivind Bratberg, and Dag Einar Thorsen, eds., *The Nordic Model of Social Democracy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

maallinen Kansanliike, IKL) that had a distinct fascist program and outlook.[18] Although the fascist party never gained power, the Swedish-speaking minority was placed under increasing pressure by the true Finnish radical nationalist sentiment which was entangled with the Finnish fascist movement. The so-called radical Fennomanes, also called true Finns, pushed already during the 1920s for a more radical Fennicisation of Finland. Crucially, it was not only limited to gaining linguistic purity within the country's existing borders, but its most radical advocates in the student association *Academic Karelia Society* envisioned the formation of a Greater Finland with substantial territorial gains from Soviet Russia. As described by leading Finland-Swedish historian Henrik Meinander, the divisions between Finnish- and Swedish-speaking groups during the 1920s were partly improved by the remembrance of the many Swedish speakers efforts and sacrifices for the White side during the Finnish Civil War, but as will be shown below the merger of radical nationalism and fascism proved to be a major concern for the Swedish speakers too.[19]

During the interwar years, a vibrant Swedish speaking public sphere flourished with a multitude of newspapers and journals that transmitted news in Swedish and debated culture and politics in Swedish in Finland. These publications also took an active part in defending the Swedish language and culture in Finland which, as a consequence, led to the stronger articulation of a Finland-Swedish community. Therefore, both the Finnish radical nationalists and the Swedish-speaking political and cultural elite helped in their own way to transform the Swedish speakers into a more distinctly identifiable minority, as argued by Meinander.[20] Already in 1906, representatives of the Swedish speaking group had formed a political party, the *Swedish Peoples' Party* (*Svenska Folkpartiet*, SFP), that strove to represent the Swedish speakers as widely as possible and to defend their right to use Swedish as their mother tongue and to guard and preserve their culture and traditions in Finland. However, despite being a minority population, the Swedish speakers did not perceive themselves as a national minority as defined in many other parts

18 Lauri Karvonen, *From White to Blue-and-Black: Finnish Fascism in the Inter-War Era* (Helsinki: Finnish Society of Sciences and Letters, 1988); Oula Silvennoinen, "'Home, Religion, Fatherland'. Movements of the Radical Right in Finland," *Fascism*, no. 4 (2015):134–35.

19 See especially Meinander, *A History of Finland,* 133–35; and Meinander, *Nationalstaten*, 9–18.

20 Meinander, *Nationalstaten*, 23–27.

for Europe, but as an integrated part of one Finnish nation (together with the Finns). In some more ethnically inclined interpretations, the Swedish speakers were called Eastern Swedes or a Germanic minority in Finland. Despite the unusually good position of minorities in Finland, the need to guard and protect their cultural, political, and linguistic interests did not disappear after 1919, but on the contrary needed an increasingly active defense in parliament and public life. Although the SFP had a clear conservative political profile, its main mission during the 1920s was to protect the rights of the Swedish-speaking minority. In parliament they could even compromise with the communists if it came to language policy interests, which resulted in strong expressions of dissent from the Finnish conservative side.[21]

Warnings from the Mountains of South Tyrol

The history of anti-fascism in Finland and the Nordic Countries is a relatively new field,[22] while the history of anti-fascism among the Finland-Swedish minority is even less known.[23] While the previous focus in Finland has been on the responses to the Lapua Movement and anti-fascism mobilized around the events of 1930 and later, I will here use the much lesser known example of South Tyrol (Alto Adige)[24] during the 1920s that illustrates how the fate of the German minority in North Italy could be used to enhance an anti-fascist minority position in Finland. Significantly, it must be stated that the cultural relations between Finland and Germany were especially strong, which could explain why there was such an emphatic response to the Italian oppression. In comparison, it seems clear that reports about the Italian oppression of the Slovenes at

21 Vesa Vares, Mikko Uola, and Mikko Majander, *Kansanvalta koetuksella, Suomen Eduskunta 100 vuotta* (Helsinki: Edita, 2006), 177.

22 See Kasper Braskén, Matias Kaihovirta, and Mats Wickström, "Antifascismen i Norden. Ett nytt forskningsfält," *Historisk Tidskrift för Finland*, Vol. 102, no. 1 (2017); and Kasper Braskén, Nigel Copsey, and Johan Lundin, eds., *Anti-Fascism in the Nordic Countries: New Perspectives, Comparisons and Transnational Connections*, Routledge Studies in Fascism and the Far Right (London and New York: Routledge, 2019). On Jewish responses, see Pontus Rudberg, *The Swedish Jews and the Holocaus*t (London and New York: Routledge, 2017).

23 A pioneering study in the field was Matias Kaihovirta and Mats Wickström, "An Anti-Fascist Minority? Swedish-Speaking Finnish Responses to Fascism," in *Anti-Fascism in the Nordic Countries,* eds. Braskén, Copsey, and Lundin, 55–71.

24 Anny Schweigkofler, "South Tyrol. Rethinking Ethnolinguistic Vitality," in *German Minorities in Europe*: *Ethnic Identity and Cultural Belonging,* ed. Stefan Wolff (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000).

the Eastern borderlands gained much less attention and much less sympathy in Finland.

One of the first notes about fascist oppression in South Tyrol came from the liberal weekly *Nya Tidningen*. In an article published on 16 October 1922 on fascism – the movement "all of Europe was talking about"—it noted that, now that the "red menace" had been largely quashed by the Fascists in Italy, the Fascists had shifted focus to reinvigorating Italian nationalism. The author, Axel Grönvik, who later would take over leading positions in the Swedish speaking press in Helsinki, noted that Fascism had now taken the form of a ruthless fight against all things German in the new territories in the north. Although anti-Bolshevism was described here as a healthy strain of fascism, the author argued that it was necessary to get rid of its "blind" hate of the Germans.[25] Those conservatives and nationalists who only four years earlier had fought on the White side in the Finnish Civil War had also resorted to extreme violence against the Reds. They were thus in no position to condemn the Italian fascists for doing the same. Hence, many Swedish speaking conservatives applauded Mussolini in the beginning for taking such a firm stance against Bolshevism. This first example directly illustrates how ambiguous the relation with Fascism was in the early 1920s, when the Fascists' class politics were on the one hand approved, but their nationalities politics on the other hand started to cause serious suspicions and condemnations.

In another example, the economist Axel Gadolin made a rather spectacular suggestion in January 1923 when he advocated something he called "minority fascism," which strove for collaboration between all Germanic national minorities. Although Gadolin acknowledged that many national minorities had gained independence in the new postwar order, he claimed that, for one particular minority, everything had turned for the worse. This was the Germanic nation, and it was in this category that he also placed the Swedish-speaking minority.[26] Gadolin

25 Axel Grönvik, "Fascisterna – Europas risare," *Nya Tidningen* 1 (16 October 1922).

26 Although Swedish as a language belonged to the North Germanic language group, to speak of the Swedish speaking population as Finland's Germanics became a highly problematic racialized category during the interwar period. Moreover, the race biological studies made in the 1920s finally concluded that the 'racial differences' were non-existent between the Finnish and Swedish populations in Finland. The Swedish speaking minority had therefore to be defined via cultural and linguistic parameters. See further in Markku Mattila, '"Det får ej finnas dåliga svenskar i detta land!" Rasbiologi och rashygien som vetenskapliga vapen i språkstridens Finland,' in *Mångkulturalitet, migration och minoriteter i Finland under tre sekel*, eds. Mats Wickström and Charlotta Wolff (Helsingfors: Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland, 2016), 271–311.

claimed that under five years of independence the Swedish speaking people in Finland had lost more of their influence than under a century of Russian oppression. Gadolin identified two stages in the formation of minority nationalism or small state nationalism. The first was a more healthy work on one's own group, while the latter shaped itself as a need to assert oneself at the expense of others. While observing Italian Fascism, Gadolin had, like Grönvik, been sympathetic at first when it strove to "save" Italy, but then turned repellent when it targeted the German minorities in South Tyrol. The main point was to strive for a "positive nationalism" and Gadolin suggested that all Germanic minorities in Europe, including the Eastern Swedes (aka the Swedish population in Finland), Flems, Balts, and Germans in Romania could start cooperating in the form of a "international Germanic national (minority) fascism." Gadolin even imagined that the Finland-Swedes could take on a leading position in such a community.[27] The aforementioned Axel Grönvik was quick to retort in the subsequent issue of the journal that, although the Finland Swedes needed to approach the Germanic minorities in Europe with sympathy and perhaps even study their problems, Gadolin's solution remained outrageous. The question was how it would be useful for the Finland-Swedes to mobilize the support of these dispersed Germanic minorities in foreign lands. The fight for the Swedish speaking minority in Finland could not be established on "shared misery,"[28] but had to be constructed in places where Swedes dwelled (including Sweden), in his view. The inclusion of the term fascism in Gadolin's proposal revealed to Grönvik that the suggested community was not meant to be a "discussion club,"[29] but a unity for action. Grönvik claimed that to endorse fascism for the minorities problem, was the same as to endorse violent methods. The example from the South Tyrol illustrated this again as the Fascist regime had convinced the majority to oppress a national minority. Grönvik even noted how it was clear that the German fascists (National Socialists) in the Weimar Republic and Austria aimed to root out the minorities, most explicitly expressed through its antisemitism. Cru-

27 C. A. J. Gadolin, "Minoritetsfascism. Ett förslag till samarbete mellan germanska nationella minoriteter", *Studentbladet. Organ för Finlands Svenska Studenter* no. 1 (29 January 1923). On the German minorities, see Wolff, ed., *German Minorities in Europe*. Note that the idea of 'Germanic' and German minorities differed, where the idea of the Nordic-Germanic race was incorporated into Nazi race theory.

28 Axel Grönvik, "Minoritetsfascism," *Studentbladet* no. 2 (12 February 1923)

29 Grönvik, "Minoritetsfascism."

cially Grönvik concluded: "Nowhere has fascism ... had a protective tendency towards minorities."[30] Grönvik's intervention seems especially important as he noted, early on, that both Italian and German fascisms were targeting minorities as the enemy.

Beginning in early 1926, the Swedish-speaking newspapers were riddled with news about the "Fascist oppression" in South Tyrol.[31] On the front page of the main Swedish speaking newspaper in Helsinki, *Hufvudstadsbladet*, it was noted on 19 January 1926 that only Italian surnames were henceforth permitted in South Tyrol, and that the Fascist regime was pushing for the Italianization of all family names in the region.[32] Later that month it was reported that German had been forbidden in the schools in Trentino.[33] The front page of the regional newspaper, *Nyland*, now with Axel Grönvik as chief editor, devoted major room for a story on Mussolini's preparations for more violent measures against the Germans in the South Tyrol. It reported that Mussolini had threatened to confiscate all property of Tyrolean Germans who refused to become Italian citizens and Italianize their names. Even more disconcerting were the reports that German newspapers in the region were banned.[34]

One article of relevance from a minority perspective was entitled "broken promises" and treated the Italianization of the Germans in the South Tyrol. Or as the author explained, it was even forbidden to call it South Tyrol now; one had to call the region Upper Adige (Alto Adige). The Italianization of place names was seen as a direct attack on the minority. Above all, it was underlined that the German minority in the area lived under a constant threat of Fascist aggression, that could be executed without risk of punishment to the persecutors. The major concern was, however, that Italy, after the end of World War One, had made guarantees to respect the German language, culture, and economic interests in South Tyrol. It was in light of these guarantees that the Wilsonian principles had not been implemented in this instance and that the predominantly German area had been handed over to Italy. The Italians had

30 Grönvik, "Minoritetsfascism."
31 The timing coincided with the heated exchanges between Gustav Stresemann, the German foreign minister, and Mussolini over the German minority rights in South Tyrol, see: Alan Cassels, "Mussolini and German Nationalism, 1922–25," *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 35, no. 2 (1963): 154–57.
32 "Fascistregimen i Sydyrolen," *Hufvudstadsbladet,* no. 17 (19 January 1926).
33 "Fascistpolitiken i Södra Tyrolen," *Hufvudstadsbladet,* no. 25 (27 January 1926).
34 "Mussolini förbereder ny våldspolitik mot tyskarna i Tyrolen," *Nyland* no. 13 (4 February 1926).

from this perspective a *moral* duty to treat the Germans well. Merely four years after the Versailles peace these promises had been thrown out the window, which of course more generally shattered the belief in the League of Nations as an effective instrument to protect these rights. If this was permitted to occur in Italy, what guarantees were there left to the other minorities in Europe?[35]

In many reports the interest in minority questions can be interpreted more indirectly, but in other cases this is explicitly stated. For example, one regional newspaper stated on its front page that: "The conditions and treatment of national minorities in different parts of the world are of especial interest for us Swedes in today's Finland."[36] It polemicized how paradoxical it was that, when it came to the rights of the Swedish-speaking population, the Finns disregarded them as a marginal minority that need not be considered, but when the successes and privileges of the Finns were concerned, then the Swedish speakers suddenly were presented as major obstacles. The newspaper article continued with examples dealing with the fate of South Tyrol under Italian Fascism that, according to the newspaper, was "doing everything in its power to oppress the national minorities." A direct comparison was made between "Mussolini's methods in minority questions" and the Finnish politics and lawmaking advanced by the "true Finns" and the Agrarian party: They together form a "national fascism,"[37] it was stated, that did not differ much from Italian Fascism. Telling examples from Finland were listed, including the Fennicisation of names, language oppression in various forms, hostility to Swedish schools, the transformation of the universities into exclusively Finnish-language institutions, the unjust discrimination against Swedish talent, hate campaigns in the Finnish press, and an immature jealousy of everything Swedish. Nothing seemed more important than giving more room to the Finn under the sun. The newspaper argued that the general mistreatment of national minorities in Europe should be spotlighted more, especially as states guarantee to foreign observers that all is well, while the most upsetting mistreatments continued behind the scenes on the domestic front.[38]

35 "Brutna löften," *Åbo Underrättelser* no. 53 (23 February 1926).
36 Hr. Nagel, "Tidsbetraktelser," *Syd-Österbotten,* no. 16 (3 March 1926).
37 All quotes from Hr. Nagel, "Tidsbetraktelser," *Syd-Österbotten,* no. 16 (3 March 1926).
38 Hr. Nagel, "Tidsbetraktelser," *Syd-Österbotten,* no. 16 (3 March 1926).

The Swedish-speaking social democratic yearbook for 1927 included an extensive article on "Fascism and how to fight it" by the Labor MP Dr. Mikko W. Erich. He had earlier been in parliament as a representative of the National Coalition Party, a conservative party, but turned to social democracy during the mid-1920s. He too stressed the urgency of recognizing fascism as a threat on an international scale. While communism did not represent a significant threat in Europe any longer, according to Erich, the threat of fascism was identified as much more tangible. While Erich dismissed the threat of fascism in the Scandinavian countries (Sweden, Norway, Denmark) he observed how it had inspired right-wing military dictatorships in Spain and Hungary, adding Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, and Portugal to the group of countries moving toward fascism. For Finland, Erich noted how the Social Democratic press in Finland had early on identified the spread of fascist ideas in the Civil Guards (Suojeluskunta) and the military. Although the article does not write about the ethnic minorities in Italy, a reproduction of an important caricature illustrates how Mussolini was dominating a stereotypical German from South Tyrol: "As known," the caption read, "Mussolini has enforced a ruthless oppression of the German nationality in northern Italy."[39] Again, although the parallel to the situation in Finland was not directly drawn, it was most likely meaningful for representatives of another minority who could read about it and thereby gain an understanding of Fascism's treatment of minorities not only as an Italian phenomenon, but internationally. The example from the Social Democrats illustrates that, although their major concern was the Fascist assault on the Marxist working class, they too acknowledged the suppression of minority rights which might have provided an additional reason to fight fascism among the Swedish-speaking working class in Finland.

For Swedish-speaking conservatives in Finland, the National Coalition Party's turn to a more open true Finnish sentiment in the late 1920s meant that the old fronts of 1918 were being partly renegotiated. After ten years of independence the conservative party had turned from moderation to an intolerant position vis-à-vis the Swedish minority and many leading true Finns had gained central positions within the party.[40] Such fears were openly confronted in *Kotka Nyheter* in June 1927. It was

39 Mikko W. Erich, "Fascismen och dess bekämpande," in *Folkkalendern 1927* (Helsingfors: Finlands Socialdemokratiska Partibyrås Förlag, 1926), 64–71.

40 Meinander, *Nationalstaten,* 42–43.

stated that they, as Swedish speakers, feared that a true Finnish drive would lead to an ultranationalist victory and the formation of a true Finnish dictatorship or nationalist fascism in Finland. The newspaper assessed that there was a veritable risk that such right wing forces would come to power and, if that happened, the first blow would be aimed against everything Swedish in Finland. Alarmingly, the newspaper stated that the danger was grave and that the Swedish speakers could not stand idle: "A people like ours," it declared, "could be wiped out." Such explicit comparisons between Fascist Italy's active oppression of the German minority in South Tyrol and the feared undoing of the Swedish speaking minority in a future fascist Finland was used to mobilize unity within the Swedish speaking group.[41] This striking example provides direct proof that the fascist oppression of one minority could give rise to an anti-fascist consciousness in another.

In another piece titled "Between Brenner and Salurn," the state of the German minority in South Tyrol was discussed in more detail, throwing important light on the Fascist policy vis-à-vis minorities. The article presented arguments from both sides, allowing Fascist Italy's arguments about South Tyrol first, followed by responses articulated by the Germans in South Tyrol themselves. Taking Mussolini's talking points from his speech in parliament on 6 January 1926, the article reported how Mussolini had been utterly dismayed by all allegations about the Fascist regime's brutal acts in South Tyrol. This was, according to him, a distortion as the Fascists were merely pursuing an Italianization policy. "Mussolini perceived the people in South Tyrol as Italian citizens and treated them accordingly."[42] If this was not put into effect, then the regime would have a state within the state—which was an unbearable solution. The aim was to make the area Italian in its geography and in its historical development. The Germans in the area thus did not constitute a national minority from the Italian perspective, but more of an ethnic relic. The by-then defunct state of Austria-Hungary was identified as the main culprit that had caused the current situation, according to the Fascists, who alleged that the Dual Monarchy had ruthlessly Germanized South Tyrol and Trentino in the late 19th century. Now, if left as a self-governing entity, the main fear was that the people would ac-

41 "Den brutna fronten," *Kotka Nyheter,* no. 46 (21 June 1927).
42 Harald Tapenius, "Mellan Brenner och Salurn", *Finsk Tidskrift,* no. 6 (December 1928), 396.

tively pursue reunification with Austria. Although these views were presented, the author's sympathies clearly lay with the German minority. While the perspectives from the Fascist side were drawn from official speeches, the report on the German minority's arguments were based on the author's personal impressions after a visit in the area. For him it was clear that "the German people, the German tongue and German hearts" extended all the way to Salurn (Salorno), and that it could never be separated by Italian fascists. The memory of Andreas Hofer (1767–1810) was here also brought up as a German (Austrian/Tyrolean) hero who had raised a peasant army to inflict a defeat on the Napoleonic Army when it invaded these German speaking lands.[43]

In interviews with locals in South Tyrol the author reported how they, in fact, had no wish to abandon their German heritage and become Italian. He claimed that they had accepted the peace terms on the condition that Wilson's principles were to be implemented. Instead, they had been betrayed and handed over "like cattle"[44] to Italy. In examples relevant to the Swedish-speaking minority, the locals in Tyrol were devastated that Italy had not honored its pledges to sustain German as a school language and to permit German to be used in the courts and public administration. These promises had been kept during the first years after the war, "but when fascism came to power, life became nearly unbearable for us,"[45] the Germans exclaimed. Local self-government was annulled, being replaced by Italian officials appointed by the Italian government. With concern he reported that, even if the Italian judges in the courts were decent men, how could they possibly function when they did not understand German and the people did not understand Italian? The worst aspect of it all was identified as the oppression of the German language. German was not permitted in public life and only one German-language newspaper was preserved and it was made to serve as the mouthpiece of the Fascists and the anti-German hate. Even so, the story concluded with a hopeful belief in the strength of the German people in South Tyrol to bide their time and, while Fascism might be temporary, their will to reunite with the Germans in the north was eternal. Just as the Poles never

43 Tapenius, "Mellan Brenner och Salurn," 395–96.
44 Tapenius, "Mellan Brenner och Salurn," 399.
45 Tapenius, "Mellan Brenner och Salurn," 400.

became Russian or German, so it was believed that the people of South Tyrol never would become Italian.[46]

In a final example, the newspaper *Svenska Pressen* discussed the situation in South Tyrol in October 1929 that, in a significant way, bore comparison to the situation of minority rights in Finland. The author of the piece noted that it was with a certain sense of hesitance that a Swedish newspaper in Finland took notice of the minority oppression taking place in Europe. Even the reporting of ruthless oppression could in fact be used against the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland. The act could provide the Finns with the opportunity to argue that the Swedish speakers were in fact well off and that other national minorities had to cope with much worse circumstances. This was, of course, deemed a highly unjust perspective, as large-scale oppression in foreign lands could not be used to justify oppression on a smaller scale in Finland. The case of the South Tyrol was still used as an opportunity to ridicule the fascists. Paraphrasing the Swedish author Per Hallström, *Svenska Pressen* defined the fascists as "brave heroes who first appeared – when the war was over." Now, when it came to oppressing the national minorities, the Fascists wanted to project the appearance of being brave and strong. The latest Italianization measures in South Tyrol were deemed "hysterical" by the author, and were even compared to violating a people's soul. The author deemed that there was a certain comfort in the fact that any regime compelled to execute such oppressive orders, revealed at the same time its inherent weakness. For the sake of human justice, the author hoped that the Germans of Tyrol had the national resilience to survive and to preserve their culture. Despite the intensifying cultural and political oppression, there was a sense of hope that Europe understood that ithad a moral duty to step in to protect this minority and even remove Mussolini from office or at least limit him to oppressing his own people.[47]

Sadly, such hopes were illusory and Europe did not save South Tyrol. Contrary to the logic of pan-Germanism, South Tyrol never became a major point of conflict between Fascist Italy and the rising Nazi movement in Germany either. Somewhat paradoxically, Hitler was one of the few Germans who in 1927–1928 did not complain over Italy's oppression of the German minority in South Tyrol. Hitler envisioned instead a fu-

46 Tapenius, "Mellan Brenner och Salurn."
47 "I veckans marginal," *Svenska Pressen,* no. 243 (19 October 1929).

ture alliance between Germany and Italy and the first stepping stone in the process was the acceptance of Italy's hegemonic rule over South Tyrol.[48] For Austria, the annexation of South Tyrol remained a major point of contestation until 1928, when the Austrian chancellor declared that Italian policy in South Tyrol was now perceived as Italy's internal affair. Here again, Austria's foreign policy needs trumped the interest of the protection of the German minority. The process was completed by a friendship treaty between Austria and Italy in 1930. The Swedish-speaking minority in Finland did its part to raise awareness about the oppression of the German minority, but the main interest for the Swedish public was perhaps to use this dire warning from the mountains of South Tyrol for domestic purposes and for needs to consolidate the Swedish speakers behind the *Swedish People's Party*. By showing that the threat posed by the radical true Finns together with Finnish fascist politics was of major concern for the very survival of Swedish culture and society in Finland, the Swedish-speaking press could effectively motivate an anti-fascist minority position. For these purposes, South Tyrol became an utterly useful but later overlooked international example.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that, although the rise of Fascism in Italy was due to its anti-communist credentials, credentials, initially applauded initially applauded by many conservative Swedish speakers in Finland who had stood on the White side in the Finnish Civil War, the example of South Tyrol quickly revealed that the Fascist revolution was a two-step program. First it targeted communism, later it attacked the national minorities. This crucial transnational lesson for the Swedish speaking public was explicitly brought forward in the hundreds of press reports about the Fascist oppression of the Germans in South Tyrol. When then the fascist Lapua Movement gained momentum in 1929 it did so in a very similar pattern. While the first mobilization was implemented with anti-communist slogans and rhetoric that engaged many Swedish speakers too, several of the main leaders of the *Swedish People's Party* strove to show that the Lapua Movement was in dangerous ways inspired by Italian Fascism and thus,

48 R. J. B. Bosworth, *Mussolini*, 2 ed. (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010), 216–17.

after the anti-communist stage, was most likely turning its assault against the Swedish speaking minority in Finland. One of the party's main leaders, Ernst von Born, noted in 1930 that, although anti-communism was, at the time, the main program of the Lapua Movement, it would not last long until it would form a direct threat to everything Swedish in Finland and dismantle the Swedish speaking minority's rights and interests.[49] The chapter has thus shown that the example of South Tyrol played a perhaps surprisingly meaningful role for the consolidation of an anti-Fascist minority position in Finland and likewise showed how the rise of fascism would lead to the betrayal of the promises and guarantees previously secured under more propitious circumstances.

49 Ernst von Born, *Levnadsminnen* (Helsingfors: Söderströms, 1954), 100–102.

15

Maritime Communists Against Fascism and in Defense of the USSR

Transnational Anti-fascism in a Danish Perspective 1933–1938

JESPER JØRGENSEN

Even though a lot of documents and some central archives are still classified, the opening of Russian archives in the 1990s altered the study of communist history of the twentieth century. New and more solid knowledge about the activities of communists, including the illegal parties, has supplemented, and corrected earlier studies based on open sources, memoirs, court records, and the like. In a Danish perspective, a pioneering effort was made by journalist Erik Nørgaard in the 1970s and 1980s; his book remains useful in spite of the absence of footnotes.[1] The Norwegian historian Lars Borgersrud, the leading expert on communist ship sabotage in Northern Europe in the 1930s, has described this work as "interesting" and historically correct concerning the main episodes. Nonetheless, Borgersrud has criticized the book for its narrow national (Danish) approach, its failure to make use of closed sources, and its journalistic perspective.[2]

Based on historical research in recent years, it is therefore time to revisit the history of transnational anti-fascism of the 1930s from a Danish perspective. This chapter will focus on the history of the Soviet- and Comintern-backed activities in Denmark or involving Danish communists. The results are based in part on research carried out for the pub-

1 Erik Nørgaard, *Revolutionen der udeblev. Kominterns virksomhed med Ernst Wollweber og Richard Jensen i forgrunden*; and *Den usynlige krig. Historien om Ernst Wollwebers sabotageorganisation* (Copenhagen: Fremad, 1975); and Erik Nørgaard, *Truslen om krig. Komintern, Folkefront og 5. kolonne. Fra Hitlers magtovertagelse til den spanske borgerkrig*; and *Krigen før krigen. Wollweber-organisationen og skibssabotagerne. Fra den spanske borgerkrig til besættelsen af Danmark* (Lynge: Bogan, 1985–1986).

2 Lars Borgersrud, *Wollweber-organisasjonen i Norge* (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Oslo, 2017 (first edition: 1995), at http://www.larsborgersrud.no/boker/wollweber_komplett_b5.pdf), 15.

lication *Den røde underverden: Hemmelig kommunistisk virksomhed i Skandinavien mellem to verdenskrige* (The red underworld: Secret communist activities in Scandinavia between two World Wars) by Morten Møller, Niels Erik Rosenfeldt, and Jesper Jørgensen (published in 2019).[3]

The main actors were radicalized activists from the unions of the water transport workers and harbor workers, which is to say maritime communists. They were involved in the most violent anti-fascist activities in Northern Europe in the period from the Nazi takeover in Germany in 1933 to the temporary suspension of communist anti-fascism with the Soviet withdrawal from Spain in 1938. Apparently, or at least symbolically, the impact of the activities was significant. For both sides. Notably, communist sabotage against German ships in the Baltic Sea was used by Germany as one of the reasons for declaring war on the Soviet Union in 1941.[4]

Because of a high degree of continuity in the personnel involved in these activities there has until recently been some confusion about the organizational backdrop of these anti-fascist activities. But as pointed out by Holger Weiss, there was no direct organizational link between the anti-fascist activities of the Comintern-affiliated International of Seamen and Harbor Workers (ISH) in the first half of the decade and the later arms smuggling and ship sabotage of the so-called Wollweber League, simply because ISH no longer functioned after 1936.[5] However, the original linkage will be pursued here because the involvement of the same maritime communists suggests a coherent process of mobilization and radicalization around anti-fascism. At the same time, the abrupt end of communist anti-fascist rhetoric and activities is striking, calling for reflections on transnational anti-fascism as an instrumental tool of Soviet foreign policy.

On that basis, this chapter will focus on three of the main transnational anti-fascist activities in relation to Denmark: the "Boycott the Nazi

---

3 Morten Møller, Niels Erik Rosenfeldt, and Jesper Jørgensen, *Den røde underverden. Hemmelig kommunistisk virksomhed i Skandinavien mellem to verdenskrige* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2019).

4 Adolf Hitler, *Proklamation des Führers an das Deutsche Volk und Note des Auswärtigen Amtes an die Sowjet-Regierung nebst Anlagen* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag, 1941), 72–73. See also Arne Hardis, *Klassekammeraten. Otto Melchior – kommunisten, der forsvandt* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2010), 186–188.

5 Holger Weiss, "'Boycott the Nazi Flag'. The anti-fascism of the International of Seamen and Harbour Workers," in Kasper Braskén, Nigel Copsey and Johan A. Lundin, eds., *Anti-fascism in the Nordic Countries. New Perspectives, Comparisons and Transnational Connections* (London: Routledge, 2019), 126.

Flag" campaign in 1933, arms smuggling for the Spanish Republic and the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War, and finally ship sabotage against the fleets of the Anti-Comintern Pact countries and Francoist Spain in 1937–1938. It will also uncover the personnel and organizational underground networks involved in these mostly illegal activities in order to comprehend the increasing transnational radicalization and instrumentalization of anti-fascism by the Soviet Union in the years leading up to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939. The aim is not to equate anti-fascism with communism but to try to understand how the Soviet Union managed to profit from and compromise a popular cause.[6]

Methodologically, this chapter is inspired by the triangular approach to global communism and global communist anti-fascism of the 1930s by Bernhard H. Bayerlein. In his view, this "entangled" history can be reconstructed meaningfully only if one takes into account the multifaceted interplay of different forces and actors governed by the triangular relationship between the national communist parties, the Comintern, and the Soviet Union "... and its ever changing foreign and domestic politics, supported by its powerful secret intelligence service."[7]

Maritime Communists

The transport workers, and especially the water transport workers, had a high strategic value for the Soviet-dominated Comintern and its affiliate, the Red International of Labour Unions (Profintern). Even though these workers represented a smaller group of workers than other trades on land, they played an important role in the capitalist countries. They facilitated the supply lines between the factories and the consumers and were a crucial part of weapons and ammunition transportation. For the Soviet Union and the Comintern, control of the seaways was therefore

6 See Hugo García, Mercedes Yusta, Xavier Tabet, and Cristina Clímaco, eds., *Rethinking Anti-fascism. History, Memory and Politics, 1922 to the Present* (New York/Oxford: Berghahn, 2018), 4. A fourth relevant activity was the recruitment for the International Brigades and the participation of about 500 Danish volunteers in the Spanish civil war. The later part has been studied excellently and myth-punctuating in Morten Møller, *De glemtes hær. Danske frivillige i den spanske borgerkrig* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2017).

7 Bernhard H. Bayerlein, "Addis Ababa, Rio de Janeiro and Moscow 1935. The double failure of Comintern anti-fascism and anti-colonialism," in Kasper Braskén, Nigel Copsey, and David Featherstone, eds., *Anti-Fascism in a Global Perspective: Transnational Networks, Exile Communities, and Radical Internationalism* (London: Routledge, 2020), 218.

seen from a military strategic perspective, as well as being a means to secure the communication lines between its secret liaison points in key capitals all over the world.[8]

The network consisted of communist cells on the ships and in ports in the form of Port Bureaus and International Seamen Clubs (Interclubs). The earliest Interclubs were established in Leningrad in 1922, Vladivostok in 1923, and Hamburg in 1924. In 1930, the Hamburg bureau was upgraded to become the headquarters of the newly founded ISH, officially an independent federation but subordinated to the Central European Bureau of the Profintern in Berlin and thereby a successor organization to the International Propaganda Committee of Transport Workers. Shortly after the Reichstag Fire in February 1933 the ISH-secretariat moved to Copenhagen.[9]

The Danish maritime communists were organized as seamen, stokers, and harbor workers in union opposition groups (inside the Social Democratic dominated federations and unions). On top of that the Danish Seamen and Harbour Workers' Revolutionary Union Opposition was founded in 1931. Its journal was the main journal of the Danish maritime communists.[10] It was founded in Esbjerg, the second largest harbor city in Denmark at that time, in 1931, under the name *Sø- og Havnearbejderen* (The sea- and harbor worker), but from January 1932 it was published as *Rød Kurs* (Red course) in Copenhagen, the capital and largest harbor city.

From its inception, the journal had a clear focus on international solidarity. Many strikes in foreign harbors were covered in the journal. Special attention was dedicated to police harassment of German seamen and harbor workers and the authorities' attempts to dismantle the ISH office in

8 For the Comintern liaison point in Denmark, see Jesper Jørgensen, Niels Erik Rosenfeldt, and Morten Møller, "SS Apparat Kopenhagen: The Secret Comintern Network in Copenhagen 1933–1938," in *The Left Alternative in the 20th Century: Drama of Ideas and Personal Stories. On the 100th Anniversary of the Comintern. Collected reports of the International Scientific Conference Moscow, 26–28 of June, 2019* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2020).

9 Holger Weiss, "The International of Seamen and Harbour Workers – A Radical Global Labour Union of the Waterfront or a subversive World-Wide Web?," in Holger Weiss, ed., *International Communism and Transnational Solidarity: Radical Networks, Mass Movements and Global Politics* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 257–258, 267–268; Holger Weiss: *För kampen internationellt! Transportarbetarnas globala kampinternational och dess verksomhet i Nordeuropa under 1930-tallet* (Helsinki: THPTS, 2019), 146. See also Holger Weiss, *A Global Radical Waterfront. The International Propaganda Committee of Transport Workers and the International of Seamen and Harbour Workers, 1921–1937* (Leiden: Brill, 2021); and Constance Margain, The International Union of Seamen and Harbour Workers (ISH) 1930–1937: interclubs and transnational aspects, in *Twentieth Century Communism*, Vol. 8 (2015).

10 Others were the harbor workers' *Hooksen* (1929–1941), the seamen's *Lanternen* (1926–1934), *Udkiggen* (1934), and *Aktion* (1934–1936).

Hamburg.[11] For the most part, their anger was directed against the Social Democrats, sometimes labelled *social fascists*, but more often called *reformists*, as well as the International Transport Federation. In compliance with the general line of the Comintern and Profintern from 1928, the Social Democrats were accused of helping to prepare for war against the Soviet Union.[12] The Soviet Union was portrayed as the ideal political model for how to change Danish society for the better. Several positive stories from Danish seamen visiting the Soviet Union were published in the journal and the October Revolution was commemorated every year in November.[13] The concept of fascism was scarcely used and only in a very abstract way. In the February 1933 issue of *Rød Kurs* fascism was not mentioned at all.[14]

Boycott the Nazi Flag

In March 1933 things changed overnight. A big headline on the front page of *Rød Kurs* called for a "United Front against Fascism! The brown murder plague rages in Germany." A critical event was that the ISH general secretary, Albert Walther, who had been in Copenhagen just a month before, had been arrested, and the ISH office and the Interclub in Hamburg forcibly shut down. The way out of these setbacks was the 'united front platform' of the Danish Communist Party (Danmarks Kommunistiske Parti, DKP) that called for Social Democrats to support the united front; to participate in forming anti-fascist protection groups, and to support the German victims of fascist terror.[15] But in fact, the Comintern leadership had no intention to compromise with the Social Democrats, no matter the consequence that this would have for the German communists, not to mention the German Social Democrats.[16]

---

11 *Sø- og Havnearbejderen*, No. 1 (September 1931).

12 Reiner Tosstorff, *Profintern: Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale 1920–1937* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2004), 649–668; Hermann Weber, Zum Verhältnis vom Komintern, Sowjetstaat und KPD. Eine historische Einführung, in Herman Weber, Jakov Drabkin, Bernhard H. Bayerlein and Aleksandr Galkin, eds., *Deutschland, Russland, Komintern, Vol. I: Überblicke, Analyse, Diskussionen. Neue Perspektiven auf die Geschichte der KPD und die deutsch-russischen Beziehungen (1918–1943)* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 9–139; and Jørgen Bloch-Poulsen and Morten Thing, "DKP's faglige politik 1930–35: Den revolutionære fagopposition," in *Historievidenskab*, Vol. 9 (1976).

13 *Rød Kurs* (November 1932).

14 *Rød Kurs* (February 1933).

15 *Rød Kurs* (March 1933).

16 Bernhard H. Bayerlein, Das geheime Winogradow-Treffen. Die Sowjetunion und die Machtübernahme Hitlers, in *INDES*, No. 1–2017.

The headline article was signed by the ISH executive committee. So clearly the big issues were not for the national sections to decide. But smaller issues were probably influenced more by local or national circumstances. The anti-fascist agenda continued in the journal for almost a year. But, beginning in March 1934, international anti-fascism was suddenly downgraded.[17]

Besides more non-violent forms of anti-fascist actions such as demonstrating, organizing and attending meetings, resolving resolutions, and publishing journals[18] the main transnational and radical anti-fascist activity in Denmark from April 1933 was focused on countering and fighting fascist symbols, such as the display of swastika flags or the wearing of clothing with swastika emblems. In a circular from May 1933, it was stated that the Danish seamen and harbor workers had torn down swastika flags from German ships and consulate premises around the country and had also chased German Nazis in Copenhagen.[19]

In June, July, and August, *Rød Kurs* again reported that swastika flags—which the publication called "a worker murderer flag"—had been removed from German consulate premises in several cities and that German ships flying swastika flags had been denied rights to unload their cargo in more than 10 Danish harbors. Also, in August the DKP chairman, Aksel Larsen, tore a swastika flag apart during a general strike demonstration in the city of Aabenraa.[20] The event even provoked a diplomatic crisis between Denmark and Germany and figured at the same time as the culmination and the beginning of the end of the Boycott the Nazi flag campaign in Denmark.

---

17 In the spring of 1934 Workers International Relief (IAH) started to publish a bulletin with international anti-fascist news for seamen and harbor workers, in Danish: *Søfolks og Havnearbejderes Bulletin*.

18 E.g. Kasper Braskén, "Make Scandinavia a bulwark against fascism!: Hitlers's seizure of power and the transnational anti-fascist movement in the Nordic countries," in Braskén, Copsey and Featherstone, eds., *Anti-Fascism in a Global Perspective*; and Ole Martin Rønning, "Intellectuals ready to fight: anti-fascist cultural fronts in Scandinavia, 1935–1939," in *Anti-fascism in the Nordic Countries,* eds. Braskén, Copsey, and Lundin, and for the militant, but mostly national grounded anti-fascism in Denmark, see Charlie Krautwald, *Kampklar! Venstrefløjen og den militante anti-fascism i Danmark 1930–1939* (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2020); and Charlie Krautwald, *Kampen om gaderne. Gadepolitik og rumlige krav i 1930'ernes politiske kultur* (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Agder, 2021).

19 The Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), 534/7/280, 42: *Meddelelser fra Landssekretariatet Søfolkenes og Havnearbejdernes R.F.O. (Sektion af I.S.H.), 25 May 1933*.

20 *Rød Kurs* (June, July, and August 1933). See also: Kurt Jacobsen, *Aksel Larsen. En politisk biografi* (Copenhagen: Vindrose, 1993), 119–121; Krautwald, *Kampklar!*, 50.

The campaign was not exclusively Danish. As highlighted by Holger Weiss, it was a truly transnational anti-fascist campaign organized by the international secretariat of the ISH. Boycott actions took place in ports all over Northern Europe and a few other places, though notably not in the Soviet Union.[21]

Lack of Comintern directives

It is a difficult task to establish precisely where the initiatives to the ISH boycott campaign originated and how the campaign was organized nationally and locally. But no doubt there was a resonant milieu or a 'culture of anti-fascism' in the internationally oriented labor movement in general and in the radicalized group of communist seamen and harbor workers in particular, dating back to Mussolini's accession to power in Italy in 1922 and to the Comintern's and Profintern's anti-fascist initiatives in 1923–24.[22]

The directives from the Comintern's Regional Office for Scandinavia (Skandinavischen Ländersekretariat) to the DKP immediately after Hitler's *putsch* were remarkably few. There were almost no corresponding activities from the beginning of February to mid-March.[23] Then nearly two weeks after the Reichstag Fire Decree of the 28th of February, a letter calling for a "Kampf gegen alle Waffen- und Munitionstransporte für die imperialistischen Mächte, gegen die freiwillingen Korps der Bourgeoisie und die Faschisierung des Staatsapparates" was issued.[24] But the situation in Germany was not addressed at all. Three days later the Danish communists received their first real call for an anti-fascist agenda concerning "Asylrecht für politische Emigranten, die gegen Fascismus und Reaktion gekämpft haben."[25] The next letter on the issue was dated the 25th of May and stated that the DKP should pay more attention

21 Weiss, "Boycott the Nazi Flag," 133–135. For a mapping of the actions, see Weiss, A *Global Radical Waterfront*, 365.

22 Kasper Braskén, "Making Anti-Fascism Transnational: The Origins of Communist and Socialist Articulations of Resistance in Europe, 1923–1924," *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (2016): 579.

23 13 February a memo on the Scandinavian social democrats' rejections of the united front initiatives against fascism was made but no conclusions were drawn in this paper (*Einheitsfrontmanöver der Sozialdemokratie gegen Faschismus. Skandinavien*. RGASPI, 495/31/70, 13–14).

24 *KP Dänemark*, 11 March 1933. RGASPI, 495/31/103, 17.

25 *An die KP Dänemark*, 14 March 1933. RGASPI, 495/31/103, 12.

to the International Red Aid (MOPR) in Denmark (Danmarks Røde Hjælp) and support that agency with campaigns to help the victims of fascist terror in Germany, prepare a European anti-fascist congress, and provide help for political prisoners in Denmark.[26]

No directives to tear down swastika flags from consulate premises were sent to the DKP during spring and summer, let alone calls to boycott German ships with swastika flags or attack Nazis in the harbors. Just one letter was sent in August to the chairman congratulating him on getting communist control over the Danish stoker union and on the success with the swastika campaign, especially the events in Aabenraa. At the same time, the Ländersekretariat was not at all satisfied with communication with the Danish communists. The Sekretariat wanted to know more about what had happened in the previous months and about the future plans of the Danish party: "Trotz Eurer starken Beschäftigung werdet Ihr die paar Stunden Zeit finden, um die notwendige Verbindungen mit uns herzustellen."[27]

Even though it would seem that the Comintern did not fully control all of the communist anti-fascist activities, that the situation was to some extent dynamic, inspired by activities in foreign harbors, and that the ISH and maritime communists to some degree had to fill out the general line themselves, there is no doubt that the *Ländersekretariat* had an obvious interest in at least pretending to be in full control of the events. An example of this is a series of eight reports between March and April under the same heading "Übersicht des Skand.L.S. vom [different dates] über die Durchführung der Kampagne gegen den fascistischen Terror in Deutchland."[28] The word "Durchführung" clearly signaled control. But, on the other hand, this impression is countered by the absence of directives ordering these activities.

Due to what Bernhard H. Bayerlein has labelled the "German-Russian complex" in Soviet foreign policy, the positive economic relations between the two countries continued unhindered despite the Nazi takeover and the Nazi slaughter of communists, socialists, and social democrats in Germany. The communist anti-fascist activities in 1933 from Comintern-affiliated organizations like the ISH received only lukewarm approval by the Soviet leadership and was perhaps even used as a Stalin-

26 *An die KP Dänemarks*, 25 May 1933. RGASPI, 495/31/103, 15.
27 *An die KP Dänemarks, Gen. Aksel Larsen, 29 August 1933*. RGASPI, 495/31/103, 32.
28 RGASPI, 495/31/70, 21–44.

ist smoke screen.[29] In conclusion the activities in 1933 as representations of anti-fascist mobilization fall somewhere in between "from below" and "from above"—until recently a somewhat neglected position in the history of global communism.[30]

Arms for Spain

One of the leading figures in the boycott campaign was the Danish communist Richard Jensen (1894–1974). Since 1919 he had been involved in revolutionary activities with pecuniary links to communists in Germany and Soviet-Russia.[31] In 1933, he was member of the DKP Politburo, member of the City Council of Copenhagen, chairman of the Copenhagen branch of the Danish Stokers' Union, and leading member of the ISH secretariat in Copenhagen. During the Spanish Civil War, he organized the illegal purchase and transport of weapons and ammunition for the republican government in Spain and the International Brigades set up by the Comintern.

This transnational anti-fascist activity was facilitated by Moscow. On the 14th of September 1936, the head of the Soviet government, Vyacheslav Molotov, the heads of Soviet intelligence (Semyon Uritsky, Genrikh Yagoda, and Abram Slutsky), the Comintern General Secretary (Georgi Dimitrov), and the head of the International Liaison Department (Otdel mezhdunarodnoi svyazi, OMS) (Meer Trilisser) determined the last details for a military intervention in Spain. Besides the establishment of the International Brigades, the main contribution was to consist of illegal weapon shipments from the Soviet Union and other countries.[32]

---

29 Bernhard H. Bayerlein, "The Entangled Catastrophe: Hitler's 1933 'Seizure of Power' and the Power Triangle – New Evidence on the Historic Failure of the KPD, the Comintern, and the Soviet Union," in *Weimar Communism as Mass Movement 1918–1933,* eds. Ralf Hoffrogge and Norman Laporte (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 2017), 272–73. See also Bernhard H. Bayerlein, "Abschied von einem Mythos. Die UdSSR, die Komintern and der Antifaschismus 1930–1941," *Osteuropa*, Vol. 59, No. 7–8 (2009).

30 Kasper Braskén, David Featherstone, & Nigel Copsey, "Introduction: Towards a global history of anti-fascism," in *Anti-Fascism in a Global Perspective*, eds. Braskén, Copsey, and Featherstone, 5–6, with reference to Joachim C. Häberlen, "Between Global Aspirations and Local Realities: The Global Dimensions of Interwar Communism," *Journal of Global History*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (2012).

31 According to reports from the French military attaché in Copenhagen in 1919 (Erik Nørgaard, *Richard Jensen – Historien om en mand,* 2nd ed. (Copenhagen: Holkenfeldt 3, 2007), 19).

32 Stephen Kotkin, *Stalin, Vol. II: Waiting for Hitler 1929–1941* (London: Penguin Books, 2018), 342; Boris Volodarsky, *Stalin's Agent: The Life and Death of Alexander Orlov* (Oxford: Oxford

Richard Jensen was an executing agent of the operation, code-named Operation X, and was connected to a technical bureau of the Comintern in Paris. During the Spanish Civil War Richard Jensen traveled to Paris several times to coordinate and to receive money to finance his mission.[33] According to Richard Jensen, the Jensen Shipping Company had a total of nine vessels, three Norwegian, one Swedish, one British, and four Soviet ships. The crew of Jensen's "gunpowder boats" consisted mainly of Danes—up to two hundred Danish seamen were active in the arms smuggling—but also Norwegians and Swedes were involved.[34]

We know several colorful stories about the activities of Richard Jensen himself—and he was indeed a very flamboyant person—but there are also other sources to this story. The seamen were obviously putting their lives on the line and not everyone was happy with the conditions of work. A Danish stoker from the gunpowder boat Scotia recalled later that Richard Jensen was cheating with the salaries. All the seamen had been promised 1,000 Danish kroner in extra payment on top of their normal wages as well as a war bonus but on payday only the able seamen got the full amount. The ordinary seamen, the stokers, and the deck and cabin boys had to settle with considerably less. Years later he was still bitter because he had had to sail "in the gloom and darkness of night in the Mediterranean Sea with the lanterns off, [flying the] Panama flag and [smuggling] explosives on board," while Richard Jensen was on the safe side rolling in money and treating another round of drinks in a pub in Nyhavn, the red-light district of the harbor of Copenhagen.[35]

University Press, 2015), 154. See also: Daniel Kowalsky, *Stalin and the Spanish Civil War* (New York: Colombia University Press, 2001); and Møller, Rosenfeldt, and Jørgensen, *Den røde underverden*, 291–92. See moreover for the "Krivitsky Thesis" that says that the Soviet intervention in the Spanish Civil War was an attempt, compatible with the world system theory, to secure a certain control against the spread of a revolution in Western Europe: Bernhard H. Bayerlein, Deutscher Kommunismus und transnationaler Stalinismus – Komintern, KPD und Sowjetunion 1929–1943. Neue Dokumente zur Konzeptualisierung einer verbundenen Geschichte, in *Deutschland, Russland, Komintern*, eds. Weber, Drabkin, Bayerlein & Galkin, 243.

33 Richard Jensen, *En omtumlet Tilværelse* (Copenhagen: Fremad, 1957), 156. Most likely the money came from a part of the Spanish gold reserves that was transferred to Paris, also known as the Paris Gold (Pablo Martín Aceña, *El Oro de Moscú y el Oro de Berlin* (Madrid: Taurus, 2001), 74).

34 Borgersrud, *Wollweber-organisasjonen*, 149–50; and Møller, Rosenfeldt and Jørgensen, *Den røde underverden*, 293.

35 Svend Borg, *Søfyrbødere gav deres liv for demokratiet. 70 år efter. Mindeskrift om den spanske borgerkrig 1936–1939* (Copenhagen: Dansk Metal, 2006), 6–7.

The agents of the British secret service were also taking note. In May 1937, they recorded that Richard Jensen had bought a British steamship named Tusker in the name of a Swedish skipper and renamed it Lola. From Copenhagen the ship sailed to the port city of Constanza on the Romanian Black Sea coast, where it was loaded with Polish weapons supposedly to be delivered to Greece, but which ended up in Spain.[36]

According to Richard Jensen himself, the arms smuggling was coordinated directly with representatives of Republican Spain, but without the assistance of the Soviet secret services the campaign would not have been possible. In fact, it seems more likely that Jensen was supervised by a certain Ernst Wollweber (1898–1967) on behalf of the NKVD.[37]

Ship sabotage

During the Spanish Civil War Richard Jensen was also involved in another closely connected transnational anti-fascist activity: the sabotage activities of the Wollweber League. His precise role in the League has been disputed[38] but in 1941 he was convicted of recruitment of members to the Danish Wollweber group and of having supported the group logistically with money and housing.[39] We also know from the memoirs of the first Danish recruit to the campaign in 1936, that he was introduced to Ernst Wollweber by Richard Jensen:

> They both wanted to know if I was still interested in going to Spain. And when I had explained what I thought about fascism in general and Franco in particular, Richard stated that I surely was the man Wollweber needed and that we could arrange the rest without him. Wollweber then told me in private that he needed some young men for a mission that was more useful than traveling to Spain only to get shot.[40]

---

36 The National Archives (NA), KV 2/2158: Jensen, Erik Aage Richard, 66a.
37 Borgersrud, *Wollweber-organisasjonen*, 151–152.
38 Borgersrud, *Wollweber-organisasjonen*, 151–152; Chris Holmsted Larsen, *Den folkekære stalinist. En biografi om Carl Madsen* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2017), 328.
39 Royal Danish Library (KB), Erik Nørgaard's archive, acc. 1992/148, caps. 29, copies of court records 1941.
40 The Workers Museum & The Labour Movement's Library and Archives (ABA), unpublished memoirs of Kaj Gejl, 1971, Carl Madsen's archive, Box 5, 10–11.

The judgment is further substantiated by a not previously studied KGB-file on a German emigrant, Josef Amann that confirms Jensen's main role as a recruiter. This file reveals the identity of the until recently mysterious figure "Conrad."[41] Reportedly, he was the leader of the Danish group. Amann was born in Dortmund in 1911 and had joined the Communist Party of Germany (Kommunistische Partei Deutschland, KPD) in 1930. In 1933 he was involved in a Roter Frontkämpferbund killing of an SA Sturmführer and fled to France. In June 1935, he moved to Denmark and in February 1936 to Norway from where he was sent back to Copenhagen by Ernst Wollweber to establish a sabotage group.[42]

Wollweber knew Jensen very well from the ISH. In 1932, Wollweber became head of the German ISH-section, Einheitsverbandes der Seeleute, Hafenarbeiter und Binnenschiffer, and took a leading role in the ISH-secretariat in Copenhagen beginning in June 1933.[43] In 1934, he left Denmark for the Soviet Union to lead the Interclub in Leningrad, and in 1935 he enlisted in the NKVD's Special Group for Special Purposes (Spetsgruppa osobogo naznacheniya, SGON), headed by Jakov "Jascha" Serebryansky (1934–1937). The "Jascha group" had for several years been involved in sabotage, subversive activities, and political liquidations outside the Soviet Union. Through the 1930s, the group grew ever larger and gradually developed into an elite corps. Wollweber was assigned a special task to set up a network called the Organization Against Fascism and in Defense of the USSR.[44] The mission was to sabotage ships from the Anti-Comintern Pact countries of Europe and Francoist Spain with firebombs and dynamite. The area of operations was centered around the Baltic Sea, the North Sea, and the English Channel, and its secret headquarters was placed in Oslo.[45] The KGB

41 See Nørgaard, *Krig og slutspil*, 227.

42 Churcill Archives Centre (CAC), The Papers of Vasiliy Mitrokhin (MITH), Vol. 2/3: "Communists": "Konrad" (without date). Thanks to Professor Jacek Tebinka from University of Gdansk for making me aware of the file, and thanks to retired Associate Professor Niels Erik Rosenfeldt for providing me with a summary of the Russian-language MITH 2/3-source and for contextualizing the evidence. Information from the file was apparently passed on to the Danish Security and Intelligence Service (Politiets Efterretningstjeneste, PET) by Mitrokhin in the 1990s (PET-kommissionens beretning, Vol. 6: PET's overvågning af Danmarks Kommunistiske Parti 1945-1989 (Copenhagen: PET-kommissionen, 2009), 154–155).

43 Weiss, *A Global Radical Waterfront,* 380.

44 Borgersrud, *Wollweber-organisasjonen*, 106–107; Niels Erik Rosenfeldt, *The "Special" World: Stalin's power apparatus and the Soviet system's secret structures of communication* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2009, Vol. 2), 126.

45 Borgersrud, *Wollweber-organisasjonen,* 268. Notable, not all ship sabotage against fascist

later described it as the NKVD's illegal residency for subversive activities in Scandinavia.[46]

The overall aim dating back to the late 1920s was to weaken enemy countries' infrastructure and economy. The idea was that the expected forthcoming war would be total. Therefore, it was crucial to strengthen one's own "hinterland"—as Stalin put it—and to disorganize the enemy's home front as much as possible.[47] Out of the 24 ship sabotage incidents from 1937 to 1938 validated by Lars Borgersrud, five took place in Denmark. The first three were failed firebombs attempts. We do not know the circumstances about the latest case from August 1938.[48]

Frederikshavn 1938

The most significant attack came in May 1938 in the port city of Frederikshavn on two newly built trawlers ordered by a Spanish company. The aim of the organization was to prevent the ships from ending up in the hands of General Franco. It subsequently came to light that at first Wollweber had ordered the dynamite from the northern part of the network in Kiruna and Luleå in northern Sweden. A few days later a courier delivered a suitcase to a clothing store in Malmø in southern Sweden. The suitcase was then transported by ferry to Copenhagen where one of the Danish members of Wollweber's circle received the baggage. Again a few days later, the same man and another group member took the train to Northern Jutland and finally, in cooperation with two local communists, placed the bomb in the harbor of Frederikshavn.[49]

The sabotage action was successful in terms of damaging the ships and preventing the shipment to Spain, but the Danish group's efforts were not valued particularly highly by the commissioner in Moscow. According to an assessment in the aforementioned KGB file, it was later judged as bad tradecraft:

---

countries in the 1930s was led by the NKVD, see: Jonathan Hyslop, German Seafarers, anti-fascism and the anti-Stalinist left: the 'Antwerp Group' and Edo Fimmen's International Transportworkers' Federation, 1933-40, *Global Networks*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (2018).

46 CAC, MITH 2/3.

47 Jørgensen, Rosenfeldt and Møller, *Den røde underverden*, 114. For the militarization of the Comintern, see: Rosenfeldt, *The "Special" World*, 234.

48 Borgersrud, *Wollweber-organisasjonen*, 902–903.

49 Møller, Rosenfeldt & Jørgensen, *Den røde underverden*, 325.

> The group exploded two steamboats in the port of Frederikshavn, Northern Denmark, but the explosion did not cause any significant damage, and the perpetrators were arrested by the authorities. The failure was due to a poorly set conspiracy and the absence of a prepared plan of retreat after the completion of the sabotage. The battlegroup itself was formed in a hurry, [and was] poorly organized.[50]

Because of the arrests following the attack, German and Scandinavian police were catching up with the organization. In the following years, the entire network was unraveled. Josef Amann fled back to France and participated in the French resistance movement during the German occupation. After World War Two he resumed his underground work for the Soviet secret service in West Germany, France and Denmark.[51] Wollweber was arrested in Sweden in 1940 shortly after he crossed the border from recently Nazi-occupied Norway. In 1944, he was released to the Soviet Union and in 1946 he returned to (East) Germany where he became a leading figure in German Democratic Republic shipping and intelligence. Four Danes were convicted in 1938 for the Frederikshavn bombing: Alberti Hansen (3 years in prison), Kaj Tandrup Christensen (1 year), and the two local communists (60 days each). Seven were convicted in 1941 of complicity in the Wollweber ship sabotage in Denmark 1936–1938: Richard Jensen (16 years), Kaj Gejl (16 years), Gustaf Longfors (12 years), Alberti Hansen (11 years), Kjeld Vanman (8 years), Elsebeth Mollerup (3 years), and Harry Rasmussen (2½ years). Most of them escaped prison in 1944 and fled to Sweden. All but one of the Danish "bombers" were pardoned in 1945.[52]

Conclusion

In most European countries one could probably find stories like these and many of them would be even more spectacular, radical, and violent. But that is not the point here. The point is that we see transnational antifascism being increasingly instrumentalized by the Soviet Union during the 1930s.

---

50 CAC, MITH 2/3.
51 CAC, MITH 2/3.
52 Nørgaard, *Richard Jensen*, 100; Nørgaard, Krigen før krigen, 116; and Nørgaard, *Den usynlige krig*, 217, 226.

An anecdote by Richard Jensen highlights this. In 1939 he was in Moscow for the last time. It was in August when the news of the Pact broke. He met Otto Kuusinen, chairman of the Communist Party of Finland and member of the Comintern leadership and asked him what the hell (his own expression) was going on. Kuusinen answered him:

> "Well, Richard, ... Hitler came to Stalin and said to him: 'Why don't we conclude a pact not to attack each other.' Then Stalin laid a hand on Hitler's shoulder and answered: 'Ok, we can do that.' And do you understand, Richard, from doing that—laying his hand on Hitler's shoulder (he laid his hand on my shoulder)—to doing this (he grabbed me jokingly by the throat) is not all that far!"[53]

This anecdote sums up the development of Soviet- and Comintern-initiated transnational anti-fascist activities of the 1930s very well. It was predominantly motivated by an ever-increasing, unscrupulous, and violent defense of the Soviet Union.

In a Danish perspective the locations and practices of anti-fascism significantly changed during this time period. The initial public fight against the spread of the swastika symbol in Denmark was replaced by subversive, military-style ship sabotage in Danish harbors and international waters. Activities developed from vandalism and street violence to bombings and participation in war—and from mobilization "from a transnational middle" (the Comintern's mass organizations) to Soviet secret service missions from the top of the global communist triangle. The DKP played a slow starter supportive role during the boycott action in 1933 but later, during the arms smuggling and sabotage actions, their (sometimes difficult) job was to stay out of the most illegal transnational anti-fascist activities that were going on in and around Denmark.

As happened to many of the other old "Agents of the Revolution," Richard Jensen fell victim to this turn of events. Only one year later in the wake of the German occupation of Denmark Richard Jensen was expelled from the DKP, apparently because of a serious personal and strategic antagonism (illegal vs. legal) between him and the party chairman, Aksel Larsen, and probably also because during the Pact Period the Soviet Union was reluctant to intervene in favor of an anti-fas-

53 Jensen, *En omtumlet Tilværelse*, 167.

cist "bomber."[54] This may also have been because he was simply too much of a loose cannon, too compromised and with much too much public attention to do any more illegal work for the Soviet Union. Quite revealing is that the English MI5 (Security Service) had monitored him closely since 1927.[55]

The findings of this study of transnational anti-fascism in a Danish perspective fit well with Bernhard H. Bayerlein's conclusion that the turning point and transformation of official communist anti-fascism (and anticolonialism) were revealed with the Comintern's military defeat in Brazil and Stalin's preference for Fascist Italy over independent Abyssinia (Ethiopia) in 1935. From then on and despite the anti-fascist Popular Front of the 7th Comintern World Congress in 1935 and the call for international anti-fascist solidarity with republican Spain in 1936–1938, the Comintern ceased to be an actor on behalf of doctrinaire anti-fascism and communist anti-fascism and became rather a full-blown instrument of Soviet foreign policy.[56]

From a Danish perspective, the Comintern- and Soviet-initiated anti-fascism involved hundreds of Danish maritime communists and a handful of hardcore German and Danish lead activists with close links to likeminded agents in Norway and Sweden. During most of the 1930s, they constituted a relatively consistent radical network whose members risked their lives for a greater cause: the fight against fascism. In the process of the militarization of maritime anti-fascism, the foot soldiers maybe never realized that they were being turned into chess pieces in a game of world power politics. The defense of the Stalinist Soviet Union not only jeopardized the anti-fascist objective but shaped a trajectory of anti-fascism in the twentieth century. Stalinist anti-fascism later became a crucial foundation myth for the repressive communist regimes of post-war Eastern Europe and even today it is a dark legacy of transnational anti-fascism that anti-fascists of the twenty-first century must confront.

54 Jacobsen, *Aksel Larsen*, 245–46.
55 NA, KV 2/2158, 1a.
56 Bayerlein, "Addis Ababa," 230–31.

Afterword
"Are you a communist? No, I am an anti-fascist."

NIGEL COPSEY

"Are you a communist?"
"No, I am an anti-fascist"
"For a long time?"
"Since I have understood fascism."

— Ernest Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940)

We have long been told that, during the "short twentieth century" (1914–1991), the influence of the Marxist tradition on anti-fascism overshadowed all other political traditions, whether anarchist, socialist, liberal, monarchist, or conservative. If fascism was born in violent reaction to communism, so it followed that communists would dominate anti-fascist arenas, not just politically, but culturally too, and in the end, militarily, be that in Spain, in the resistance movements of Nazi-occupied Europe, or in the blood spilled by the Soviet Red Army on the Eastern Front during World War Two. Faced with the irrefutable fact that the peoples of the Soviet Union had made the greatest of sacrifices—13.6 million military deaths; 7 million civilian deaths[1]—few could deny the Soviet Union the right to claim hegemony in the heroic struggle against Hitlerite fascism.

Communist anti-fascism would prove remarkably resilient, surviving well beyond the Red Army's final reckoning with Hitler. After 1945, across Central and Eastern Europe, anti-fascism was reconfigured in the Soviet-style satellite states as regime legitimation. Prescribed from above, and under Moscow's dominion, this project transitioned anti-fascism from a measure of opposition to a measure of loyalty—of adherence to a state that now defined itself anti-fascist. While this state-sponsored anti-fascism could find expression in, quite frankly, linguistic absurdities—the Berlin Wall as the "anti-fascist protection bulwark"—on a more

1 See figures cited in Stein Ugelvik Larsen, ed., *Modern Europe After Fascism* (Boulder: Social Science Monographs, 1998) Volume 2, 1839.

everyday level, as have seen, it was "colored by its highly clichéd veneration of the heroes of the resistance, by the blood sacrifice of the Soviet Union, and by the martyrs whose noble deeds provided the basis for school textbooks, memorials and rituals."[2] If this process reached its apogee in the former German Democratic Republic, recourse to this official anti-fascism was manifested elsewhere in the Eastern bloc—in 1956, in 1968, and even in Ceauşescu's resistance to internal reform in 1980s Romania.[3] As for Slovenia, the pattern, if not the same, was similar. In this case, the national-deviationist Yugoslav state gave prominence to the heroism and independence of Tito's Partisans, rather than the heroics of the Red Army.

As the 1990s ushered in, and with the collapse of the Soviet Union, so the short twentieth century gave way to the post-communist era. Sure enough, with Soviet communism now discredited, an *anti-anti-fascism* emerged, which decried the communist variant of anti-fascism as a Stalinist state ideology whose vicissitudes revealed not an authentic quest for liberation but Moscow's cynical opportunism, and its subjugation of freedom-seeking peoples. Yet the negative consequence to this post-Soviet denigration of communist anti-fascism was that it silenced authentic anti-fascist voices. Whilst it may be tempting to cast communist anti-fascism aside, especially given its many twists and turns, not least the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, we must resist the temptation to do so. For this confrontation between fascism and communism was all too real for those people caught up in the maelstrom.

The absence of any consideration of communist engagement would therefore constitute a major lacuna in a volume on international anti-fascism, and hence Jesper Jørgensen's chapter on Danish maritime communists is a welcome addition. Complementing the work of Holger Weiss,[4] Jørgensen's chapter reminds me of other cases of maritime communist resistance further afield, such as William (Bill) Bailey's exploits at Pier

2 Anson Rabinbach, "Antifascism (2006)," in *Staging the Third Reich: Essays in Cultural and Intellectual History*, eds. Stefan Geroulanos and Dagmar Herzog (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2020), 194.

3 Dan Stone, *Goodbye to all that? The Story of Europe since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 284.

4 See Holger Weiss, "Boycott the Nazi Flag": The anti-fascism of the International of Seaman and Harbour Workers' in *Anti-Fascism in the Nordic Countries: New Perspectives, Comparison and Transnational Connections,* eds. Kasper Braskén, Nigel Copsey, and Johan A. Lundin (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019) 124–42.

86 in New York Harbor when, in July 1935, he tore down the swastika flag from the *SS Bremen*, making headlines in London and Shanghai.[5]

In being sure to retain the deep, if problematic, historical association between anti-fascism and communism, we still need to challenge the notion that the only authentic or true anti-fascists were *communists* for whom fascism was not only an existential threat, but a menace that could be extinguished only when the system that gave rise to it in the first place was finally destroyed—"dead when the domination of capital was done away with."[6] To be a Marxist was to be, by definition, anti-fascist, and the only true anti-fascist was therefore a Marxist. Although Marxists, it need hardly be added, offered differing analyses of the agent theory of fascism, all Marxists agreed that fascism was a form of capitalist offensive.[7] We need only recall the memorable comment by French historian François Furet that, "the communist nourishes his faith with antifascism, and the fascist his with anticommunism."[8] In reality, however, relations between fascism and communism were far more complex. Even outside the geo-political arena of international relations, as the history of the German Communist Party (KPD) and the Nazis in the Weimar Republic further reveals, this relationship was not always based on unrelenting conflict.

Nonetheless, we cannot escape the overarching judgement of history. The two ideological camps of fascism and communism were sworn enemies. Even if both vied to depose liberal-bourgeois democracy, and both offered collectivist and revolutionary alternatives to democracy,[9] fascism's radical alternative was ultra-nationalist and anti-egalitarian, the antithesis to communism's professed internationalism and egalitarianism. Such was the severity of fascism's enmity towards communism that already, in 1923, a full decade before Hitler's accession to power, German Marxist Clara Zetkin warned that "All that matters to fascis[ts] is that they encounter a class-conscious proletarian, and then they club him to

---

5 See Peter Duffy, *The Agitator: William Bailey and the First American Uprising Against Nazism* (New York: Public Affairs, 2019).

6 François Furet, *The Passing of an Illusion: The Idea of Communism in the Twentieth Century*, trans. by Deborah Furet (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 238

7 See David Beetham, *Marxists in the Face of Fascism: Writings by Marxists on Fascism from the Inter-War Period* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983).

8 François Furet & Ernst Nolte, *Fascism and Communism* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 33.

9 See Sabrina P. Ramet, *Alternatives to Democracy in Twentieth-Century Europe: Collectivist Visions of Modernity* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2019).

the ground."[10] This warning proved particularly prescient in the wave of barbarism inflicted upon communists following Hitler's seizure of power. There were "about 300,000 members of the KPD before 1933," one anti-fascist East German source tells us. "Of these, 150,000 were persecuted, imprisoned or thrown into a concentration camp; tens of thousands of officials and members of the KPD were murdered."[11] So, in writing our histories of anti-fascism, let us not denigrate the scale of communist engagement in, and sacrifice to, the anti-fascist cause. Indeed, even before the Second World War was unleashed,

> Marxist anti-Fascists had politically educated many people; they aided many refugees from and victims of fascism; they had helped elect two governments in Spain and France that promised important social and economic reforms; they had bodily defended the Spanish Republic against a coalition of reactionaries, Fascists, and Nazis; and they had clearly, repeatedly, and accurately predicted the end results of unchallenged Fascist aggression.[12]

Without question, and with much justification, communists can lay claim to being history's most committed anti-fascist fighters. Yet, as this volume further bears out, not all of fascism's enemies were located on the far left, and so "to reduce anti-fascism to communist ideology," as Dan Stone reminds us, "is not only historically inaccurate," but it would also "do a real disservice to the wide variety of individuals and groups to insist they had been duped by or were patsies for communist manipulators."[13] Hence my reference above to Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. This serves as a (literary) reminder: anti-fascists also comprised people who did not self-identify as communists, but who still recognized fascism as an ideology of violence, inhumanity, and terror, and understood the mortal threat to humanity that fascism posed. As historians, it is incumbent on us to recover these *non-communist* voices too and, as this volume ably does, capture critical appreciation of *their* anti-fascism(s). A true anti-fascist did not have to accept Max Hork-

10 Clara Zetkin, *Fighting Fascism: How to Struggle and Win*, edited and introduced by M. Taber & J. Riddell, (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2017), 64–65.
11 Anon., *The GDR – An Anti-Fascist State* (Dresden: Verlag Zeit Im Bild, 1969), 6.
12 Larry Ceplair, *Under the Shadow of War: Fascism, Anti-Fascism and Marxists, 1918–1939* (NY: University of Columbia Press, 1987), 207.
13 Stone, *Goodbye to all that?,* 10.

heimer's dictum, from 1939, that "He has nothing useful to say about fascism who is unwilling to mention capitalism."[14] Anti-fascists appeared in many colors, not just in red. Indeed, as Jože Pirjevec's chapter shows, Slovene nationalists were drawn to anti-fascism when confronted with ethnocide; in the case of the White Rose, as Sabrina Ramet and Christine Hassenstab reveal, Hans and Sophie Scholl's intellectual sources were not the red theoreticians of the Comintern, but Christian writers.

Recognition of wider anti-fascist *diversity*, long overdue, and further detailed in the pages of this volume, is appreciated for not only does it correspond to historical reality it also speaks to where the true nature of anti-fascism resides. True anti-fascism does not reside exclusively in one ideology; no single ideology can claim ownership of it. Anti-fascists are simply those of any *non-fascist* conviction who, cognizant of the barbarous dystopian nature of fascism and the threat that fascism poses to humanity, are deeply opposed to it. The prefix "anti," as any dictionary will tell us, means *opposite*: the higher the awareness and the concern about fascism, the more likely it is that people who are opposed to it will engage in protective or defensive action against it. Anti-fascist practice is thus quintessentially reactive, first and foremost a defensive (re)action designed to protect anti-fascists "from a movement or form of government that promised to destroy what they achieved, obstruct what they hoped to achieve, and eliminate them altogether."[15] This "anti" (as adjective) is not an ambivalence, or even a general dislike, but describes a more *fundamental* hostility that both in thought (as anti-fascist knowledge and attitude) and in action (as anti-fascist practice) manifests in *responses* to perceived fascist proximity.

Anti-fascism is no ideology, thick or thin, but it can be abstracted to a *minimum*:

> *Anti-fascism is fundamental hostility to fascism for reasons derived from a set of ideological beliefs or values rooted in the humanistic Enlightenment tradition, be that equality, liberty, fraternity, progress, toleration, or universality.*[16]

---

14 Max Horkheimer, "The Jews in Europe," December 1939.
15 Ceplair, *Under the Shadow of War*, 3.
16 For more on anti-fascist minimum, see Nigel Copsey, 'Preface: Towards a New Anti-Fascist Minimum', in *Varieties of Anti-Fascism: Britain in the Inter-War Period,* eds. Nigel Copsey and Andrzej Olechnowicz (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), xiv–xi.

This anti-fascist minimum is shared by all anti-fascists, being just as applicable for communist anti-fascism (notwithstanding obvious tensions between its humanistic concerns, such as ending capitalist exploitation, and its more authoritarian aspects, such as dictatorship of the proletariat) as it is for other forms. Let us resist the temptation to moralize between "good" (liberal) anti-fascism and "bad" (communist) anti-fascism. What is important for future research is continuing to offer rigorous contextual analysis of the myriad forms and shapes of anti-fascist praxis across time and space.

On the face of it, a case study of Slovenia seems a rather odd point of departure for an international study of anti-fascism. Surely, a peripheral case at best? After all, Slovenia is merely a small country of South Slavs in East Central Europe. We might, for a moment, return to reflect on its history. Slovenia had originally been part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in the inter-war period, before being trisected during the Second World War by Italy, Germany, and Hungary. Its resistance movement was communist-led; only in 1944 did it join with Tito's Partisans (who were dominated by Serbs and Croats). After the war, Slovenia was incorporated into Tito's Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, before finally becoming an independent sovereign state when Slovenia seceded from Yugoslavia in 1991. This is a small state history; so unsurprisingly, within existing accounts of fascism and anti-fascism, Slovenia barely figures at all. English-language literature on anti-fascism has been more concerned with how fascism was opposed by Europeans in the core countries of Western Europe, than with its expression among peripheral Europeans in "lesser countries" in East Central Europe.

Admittedly, it is hard to make the case for Slovenian anti-fascists having a singularly powerful role in shaping the historical development of global anti-fascism. This would be an unreasonable, if not preposterous suggestion. However, this is not what this volume proposes. The foregrounding of Slovenia validates two key points. The first is that peripheral anti-fascists were not passive, simply accepting a fate determined by the core. The second is that the Slovenian experience informs wider understandings of the global anti-fascist phenomenon. Studies of the subaltern, of anti-fascisms of lower status, are heuristically valuable. Contributors to this volume are therefore right to shed light on the multilayered anti-fascist experience of Slovenia.

More specifically, the Slovene experience can be deemed valuable for several reasons. In the first place, we have the TIGR, Trst-Istra-Gorica-Reka - the Revolutionary Organization of the Julian March. This anti-fascist movement, formed in response to the forced Italianization of ethnic Slovenes in the borderlands of the Venezia-Giulia region, can be rightfully considered one of the first anti-fascist movements in Europe (it still awaits an in-depth English-language study). What is important here is not the claim that the TIGR was the very first anti-fascism – a claim made in the title of the 1990 book, *Prvi antifašizem v Evropi. Primorska 1925–1935*, by the Slovene historian Milica Kacin Wohinz.[17] There were, of course, other anti-fascist movements that pre-date the formation of the TIGR in 1927; perhaps the most well-known example is the Italian *Arditi del popolo*, established in 1921. What matters to us is not winning accolades for being the world's very first anti-fascist movement, what matters is the fact that, unlike the *Arditi del popolo*, the TIGR combined anti-fascist militancy with an ethno-liberal nationalist perspective. In other words, as early as the 1920s, there were already examples of anti-fascisms directly challenging the traditional historical conflation of anti-fascist militancy with the revolutionary left. Although the TIGR would reach an agreement with the Italian Communist Party, it would also co-operate with the coalition of reformist socialists, democrats and republicans that comprised the Italian Anti-Fascist Concentration in Paris, Catholic clerics, and even British intelligence.

Secondly, the example of the TIGR also calls our attention to the neglected contribution of ethnic minority diasporas in the history of anti-fascism. My own work on anti-fascists in the Italian *radical* diaspora emphasises the role that anarchists played in leading early militant anti-fascist responses during the 1920s amongst Italian diasporic communities in the United States, Canada, Britain, and Australia.[18] Yet as Borut Klabjan's chapter points out, the TIGR were not anarchists but ethno-nationalists. These militant anti-fascists—engaging in bombing attacks and assassinations—did not look to Bakunin but to Irish nationalists for inspiration. Even conservative-inclined minorities could adopt

17 Milica Kacin Wohinz, *Prvi antifašizem v Evropi. Primorska 1925–1935* [The first anti-fascism in Europe: The Slovenian Littoral between 1925 and 1935] (Koper: Lipa, 1990).

18 Nigel Copsey, "Radical diasporic anti-fascism in the 1920s: Italian anarchists in the English-speaking world," in *Anti-Fascism in a Global Perspective: Transnational Networks, Exile Communities and Radical Internationalism,* eds. Kasper Braskén, Nigel Copsey and David Featherstone (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021), 23–42.

anti-fascist positions, such as the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland, as Kasper Braskén's contribution also reveals.

Thirdly, the Slovenian experience of anti-fascism once more underscores the diversity of the anti-fascist experience. As we have seen, in Marta Verginella's chapter, anti-fascism could take the form of domesticated female anti-fascist activity in cultural and care settings, but in some cases, it could lead to illegal anti-fascist activism; anti-fascist resistance could also take the form of clergy defending national rights, as Egon Pelikan documents. Even if it remains tempting to bundle the Slovene experience into that of Yugoslavia as a whole, a country that suffered around 250,000 Partisan losses and an estimated 1,027,000 deaths in course of the Second World War, its disaggregation serves us better.

Fourthly, for scholars of anti-fascist studies, what happened in Slovenia reminds us that the weaponization of collective memory remains an important consideration. As elsewhere in East Central Europe, once communists asserted their political monopoly, varieties of non-communist anti-fascism were subject to revision. In the case of former members of the TIGR, it led to their persecution by Yugoslav state authorities. Then, following the disintegration of Yugoslavia, in something of an ironic twist, communist anti-fascism would fall victim to *anti-anti-fascist* revisionism. As we have seen, Partisan monuments have been removed; street names have been changed. Driving this new right-wing revisionism is a political desire to equate Partisan struggle with the forced imposition of a communist system, and in so doing, the denial of the post-war liberation of the Slovene nation.

If this process of right-wing revision has affected East Central Europe to varying extent, it has not escaped Western Europe too, not least Italy, where anti-Fascist public memory has become increasingly contested. *Inter alia*, we have witnessed the democratic legitimacy of the Italian Communist Party questioned; Mussolini's regime rehabilitated as a benign dictatorship; and Italian victims of Tito's communist forces in the borderlands of Venezia-Giulia and Istria commemorated. Elsewhere, the newly reunified Germany, as Enzo Traverso points out, "was conceived of as a political, economic and cultural process that inevitably implied the demolition of antifascism: the legacy of the German Resistance."[19] "Antifascism is a case study *par excellence* in revisionism,"

19 Enzo Traverso, *The New Faces of Fascism: Populism and the Far Right* (London: Verso, 2019), 137.

as Enzo Traverso has put it.[20] In light of this growing revisionism, with effects in other countries too, such as France and Spain, historians of anti-fascism have a particular responsibility to approach their subject dispassionately. But this does not necessarily mean succumbing to anti-communist revisionism, or to syllogistic reasoning: anti-fascism = communism, communism = totalitarianism, and so anti-fascism = totalitarianism.[21] For scholars of anti-fascist history, we must be mindful of the potential public use, and abuse of, our subject. I am reminded of Franco Ferrarotti's plea that "Memory is a faculty that forgets", and so "One must not give up the educational process."[22]

The educative side to anti-fascism, it should not be forgotten, is also an essential component in raising wider anti-fascist consciousness. This often goes unrecognized in anti-fascist studies, with such activity deemed uninteresting and unexciting when compared to more dramatic (and violent) forms of contentious politics. Indeed, and particularly so for non-violent anti-fascists, educative work can often be at the very core of their activity (the Swedish Committee Against Neo-Fascism and Racial Prejudices is one example from many). In fact, acquiring knowledge of fascism applies to all anti-fascists: it is a *sine qua non* when it comes to anti-fascist action simply because actions are mediated by conscious processes. It is worth remembering that it is the anti-fascist who defines the "fascist"—the anti-fascist defines the adversary. Without some conscious understanding of this adversary, even if definitions are left open-ended, there would be no cognitive process of applying (auto) meaning to why anti-fascists react in the ways that they do. What this means is that, in behavioral terms, we cannot dismiss anti-fascist activity as not being truly anti-fascist when anti-fascists campaign against what many of us might deem as non-fascist.

The difficulty here, of course, is when name-calling stretches credibility to the breaking point. So, for example, one of my critics suggested that this approach "would also mean that someone who genuinely believed the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds was protecting cormorants in a fascist manner and opposed them on that basis could be

20 Traverso, *The New Faces of Fascism,* 135.
21 For more on syllogisms and 'value-neutral' scholarship, see Traverso, *The New Faces of Fascism,* 140–149.
22 Franco Ferrarotti, *The Temptation to Forget: Racism, Anti-Semitism, Neo-Nazism* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1994), 137.

considered an anti-fascist."[23] This is not what is being said here: the self-professed anti-fascist defines *fascism* through reference to a set of values or beliefs, such as the historical function of fascism in systemic terms (dictatorship of capital, for instance, if a Marxist) or hostility to the core ideological features that generic fascist movements share(d), such as ultra-nationalism, anti-communism, anti-conservatism, anti-liberalism, and so forth. For sure, the "f-word" has been, and continues to be, bandied about by anti-fascists without the necessary care and attention upon which scholars might insist. Nevertheless, fascism is not exactly the easiest term to define in the first place (although applying it to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds is clearly preposterous).

This brings me to some final afterthoughts on the nature of anti-fascism in the twenty-first century. As the concluding paragraph to Pontus Järvstad's chapter tells us, a new anti-fascism has emerged in recent decades, a "neo- anti-fascism" inspired more by anarchist militancy than by the (communist) politics of the inter-war Popular Front. Following the election of Donald Trump in 2016, few of us could have avoided the anonymous, masked-up anti-fascist militant ("Antifa") engaged in physical confrontation with the far right. The (paleo)conservative historian, Paul Gottfried, in his recent book, *Antifascism: The Course of a Crusade*, historicizes this development as marking a historical transition from the Marxist left to a post-Marxist intersectional left. Antifa, we are told, is integral to this hegemonic post-Marxist left which,

> ... today enjoys cultural support in much of the West and, not incidentally, in the United States. This now-surging left rests on an alliance of government, a corporate capitalist economy, and for want of a better term, what has been styled as "cultural Marxism".[24]

Gottfried's tendentious reading, which casts Antifa as nihilistic opposition to Western civilization, once more underscores the need for historians to be vigilant against newer forms of revisionism which seek to relativize contemporary anti-fascists as rampaging "totalitarians", en-

23 David Landon Cole, *Bashing the fash: the effect of civil society opposition on the electoral performance of far right parties in the United Kingdom, 2005-2015*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of York, 2019, 54.

24 See Paul Gottfried, *Antifascism: The Course of a Crusade* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021), 17.

gaged in a violent, and irrational struggle against an imaginary foe. It is worth quoting US anti-fascist writer Shane Burley here: "The facts remain: antifascists are not responsible for the kind of violence their opponents perpetrate. It's not even the same league, not even part of the same universe."[25]

For sure, as events in the US and elsewhere attest, anti-fascism has remained a remarkably durable tradition, but its longevity, its ebb and flow, is a consequence of its *reactive* dynamic. In this sense, anti-fascism is not some artificial construct of the post-Marxist left. At its root is the perception, whether overblown or not, that fascism represents a serious and ongoing danger to equality, liberty, fraternity, progress, toleration, and universality. As such, today's anti-fascists will insist, we need push back against this fascism, or at least against forms derivative of it. But this book has not been a book about anti-fascism in the twenty-first century. Its concern has been to capture, from a Slovenian vantage point (and beyond), further varieties of anti-fascism in the twentieth century. Without doubt, this volume will help to guide scholarly examination of our subject in the future, joining a growing body of literature that is internationalizing the study of anti-fascism. Let me end this afterword thus, "Are you a communist? No I am an anti-fascist", by connecting my opening comments to my final afterthoughts. Significantly, this volume cautions us against *reductionist* tendencies, not only in the turbulent past, but also in the troubled times of the present.

25 Shane Burley, *Why We Fight: Essays on Fascism, Resistance, and Surviving the Apocalypse* (Chico, CA: AK Press, 2021), 99.

About the Contributors

Kasper Braskén has a Ph.D. in General History from Åbo Akademi University (Turku, Finland). He is author of the book *The International Workers' Relief, Communism, and Transnational Solidarity: Willi Münzenberg in Weimar Germany* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) and co-editor of the volumes *Anti-Fascism in the Nordic Countries* (Routledge, 2019) and *Anti-Fascism in a Global Perspective* (Routledge, 2021). Braskén is currently researching in the research project "Finland-Swedish Anti-Fascism" that is funded by the Society of Swedish Literature in Finland at Åbo Akademi University.

Nigel Copsey is a Professor of Modern History at Teeside University. He is the author of *Anti-Fascism in Britain* (Routledge, 2000) and *Contemporary British Fascism: The British National Party and the quest for legitimacy,* 2nd ed. (Routledge, 2017) and co-editor of *Anti-fascism in the Nordic Countries: New perspectives, comparisons and transnational connections* (Routledge, 2019) and *Anti-fascism in a Global Perspective: Transnational networks, exile communities, and radical internationalism* (Routledge, 2020). He is co-editor of Brill's journal, *Fascism: Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies,* and editor of Routledge's series on Fascism and the Far Right.

Gianfranco Cresciani is a Historical Consultant at the Altreitalie Scientific Committee. Born in Trieste, he emigrated to Australia in 1962. He has conducted research on the history of Italian migration to Australia since 1971. He is the author of many books on Italian culture, includ-

ing *Fascism, Anti-Fascism and Italians in Australia 1922–1945* (Australian National University Press, 1980). He was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of New South Wales in 2005.

Vida Rožac Darovec (b. 1965) is a researcher at the Koper Science and Research Center, at the Institute of Historical Studies. She has participated in several research projects of contemporary history, the first dealing with oral history, and more recently one focused on collective memory along the Slovenian border. She is on the editorial board of the scientific journals *Acta Histriae* and *Annales for Istrian and Mediterranean Studies,* serving also as chief of University Publishing house Annales in the year 2008–2012. She has published articles in *Acta Histriae* and contributed a chapter to Borut Klabjan, ed., *Borderlands of memory: Adriatic and Central European perspectives* (Peter Lang, 2019).

Christine M. Hassenstab is a retired public defender, who also worked as an Adviser in the EU Grants Office at the Norwegian University of Science & Technology (NTNU), in Trondheim, Norway. She is the author, among other works, of *Body Law and the Body of Law: A Comparative Study of Social Norm Inclusion in Norwegian and American Laws* (De Gruyter, 2015). She is co-editor (with Sabrina P. Ramet) of four volumes, most recently of *Civic and Uncivic Values in the Czech Republic: Value Transformation, Politics, Education, and Gender Equality* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2022). She earned her Ph.D. in Sociology at NTNU in 2010.

Anton Hruboň is an associate professor of political sciences at the Faculty of Political Science and International Relations/Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica. He earned his PhD in Slovak History in 2015. In his research he focuses on political history of Slovakia and Central Europe in the 20th Century with emphasis on comparative study of fascism, political radicalism, and nationalism. He has published 8 academic monographs and more than 70 research articles in Slovakia, Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Belarus, and Netherlands. His key works include a biography *Alexander Mach: Radikál z povolania* [*Alexander Mach: A Career Radical*, 2018] and a recent collective monograph *Fašizmus náš slovenský: Korene, podoby a reflexie fašizmu na Slovensku (1919–1945)* [*Our Slovak Fascism: Roots, Faces and Reflections of Fascism in Slovakia (1919–1945)*, 2021].

Pontus Järvstad is a Ph.D. student in history at the University of Iceland, working on a transnational study of post-war anti-fascism in the Nordic countries. He has co-authored a chapter about Icelandic anti-fascism in the 1930s in the anthology *Anti-fascism in the Nordic Countries: New Perspectives, Comparisons and Transnational Connections* (Routledge, 2019).

Jesper Jørgensen is researcher and archivist at The Workers Museum & The Labour Movement's Library and Archives in Copenhagen. He earned his M.A. in history and anthropology from Aarhus University in 2003 and co-author (with Morten Møller and Niels Erik Rosenfeldt) of *Den røde underverden. Hemmelig kommunistisk virksomhed i Skandinavien mellem to verdenskrige* [The Red Underworld. Secret Communist Activities in Scandinavia between Two World Wars] (Gyldendal 2019).

Borut Klabjan is a historian, having earned his Ph.D. in 2007 at the University of Ljubljana. He is the Principal Research Fellow at the Science and Research Centre in Koper and teaches as Associate Professor at the Universities of Ljubljana and Maribor. He is dealing with themes of political and cultural history in nineteenth and twentieth century Europe and his most recent edited volume, *Borderlands of Memory. Adriatic and Central European Perspectives,* was published by Peter Lang in 2018.

Vesna Mikolič, professor and scientific counsellor of linguistics at the Science and Research Centre of Koper (Slovenia) and at the University of Trieste (Italy), earned her Ph.D. in 2003 at the University of Ljubljana. Her research focuses on intercultural pragmatics, nonviolent communication, and semantics. She is the author of more than 500 publications, including the monograph *Ethnic Identity and Intercultural Awareness in Modern Language Teaching* (Nova Science Publishers, 2016).

Egon Pelikan obtained his Ph.D. from the University of Ljubljana Faculty of Arts in 1998. He is a member of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and head of the Institute for Historical Studies at the Science and Research Centre, Koper. Pelikan has authored several monographs on ideologies, Fascism, and anti-Fascism, most notably *L'Attività clandestina del clero sloveno durante il fascismo* (KAPPA VU, 2011) and *Hitler and Mussolini in Churches* (Peter Lang, 2020).

Jože Pirjevec is full member of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts and scientific counsellor at the Science and Research Centre, Koper (Slovenia). He studied at the Universities of Trieste, Scuola Normale di Pisa, and the Diplomatische Akademie, Vienna, earning his Ph.D. at the University of Ljubljana. The main stages of his academic carreer were: Pisa, Padua, Trieste, and Koper. His ten monographs, some of them translated into foreign languages, deal mostly with contemporatry history. His most recent book, published in 2020, provides a comprehensive description of the Partisan movement in occupied Yugoslavia during World War Two.

Catherine Plum, professor of history at Western New England University, received her Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2005. Her monograph *Antifascism after Hitler: East German Youth and Socialist Memory, 1949–1989* (Routledge 2015) investigates antifascist stories and memory sites central to formal and informal youth education as well as the role of adult memory intermediaties and youth reception. She also explored the communist summer camp experience and nonconformity in a volume she co-edited on socialist leisure: *Socialist Escapes: Breaking Away from Ideology and Everyday Routine in Eastern Europe, 1945–1989* (Berghahn, 2013).

Sabrina P. Ramet is a Professor Emerita at the Norwegian University of Science & Technology (NTNU). She earned her Ph.D. in Political Science at UCLA in 1981. She has conducted more than 400 research interviews in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Macedonia, and the United States. She is the author of 16 scholarly books, including *Alternatives to Democracy in Twentieth-Century Europe: Collectivist Visions of Modernity* (Central European University Press, 2019) and *East Central Europe and Communism: Politics, Culture, and Society, 1943–1991* (Routledge, 2023). She is also the editor or co-editor of 39 previous books, including *Central and Southeast European Politics since 1989,* 2nd ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2019).

Božo Repe (1956) is a Full Professor of Contemporary History at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana. He earned his doctorate in 1991 at the University Ljubljana. He is the author or co-author of 33 monographs, and more than 40 original scientific articles. Among the monographs is *Razko-*

sana Slovenija. Okupacijske meje med drugo svetovno vojno [Slovenia dismembered. Occupation borders during World War Two], co-authored with Kornelija Ajlec (Znanstvena založba FF Ljubljana 2021). His most recent book chapter is "Wege der Slowenen nach Mauthausen", in *Deportiert nach Mauthausen,* Vol. 2 of *Europa in Mauthausen,* ed. Alexander Prenninger (Vienna, Cologne, and Weimar: Böhlau, 2021), 245–67.

Marek Syrný is an associate professor of history at the Faculty of Arts/ Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica. He earned his Ph.D. in Slovak History in 2009. In his research he focuses on political history of Slovakia and Czechoslovakia from 1918 to 1948 with special focus on anti-fascism, wartime resistance and post-1948 exile from Czechoslovakia. He is an author of monographs *Slovenskí demokrati '44-48* [*Slovak Democrats '44-48*, published 2010] and *Slovenskí komunisti v rokoch 1939–1944* [*Slovak Communists in 1939-1944*, published 2013] and editor of numerous conference proceedings.

Klaus Tragbar is Professor of History of Architecture and Preservation of Monuments at the University of Innsbruck and Head of the Institute of Theory and History of Architecture. He earned his doctorate in 1997 at the University of Technology of Darmstadt. He researches on architectural history of medieval and 20th century, especially on architecture within Fascism in Italy, and conducts building research projects on St Peter in Salzburg and on the baptistery in Aquileia. His most recent publications include an article on "Capri, il Mediterraneo e la modernità," in *Viaggi e Viste. Mediterraneo e Modernità* [Momenti di Architettura Moderna], ed. Stamatina Kousidi (Altralinea 2020), 81–93) and a conference volume on *The Multiple Modernity* (Deutscher Kunstverlag 2021).

Marta Verginella is the principal investigator on the ERC Advanced Grant project EIRENE and a full-time professor at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, teaching Theory of History at the Department of History. She earned her doctorate in History at the University of Ljubljana in 1995. She has published numerous monographs and articles on the subject of border studies, memory studies, oral history, and nineteenth-century history. She is the author or co-author of 17 books, including *Donne e confini* (Roma: Manifestolibri 2021) and *La guerra di Bruno: l'identità di confine di un antieroe triestino e sloveno* (Roma: Donzelli, 2015).

For Further Reading

Fascism – comparative & theoretical

Bauerkämper, Arnd, and Grzegorz Rossolinksi-Liebe, eds. *Fascism without Borders: Transnational Connections and Co-operation between Movements and Regimes in Europe from 1918 to 1945*. Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2017.

Blinkhorn, Martin. *Fascists and the Right in Europe*. Harlow: Longman, 2000.

Bosworth, Richard, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Fascism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Copsey, Nigel. *Contemporary British Fascism: The British National Party and the Quest for Legitimacy,* 2nd ed. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Costa Pinto, António, and Aristotle Kallis, eds. *Rethinking Fascism and Dictatorship in Europe*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Eatwell, Roger. *Fascism: A History*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1995.

Gentile, Emilio. "Fascism, totalitarianism and political religion: definitions and critical reflections of an interpretation." *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions,* Vol. 5, Issue 3 (2004).

Griffin, Roger. *Fascism: A Quick Immersion*. New York: Tibidabo Publishing, 2020.

———. *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

———. "The Palingenetic Political Community: Rethinking the Legitimation of Totalitarian Regimes in Interwar Europe." *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions,* Vol. 3, No. 3 Winter 2002.

———, ed. *Fascism*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

———, ed. *International Fascism: Theories, Causes and the New Consensus*. London: Arnold, 1998.

Iordachi, Constantin, ed. *Comparative Fascist Studies: New Perspectives*. London and New York: Routledge, 2010.

Kallis, Aristotle A., ed. *The Fascism Reader.* Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2003.

Ledeen, Michael A. "Renzo de Felice and the Controversy over Italian Fascism." *Journal of Contemporary History,* Vol. 11, No. 4 (October 1976).

Mann, Michael. *Fascists*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Passmore, Kevin. *Fascism – A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Paxton, Robert A. *The Anatomy of Fascism*. New York: Vintage Books, 2004.

Payne, Stanley. *Fascism: Definition and Comparison*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980.

———. *A History of Fascism, 1914–1945*. London: UCL Press, 1995.

Pellicani, Luciano. "Fascism, Capitalism, Modernity." *European Journal of Political Theory,* Vol. 11, No. 4 (October 2012).

Ramet, Sabrina P. *Alternatives to Democracy in Twentieth-Century Europe: Collectivist Visions of Modernity*. Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2019.

Renton, David. *Fascism: Theory and Practice*. London: Pluto Press, 1999.

Roberts, David. *Fascist Interactions: Proposals for a New Approach to Fascism and its Era*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2016.

Sternhell, Zeev, with Mario Sznajder and Maia Asheri. *The Birth of Fascist Ideology,* trans. from French by David Maisel. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994.

Italian fascism

Blinkhorn, Martin. *Mussolini and Fascist Italy,* 3rd ed. London and New York: Routledge, 2007.

Bosworth, R. J. B. *The Italian Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives in the Interpretation of Mussolini and Fascism*. London: Arnold, 1998.

———. *Mussolini and the Eclipse of Italian Fascism: From Dictatorship to Populism*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2021.

———. *Mussolini's Italy: Life under the Dictatorship, 1915–1945*. New York: Penguin Press, 2006.

De Grazia, Victoria. *How Fascism Ruled Women: Italy, 1922–1945.* Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992.

Gregor, A. James. *Mussolini's Intellectuals: Fascist Social and Political Thought.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006.

Kallis, Aristotle. *The Third Rome, 1922–1943: The Making of the Fascist Capital.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Moseley, Ray. *Mussolini: The Last 600 Days of Il Duce.* Dallas: Taylor Trade Publishing, 2004.

Smith, Denis Mack. *Mussolini: A Biography.* London: Phoenix Press, 2001.

Stone, Maria. *The Patron State: Culture and Politics in Fascist Italy.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998.

Wiskemann, Elizabeth. *Fascism in Italy: Its Development and Influence,* 2nd ed. London: Macmillan, 1970.

Nazi Germany

Bergen, Doris L. *Twisted Cross: The German Christian Movement in the Third Reich.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.

Browning, Christopher R., with contributions by Jürgen Matthäus. *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939 – March 1942.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004.

Evans, Richard J. *The Coming of the Third Reich.* New York: Penguin Books, 2013.

Kater, Michael H. *Composers of the Nazi Era: Eight Portraits.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Kershaw, Ian. *Hitler.* London: Penguin Books, 2008.

Mazower, Mark. *Hitler's Empire: Nazi Rule in Occupied Europe.* London: Penguin Books, 2008.

Noakes, Jeremy, ed. *Nazism 1919–1945, Vol. 4: The German Home Front in World War II – A Documentary Reader.* Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1998.

Schleunes, Karl A. *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz: Nazi Policy toward German Jews 1933–1939.* Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1970.

Fascist states in southeastern Europe & the nordic countries

Dahl, Hans Frederik. *Quisling: A Study in Treachery,* trans. from Norwegian by Anne-Marie Stanton. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Hayes, Paul M. *Quisling: The Career and Political Ideas of Vidkun Quisling, 1887–1945*. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1972.

Hoidal, Oddvar K. *Quisling: A Study in Treason*. Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1989.

Karcher, Nicola and Markus Lundström, eds. *Nordic Fascism: Fragments of an Entangled History*. London & New York: Routledge, 2022.

Prusin, Alexander. *Serbia under the Swastika: A World War II Occupation*. Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2017.

Ramet, Sabrina P., ed. *The Independent State of Croatia, 1941–45*. London & New York: Routledge, 2007.

Ramet, Sabrina P., and Ola Listhaug, eds. *Serbia and the Serbs in World War Two*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Yeomans, Rory. *Visions of Annihilation: The Ustasha Regime and the Cultural Politics of Fascism, 1941–1945*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013.

Anti-fascism

Barker, Jennifer Lynde. *The Aesthetics of Antifascist Film*. London and New York: Routledge, 2013.

Beetham, David. *Marxists in the Face of Fascism*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983.

Braskén, Kasper, David Featherstone, and Nigel Copsey, eds. *Anti-Fascism in a Global Perspective: Transnational Networks, Exile Communities, and Radical International*. London and New York: Routledge, 2021.

Braskén, Kasper, Nigel Copsey, and Johan A. Lundin, eds. *Anti-fascism in the Nordic Countries: New Perspectives, Comparisons, and Transnational Connections*. London and New York: Routledge, 2019.

Ceplair, Larry. *Under the Shadow of War: Fascism, Anti-Fascism, and Marxists, 1918–1939*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1987.

Copsey, Nigel. *Anti-Fascism in Britain,* 2nd ed. London and New York: Routledge, 2016.

Copsey, Nigel, and Andrzej Olechnowicz, eds. *Varieties of Anti-Fascism: Britain in the Inter-War Period*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Fitch, Mattie, Michael Ortiz, and Nick Underwood. "Editorial Introduction: The Global Cultures of Antifascism, 1921–2020." *Fascism,* Vol. 9 (2020).

Garcia, Hugo, Mercedes Yusta, Xavier Tabet, and Cristina Clímaco, eds. *Rethinking Antifascism: History, Memory and Politics, 1922 to the Present*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2016.

Horn, Gerd-Rainer, *European Socialists Respond to Fascism: Ideology, Activism and Contingency in the 1930s.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Jackson, Julian. *The Popular Front in France: Defending Democracy, 1934–38.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Kirk, Tim, and McElligott, Anthony, eds. *Opposing Fascism: Community, Authority and Resistance in Europe.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Krammer, Arnold. "The Cult of the Spanish Civil War in East Germany." *Journal of Contemporary History,* Vol. 39, No. 4 (2008).

Marco, Jorge. *Guerrilleros & Neighbours in Arms: Identities & Cultures of Anti-Fascist Resistance in Spain.* Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2016.

McLellan, Josie. *Antifascism and Memory in East Germany: Remembering the International Brigades, 1945–1989.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004.

Michielsen, Edwin. "Fighting Fascism with 'Verbal Bullets': Kaji Wataru and the Antifascist Struggle in Wartime East Asia." *Fascism,* Vol. 9 (2020).

Plum, Catherine. *Antifascism After Hitler: East German Youth and Socialist Memory, 1949–1989.* London and New York: Routledge, 2015.

Pugliese, Stanislao, ed. *Fascism, Anti-Fascism and the Resistance in Italy: 1919 to the Present.* Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003.

———, ed. *Italian Fascism and Antifascism: A Critical Anthology.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001.

Renton, Dave. *This Rough Game: Fascism and Anti-fascism.* Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2001.

Smith, Evan. *No Platform: A History of Anti-Fascism, Universities and the Limits of Free Speech.* London and New York: Routledge, 2020.

Index of Names

"Timely and original, this edited volume brings together a combination of thoughtful and well-crafted articles. Many of the case studies and micro-histories of Italy, Slovenia, Germany, Denmark, Slovakia, and Finland cast new light on anti-fascism's important role. This volume is essential reading for all scholars who care about the past and the future of Central Europe."

CATHIE CARMICHAEL, Professor of European History at the University of East Anglia

"At a time when 'fascism' and 'anti-fascism' have too often been flung around like weapons in a children's wet sponge fighting using filthy water, this extraordinarily comprehensive book is a welcome addition to the small number of reliable sources about the modern fight against the extreme right available to serious academics and political journalists. With an unusual degree of conceptual sophistication in the way it addresses the rich theme of anti-fascism, it not only offers a uniquely wide coverage of its many interwar manifestations, but also takes a hard look at its complex post-war evolutions and permutations. Nor does it neglect the special place in the struggle against fascism occupied by women and communists in the defense of their own causes. *Anti-Fascism in European History* sets a new benchmark for genuinely comparative and collaborative politico-historical studies purged of any trace of spurious distinctions between the center and the periphery, or the political, the social and the historical."

ROGER GRIFFIN, Emeritus Professor, Oxford Brookes University

About the Editors

JOŽE PIRJEVEC is a Principal Research Associate at the Science and Research Centre in Koper, Slovenia, and a Full Member of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

EGON PELIKAN is a full professor and head of the Institute of Historical Studies of the Science and Research Centre in Koper, Slovenia.

SABRINA P. RAMET is a professor of political science at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Trondheim, Norway. She is also a member of the Royal Norwegian Society of Sciences and Letters, a member of the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters, and a Research Associate of the Science and Research Center in Koper, Slovenia.

CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY PRESS
BUDAPEST – VIENNA – NEW YORK
Sales and information: ceupress@press.ceu.edu
Website: http://www.ceupress.com

ISBN 978-963-386-657-3

Series design by Sebastian Stachowski