Martin Kristoffer Hamre
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A History of Fascist Internationalism in the 1930s

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List of Abbreviations

AA	Auswärtiges Amt (German Foreign Ministry)
ACA	Army Comrades Association (Irish organization)
AfD	Alternative für Deutschland (Alternative for Germany)
AIB	Ação Integralista Brasileira (Brazilian Integralist Action)
BUF	British Union of Fascists
CAUR	Comitati d'Azione per l'Universalità di Roma (Action Committees for the Universality of Rome, Italian organization)
CINEF	Centre international d'étude sur le fascisme (International Centre of Fascist Studies, Italo-Swiss organization)
CPAC	Conservative Political Action Conference
DNSAP	Danmarks Naionalsocialistiske Arbejderparti (National Socialist Workers' Party of Denmark)
DNVP	Deutschnationale Volkspartei (German National People's Party)
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community (European organization)
EIA	Entente Internationale Anticommuniste (International Anticommunist Entente, organization based in Switzerland)
EP	European Parliament
ESB	Europäische soziale Bewegung (European Social Movement)
EU	European Union
FdI	Fratelli d'Italia (Brothers of Italy, Italian party)
FE de las JONS	Falange Española de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista (Spanish Falange of the Councils of the National Syndicalist Offensive)
FE	Falange Española (Spanish Phalanx)
FFS	Fédération Fasciste Suisse (The Swiss Fascist Federation)
FL	Fedrelandslaget (Fatherland League, Norwegian party)
FONS	Friends of National Spain (British lobby group)
Gestapo	Geheime Staatspolizei (German Secret State Police)
IAdN	Internationale Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Nationalisten (International Action of Nationalists, or Nationalist International, German organization)
IFG	Irish Friends of Germany
IFL	Imperial Fascist League (British movement)
IFTU	International Federation of Trade Unions
IKL	Isänmaallinen kansanliike (Patriotic People's Movement, Finish party)
ILO	International Labour Organization
IRA	Irish Republican Army (Irish paramilitary organization)
KdF	Kraft durch Freude (Strength through joy, German leisure organization)
LNB	Légion Nationale Belge (Belgian National League)
LSI	Labour and Socialist International
MAGA	Make America Great Again (US American movement)
MF	Mouvement Franciste (Francist Movement, French party)
MSI	Movimento Sociale Italiano (Italian Social Movement)
NatCon	National Conservatism Conference
NCP	National Corporate Party (Irish party)
NOF	Národní obec fašistická (National Fascist Community, Czechoslovak party)

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NPD	Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (National Democratic Party of Germany)
NS	Nasjonal Samling (National Unity, Norwegian party)
NSAP	Nationalsocialistiska Arbetarepartiet (National Socialist Workers' Party, Swedish party)
NSB	Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging in Nederland (National Socialist Movement in the Netherlands)
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (National Socialist German Workers' Party)
NSDAP-N	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei Nordschleswig (National Socialist Workers' Party of North Schleswig)
PFA	Partido Fascista Argentino (Argentine Fascist Party)
PNF	Partito Nazionale Fascista (National Fascist Party, Italy)
RFU	Russian Fascist Union (Russian émigré movement based in Manchukuo)
RMVP	Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda (German Reich Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda)
RN	Rassemblement National (National Rally, French party)
RSHA	Reichssicherheitshauptamt (Reich Security Main Office)
SA	Sturmabteilung (Storm Troopers, German paramilitary organization)
SD	Sicherheitsdienst (Intelligence service of the German SS)
SNF	Sveriges Nationella Förbund (National League of Sweden)
SNSP	Svenska Nationalsocialistiska Partiet (Swedish National Socialist Party)
SNU	Sveriges Nationella Ungdomsförbund (National Youth League of Sweden)
SS	Schutzstaffel (Protection Squadron, German paramilitary organization)
SSS	Svensk Socialistisk Samling (Swedish Socialist Gathering)
UMON	Union Universitaire Mondiale d'Ordre Nouveau (World University Union for the New Order, Italo-Belgian organization)

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Introduction: Rethinking Fascist Internationalism in the 1930s

In the first half of the 1930s, after the consolidation of Benito Mussolini's Fascist regime in Italy and during the rise of German Nazism under Adolf Hitler, a heterogenous group of European men with different political backgrounds, professions, and agendas came to analogical convictions.[1] The Swiss army officer Arthur Fonjallaz dreamed of a powerful Fascist International to oppose the Communist International, arguing in his party newspaper that "All nationalists are our friends! All internationalists are our enemies!"[2] In Germany, the legal scholar Hans Keller claimed that "nationalists of all countries" were united in their confidence that "the nationalism of the twentieth century will renew Europe" and establish a more just and peaceful international order.[3] The former Norwegian defense minister and fascist leader Vidkun Quisling expressed the desire to "create a direct and honest cooperation between all young and healthy national movements" on the "ruins of the League of Nations" to combat "the monstrous alliance between the international financial world, the Marxist internationals and the world's hidden forces".[4] According to the Austro-Hungarian publicists Georg de Pottere, "supranational cooperation" among nationalist forces would not be "a betrayal of nationalism" but rather be the "only and last resort to protect all peoples", and in particular the "Arian race" and Christian culture, from Judaism.[5] The Italian lawyer Eugenio Coselschi was one of the first to put such visions of international cooperation among ultranationalist forces into practice when he invited numerous newly formed movements, parties, and individuals to the world's first international fascist conference, held in Montreux, Switzerland, on December 16–17, 1934.

The Montreux Congress was an ambitious attempt to unite more than a dozen European ultranationalist movements with idiosyncratic programs under Italian leadership, mimicking the unification of communist parties in the Soviet-led Com-

1 In this book, 'Fascism' and 'Fascist' written with a capitalized 'F' refer to the Italian movement and regime headed by Benito Mussolini, whereas 'fascism' and 'fascist' with a lower-case 'f' refer to the generic phenomenon, encompassing other actors, movements, and regimes in Europe and beyond.

2 "Unser Bundesführer eine im gesamten Ausland anerkannte Persönlichkeit", *Der Schweizer Fascist,* June 27, 1935. Unless otherwise stated, all translations from German and other languages into English in this book are by the author.

3 Hans Keller, *Das Dritte Europa* (Zurich: Batschari, 1935), 34.

4 "Et nytt Verdensforbund", *Nasjonal Samling,* September 19, 1935.

5 Egon van Winghene (pseudonym for Georg de Pottere), *Arische Rasse, Christliche Kultur und das Judenproblem* (Erfurt: U. Bodung-Verlag, 1931), 59.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111469799-001

munist International. Strikingly, Nazi Germany, at that point considered Fascist Italy's ideological rival, was not invited, causing surprise and annoyance among some of the participants with a particularly antisemitic, pro-German attitude. One of them was Frits Clausen, the leader of a small Danish Nazi party, who was shocked by "some of the other delegates' wish and will to bow under Roman hegemony".[6] He decided never to adhere to "Southern" Italian leadership, and together, with the Norwegian delegate Vidkun Quisling, Clausen created a schism at the congress between a Roman-Latin and a Nordic-Germanophile camp. The delegates also strongly disagreed on whether antisemitism should become an ideological cornerstone of the planned Fascist International, exemplifying divergent objectives and tensions when ultranationalists from various countries with competing interests and different ideological beliefs attempted to unite across borders.

This monograph analyzes the aspirations and challenges of international cooperation in the 1930s among a wide range of actors, movements, parties, organizations, think tanks, and regimes, subsumed under the rubric of *fascist internationalism*. This umbrella term encompasses various historical phenomena, namely theoretical concepts and ideas, concrete visions, and legitimization strategies of international cooperation among fascist, ultranationalist, and antisemitic actors from different countries, as well as factual connections, networking processes, and cooperative activities across borders. The book focuses on the empirical study of international organizations dominated by Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, as well as smaller fascist movements from northwestern Europe, and thus necessarily constitutes *a* history and not *the* history of fascist internationalism, leaving gaps regarding, for instance, southern and eastern Europe and global forms of fascism outside Europe.

The core theme of this book is the evident tension between fascist ultranationalism and internationalism. On the one hand, fascist movements and regimes were characterized by an ultranationalist ideology, often based on ideas of national superiority and 'natural hierarchies' between peoples, racism, and some form of territorial or ideological expansionism. Numerous scholars therefore consider extreme, hyper-, or ultranationalism a core element of fascism, linked to ambitions of hegemonic power, imperial aggression, and chauvinism.[7] On the other hand, fascists pursued international cooperation with ideologically affiliated partners from abroad to promote and achieve their political goals and combat their common enemies. Due to

6 Cited in John T. Lauridsen, "*Føreren har ordet!": Frits Clausen om sig selv og DNSAP* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanums Forlag, 2003), 462.

7 E.g. Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism: 1914-1945* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1995), 7; Philip Morgan, *Fascism in Europe, 1919–1945* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 159–160; Michael Mann, *Fascists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 13–14; Roger Griffin, *Fascism: An Introduction to Comparative Fascist Studies* (Newark: Polity Press, 2018), 40–45.

this apparent tension, contemporary observers and opponents often ridiculed appearances of fascist internationalism. This is demonstrated by a caricature about the Montreux Congress (see Figure 1), published by the French anti-fascist cartoonist Robert Fuzier in the socialist newspaper *Le Populair*e in December 1934. The cartoon depicts four ridiculous-looking men in uniforms, all giving the fascist salute with their mouths wide open. Next to an Italian Blackshirt (*squadristi*, Fascist Italy's all-volunteer militia) is a French fascist with a stereotypical moustache and a Nazi with a swastika wristband (although Germans were not present at the conference). The core paradox of fascist internationalism is outlined in the caption of Fuzier's cartoon. "We, NATIONALISTS of all countries, gathered in the INTERNATIONAL Congress, swear to fight against the scandalous INTERNATIONALIST sentiments of the workers!"[8]



Figure 1: Robert Fuzier, "A Montreux", *Le Populaire. Organ du Parti Socialiste*, December 18, 1934. BnF.

Thus, it seemed obvious to contemporary observers and an older generation of historians alike that fascists could not cooperate internationally beyond purely strategic, propagandistic, and power-political reasons, presenting fascism primar-

8 A Montreux', *Le Populaire. Organ du Parti Socialiste*, December 18, 1934.

ily as "the antithesis of internationalism".[9] For instance, Paul E. Gottfried argues that the "failure of fascist internationalism" seemed rooted in the "ineluctably nationalist character of fascism".[10] Likewise, studies of right-wing intellectualism emphasize fascism's "rejection of universalism" and "opposition to internationalism in favor of relativist nationalism".[11] While taking this tension between national and international interests as its starting point, this monograph moves beyond these older understandings of internationalism and fascism as a mere "contradiction in terms".[12]

Newer research on the complex interplay between internationalism and nationalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries demonstrates that both phenomena were mutual prerequisites, intertwined historical phenomena, and far more than antonyms.[13] Transnational studies on fascism, in particular, emphasize that cross-border relations and nationalist delimitation were "not only contradictory but also complementary and even dialectical".[14] Accordingly, the book explores how European fascist organizations and movements navigated between ultranationalism and internationalism in theory and practice while building on a burgeoning body of research on fascist internationalism and international fascism.[15] Contributing to these newer insights, this monograph proposes an alterna-

9 Jerzy W. Borejsza, "Die Rivalität zwischen Faschismus und Nationalsozialismus in Ostmitteleuropa", *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 29.4 (1981): 579–614, 607.

10 Paul Edward Gottfried, *Fascism: The Career of a Concept* (Chicago: NIU Press DeKalb, 2016), 128.

11 Sarah E. Shurts, *Resentment and the Right: French Intellectual Identity Reimagined, 1898–2000* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2017), 307.

12 Walter Laqueur, *Fascism: Past, Present, Future* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 218.

13 See, among others, Daniel Laqua, ed., *Internationalism Reconfigured: Transnational Ideas and Movements between the World Wars* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011); Glenda Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin, eds., *Internationalisms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Pasi Ihalainen and Antero Holmila, eds., *Nationalism and Internationalism Intertwined: A European History of Concepts* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2022).

14 Arnd Bauerkämper, "Ambiguities of Transnationalism: Fascism in Europe between Pan-Europeanism and Ultra-Nationalism, 1919-39", *German Historical Institute London Bulletin* 29.2 (2007): 43–44.

15 For two recent literature overviews on fascist internationalism, see Kye J. Allen, "Why Is There No History of Fascist International Thought?", *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 51.3 (2023): 758–784; Martin Kristoffer Hamre, Sabrina Proschmann, Frederik Forrai Ørskov, "Editorial Introduction. Approaches to Transnational and International Fascism: Actors, Networks, and Ideas, 1919–1945", *Fascism. Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 13.1 (2024): 1–12. On fascist internationalism and international fascism, see, among others, Michael Arthur Ledeen, *Universal Fascism: The Theory and Practice of the Fascist International, 1928-1936* (New York: Howard Fertig Pub, 1973); Hans Werner Neulen, *Eurofaschismus und der Zweite Weltkrieg*: *Europas verratene Söhne* (Munich: Universitas-Verlag, 1980); Roger Griffin, "Europe for the Europeans: Fascist Myths of the European

tive reading of fascist internationalism as a counter-reaction to competing forms of internationalism.

Several research questions arise from the core issue of the intricate interplay between nationalism and internationalism when analyzing the fascists' own conceptualizations and practices of international cooperation: which actors, movements, parties, and regimes conceptualized, propagated, and pursued fascist internationalism for what reasons? Which notions fueled and legitimized international cooperation among fascists? How was fascist internationalism organized in practice? And finally, which ideological and practical challenges and limitations occurred when fascists from different countries attempted to cooperate internationally? Accordingly, this monograph is not offering a story of uncontested success; quite the contrary. It discusses numerous cases when theory and practice, ideological vision and material reality, eager enthusiasms and opportunistic ambiguity clashed in the historical messiness of cooperation between ultranationalists from various countries.

The book offers two original foci when addressing these questions, based on a new set of empirical sources in multiple languages. First, in contrast to previous studies on fascist internationalism that mainly focused on either Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, or other individual national case studies, the monograph provides an entangled, transnational, and comparative history of four organizations emanating from the two fascist regimes in Italy and Germany (see Table 1) and their interactions with other actors and movements from abroad. The book revisits previously

New Order 1922–1992," in *A Fascist Century: Essays by Roger Griffin*, ed. Matthew Feldman (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2008), 132–181; Jens Steffek, "Fascist Internationalism," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 44.1 (2015): 3–22; Eric S. Roubinek, "A 'Fascist' Colonialism? German National Socialist and Italian Fascist Colonial Cooperation, 1936–1943," in *Nazi Germany and Southern Europe, 1933–1945: Science, Culture and Politics* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016) 183–197; Madeleine Herren, "Fascist Internationalism," in *Internationalisms: A Twentieth-Century History*, eds. Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 191–212; Benjamin G. Martin, "International Legal Cooperation in the Nazi-Fascist New Order," *International Politics* 55 (2018): 870–887; Sandrine Kott and Kiran Klaus Patel, "Fascist Internationalism: Nazi Social Policy as an Imperial Project – An Introduction", in Sandrine Kott and Kiran Klaus Patel, eds., *Nazism Across Borders: The Social Policies of the Third Reich and Their Global Appeal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 1–28; Daniel Hedinger, *Die Achse: Berlin, Rom, Tokio* (Munich: C.H.Beck, 2021); Sabrina Proschmann, *Creating the 'New Europe' through Postal Services: Setting Postal Standards during World War II* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2022); Celestine S. Kunkeler and Martin Kristoffer Hamre, "Conceptions and Practices of International Fascism in Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands, 1930–1940," *Journal of Contemporary History* 57.1 (2022): 45–67; Frederik Forrai Ørskov, "Three Settings for Nordic-German Cultural Relations: Nordic Writers, the Deutsch-Nordische Schriftstellerhaus, and National Socialist Internationalism," *Diplomatica: A Journal of Diplomacy and Society* 5.2 (2023): 263–281; Martin Kristoffer Hamre, "'Nationalists of All Countries, Unite!': Hans Keller and Nazi Internationalism in the 1930s", *Contemporary European History* 33.2 (2024): 477–496.

studied organizations such as the host of the Montreux Congress, the Italian Action Committees for the Universality of Rome (*Comitati d'Azione per l'Universalità di Roma*, CAUR), as well as the German antisemitic World-Service (*Welt-Dienst*, WD) with a new, transnational lens. It also examines hitherto neglected agencies such as the International Centre of Fascist Studies (*Centre international d'études sur le fascisme*, CINEF) and the International Action of Nationalists (*Internationale Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Nationalisten*, IAdN), also known as the Nationalist International. The entangled approach, encompassing motives, aspirations, and expectations of actors from different countries when coming together in these organizations, grasps transnational networking processes and explores how minor fascist movements comprehended, contested, and utilized ideas propagated by Italian and German agencies. This provides insight into the international circulation of fascist ideology beyond simplified center-periphery models and helps to explain the European-wide lure of fascism beyond Mussolini's and Hitler's regimes.

Table 1: Agencies of Fascist Internationalism emanating from Italy and Germany.

Abbr.	Name	English translation	Country	Leading figures	Period	Main journal
CAUR	Comitati d'Azione per l'Universalità di Roma	Action Committees for the Universality of Rome	Italy	Eugenio Coselschi (1888–1969)	1933–1939	*Roma Universa*
CINEF	Centre International d'Études Fascistes	International Centre of Fascist Studies	Switzerland (but funded by Italy)	Herman de Vries de Heekelingen (1880–1942), James Strachey Barnes (1890–1955)	1927–1930	*A Survey of Fascism*
IAdN	Internationale Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Nationalisten	Nationalist International, International Action of Nationalists	Germany	Hans Keller (1908–1970)	1934–1941	
WD	Welt-Dienst	World-Service	Germany	Ulrich Fleischhauer (1876–1960)	1933–1945	*Welt-Dienst*

Second, the study provides the first comprehensive analysis of fascist internationalism as it was theorized and practiced by seven fascist movements in northwestern Europe in the 1930s: the National Unity (*Nasjonal Samling*, NS) from Norway, the National League of Sweden (*Sveriges Nationella Förbund*, SNF), the National Socialist Workers' Party of Denmark (*Danmarks Naionalsocialistiske Arbejderparti*, DNSAP), the Imperial Fascist League (IFL) from Britain, the so-called Irish Blueshirts from Ireland, as well as the Swiss Fascist Federation (*Fédération Fasciste Suisse*, FFS) and the National Front (*Nationale Front*, NF) from Switzerland (see Table 2). In this broadly defined geographical region of northwestern Europe that includes Switzerland (normally considered as part of central Europe), fascism remained marginal and excluded from political power throughout the 1930s (except Nazi Germany). This enables insights into the functions and legitimization of fascist internationalism from a 'peripheral' perspective. I argue that the marginality of these parties fueled visions of fascism as an international phenomenon and fostered cooperation across borders, as smaller movements propagandistically inflated their importance by invoking a broader fascist 'party family' when linking themselves to political events, parties, and regimes abroad, and thus to the so-called *fascist era* in the first half of the twentieth century.[16]

The fascist era between the two world wars (1919–1939) has been characterized as a revolt against internationalist processes, an age of anti-globalism reversing political liberalization, and a global assault on democracy.[17] At the same time, this "age of nationalism" was also a heyday of internationalism.[18] When European fascism emerged in the interwar period, it was born into a world predominantly shaped by the new international order established at Versailles in the aftermath of the First World War.[19] The League of Nations (1920–1946) embodied this so-

16 This builds on a novel strand of research that pays specific attention to smaller movements 'from the margins' and 'peripheral' regions while still posing broader questions about the nature of fascism. See, for instance, Raul Cârstocea, "Approaching Generic Fascism from the Margins: On the Uses of 'Palingenesis' in the Romanian Context", edited by Constantin Iordachi and Aristotle Kallis, in *Beyond the Fascist Century. Essays in Honour of Roger Griffin* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 153–176; Celestine S. Kunkeler, *Making Fascism in Sweden and the Netherlands: Myth-Creation and Respectability, 1931-40* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021); Nicola Karcher and Markus Lundström, eds., *Nordic Fascism: Fragments of an Entangled History* (London: Routledge, 2022).

17 Tara Zahra, *Against the World: Anti-Globalism and Mass Politics between the World Wars* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2023); Kurt Weyland, *Assault on Democracy: Communism, Fascism, and Authoritarianism during the Interwar Years* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

18 Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism*.

19 See Jörn Leonhard, ed., *Große Erwartungen - 1919 und die Neuordnung der Welt* (Oldenburg: De Gruyter, 2023); Peter Jackson, William Mulligan, and Glenda Sluga, eds., *Peacemaking and International Order after the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023).

Table 2: Fascist Movements from Northwestern Europe.

Abbr.	Name	English translation	Country	Leading figures	Period	Main party organ
ACA/ NCP	Army Comrades Association, known as the Irish Blueshirts, National Corporative Party		Ireland	Eoin O'Duffy (1892–1944)	1932–1936	*The Blueshirt*, *The Nation*
DNSAP	Danmarks Naionalsocialistiske Arbejderparti	National Socialist Workers' Party of Denmark	Denmark	Cay Lembcke (1885–1965), Frits Clausen (1893–1947)	1930–1945	*National-Socialisten*
FFS	Fédération Fasciste Suisse	Swiss Fascist Federation	Switzerland	Arthur Fonjallaz (1875–1944)	1933–1936	*Der Schweizer Fascist*
IFL	Imperial Fascist League		Britain	Arnold Spencer Leese (1878–1956)	1929–1939	*The Fascist*
NF	Nationale Front	National Front	Switzerland	Rolf Henne (1901–1966), Hans Oehler (1888–1967)	1933–1940	*Die Front*
NS	Nasjonal Samling	National Unity	Norway	Vidkun Quisling (1887–1945), Herman Harris Aall (1871–1957)	1933–1945	*Nasjonal Samling*, *Fritt Folk*
SNU/ SNF	Sveriges Nationella Ungdomsförbund, Sveriges Nationella Förbund	National Youth League of Sweden, National League of Sweden	Sweden	Elmo Lindholm (1897–1978) Rütger Essén (1890–1972), Per Engdahl (1909–1994)	1915–1973	*Nationell Tidning*

called *liberal internationalism*, built upon ideas of nation-states as the central unit of world order, open markets, cooperative security, and the aim to maintain world peace.[20] Simultaneously, the Moscow-led Communist International (1919–1943) advocated for an alternative world order based on the vision of a Bolshevist world revolution, linking and directing multiple communist and socialist movements around the globe.[21] This *communist internationalism* sparked European anticommunists to unite beyond borders in first counter-organizations, such as the International Anticommunist Entente (*Entente Internationale Anticommuniste,* EIA), founded in 1924.[22] The book is situated within this broader history of *nationalist internationalism* in the modern age but focuses on the decade between 1929 and 1939.[23]

Three factors contributed to the rise of a specifically fascist version of internationalism in the 1930s. First, the world's original Fascist movement that coined the term fascism (*fascismo*), the Italian Fasces of Combat (*Fasci Italiani di Combattimento*), was founded by Benito Mussolini and his followers after the First World War in 1919. Reorganized as the National Fascist Party (*Partito Nazionale Fascista*, PNF), Fascism gained governmental power in Italy after the so-called March on Rome in 1922. After the establishment of a Fascist dictatorship in 1925 and a period of consolidation in the late 1920s, Italian intellectuals propagated that Fascism allegedly had 'universal' implications for Europe and the world. Henceforth, the Fascist regime turned to a policy of internationalism in the early 1930s. A second factor was the Great Depression in 1929, which led to mass unemployment and an economic recession in most European countries, challenging the credibility of liberal capitalism, parliamentary democracy, and the existing international order. This benefitted the rise of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*, NSDAP) and led to the foundation of various other fascist parties in Europe, which gained momentum in the 1930s.[24] Third, the coming of the 'Third Reich' from 1933 onward inspired the creation of further parties that become involved in fascist internationalism and pro-

20 See Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

21 See Brigitte Studer, *Reisende der Weltrevolution: Eine Globalgeschichte der Kommunistischen Internationale* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2020).

22 See Markku Ruotsila, "International Anti-Communism before the Cold War: Success and Failure in the Building of a Transnational Right", in *New Perspectives on the Transnational Right,* edited by Martin Durham and Margaret Power (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 11–37.

23 See David Motadel, 'Nationalist Internationalism in the Modern Age', *Contemporary European History* 28.1 (2019): 77–81.

24 See Alexander Nützenadel, 'Fascism and Finance: Economic Populism in Inter-War Europe', *German Historical Institute London Bulletin* 44.1 (2022): 3–27; Morgan, *Fascism in Europe*, 64–118.

vided entirely new conditions for ideas and activities of fascist cooperation across borders. The Second World War fundamentally changed the nature of fascist internationalism because vast parts of Europe were occupied by the Axis powers, constituting a logical historical endpoint for the empirical investigation period of this book, despite important continuities.

In fact, one broader historical relevance of analyzing fascist internationalism in the 1930s lies in acknowledging this period as a critical precondition of collaboration of European fascist movements with the Axis powers in the Second World War (1939–1945), with the Quisling government in Norway serving as the most extreme example. Furthermore, some of the organizations, conferences, and ideas that are examined in the following chapters constitute an important, but often overlooked prehistory to the internationalization and European turn of neofascism in the postwar period. Therefore, Part III of this monograph will foreground hitherto understudied reverberations of fascist internationalism in the form of long-term continuities, legacies, and threads between the 1930s, the Second World War, the postwar period, and the contemporary far right.[25]

The following five sections of this introduction rethink historiographical, conceptual, and methodological dimensions of fascist internationalism in the 1930s, linked to the history of international relations, internationalism and Europeanism, fascism and far-right studies, transnational and global history, and the history of knowledge. The first section returns to the contradictory relationship between fascism and internationalism from a conceptual history point of view, highlighting how key figures avoided these terms and yet engaged with a phenomenon that they found difficult to define. The second section conceptualizes fascist internationalism as a counter-reaction in interplay with other internationalisms in the interwar period. The third part emphasizes the transnational and processual nature of fascism and the malleability of cooperation across borders. The fourth section asks what 'world' was meant when 'fascists of all countries' attempted to unite across borders and explores fascist Europeanism in relation to internationalism. The fifth and final part reassesses the complex center-periphery relations within European fascism, provides a chapter overview, and discusses the source material.

25 This book uses the term fascism to refer to historical phenomena in the period between 1919–1945, neofascism for the postwar period from 1945 onward, and far right when referring to contemporary right-wing phenomena, without implying that all these phenomena were essential the same.

The Anti-internationalist International? Fascist Internationalism as an Oxymoron

During the 1930s, antifascist activists such as the chairman of the American League Against War and Fascism, Harry Ward, repeatedly warned against the creation of a "Fascist International".[26] Contrastingly, fascists rarely used this term or cognates from the same semantic field, such as 'fascist internationalism' or 'nationalist internationalism', to describe their own agendas, because of two contested concepts: fascism and internationalism. Even for Eugenio Coselschi, the Italian agent who sought to unite European fascist movements at the Montreux Congress, the term pair Fascist International was an oxymoron (a concept encompassing opposite meanings), because "Fascism is not an international phenomenon. It is even national to the highest degree".[27] The Norwegian fascist leader Vidkun Quisling articulated this conceptual ambivalence in a speech in 1936: On the one hand, he argued that "it is obvious that an international evil such as Marxism can only be fought effectively on an international basis, by cooperation between its opponents". On the other hand, Quisling refused to be a part of, and even to speak of any "Fascist International".[28] This points to two fundamental challenges when tracing the history of fascist internationalism from a terminological point of view.

First, some actors that were involved did not identify themselves as fascists but used idiosyncratic self-descriptions or preferred other labels such as 'national socialism', 'movements of national regeneration', 'corporatism' or 'new nationalism' due to the polemic nature of the term fascism.[29] And even when they used fascism as a common denominator to demarcate their movements and the broader party family from other political ideologies, they were far from uniform in what the label entailed. This conceptual messiness is rooted in fascism's specific emergence as a political concept. When the Italian Fascist movement took up the term as self-description in the early twentieth century, it preferred violent action above theory, lacking a concrete ideology, program or canon in contrast to

26 Ward, Harry Frederick, 'The Fascist International' PRISM: Political & Rights Issues & Social Movements, 447 (1937), accessed March 17, 2024, https://stars.library.ucf.edu/prism/447.

27 Comités d'Action pour l'Universalité de Rome (CAUR), *Réunion de Montreux: 16–17 Décembre 1934, XIII* (Rome: Le Bureau de Presse des Comités d'Action pour l'Universalité de Rome, 1935), 39.

28 'Situasjonen hjemme og ute', *Nasjonal Samling*, January 9, 1936.

29 On fascism as a polemic label, see Udi Greenberg, "Intellectual History and the Fascism Debate: On Analogies and Polemic", *Modern Intellectual History* 20.2 (2023): 571–581; Michael Dobry, "Desperately Seeking 'Generic Fascism': Some Discordant Thoughts on the Academic Recycling of Indigenous Categories", edited by Antonio Costa Pinto, in *Rethinking the Nature of Fascism. Comparative Perspectives* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 53–84.

other more established ideologies such as liberalism and communism. Domestic followers, foreign imitators, observers, and opponents alike filled the term with diverging imaginaries ranging from hope to fear. As Celestine Kunkeler argues, fascism was from the outset an "empty signifier", a "historically contingent phenomenon which was and always remained a work-in-progress, open to interpretation and revision from all sides".[30] Thus, inspired by conceptual history, this monograph explores how fascism functioned as a contested concept that fascist actors and organizations filled with different, sometimes contradictory and shifting meanings when defining who belonged to the same party family and who remained excluded.[31]

A second conceptual issue arises from the fact that fascism was, rhetorically, an "anti-globalization movement" based on notions of the degeneration of the own people through the intrusion of the international and global into the local context.[32] Thus, fascists "sought to insulate societies from the global economy by mobilizing against policies, people, and institutions associated with globalism and/or internationalism".[33] In consequence, European fascist regimes and movements almost uniformly reserved the term internationalism for their liberal, 'Marxist', socialist, communist, Masonic, or Jewish opponents, which they described as destructive and warmongering representatives of an old, crumbling order. The Italian Fascist regime, for example, never explicitly endorsed internationalism because it "was considered anathema [. . .], tainted through its association with both Communism and global capitalism".[34]

In Nazi German vocabulary, in particular, the terms international and internationalism indicated treason, conceptually linked to the constructed archenemy of the German people: 'international Jewry'.[35] This dualistic worldview was shared by many other European fascist actors and movements, rooted in conspiracy theories blending anticommunism, antisemitism, and the fear of a 'Jewish world republic'. These theories originated in the powerful myth that 'Judeo-Bolshevism' was a Jew-

30 Kunkeler, *Making Fascism in Sweden and the Netherlands*, 13.

31 On conceptual history, see Margrit Pernau and Dominic Sachsenmaier, eds., *Global Conceptual History: A Reader* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016); Willibald Steinmetz, Michael Freeden, and Fernández-Sebastián, Javier eds., *Conceptual History in the European Space* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2017).

32 Hedinger, *Die Achse: Berlin, Rom, Tokio*, 118.

33 Zahra, *Against the World*, xvi.

34 Aristotle Kallis, "From CAUR to EUR: Italian Fascism, the 'Myth of Rome' and the Pursuit of International Primacy", *Patterns of Prejudice* 50.4–5 (2016): 359–377, 364.

35 Cf. Cornelia Schmitz-Berning, *Vokabular des Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 322–325.

ish plot and global conspiracy to destroy Western civilization.[36] In result, fascist movements feared and warned about a united 'internationalist' political front of communism, cosmopolitanism, democracy, and liberalism, secretly dominated by Freemasonry and 'international Jewry'. Therefore, parties like the DNSAP blamed "plutocratic internationalism" for the "world crisis" and a "decay of the current time".[37] The party explicitly called for the "death of internationalism" as the opposite pole to nationalism.[38] Likewise, the Swiss NF claimed that nationalism and internationalism were two "irreconcilable antagonisms".[39] Because of this terminological rejection of internationalism, it is necessary to pursue inevitable conceptual detours when outlining that many fascist parties conceptualized themselves as part of a European or worldwide camp of fascist internationalism.

In some exceptional cases, fascist organizations used internationalism affirmatively as an argumentative tool. The British IFL, for instance, described fascist internationalism as a form of mutual respect and aid between equally nationalist, racist, and white supremacist movements directed against the common Jewish enemy.[40] The Swedish SNF, in turn, called for "nationalist internationalism".[41] Hans Keller's IAdN employed the same slogan, even within the anti-internationalist 'Third Reich'. While openly opposing liberal, communist, and even Italian fascist internationalism, the organization publicly embraced nationalist internationalism to promote *Volk* (people) nationalism beyond borders. Moreover, many fascist parties across Europe claimed that the forces of nationalism were as international, universal, global, or planetary as the 'internationalist' opponents. The Swiss FFS fantasized about "world fascism" and the DNSAP insisted that "the feeling of nationality is as worldwide as internationalist thoughts".[42] This monograph deciphers such statements and the underlying ideology by characterizing them as expressions of fascist internationalism, even though fascists largely rejected the concept itself. Nevertheless, they regarded themselves as part of a novel force transcending national boundaries, engaged in a political struggle for global order against liberal, communist, and Jewish adversaries.

36 See Paul Hanebrink, *A Specter Haunting Europe: The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018).

37 "Den nationalsocialistiske korporative Stat", *National-Socialisten*, November 22, 1931.

38 "Død over Internationalismen!", *National-Socialisten*, November 29, 1931.

39 Werner Meyer, "Die Internationale der Volksfront", *Die Front*, July 17, 1936.

40 Cf. Imperial Fascist League, *Race and Politics: A Counter-Blast to the Masonic Teaching of Universal Brotherhood* (London: I.F.L. Printing and Publishing Co, 1938), 7.

41 Gardar Sahrberg, "Svensk ungdom vill ha en världshistorisk mission", *Nationell Tidning*, November 28, 1936.

42 "Weltfascismus", *Der Schweizer Fascist*, May 17, 1934; DNSAP, *Hvorfor?* (Toftlund: Axel Lngby Petersens Bogtrykkeri, 1932), 4.

Imitating the Enemies: Fascist Internationalism as a Mimetic Counter-Reaction

At the founding congress of the so-called Nationalist International, held in Berlin in December 1934 and financed by the Nazi German Ministry of Propaganda, the Polish professor Zygmunt Cybichowski proposed that the organization's slogan should be "Nationalists of the world, unite!"[43] This was one of many fascist copies of the famous rallying cry "Workers of the world, unite!" by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in *The Communist Manifesto* (first published in 1848).[44] The usage of this slogan exemplifies that fascist internationalism was grounded in a specific form of mimicry, understood as a form of imitation and reproduction of ideas and practices of other ideologies and international organizations.[45]

Accordingly, this book argues that fascist individuals, movements, and regimes conceptualized and practiced fascist internationalism as an imitative counter-reaction to various other forms of competing internationalisms, notably liberal, communist, and alleged Jewish internationalism. Fascist agencies in Italy and Germany and minor movements in northwestern Europe interpreted fascism as a broader 'international' phenomenon, which they explicitly juxtaposed with the post-1919 liberal order established at Versailles and the Moscow-led Communist International. Fascists therefore created mimetic forms of counter-internationalism through international organizations, conferences, publications, exhibitions, and circulation of propaganda across borders. They even copied the socialist battle hymn *The International* from their liberal and socialist antagonists.[46] Hence, European fascists were shaped by internationalist thoughts, mechanisms, structures, patterns, and terms that they rejected rhetorically due to their ultranationalism.

To explore the interplay between fascism and its international opponents, this book draws on the historiography of internationalism, which has diversified

43 Internationale Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Nationalisten (IAdN), *Volksgemeinschaft und Völkerfriede: Sitzungsbericht der Berliner Tagung* (Zurich: Batschari, 1935), 69.

44 For instance, in 1930, Franz Seldte from the German fascist veteran's organization The Steel Helmet (*Stahlhelm*) propagated the slogan "Front soldiers of the world, unite!" Cf. Ángel Alcalde, *War Veterans and Fascism in Interwar Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 206–207.

45 On mimicry, based on Aristotle's ancient concept of *mimesis*, see Katharina Krčal, *Nachahmen und Täuschen: Die ›jüdische Mimikry‹ und der antisemitische Diskurs im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Georg-Olms-Verlag, 2022), 5–11.

46 See Chapter 8.

since the beginning of the twenty-first century.[47] Especially in the past decade, a plethora of studies emerged on multiple competing forms of internationalism(s) beyond paradigmatic 'liberal' international organizations such as the League of Nations and the United Nations, encompassing socialist, communist, anticolonial, Black, feminist but also anticommunist, imperialist, racist, and ultimately fascist internationalisms.[48] This monograph builds on three foci within this research on the "multilayeredness and polyvocality of internationalisms" and combines them with insights from recent fascism studies.[49]

First, scholars like Madeleine Herren, Jens Steffek, and Benjamin G. Martin emphasize the entanglement between fascist regimes and apparently incompatible liberal international organizations and networks.[50] In a pioneering piece, Herren argues that fascist actors rejected internationalism ideologically but attempted to adopt its structural pattern. She conceptualizes fascist internationalism as "a version of fascist global governance based on the infiltration of liberal internationalist networks", aiming "at creating spheres of influence beyond territorial control".[51] Similarly, Benjamin G. Martin demonstrates how Italy's and Germany's "cultural inter-nationalism" was "built on practices of the kind associated with precisely the internationalism that Nazis and fascists rejected".[52] In consequence, Mercedes Peñalba-Sotorrío argues that both Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy "made use of the mechanics of internationalism and culture to infiltrate other nations' cultural markets and steer their policies and populations towards the construction of a New

47 See, among others, Giuliana Chamedes, "Review: New Histories of Internationalism", *Journal of World History* 31.4 (2018): 797–804; Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin, "Rethinking the History of Internationalism", edited by Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin, in *Internationalisms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 3–14; Ana Carolina Schveitzer, Lea Börgerding, and Oscar Broughton, "A Global History of Internationalism", *Esboços, Florianópolis* 28.48 (2021): 619–639; and the Bloomsbury book series "Histories of Internationalism" edited by David Brydan and Jessica Reinisch.

48 On competing internationalisms, see Fred Halliday, "Three Concepts of Internationalism", *International Affairs* 64.2 (1988): 187–198; Ana Antic, Johanna Conterio, and Dora Vargha, "Conclusion: Beyond Liberal Internationalism", *Contemporary European History* 25.2 (2016): 359–371; Philippa Hetherington and Glenda Sluga, "Liberal and Illiberal Internationalisms", *Journal of World History* 31.1 (2020): 1–9.

49 Antero Holmila and Pasi Ihalainen, "Conclusion: Long-Term Patterns in the Vocabulary of Internationalisms", edited by Pasi Ihalainen and Antero Holmila, in *Nationalism and Internationalism Intertwined. A European History of Concepts* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2022), 322–329, 329.

50 Herren, "Fascist Internationalism"; Steffek, "Fascist Internationalism"; Martin, *The Nazi-Fascist New Order for European Culture*.

51 Herren, "Fascist Internationalism", 192.

52 Martin, *The Nazi-Fascist New Order for European Culture*, 6.

(fascist) Order".[53] Similarly, this book empirically examines how fascist movements and regimes copied the mechanisms, structural patterns, and practices of other interwar internationalisms. However, unlike some of the studies discussed above, this book goes beyond a narrow understanding of internationalism as a form of governance in which only actions between national governments, ministries, and official state actors such as diplomats can be called acts of internationalism.

Instead, and this is the second foci, the monograph draws on a research tradition that emphasizes non-governmental or semi-independent institutions and agents beyond classical international history as actors of internationalism.[54] As Jessica Reinisch notes, the study of internationalism should not be restricted to "official memoranda filed in triplicate", but also show how international cooperation was "experienced and practiced" by non-state institutions, informal networks, and *agents of internationalism*.[55] Inspired by transcultural brokerage studies, fascism studies also increasingly recognize the historical importance of 'go-betweens', intermediaries, and brokers beyond typical diplomatic channels, who mediated between various fascist regimes, movements, milieus, and networks.[56]

This study provides several examples of such *fascist brokers* in order to rethink the agent's room for maneuvering within broader historical dynamics, to explore the grey zones between state and non-state activities, and to demonstrate how individual experiences, interests, and relationships shaped fascist internationalism 'from below' (see Table 1, "Leading figures"). These agents include Her-

53 Mercedes Peñalba-Sotorrío, 'Cultural Intervention in the Spanish Civil War: A Comparative Analysis of Nazi and Fascist Propaganda', *Journal of Contemporary History* 58.1 (2023): 26–49, 48.

54 For instance, Martin H. Geyer and Johannes Paulmann elaborate on various types of organizations ranging from governmental organizations to informal networks as potential actors of internationalism. See Martin H. Geyer and Johannes Paulmann, eds., *The Mechanics of Internationalism*: *Culture, Society and Politics from the 1840s to the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

55 Jessica Reinisch, "Introduction: Agents of Internationalism", *Contemporary European History* 25.2 (2016): 195–205, 202.

56 See, among others, Wolfgang Schieder, "Faschismus im politischen Transfer: Giuseppe Renzetti als faschistischer Propagandist und Geheimagent in Berlin 1922–1941," in *Faschismus in Italien und Deutschland: Studien zu Transfer und Vergleich,* eds. Armin Nolzen and Sven Reichardt (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2012); Sven Reichardt, "Globalgeschichte des Faschismus: Neue Forschungen und Perspektiven", *Aus Politik und* Zeitgeschichte 42–43 (2017): 10–16, 16; Annarita Gori and Valeria Galimi, "Hybridizing Ideas in the Latin Space: Transnational Agents and Polycentric Cross-Border Networks", in *Intellectuals in the Latin Space during the Era of Fascism. Crossing Borders*, edited by Valeria Galimi and Annarita Gori (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020), 1–11; Daniele Toro, "Fascist Transnationalism: The Networking Process Between the German, Austrian, and Italian Radical Nationalist Milieus during the Long 1920s", *Fascism. Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 13.1 (2024), 13–37.

man de Vries de Heekelingen, a Dutch-Swiss professor who turned from a mouthpiece of Benito Mussolini into an ardent pro-German antisemite; the Italian opportunistic president of CAUR, Eugenio Coselschi; the German war veteran and Jew-baiter, Ulrich Fleischhauer; and last but not least, Hans Keller, the founder of IAdN with traits of an impostor.

A number of leaders from smaller parties such as Vidkun Quisling, Arthur Fonjallaz, and Eoin O'Duffy also acted as agents of fascist internationalism. These had a specific role in their movements beyond usual elected chairmen due to the fascist leader cult and ideas of charismatic leadership. Many (but not all) minor fascist parties copied the unconditional leadership principle that also characterized Mussolini's and Hitler's exceptional position within their movements.[57] This gave fascist leaders a particularly dominant (albeit sometimes contested) role in shaping the party's main program, especially concerning international politics. Some fascist intellectuals, such as the Swiss NF publicist, Hans Oehler, and the Norwegian professor and philosopher of law, Herman Harris Aall, also shaped the minor movements' cooperation beyond borders (see Table 2, "Leading figures").

In consequence, this book privileges a small group of men who met at pompous conferences while portraying themselves as vanguards and spokesmen for a new European generation of fascists, similar to the vanguardism of communism.[58] Women, on the other hand, were actively made invisible in the public arena of fascist internationalism.[59] Recent scholarship draws specific attention to fascist women and internationalism, notably by studying links between fascist women's organizations in Italy, Germany, and Spain and examining female fascist thinkers who developed their own 'internationalist' visions.[60] These studies nev-

57 On fascism and charismatic leadership, see Maurizio Bach, „Mussolini und Hitler als charismatische Führer. Was kann Max Webers Modell der charismatischen Herrschaft zur Erklärung der Dynamik faschistischer Bewegungen beitragen?", *Der Faschismus in Europa. Wege der Forschung,* edited by Thomas Schlemmer and Hans Woller (Munich: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2014), 107–122.

58 On vanguardism as a shared element of communism and fascism, see Phillip W. Gray, *Vanguardism*: *Ideology and Organization in Totalitarian Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2020).

59 On the 'invisibility' of women in fascism, see also Andrea Pető, *The Women of the Arrow Cross Party*: *Invisible Hungarian Perpetrators in the Second World War* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

60 Flavia Citrigno, "The Duce's Cheerleaders and the Führer's Spies: Reconstructing and Comparing the Dynamics of a Developing Fascist Network of Girls' Organizations", *Fascism: Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 13.1 (2024): 58–74; Antonio Morant i Ariño, "Mujeres para una 'Nueva Europa': Las relaciones y visitas entre la Sección Femenina de Falange y las organizaciones femeninas nazis, 1936–1945" (PhD diss., Universitat de València, 2013); Kye J. Allen, "'A Pro-Fascist English Lady': The International Thought of Muriel Innes Currey", *Global Studies Quarterly* 3.1 (2023): 1–13.

ertheless stress the importance of masculinity in European fascism because fascist gender concepts mainly reduced women to serving the national community, regarding the primary function of the female body as domestic and reproductive. Thus, women remained largely publicly excluded from the fascist international congresses and meetings, which were shaped by male bonding. Women could still play important roles in less visible functions, like intermediaries and secretaries. To a certain degree, this was a shared element with liberal and, to a lesser extent, communist internationalism in the interwar period, which were also characterized by misogyny and the underrepresentation of women.[61]

Third, this book builds on recent scholarship that emphasizes the spatial dimensions of internationalism, including the role of specific regions, cities, sites, and even conference venues as meeting places.[62] Such studies outline the significant role of international conferencing as political practice in creating the modern world, stressing that delegates perceived conference sites "not just as locations or material spaces but as lived, sensed and experienced places".[63] Accordingly, this study explores how fascists created spaces for political and personal bonding, by hosting international conferences and organizing exhibitions in various European cities such as Paris, Amsterdam, Berlin, London, Oslo, Brussels, Erfurt, and Copenhagen. The pivotal example is the Montreux Congress in December 1934, which nurtured further forms of collaboration in the following years.

Intriguingly, the Italian CAUR hosted two conferences in Montreux, near the headquarters of the League of Nations in Geneva, illustrating that several fascist organizations chose Switzerland, perhaps the most important country of interwar internationalism, for their international activities. To underline alleged neutrality, they even established their headquarters in Swiss cities, such as CINEF in Lausanne and IAdN in Zurich. At the same time, their propaganda attempted to portray these sites as powerful antagonists to liberal and communist internationalism: CAUR fantasized about a so-called Montreux Front on equal footing with both Geneva (a metonymy for the League of Nations) and Moscow (representing the headquarter of the Communist International). Meanwhile, the antisemitic WD attempted to portray Erfurt as a new "Mecca of anti-Judaism" to counter the alleged "Jewish Interna-

61 Cf. Studer, *Reisende der Weltrevolution*, 38–44.

62 See, among many others, Ilaria Scaglia, *The Emotions of Internationalism*: *Feeling International Cooperation in the Alps in the Interwar Period* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020); Jessica Reinisch, "Technical Conferences as a Technique of Internationalism", *The British Journal for the History of Science* 56.4 (2023): 485–502.

63 Stephen Legg, Mike Heffernan, Jake Hodder, Benjamin Thorpe, eds., *Placing Internationalism*: *International Conferences and the Making of the Modern World* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021), 2.

tional".[64] The spatial dimension thus played an important role in the ideological struggle of fascist internationalism, which was by its very nature a transnational and processual phenomenon.

Fascist Internationalism as a Transnational and Processual Phenomenon

Internationalism and transnationalism are often used interchangeably in historiography and overlap in historical reality.[65] This study defines internationalism broadly as a set of notions and practices linked to the belief in solving political issues through international cooperation, meaning the involvement of people, movements, institutions, and regimes from other nations.[66] Transnationalism, in contrast, describes factual social, cultural, political, or economic links between spaces, movements, institutions, and people that cross or transcend nation-state borders. This book argues that fascist internationalism was both *transnational*, because it involved interaction between fascist movements and regimes across borders, and *processual*, because external and internal transformations led to significant modifications and turns. This dynamic character, which was shaped by major political events such as the Italo-Ethiopian War (1935–1936), the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), and the forming of the Rome-Berlin Axis (1936), contradicts static definitions of fascist internationalism.

This book builds methodologically on the so-called *transnational turn* within fascism studies and beyond. While liberating historiography from thinking and writing within isolated 'national containers', transnational history strives to transcend national boundaries by looking at cross-fertilization processes, transfers, entanglements, and adaptations among historical actors or phenomena.[67] Over the past two decades, several related approaches of transnational, global, entangled history, and *histoire croisée* have strongly influenced fascism studies, re-

64 Ulrich Fleischhauer, "Welt-Dienst Freunde!", *Welt-Dienst,* September 1, 1938.

65 Cf. Akira Iriye, *Global and Transnational history*: *The Past, Present, and Future* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 48–49.

66 This definition builds on Iliria Scaglia, who uses internationalism "to refer to a broad set of ideas and practices based on the notion that the success of any given cause was contingent upon involving individuals, groups, and institutions from other nations". Scaglia, *The Emotions of Internationalism*, 15.

67 See Margrit Pernau, *Transnationale Geschichte* (Stuttgart: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011).

sulting in a new "transnational consensus" within the field.[68] Conceptualizing fascism as a transnational phenomenon is a fruitful lens for investigating "the web of interactions", meaning inspirations, connections, and cooperation beyond borders between various fascist agents, movements, regimes, and the broader political spectrum, including authoritarian, conservative, liberal, and even communist forces.[69]

Older comparative fascism studies often attempted to define or establish typologies of fascism as a static phenomenon detached from the broader political right, as illustrated in debates about 'generic fascism' and the 'fascist minimum' in the 1990s.[70] In contrast, a recent volume on eighteen *European Fascist Movements* (2023) eschews searching for a single definition due to the "messy and often contradictory ideas of the original participants themselves".[71] Due to the transnational turn, newer research (including this work) outlines fascism as a fluid, entangled, and open-ended phenomenon, drawing on studies that distinguish between different stages of fascist movements and regimes instead of iden-

68 For two recent overviews on transnational history and fascism studies, see Ángel Alcalde, "The Transnational Consensus: Fascism and Nazism in Current Research", *Contemporary European History* 29.2 (2020): 243–252; Hamre, Proschmann, Ørskov, "Editorial Introduction". For discussions of transnational fascism, see, among others, Bauerkämper, "Ambiguities of Transnationalism"; Arnd Bauerkämper, "Transnational Fascism: Cross-Border Relations between Regimes and Movements in Europe, 1922–1939", *East Central Europe* 37.2–3 (2010): 214–246; Matteo Albanese and Pablo Del Hierro, *Transnational Fascism in the Twentieth Century*: *Spain, Italy and the Global Neo-Fascist Network* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016); Kiran Klaus Patel and Sven Reichardt, "The Dark Side of Transnationalism: Social Engineering and Nazism, 1930s–40s", *Journal of Contemporary History* 51.1 (2016): 3–21; David D. Roberts, *Fascist Interactions: Proposals for a New Approach to Fascism and its Era, 1919–1945* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2016); Arnd Bauerkämper and Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, eds., *Fascism without Borders. Transnational Connections and Cooperation between Movements and Regimes in Europe from 1918 to 1945* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2017); Constantin Iordachi, "From 'Generic' to 'Real-Existing' Fascism: Towards a New Transnational and Historical-Comparative Agenda in Fascism Studies", in *Beyond the Fascist Century*: *Essays in Honour of Roger Griffin* edited by Constantin Iordachi and Aristotle Kallis (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 283–307; Aristotle Kallis, "The Transnational Co-production of Interwar 'Fascism': On the Dynamics of Ideational Mobility and Localization", *European History Quarterly* 51.2 (2021): 189–213.

69 Roberts, *Fascist Interactions,* 44.

70 See, for instance, Roger Eatwell, "On Defining the 'Fascist Minimum': The Centrality of Ideology", *Journal of Political Ideologies* 1.3 (1996): 303–319.

71 Roland Clark and Tim Grady, "European Fascist Movements: An Introduction", in *European Fascist Movements*: *A Sourcebook,* edited by Roland Clark and Tim Grady (New York: Routledge, 2023), 1–24, 3.

tifying one fixed core element.[72] Thus, understanding fascism as a transnational movement means embracing "a degree of definitional fluidity".[73]

Conceptualizing fascist internationalism as a transnational, malleable phenomenon implies that its potentially unifying core principles and notions were in flux, impacted by major political events and developments. Accordingly, this book traces how a political battle between the two major fascist regimes established in Italy and Germany nurtured and fueled fascist internationalism in the 1930s, eventually even beyond their reach and interests. Especially between 1933 and 1936, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany competed for ideological supremacy among other newly founded ultranationalist movements. This competition was driven by rivaling notions based, on the one hand, on Italy's supposed 'spiritual' superiority combined with corporatism and allegedly 'universal' fascist principles emanating from Rome. On the other hand, Nazi Germany based its alleged superiority on antisemitism and mythical-*völkisch* ideas of a Nordic-Aryan race.[74] These contrasting notions prompted and shaped the activities of the Italian CAUR and its antagonist, the German IAdN.

This Italo-German competition shows that it was not a single ideological core but a repertoire of ideas that called for and legitimized fascist internationalism, encompassing the belief in a universal mission of fascism, corporatism, a European rebirth, ultranationalism, Nordic-Aryan racism, white supremacism, antiparliamentarism, antiliberalism, anticommunism, antisemitism, and even a sort of anti-internationalism.[75] Rather than writing a new history of all these notions, this study investigates their role in internationalist fascist thinking. Of outmost importance were ideas of common adversaries, which could have an enormous integrating effect due to the simple rule: *the enemy of my enemy is my friend.*

Manichaeism was an underlying feature of fascist internationalism, meaning a simplified dualistic worldview constructed around a struggle between a good, spiritual world of light (fascism) and an evil, material world of darkness (the 'in-

72 See, for instance, Robert O. Paxton, "The Five Stages of Fascism", *Journal of Modern History* 70.1 (1998): 1–23; Robert O. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004); Sven Reichardt, "Fascism's Stages: Imperial Violence, Entanglement, and Processualization", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 82.1 (2021): 85–107.

73 Samuel Huston Goodfellow, "Fascism as a Transnational Movement: The Case of Inter-War Alsace", *Contemporary European History* 22.1 (2013): 87–106, 88.

74 On *völkisch* ideology and Nazism, see Uwe Puschner, ed., *Die völkisch-religiöse Bewegung im Nationalsozialismus*: *Eine Beziehungs- und Konfliktgeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012).

75 This builds on the idea of 'fascist repertoire', outlined by Benjamin Zachariah, "A Voluntary Gleichschaltung?: Indian Perspectives Towards a non-Eurocentric Understanding of Fascism", *Transcultural Studies* 5.2 (2014): 63–100.

ternationalist' enemies).[76] In consequence, fascist movements and regimes constructed a certain form of ideological allegiance and kinship as a political and spiritual bond between each other, based on common "hyper-nationalism" and shared experiences of turmoil and crisis in the interwar period.[77] Notions of belonging to the same ideological camp sparked ideas and actions of *fascist solidarity* across borders, and particular events, such as the Spanish Civil War, were perceived as part of a common battle between fascism and communism on a European, rather than national scale.[78]

Fascists of the World? Fascist Internationalism in Relation to Europeanism

Europe was the undisputed epicenter when 'fascists of the world' attempted to unite across borders during the 1930s. This inherent Eurocentrism does not render fascism exceptional among its rivals. In a piece on European internationalism, Sandrine Kott argues that liberal, communist, and fascist internationalisms "all aimed to organise and change the world in the name of universal values" while coming from "the same European matrix" that centered on the history of European imperialism, nationalism, and the generalization of the European nation-state as a model for the rest of the world.[79] Thus, former research often equated fascist internationalism with fascist (pan)-Europeanism, linked to ideas of creating a *New Europe* in opposition to the old era of liberal democracy, and the rest of the world.[80] This book follows the same path of conceptualizing fascist internationalism as a primarily European phenomenon, albeit only to a certain extent.

In fact, a central element that legitimized and facilitated international cooperation among European fascist movements and regimes was a shared perception of European crises, moral decay, and the uprootedness of European peoples due to the downsides of modernity, linked to the rise of materialism, capitalism, and

76 On Manichaeism as a feature of fascist internationalism, see Chapter 7.

77 Morgan, *Fascism in Europe, 1919–1945*, 160.

78 See Chapter 9.

79 Sandrine Kott, "European Internationalism. Why Europe, Which Europe?", *EuropeDebate* (2021), accessed March 3, 2025, https://europedebate.hypotheses.org/590.

80 Bauerkämper, "Ambiguities of Transnationalism", 43–44; Bauerkämper, "Transnational Fascism", 214. On criticism of the concept of fascist pan-Europeanism, see Aron Brouwer, "The Pan-Fascist Paradox: How Does a Nationalist-Minded Fascist Think Transnationally?", *Fascism: Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 11.1 (2022): 1–30, 7–10.

globalization since the late nineteenth century. This resulted in a shared calling for a mythical rebirth of Europe in the early twentieth century. As Phillip Morgan argues, fascism became an 'international' solution to overcoming the European decadence and the despised legacies of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution through a "regenerating mission" that was both "national and international".[81] The idea that Europe was in political and moral decay was not restricted to fascism but also invoked by authoritarian, conservative, liberal, and communist thinkers. Nevertheless, the notion was crucial for envisioning fascist internationalism because the common crisis was conceived in European terms, legitimizing cooperation among ultranationalist parties.

To capture this shared belief in the regenerative mission of fascist internationalism, this monograph draws on Roger Griffin's cultural approach to fascist ideology. Griffin's research focuses on fascist core values, narratives, ideas, and specific myths of national rebirth, and he defines fascism as "a genus of political ideology whose mythic core in its various permutations is a palingenetic form of populist ultranationalism".[82] *Palingenesis* describes the shared fascist vision of an imminent or eventual national rebirth. This rebirth is deemed necessary due to the fascist perception of a current decay, decadence, or polycrisis, which ought to be overcome through the emergence of a new order characterized by a state of permanent revolution and the creation of new men and women.

Griffin combines palingenesis with ultranationalism based on the analytical concept *ultra-nation*, indicating that the fascist vision of the nation is irrevocably beyond (*ultra* in Latin) the spectrum of social ideals compatible with liberal democracy, such as egalitarianism, individualism, and humanism.[83] The core of the mythical imagined ultra-nation (seldom equated with the actual borders of nation-states) consists of 'transcendent' categories such as race, religion, and a mythical heroic past. Fascists all over Europe turned the nation into an organic, reified, and personified entity that needed to be heroically defended from internal and external enemies, legitimizing xenophobia, racism, antisemitism, homophobia, misogyny, and the massive use of violence. Importantly, Griffin argues that this fascist ultranationalism does not "preclude tactical alliances being forged with other ultranationalisms in a common *supranational cause* to fight the same international forces of ideological hostility or decadence held to be destroying the organic nation".[84] Consequently, palingenetic ultranationalism and notions of a

81 Morgan, *Fascism in Europe, 1919–1945*, 161.

82 Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Pinter, 1991), 26. On palingenetic ultranationalism, see also Griffin, *Fascism*, 40–45.

83 Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (1991), 67–72.

84 Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (1991), 45.

European rebirth could be mutually reinforcing, resulting in specific calls for enhanced collaboration across borders, subsumed as fascist Europeanism.

Fascist Europeanism can be defined as a commitment to the political, economic, and cultural consolidation of Europe among fascist actors, parties, and regimes, based on antiliberal, antidemocratic, and racist ideas about the European continent.[85] Historians have recently paid increasing attention to such fascist concepts of Europe, particularly concerning the Second World War, when the Axis powers occupied vast parts of the continent.[86] This branch of research represents an important corrective to the history of European integration in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, illuminating a dark and long "neglected history of Europeanization" in contrast to simplified teleological narratives of increasing democratization, egalitarianism, and humanitarianism.[87]

85 For a similar definition of Europeanism, see Marius S. Ostrowski, "Europeanism. A Historical View", *Contemporary European History* 32.2 (2023): 287–304.

86 On fascist concepts of Europe, see, among others, Griffin, "Europe for the Europeans"; Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: Nazi Rule in Occupied Europe* (London: Allen Lane, 2008); Monica Fioravanzo, "Die Europakonzeption von Faschismus und Nationalsozialismus (1939–1943)", *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 58.4 (2010): 509–541; Carl Wege, *"Das neue Europa" 1933-1945*: *German Thought Patterns about Europe* (Stuttgart: Edition Axel Menges, 2016); Johannes Dafinger, "The Nazi 'New Europe': Transnational Concepts of a Fascist and Völkisch Order for the Continent", edited by Arnd Bauerkämper and Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, in *Fascism without Borders. Transnational Connections and Cooperation between Movements and Regimes in Europe from 1918 to 1945* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2017), 264–287; Johannes Dafinger and Dieter Pohl, eds., *A New Nationalist Europe under Hitler*: *Concepts of Europe and Transnational Networks in the National Socialist Sphere of Influence, 1933-1945* (London: Routledge, 2019); Raimund Bauer, *The Construction of a National Socialist Europe during the Second World War*: *How the New Order Took Shape* (London: Routledge, 2020); Georges-Henri Soutou, *Europa! Les projets européens de l'Allemagne nazie et de l'Italie fasciste* (Paris: Tallandier, 2021); Johannes Dafinger, "Europeanization as Detachment from the Global", in *Reconsidering Europeanization. Ideas and Practices of (Dis-) Integrating Europe since the Nineteenth Century*: *History and Ideas,* edited by Florian Greiner, Peter Pichler, and Jan Vermeiren (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2022), 95–124; Monica Fioravanzo, *Fascist Europe from Italian Supremacy to Subservience to the Reich (1932–1943)* (New York: Berghahn, 2024).

87 Dieter Gosewinkel, ed., *Anti-liberal Europe. A Neglected History of Europeanization* (New York: Berghahn, 2014). On the history of Europeanization, see Florian Greiner, Peter Pichler and Jan Vermeiren, eds., *Reconsidering Europeanization: Ideas and Practices of (Dis-)Integrating Europe since the Nineteenth Century: History and Ideas* (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2022).

Fascist Europeanism emerged in the interwar period in relation to the non-European world. As Adam Tooze writes, "in an age of world power, Europe's position in political, military and economic terms was irreversibly provincialized".[88] Ideas of a diminishment of Europe were fostered by the perception that the 'old' continent was caught between the new superpowers of the United States, the Soviet Union, and the 'yellow' danger in the East, Imperial Japan. Benjamin G. Martin has shown, for instance, how fascists used notions of Europe in the cultural field in opposition to the global aspirations of the League of Nations, resulting in almost exclusively European exchanges and protectionist measures against non-European agents.[89] Likewise, Johannes Dafinger argues that processes of Europeanization in the Nazi period were shaped by protectionism and anti-universalism in "a deliberate attempt to detach Europe from other parts of the world".[90]

This book adds new facets to the ongoing debate on fascist Europeanism by arguing that Europe was a vital concept in the 1930s that could function as a unifying antipode to processes of globalization and multilateralism beyond Europe. The idea of a European crisis and fascism as a common solution was a central hinge of the Montreux Front, and the German Nationalist International propagated the idea of a 'Third Europe' as a core motif. However, fascist notions about Europe were far from monolithic. Scandinavian fascists, for example, focused on a racially and historically grounded division between Northern Europe and the Mediterranean or Latin nations instead of seeing Europe as a coherent entity, resulting in rivaling projects of Scandinavian fascist regionalism.[91] Irish fascists primarily stressed bonds with other Catholic European countries, such as Spain, while being shaped by a specific form of anticolonial and anti-British 'continental' Europeanism. British fascists, by contrast, emphasized links to the Empire and Commonwealth beyond Europe, exemplifying that some forms of fascist internationalism extended geographically and ideologically beyond the European continent, often linked to a white supremacist belief in solidarity between all "white races".[92] Moreover, the organizations CAUR, IAdN, and WD turned gradually to partners beyond Europe in their search for fascist, antisemitic and anticommunist allies in the late 1930s.

88 Adam Tooze, *The Deluge*: *The Great War and the Remaking of Global Order, 1916–1931* (London: Allen Lane, 2014), 6.

89 Cf. Martin, *The Nazi-Fascist New Order for European Culture*, 7.

90 Dafinger, 'Europeanization as Detachment from the Global', 112.

91 See, in particular, Chapter 10.

92 See Chapter 6.

Thus, fascist internationalism should not be reduced a priori to mere Europeanism and can, to a limited extent, be perceived as a global phenomenon.[93] Although centering on European case studies, this monograph explores numerous 'universal' visions of international order, which, at least in theory, encompassed the entire world, despite fascism's inherent racism and hierarchical thinking grounded in European imperialism.

Inspired by global history, this monograph considers the 'glocal' context of the 1930s by asking how fascist organizations and movements in Europe coped with broader structural transformations and the rapidly changing international order, including the crucial impact of events outside Europe.[94] The pivotal example is the brutal Italo-Ethiopian War (1935–1936) that took place on the African continent, which forced fascist movements in Europe to reconsider the Italian Fascist *Pax Romana* as a credible anti-expansionist, universal 'peace project'. At the same time, the conflict in Africa evoked ideas of European fascist solidarity based on extreme (white) racism, which antagonized the non-European *Other*, Abyssinia (the historical name of the Ethiopian Empire). Hence, while recognizing Europe's central role, this monograph aims to rethink the complex relationship between European fascism and the non-European world, illustrating how ideas of ultranationalism, regionalism, Europeanism, and anti-globalism intertwined with ideas of universal fascism, 'global' white supremacism, and imaginaries of a new fascist world order.

Center-Periphery Relations in European Fascism

The majority of previous research on fascist internationalism has concentrated on the two 'centers' of European fascism, with particular attention given to Italy, and less focus directed towards Germany.[95] Some historians conceptualize their

93 On the global history of fascism, see, among others, Stein Ugelvik Larsen, ed., *Fascism outside Europe: The European Impulse against Domestic Conditions in the Diffusion of Global Fascism* (Boulder: Social Science Monographs, 2001); Benjamin Zachariah, "Global Fascisms and the Volk: The Framing of Narratives and the Crossing of Lines", *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 38.4 (2015): 608–612; Reichardt, "Globalgeschichte des Faschismus".

94 On fascism as a 'glocal' phenomenon, see Hedinger, *Die Achse: Berlin, Rom, Tokio*, 114–122; Sebastian Conrad, *What is Global History?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 78–79.

95 On Italian fascist internationalism, see, among others, Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*; Beate Scholz, 'Italienischer Faschismus als 'Export'-Artikel (1927–1935): Ideologische und organisatorische Ansätze zur Verbreitung des Faschismus im Ausland" (PhD diss., Universität Trier, 2001); Marco Cuzzi, *L'internazionale delle camicie nere*: *I CAUR, Comitati d'Azione per l'Universalità di Roma, 1933–1939* (Milan: Mursia, 2005); Salvatore Garau, "The Internationalisation of Italian Fascism in the Face of German National Socialism, and its Impact on the British Union of Fascists",

cooperation from 1936 onward as a specific form of *Axis internationalism*, referring to common ideological values and geostrategic interests of the regimes in Italy, Germany, and Japan before and during the Second World War.[96] These fascist regimes had the financial means to develop distinct forms of internationalism and to disseminate their propaganda to European and non-European 'peripheral' fascist movements, which did not succeed with a revolutionary fascist takeover and remained excluded from executive power within their countries. The monograph is therefore "doing justice" to this central role of Mussolini's and Hitler's regimes by close examinations of the asymmetrical relationship between the two "centers" and "peripheral" smaller fascist parties.[97]

However, previous studies on either Fascist Italy or Nazi Germany as 'senders' of fascist internationalism often failed to address the motives of the intended 'recipients', thus offering only a limited portrayal of the complexities of international cooperation and circulation of fascist ideology. This focus on the perspective of the distributors and senders is a typical methodological trap of historical research on the production and dissemination of ideas and knowledge across borders. Instead, this study follows historians of knowledge, such as Johan Östling and David Larsson Heidenblad, who propose to grasp the circulation of ideas and practices beyond simplified center-periphery models.[98] A focus on peripheral ex-

Politics, Religion & Ideology 15.1 (2014): 45–63; Kallis, "From CAUR to EUR". On German fascist or Nazi internationalism, see Hans Werner Neulen, *Europa und das 3. Reich: Einigungsbestrebungen im deutschen Machtbereich 1939–45* (Munich: Universitas-Verlag, 1987); Sandrine Kott and Kiran Klaus Patel, "Fascist Internationalism"; Hamre, "Nationalists of All Countries, Unite!".

96 On Axis internationalism, see David Brydan, "Axis Internationalism: Spanish Health Experts and the Nazi 'New Europe', 1939–1945", *Contemporary European History* 25.2 (2016): 291–311; Ana Antić, "Living in the Age of Axis Internationalism: Imagining Europe in Serbia Before and During the Second World War," *European History Quarterly* 48.1 (2018): 61–91; Reto Hofmann and Daniel Hedinger, "Editorial – Axis Empires: Towards a Global History of Fascist Imperialism", *Journal of Global History* 12.2 (2017): 161–165; Daniel Hedinger, "Universal Fascism and its Global Legacy: Italy's and Japan's Entangled History in the Early 1930s", *Fascism: Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 2.2 (2013): 141–160; Daniel Hedinger, "The Imperial Nexus: The Second World War and the Axis in Global Perspective", *Journal of Global History* 12.2 (2017): 184–205; Hedinger, *Die Achse: Berlin, Rom, Tokio*.

97 Roberts, *Fascist Interactions*, 127.

98 Johan Östling and David Larsson Heidenblad, *The History of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 16–30.

amples, not only offers a way to undermine methodological nationalism (a main corrective of transnational history) but also provides another logic of tracing how fascist notions circulated internationally.[99]

A central objective of this book is therefore to reinvestigate the complex center-periphery relations of European fascism in the 1930s by analyzing Italian and German projects of fascist internationalism, on the one hand, and discussing how various smaller fascist movements from northwestern Europe, on the other, reacted to, and instrumentalized such projects for their own ends. Moreover, the study illustrates how these minor movements interacted internationally beyond the reach and influence of their role models, by organizing their own exhibitions and meetings, building supportive networks, and circulating propaganda. A key argument is that these 'peripheral' fascist movements interpreted themselves as part of international fascism in a broader historical understanding, providing a purpose, coherent narrative, and destiny that counterbalanced the precarious political reality and recurring domestic failures at polls and elections. Thus, minor fascist movements conceptualized and practiced forms of fascist internationalism not only vis-à-vis the major fascist regimes but also on their own terms and in relation to each other. In this sense, the monograph responds to calls for a decentering of fascism studies beyond Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, by deconstructing allegedly "one-way, asymmetrical transfer of ideas and empowering practices from major fascist regimes and movements to minor groups" and from a "putative fascist center" to a periphery of "largely passive receivers".[100]

The intricate relationship between fascists centers and peripheries is reflected in the structure of the book, which is divided into three parts with altogether eleven chapters. Part I and II focus primarily on the 1930s, whereas Part III foregrounds continuities and legacies from 1940 onward. Part I examines four internationally operating fascist organizations, think tanks, and networks that emerged in and emanated from the major fascist regimes in Italy and Germany (see Table 1). Even though these agencies were often funded by and subordinate to government ministries, they did not constitute typical state institutions such as

99 See Jani Marjanen, "Undermining Methodological Nationalism: Histoire Croisee of Concepts as Transnational History", edited by Mathias Albert, in *Transnational Political Spaces. Agents, Structures, Encounters* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus-Verlag, 2009), 239–263, 257.

100 Aristotle Kallis, 'Transnational Fascism. The Fascist New Order, Violence and Creative Destruction', edited by Arnd Bauerkämper and Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, in *Fascism without Borders. Transnational Connections and Cooperation between Movements and Regimes in Europe from 1918 to 1945* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2017), 39–64, 50. See also Iordachi, 'From 'Generic' to 'Real-Existing' Fascism'; Roger Griffin, 'Decentering Comparative Fascist Studies', *Fascism. Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 4.1 (2015): 103–118.

official governmental or administrative bodies. In fact, to a differing degree, they operated semi-independently with some room for maneuver within the "grey zones of transnational fascist interaction" beyond the largely institutionalized dimension of state diplomacy.[101] The objectives of these agencies depended highly on their leaders, whose interests sometimes clashed with other governmental institutions involved in international relations. The German Foreign Ministry, for instance, disdained and antagonized Hans Keller's IAdN. Such internal competition was a typical feature of the polycratic multi-level governance of fascist regimes.

Chapter 1 explores the genesis of Italian fascist internationalism in the late 1920s through an analysis of CINEF, a think tank that attempted to convince Europe and the world of the 'spiritual' leadership of Fascist Italy based on the notions of universal fascism and corporatism. Chapter 2 illustrates how an intense Italo-German rivalry about ideological supremacy in the broader political camp of ultranationalist movements served as an engine of fascist internationalism in the 1930s. It examines Italian attempts to create a 'Fascist International', linked to the supposed ideological superiority of Fascist Italy, culminating in the organization CAUR and the establishment of the so-called Montreux Front at the Montreux Congress in 1934. The ambiguous interactions between CAUR and minor parties such as Frits Clausen's DNSAP highlight how Fascist Italy made ideological concessions to its foreign partners and gradually changed its hegemonic agenda linked to the Italo-German rapprochement from the mid-1930s onward.

Chapter 3 presents the counter-history of the Nazi German organization IAdN, which, in contrast to Italian Fascism and its conviction of a universal mission, placed biological-racist and *völkisch* ideas at the center of international cooperation between fascist movements and regimes. Hans Keller's Nationalist International was mainly driven by the idea of promoting *Volk* nationalism and the 'Third Reich' as a role model while combatting Italian fascist universalism. Chapter 4 analyzes Ulrich Fleischhauer's WD, and its predecessor, the Antisemitic International, which both foregrounded conspiratorial antisemitism as the main connector among ultranationalist forces around the globe. WD's Erfurt congresses, held annually between 1936 and 1938, served as an important international platform for discussing the so-called 'Jewish question', including potentially eliminationist 'solutions' such as the Madagascar Plan, thus preparing the ideological ground for the Holocaust.

Part II of the monograph focuses mainly on the 'peripheral' fascist movements from Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Britain, Ireland, and Switzerland

101 See Toro, 'Fascist Transnationalism'.

(see Table 2). These parties were involved in at least one or several of the internationally operating fascist organizations discussed in Part I. Given their lack of electoral success and limited membership, they were "amateur fascists" characterized "by chaos, division and incompetence" compared to the mass organizations of their role models, the NSDAP and the PNF.[102] Similar political preconditions in northern and western Europe shaped these fascist movements, which operated in parliamentary democracies challenged by the economic-political crises following the First World War. Nevertheless, the democracies in Scandinavia, Britain, Ireland, and Switzerland remained more-or-less politically stable until the Second World War. Hence, all seven movements remained excluded from executive political power during the 1930s. This predominance of parliamentary democracy in northwestern Europe in the interwar period starkly contrasts with the often very different historical-political conditions for fascist parties in southern and eastern Europe. Multiple authoritarian dictatorships emerged in these parts of Europe, which often "borrowed some trappings from fascism but excluded fascist parties from real power".[103]

Another specificity of fascist parties in northwestern Europe (particularly in Scandinavia) was that many of these propagated similar ideas of racial relatedness among Nordic (white) peoples. Parties like the Norwegian NS and the Danish DNSAP were influenced by nineteenth and early twentieth century 'race researchers' and 'Nordicists' such as Hans F. K. Günther, who claimed that members of the 'Nordic-Aryan race' were concentrated in northwestern Europe.[104] In consequence, fascist parties in this region paid more attention to each other than to eastern European or non-European parties, where contacts and perceptions often remained sparse due to language barriers and constructed racial hierarchies in which eastern and non-European peoples were regarded as inferior.

Chapter 5 introduces the particularities, trajectories, and key figures of the seven smaller movements through the lens of the *fascist predicament.* This analytical concept is used to illustrate the ambivalent relationship of these parties to their Italian and German role models, oscillating between foreign imitation and allegiance on the one hand, and an emphasis on patriotism and nativist traditions on the other. Chapter 6 explores fascist expansionist and imperialist ambitions in relation to potential cooperation with movements and regimes from abroad, underscoring how territorial and geopolitical interests clashed with ideas of ideo-

102 Clark and Grady, 'European Fascist Movements', 17.

103 Robert O. Paxton, "Comparisons and Definitions", edited by R. J. B. Bosworth, in *The Oxford Handbook of Fascism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 547–565, 548.

104 See Peter Schwandt, *Hans F.K. Günther*: *Porträt, Entwicklung und Wirken des rassistisch-nordischen Denkens* (Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 2008).

logical affinity. Taken together, both chapters stress the challenges and limitations, when fascist movements navigated between ultranationalism and internationalism in the 1930s.

Nevertheless, as will be outlined in Chapter 7, these parties constructed narratives and myths of a broader 'international' fascist era based on temporal and Manichean notions of ideological affiliation among fascist movements and regimes. Arguably, smaller movements employed narratives of international fascism to stress their political significance domestically. Such ideas of *fascist kinship* had concrete consequences in political practice: Chapter 8 analyzes multiple forms of cooperation among the minor parties, such as the circulation of propaganda and knowledge on European fascism through book projects and international exhibitions.

Chapter 9 introduces the analytical concept of *fascist solidarity* when elaborating on notions and actions of cross-border solidarity during the Spanish Civil War. The voluntary fighters from the Irish Brigade headed by Eoin O'Duffy even decided to fight for international fascism against communism in Spain. Chapter 10 scrutinizes concrete visions of international cooperation, showing that fascist parties were engaged in internationalist thinking, despite an emphasis on slogans such as 'nationalism first'. Visions like the Swiss FFS's proposal of a 'United Fascist State of Europe' stress the emergence of fascist Europeanism in opposition to the non-European world. Fascist parties drafted plans for defense pacts, common currencies, and even multilateral federations, ranging from worldwide to European and regional forms of collaboration, as demonstrated by the peculiar case of fascist Scandinavianism.

The conclusion provides a kaleidoscopic overview of the complexity, malleability and polyvocality of fascist internationalism in the 1930s when summarizing the main findings of Part I and II. The epilogue in Part III deals with reverberations of this history in the Second World War, the postwar period, and the present day, and finally considers how the empirical findings, analytical tools, and concepts of this monograph might contribute to our understanding of contemporary forms of far-right internationalism.

The monograph is based on a wide range of archival material from various European archives. Next to sources from contemporary newspapers, political observers, opponents, and state authorities, it prioritizes the testimonies of fascists themselves to comprehend the internal logic of their ideology and actions.[105]

105 This approach is inspired by so-called "methodological empathy", a strategy "to enter the affective, subjective world-view and value-system of the protagonists of fascism" developed by Roger Griffin (who was inspired by George Mosse). See Griffin, *Fascism*, 39.

Mainly, these testimonies consist of contemporary public sources from the respective fascist organizations and movements (see Tables 1 and 2, Main journal/main party organ), notably their newspapers, journals, leaflets, press statements, party manifestos, and books and memoirs by their most influential members. Another set of sources are private letters, telegrams, or handwritten notes. These are particularly useful for grasping the transnational interactions between movements and organizations. However, because of the highly fragmented archival evidence (some parties and organizations left no correspondence, other records were destroyed during the Second World War), the findings are inevitably incomplete and can be enriched by future research on other movements and figures within the realm of fascist internationalism in Europe and beyond with a different set of sources.

On a final note, let us return for a moment to Robert Fuzier's anti-fascist caricature mocking the 1934 Montreux Congress (Figure 1). With its exaggerated portrayal of confused anti-internationalist nationalists, the cartoon symbolizes the limited, contradictory, and sometimes even ridiculous dimensions of fascist internationalism. The caricature can thus be placed in a long tradition of lampooning fascism, ranging from Bertolt Brecht' poetry to Charlie Chaplin's satirical film *The Great Dictator* (1940). As the Austrian philosopher Boris Buden writes, such approaches account for "fascism's intrinsic ridiculousness" while "simultaneously confirming the looming fascist threat".[106] Fuzier's cartoon is also illuminating in terms of what is depicted (the ludicrous fascist leaders), and what is not shown: the victims of fascism. This point to what is often omitted, but should not be forgotten, when writing and reading a history of the pompous international congresses, meetings, exchanges, and expressions of solidarity between fascists of the world: the horrific acts of violence, war, and genocide perpetrated by fascism.

106 Boris Buden, 'With the Blow of a Paintbrush: Contemporary Fascism and the Limits of Historical Analogy', *e-flux Journal* 76 (2016), accessed February 12, 2025, https://www.e-flux.com/journal/76/73534/with-the-blow-of-a-paintbrush-contemporary-fascism-and-the-limits-of-historical-analogy/.

Part I: **Fascist Internationalism Emanating from Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany**

Chapter 1
"To Each Country Its Own Fascism": The International Centre of Fascist Studies and Universal Fascism

> Fascists in each country must make Fascism their own national movement, adopting symbols and tactics which conform to the traditions, psychology and tastes of their own land. [. . .] Remember that, though truth is universal, its acceptance need never make the world the same colour, for in its application to the individual case is born variety.[1]

In 1928, James Strachey Barnes advanced a theory that fascism possessed universal principles and could be adopted in other countries, with adjustments made to suit their own traditions, history, and idiosyncrasies. Barnes was a British journalist whom Benito Mussolini lauded as a "clear-minded English thinker who knows Italy and the Italians perfectly, and not less perfectly Fascism".[2] Alongside Herman de Vries de Heekelingen. Barnes became a key figure of the Lausanne-based International Centre of Fascist Studies (*Centre international d'étude sur le fascisme*, CINEF), which existed from 1927 to 1930. 'Universal fascism', they insisted, would create the optimal precondition for 'true' and 'healthy' internationalism envisioned as an alternative to the existing international order. Thus, although CINEF was active at a time when many fascist movements in Europe had not yet been founded, it paved the way, both ideologically and practically, for later forms of fascist internationalism in the 1930s.

A small number of historians have written about CINEF, stressing how the center served as a "propaganda vehicle for Mussolini and Italian Fascism".[3] Roland Bütikofer has emphasized CINEF's role as part and parcel of a vibrant local fascist culture in Lausanne, while Beate Scholz mainly has analyzed it as a "foreign propaganda agency" of Italian Fascism.[4] Building on these insights, this chap-

1 James Strachey Barnes, *The Universal Aspects of Fascism* (London: William and Norgate, 1928), 240–241. See also James Strachey Barnes, "To Each Country its Own Fascism", edited by Roger Griffin, in *Fascism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 255–256.

2 Benito Mussolini, "Preface" in Barnes, *The Universal Aspects of Fascism*, xvii.

3 Thomas Linehan, *British Fascism, 1918–1939*: *Parties, Ideology and Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 128.

4 Roland Bütikofer, "Le Centre internationald'études sur le fascism et l'Institut italien de culture: la culture fasciste à Lausanne 1927–1943" (Mémoire de licence en histoire, Université de Lausanne, 1988); Scholz, "Italienischer Faschismus als 'Export'-Artikel (1927–1935)", 225–256.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111469799-002

ter will offer a new perspective on CINEF by scrutinizing its propagandistic intellectual output and asking about its wider implications for the ideas and activities of fascist internationalism outside Italy.

CINEF constitutes a significant antecedent to the developments in the 1930s, as the center adapted and disseminated the notion of universal fascism internationally, building on the work of several Italian Fascist intellectuals.[5] This concept would become essential for CAUR and the so-called Montreux Front (1933–1939), as outlined in Chapter 2. The new key message in the late 1920s was that fascism was not just a distinctly Italian but an international, 'universal' phenomenon. Accordingly, CINEF propagated that fascism entailed some sort of vague universal rules, laws, and principles that could be exported to and implemented in other countries without restricting the nationalism of each country. CINEF's main idea was that fascism, as a universal 'third way' of modern politics, which was neither right nor left and situated beyond the two antipodes of parliamentary liberalism and communism, would overcome the decay of Western society.[6] De Vries de Heekelingen, Barnes, and other fascist intellectuals conceptualized the implementation of fascism abroad as a critical precondition for the development of a form of 'peaceful' and 'true' internationalism. Hence, the chapter demonstrates how CINEF became one of the first organizations in the world to conceptualize fascist internationalism affirmatively while influencing emerging foreign movements such as the British IFL.

The Origins of Universal Fascism and Corporatism in the 1920s

Only three years after Benito Mussolini had founded the Italian Fascist movement (which was transformed into the PNF in 1921), he became Prime Minister of Italy in 1922. This was an astonishing development for Italian and European spectators alike, posing many questions about the nature of this new phenomenon that was soon generically called Fascism. Prominent politicians and intellectuals from abroad, such as Winston Churchill, admired the so-called Fascist revolution that took place in Italy and the creation of a new state, and some observers regarded fascism as a general solution to the social problems caused by the First World War and its immediate aftermath including violent revolutionary and counter-

5 On the concept of universal fascism, see Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*; Scholz, "Italienischer Faschismus als 'Export'-Artikel (1927–1935)"; Marco Cuzzi, *Antieuropa*: *Il fascismo universale di Mussolini* (Milano: M & B, 2006).

6 On the idea of fascism as a 'third way', see George L. Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution*: *Toward a General Theory of Fascism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2021), 3–38.

revolutionary upheavals. Throughout the 1920s, however, *Il Duce* Mussolini proclaimed that Italian Fascism was "not a product for export" and denied any international or universal dimension and implications of his movement and regime for foreign countries.[7]

Following the establishment of a Fascist dictatorship in Italy in 1925, a new generation of intellectuals such as Giuseppe Bottai, Asvero Gravelli, and Camillo Pellizzi challenged this view of Fascism as a purely Italian phenomenon, linked to the notions of universal fascism (*fascismo universale*) and universality (*universalità*). These journalists and politicians saw themselves as the elite and vanguard of fascism, insisting that the fascist revolution should continue beyond the borders of the Italian state. As Michael Ledeen argues in his pioneering study on *Universal Fascism* (1973), "the young fascists who agitated on the behalf of *fascismo universale* were convinced that fascism represented the destiny of the world, and that in the act of rejuvenating Mussolini's Italy they had to provide a doctrine for the rest of Europe".[8] Accordingly, the concept was linked to Italian Fascism's ambition in the late 1920s "to be the primal creator of a new global civilisation based on its own institutions, totalitarian principles and values: to imprint the Italian seal on contemporary civilisation".[9] This idea of a 'civilizing mission' of Western civilization was essential to universal fascism, legitimizing a hegemonic position of Italian Fascism in the world.[10] Thus, the concept was shaped by a Eurocentric and racist worldview. At that time, however, universal fascism was not geostrategic in the sense of a de facto expansionist ideology that would have demanded the territorial subjugation of the rest of Europe by Italy.

The multifaceted concept of universal fascism was embedded in historical myths that combined the cult of Mussolini as the heir to Caesar Augustus (and, for Catholics, the heir to Constantine the Great) with the concept of 'Romanity' (*romanità*) based on the heritage of ancient Rome.[11] In the early 1930s, some intellectuals also linked universal fascism to the idea of a renewed *Pax Romana*, presenting Italian Fascism as a guarantee of international peace. One strand of intellectuals related the notion of universality explicitly to the 'myth of Rome' "as a

7 Cited in Garau, "The Internationalisation of Italian Fascism", 46.

8 Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*, 18.

9 Eleftheria Manta, "The 'National Socialist Party of Greece' and its Contacts with Italy: Contribution to the Study of Greek Fascism", *Studia Universitatis Cibiniensis, Series Historica* 9 (2012): 89–108, 93.

10 See Gisella Longo, "I tentativi per la costituzione di un'internazionale fascista: Gli incontri di Amsterdam e Montreux attraverso i verbali delle riunioni", *Storia contemporanea* 3.27 (1996): 475–567, 478.

11 See Scholz, "Italienischer Faschismus als 'Export'-Artikel (1927–1935)", 20–26.

millenarian spiritual force inextricably linked to the physical space of the city".[12] Another strand combined universal fascism explicitly with Catholicism and the Catholic Church.[13]

Giuseppe Bottai, the founder of the influential journal *Critica fascista*, conceptualized corporatism as a sort of manifestation of universal fascism.[14] This link between universal fascism and the political-economic program and myth of corporatism would also become vital to CINEF and CAUR, deserving specific attention in the context of fascist internationalism. Antonio Costa Pinto defines political corporatism as a "system of political representation based on an 'organic-statist' view of society in which its organic units (families, local powers, professional associations and interest organizations and institutions) replace the individual-centred electoral model of representation and parliamentary legitimacy, becoming the primary and/or complementary legislative or advisory body of the ruler's executive".[15] Rooted in the guild system of the Middle Ages, this modern idea of corporatism emerged in reaction to the liberal market of the nineteenth century. In the early twentieth century, fascists, Catholics, conservatives, and left-wing theorists advocated the organization of society through corporate groups, such as agricultural, labor, business, scientific, or guild associations, but with significant differences. Left-wing syndicalists sought to unionize workers to gain control over the means of production.

In contrast, fascist movements such as the Italian PNF embraced corporatism to overcome class struggle and achieve national unity from above. From 1922 on, Mussolini evolved a political system with a top-down model of state control over the economy organized into various units and groups (corporations) while prohibiting strikes and bottom-up initiatives. His vision was to unite 'organically' and 'holistically' the common interests of employers and employees under the directive of the strong Fascist state to achieve harmony among social classes, in contrast to the class interests of both communism and liberalism. The Italian corporatist state developed gradually. Important steps were the formulation of the Labor Charter (*Carta del Lavoro*) in 1927, drafted mainly by Giuseppe Bottai, and the replacement of the directly elected Italian parliament by a corporative cham-

12 Kallis, "From CAUR to EUR", 362.

13 See Scholz, "Italienischer Faschismus als 'Export'-Artikel (1927–1935)", 37–78.

14 See Matteo Pasetti, "The Fascist Labour Charter and its Transnational Spread", edited by Antonio Costa Pinto, in *Corporatism and Fascism. The Corporatist Wave in Europe* (Florence: Taylor and Francis, 2017), 60–77.

15 Antonio Costa Pinto, "Corporatism and 'Organic Representation' in European Dictatorships", in *Corporatism and Fascism*: *The Corporatist Wave in Europe,* edited by Antonio Costa Pinto (Florence: Taylor and Francis, 2017), 3–41, 5.

ber indirectly elected by various public and private groups, agencies, and professions in 1928.

Despite flaws and internal criticism within the Fascist state, Italian corporatism soon achieved a myth of success abroad as a 'universal' tool for overcoming class struggle and achieving 'organic unity' within modern national societies. Paradigmatically, Bottai, the undersecretary of the Ministry of Corporations, maintained that "the Labour Charter is not only the document of great national thinking, namely Italy's, but also a manifestation of universal value".[16] Hence, from the late 1920s on, Fascist intellectuals frequently linked corporatism to the concept of universal fascism, becoming "a keyword for the export of Fascism".[17] Indeed, a wide range of European and non-European fascist movements and regimes adopted corporatist ideas, theories, and models, including Austria, Portugal, France, Greece, Norway, the United States, and Brazil. Fascist Italy played a key role in this transnational circulation of corporatism in the twentieth century, which recent research by Claire Lorenzelli and Matteo Pasetti characterizes as a "corporative laboratory".[18] The appeal of universal fascism and corporatism was to counter two phenomena of modernity that fascists all over the world perceived as 'materialist' aberrations: the particularism of liberal capitalism based on self-interest and exploitation on the one hand, and the 'destructive' revolutionary communism that placed class interest above nationalism on the other.

Herman de Vries de Heekelingen, James Strachey Barnes, and the Activities of the International Centre of Fascist Studies

The British theorist James Strachey Barnes and the Dutch professor Herman de Vries de Heekelingen became two of Fascism's most outspoken admirers abroad and acted as agents of fascist internationalism in the late 1920s. De Vries de Heekelingen was born in 1880 into a Calvinist family in Groningen, converted to Catholicism in 1908, and obtained Swiss citizenship during his studies in Fribourg in

16 Cited in Matteo Pasetti, "The Fascist Labour Charter and its Transnational Spread", 65.

17 Pasetti, "The Fascist Labour Charter and its Transnational Spread", 61.

18 See all articles in the thematic issue on "Fascist corporatism abroad. Circulations, receptions, hybridisations" in *Laboratoire italien* 32 (2024), including the introduction by Claire Lorenzelli and Matteo Pasetti, "Le corporatisme fasciste à l'étranger: circulations, réceptions, hybridations", *Laboratoire italien* 32 (2024), https://doi.org/10.4000/122l8.

the early 1920s.[19] De Vries de Heekelingen worked as a professor of paleography and director of the library at the University of Nijmegen. In 1927, he quit his job after a dispute with the university leadership and founded CINEF in Lausanne. Barnes was born in India in 1890 as the son of a British colonial administrator and was raised by his grandparents in Italy, where he also converted to the Catholic Church before serving in the British Army during the First World War. Both Barnes and de Vries de Heekelingen would combine theories of fascism with their belief in Catholicism. Barnes worked as an expert on foreign policy and correspondent for several British newspapers in Italy in the 1920s. He became an honorary member of the PNF and one of "Fascism's most passionate and outspoken champions".[20] In 1927, Barnes was appointed as CINEF's general secretary.

CINEF existed from 1927 to 1930 as an "elite intellectual political think tank" with the official objective to document and promote research on Italian Fascism.[21] CINEF presented itself in publications as an "absolutely impartial" and "entirely independent Institute [. . .] with the object of studying Fascism and similar political movements both objectively and scientifically".[22] The center published bibliographical and analytical texts on topics such as fascist philosophy, religion, sociology, politics, and economics.[23] According to de Vries de Heekelingen, CINEF acted as a guide in the labyrinth of research on fascism, being "in no sense an organ of propaganda", and the international character of CINEF's governing body would guarantee "rigorous impartiality".[24] Thus, the organization attempted to portray itself as neutral and purely 'scientific'. The geographical location of the headquarters of CINEF in Lausanne underlined this alleged neutrality. The city is located near Geneva in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, a region that has been home to many international organizations and research institutions since the interwar period.

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19 On de Vries de Heekelingen's biography, see Michael Hagemeister, "Vries de Heekelingen, Herrman de", edited by Wolfgang Benz, in *Handbuch des Antisemitismus. Nachträge und Register. Band 8* (Berlin: De Gruyter Saur, 2015), 143–144.

20 David Bradshaw and James Smith, "Ezra Pound, James Strachey Barnes ('The Italian Lord Haw-Haw') and Italian Fascism", *The Review of English Studies* 64.266 (2013): 672–693, 675. On Barnes' biography, see also Paul Jackson, "James Strachey Barnes and the Fascist Revolution: Catholicism, Anti-Semitism and the International New Order", *Modernism, Christianity and Apocalypse,* edited by Erik Tonning, Matthew Feldman, and David Addyman (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 187–205.

21 Linehan, *British Fascism, 1918–1939*, 128.

22 See International Centre of Fascist Studies, pamphlet, undated: [TNA], HO 144/19069, 140.

23 International Centre of Fascist Studies pamphlet, undated: [TNA], HO 144/19069, 147–149.

24 Herrman de Vries de Heekelingen, "Preface", *A Survey of Fascism: Yearbook of the International Centre of Fascist Studies* 1.1 (1928): 7–10, 7–8.

Beyond its 'scientific' surface, however, CINEF became "the first propaganda organization that aimed at spreading Italian fascism abroad".[25] Benito Mussolini, who granted de Vries de Heekelingen several audiences in the late 1920s, directly instructed CINEF, and the Italian Foreign Ministry secretly funded the think tank.[26] Particularly in CINEF's formative months, the Fascist regime apparatus supported the organization with administrative services and provided contact persons. This dichotomy between the public self-description as an independent and impartial organization on the one hand, and the concealment of ideological influence, political direction, and secret funding from a Fascist regime that orchestrated the organization in the background on the other, was a typical feature of agencies of fascist internationalism.

To promote Italian Fascism abroad, CINEF sought to instrumentalize European intellectuals and influential Italian ideologists as multipliers of fascist ideas. The center sent propaganda material to nascent European fascist movements such as the British Fascisti and the IFL in Britain, whose leader, Arnold Spencer Leese, willingly disseminated CINEF's material as a British correspondent of the think tank.[27] Another tool for the distribution of ideas was the international 'governing body' of CINEF, an executive council that included various European, entirely male academics and politicians. Notable foreign members were the French novelist Marcel Boulenger, the British professor Edmund Gardner, the former Hungarian Prime Minister Pál Teleki, and the Belgian former Minister of the Interior Baron Rolin Jaequemyns.[28] Alongside De Vries de Heekelingen, who functioned as president, the council included eminent Italian intellectuals, such as Giovanni Gentile, a member of the Italian Senate and one of the leading Fascist philosophers. CINEF also corresponded with other Italian promoters of universal fascism, such as Giuseppe Bottai and Camillo Pellizzi.[29]

CINEF's main task was to collect, write, and edit texts on fascism and to distribute internationally an annual yearbook in English called *A Survey of Fascism*. CINEF sold the magazine to relevant far-right organizations, movements, and individuals in Europe who could potentially be lured into becoming supporters of

25 Scholz, "Italienischer Faschismus als 'Export'-Artikel (1927–1935)", 225.

26 Scholz, "Italienischer Fascismus als 'Export'-Artikel", 233.

27 On the IFL and CINEF, see Chapter 5 and Robert May, "Breaking Boundaries: British Fascism from a Transnational Perspective, 1923 to 1939" (PhD diss., Sheffield Hallam University, 2019), 111; Richard Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers of the Right*: *British Enthusiasts for Nazi Germany, 1933-9* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 97–98.

28 Cf. "Governing Body. List of Members", International Centre of Fascist Studies, pamphlet, undated: [TNA], HO 144/19069.

29 Cf. Scholz, "Italienischer Faschismus als 'Export'-Artikel (1927–1935)", 226–228.

universal fascism. In Britain, for instance, a "net post free" copy was sent for a "special price" of 6 pence to organizations such as the IFL, the British Fascisti, and the Friends of Italy.[30] The yearbook included articles by Italians celebrating the Italian Labor Charter and corporatism in the Fascist state, and foreign academics discussed the possibility of implementing fascism in France and Germany.[31] One of those contributors from abroad was Walter Starkie, an Irish professor of Spanish at the National University of Dublin and a member of the executive council of CINEF.[32] His article "Whither is Ireland Heading? Is it Fascism?" addressed the potential of adopting fascism within the Irish Free State long before the first fascist movement, the Irish Blueshirts, emerged in 1933.[33] Hence, CINEF's propagandistic work "set out an intellectualised justification of the Italian variant of fascist ideology, and a model for its wider adoption".[34] Next to these external multipliers, de Vries de Heekelingen and Barnes wrote and published articles and books on universal fascism. These included Barnes's *Universal Aspects of Fascism* (1928), which became a widely read key text for fascist sympathizers in the anglophone world.

Universal Fascism as a Precondition for Fascist Internationalism

Ideologically, CINEF acted as an advocate and mouthpiece for Mussolini's regime, stressing "the uniqueness of Italian Fascism as a way for other nations to solve their own problems".[35] Both de Vries de Heekelingen and Barnes drew on the notion of universal fascism developed by Italian intellectuals. Instead of simply adopting the concept, they created their own formulations, emphases, and argu-

30 See International Centre of Fascist Studies, pamphlet, undated: [TNA], HO 144/19069.

31 Augusto Turati, "The Labour Charta", *A Survey of Fascism: Yearbook of the International Centre of Fascist Studies* 1.1 (1928): 136–147; Odon Por, "Co-operation within the Corporate System of the Italian State", *A Survey of Fascism: Yearbook of the International Centre of Fascist Studies* 1.1 (1928): 154–169; Homem Christo, "The Fascist Idea in France", *A Survey of Fascism: Yearbook of the International Centre of Fascist Studies* 1.1 (1928): 190–202; M. von Binzer, "The Trend of Fascist Opinion in Germany", *A Survey of Fascism. Yearbook of the International Centre of Fascist Studies* 1.1 (1928): 203–222.

32 Cf. Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers of the Right*, 19–20.

33 Walter Starkie, "Whither is Ireland Heading? Is it Fascism?", *A Survey of Fascism: Yearbook of the International Centre of Fascist Studies* 1.1 (1928): 223–234.

34 Jackson, "James Strachey Barnes and the Fascist Revolution", 191.

35 Mike Cronin, "Extract from 'Connections with Fascism'", in *The 'Fascist Epoch'*, edited by Roger Griffin and Matthew Feldman (London: Routledge, 2004), 247–267, 255.

ments for an international audience, and two aspects are of particular importance. First, even though the CINEF leaders agreed that Italian Fascism was a prime role model built on 'universal principles', they emphasized that fascism could not simply be copied in other countries but had to be adjusted to national traditions, languages, customs, and histories. Second, they explicitly addressed the contradictory relationship between nationalism and internationalism, arguing that the tension could be solved through the adoption of fascism in other countries, which would help to overcome the 'failed' internationalism of liberalism and communism.

CINEF's key argument was that fascism had universal principles. De Vries de Heekelingen differentiated in his works between the current events in Italy and "the principles of Fascism" that allegedly had "governed the civilised world before the triumph of Individualism", including national solidarity, corporatism, disciplinary authority, "inexorable laws of nature", and the "will of God".[36] The description of these fascist principles remained surprisingly vague, giving them the appearance of self-explanatory notions that the readers could interpret according to their own expectations and imaginaries. This conceptual ambiguity meant that the fascist universal principles, analogous to the term fascism itself, were used contemporarily as open signifiers, allowing for benevolent interpretations abroad that seemed more appealing and inclusive than clear-cut definitions. This allowed for an early understanding of fascism as a broader, generic phenomenon beyond Italy.

In a temporal understanding, de Vries de Heekelingen contrasted the universal principles of fascism with the "fundamentally erroneous principles" of the modern "individualistic era" erected since the Renaissance and the French Revolution.[37] Accordingly, the formerly universal principles rooted in "older philosophy" had to be restored through revolutionary fascism as a counter-reaction to the era of capitalist liberalism and communism. Even though de Vries de Heekelingen mentioned the violence of the Fascist revolution in Italy, he downplayed the number of victims compared to the French and Russian Revolutions. Thus, he advocated for a fascist revolt and transformation elsewhere to recreate the 'universal principles' of a pre-1789 golden era.[38] This outlook corresponds with theories of fascism as a political ideology that sought to restore a historical golden age

36 Herrman de Vries de Heekelingen, *Le Fascisme et ses Résultats* (Brussels: Social editions, 1928), 13.

37 Herrman de Vries de Heekelingen, "Introduction to the Study of Fascism", *A Survey of Fascism. Yearbook of the International Centre of Fascist Studies* 1.1 (1928): 13–18, 13–14.

38 Herrman de Vries de Keelelingen, "Introduction to the Study of Fascism", 18.

of alleged "organic unity" and solidarity through a revolutionary rebirth of the nation.[39]

De Vries de Heekelingen's book *Le Fascisme et ses Résultats* (Fascism and its Results, 1928) outlined the role model character of Italian Fascism by offering an allegedly objective analysis of its key features, summarized as the ideas of order, discipline, hierarchy, respect for religion, love of the fatherland, and the acceptance of sacrifice.[40] In particular, he outlined that "the immense value of fascism lies, in fact, in its solution of the social problem which, until its advent, risked becoming the abyss into which our civilization was about to sink".[41] Thus, in the tradition of Giuseppe Bottai, de Vries de Heekelingen hailed fascist corporatism as a way to overcome class struggle, particularism, and destructive self-interest. He also heralded Fascist Italy in general as a role model for the rest of the world. "The example of Italy will be salutary for other peoples. They will learn from Italy how to substitute a new and healthy policy for a tired and obsolete one. *Italia docet*!"[42] Despite this emphasis on Fascist Italy as a role model, de Vries de Heekelingen argued in his publications that fascism could not just be exported to other countries. It always had to be adjusted according to the national temperament, history, and even "taste". Otherwise, the adoption of fascism could become a mistake as grave as the mistaken introduction of Anglo-Saxon parliamentarism into Latin countries.[43] "What is good for one country is extremely unlikely to be good elsewhere. The ends of all governments should be the same, the means must necessarily vary indefinitely".[44]

In his book *Universal Aspects of Fascism* (1928), the Italophile Barnes offered similar arguments, presenting fascism as a modern and revolutionary ideology and an augmentation of Catholicism that could overturn materialist liberalism and communist atheism.[45] Thus, the narrative of fascism as a spiritual 'third way' beyond materialist liberalism and communism, which was at once potentially applicable all over the world but still rooted in Roman history and religion, featured prominently in Barnes' work. Even though he propagated Fascist Italy as a role model and Mussolini as the creator of Fascism, he stressed that "Fascists in each country must make Fascism their own national movement", as cited earlier.[46]

39 See Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*.
40 de Vries de Heekelingen, *Le Fascisme et ses Résultats*.
41 de Vries de Heekelingen, *Le Fascisme et ses Résultats*, 12.
42 de Vries de Heekelingen, *Le Fascisme et ses Résultats*, 76.
43 Cf. de Vries de Heekelingen, *Le Fascisme et ses Résultats*, 76–77.
44 de Vries de Heekelingen, "Introduction to the Study of Fascism", 16.
45 Cf. Jackson, "James Strachey Barnes and the Fascist Revolution", 192.
46 Barnes, *The Universal Aspects of Fascism*, 240.

Barnes defined fascism in a palingenetic framework "as a political and social movement having as its object the re-establishment of a political and social order, based upon the main current of traditions that have formed our European civilisation, traditions created by Rome, first by the Empire and subsequently by the Catholic Church".[47] In distinction from this Italo-Eurocentric outlook, he argued that the universal aspect of fascism was its philosophy and *Weltanschauung*, which he linked to the ideals of the youth, a new political state and order, and fascism's condition as a "permanent revolution". Hence, Barnes mythically combined the particularity and historical singularity of Italian Fascism with the universal implications of fascist philosophy, again remaining vague on the essence of these 'universal principles'. These universal ideas could, according to Barnes, be detached from the European and Roman historical traditions.[48] Noteworthy, most CINEF texts were marked by a Eurocentric outlook, for instance, through a focus on the moral decay of Europe that had to be overcome by a fascist revolution. Nonetheless, the think tank imagined fascism as a potentially global phenomenon. Barnes even included Japan among the "fascist states", long before the Italian-German-Japanese alliance was in sight.[49]

Benito Mussolini wrote an affirmative preface for Barnes' *Universal Aspects of Fascism*, in which he, too, conceptualized universal fascism as a potential solution on a global scale:

> Fascism is a purely Italian phenomenon in its historical expression, but its doctrinal postulates have a universal character. Fascism sets and solves problems which are common to many peoples, and precisely to those peoples who have experienced and are tired of Demo-Liberal rule and of the conventional lies attached thereto. [. . .] In the same way the fact that Fascism possesses a specific and original Italian stamp, does not prevent its principles having an application in other countries, in other forms, as indeed has already occurred.[50]

Mussolini juxtaposed the universal, doctrinal postulates of fascism with modern democratic parliamentarism and the system of liberal capitalism, which allegedly had led to the disintegration of society and class struggle all over Europe. This disorder should now be overcome in Italy and beyond by the fascist principles of solidarity, discipline, hierarchy, order, and a strong state based on corporatism. Ideas of common enemies were crucial in this theory of fascism as a universal phenomenon. For Mussolini it was "in the logic of things that the International Socialists, Democratic, Liberal, Masonic and Bolshevist world should be furiously

47 Barnes, *The Universal Aspects of Fascism*, 35.
48 Cf. Barnes, *The Universal Aspects of Fascism*, 1–34.
49 Barnes, *The Universal Aspects of Fascism*, 36.
50 Benito Mussolini, in "Preface", Barnes, *The Universal Aspects of Facism*, xiv-xx.

anti-Fascist", thus implying an international unity front against fascism.[51] This was a key argument that would later legitimize the unification of fascists from various countries in the Montreux Front.

What were the implications for potential fascist internationalism when CINEF promoted universal fascism to overcome liberalism and communism? De Vries de Heekelingen's book *Le Fascisme et ses Résultats* is a key source for analyzing the tension between 'fascism and internationalism' because the author explicitly dedicated a chapter to this topic.[52] He argued that the "reverse internationalism" of the militant socialists and communists was a threat due to its "claims to give it the meaning of an international alliance of certain social classes at the expense of the idea of the fatherland".[53] He presented humanitarian liberal internationalism based on the ideas of the French Revolution of 1789 as equally dangerous because its individualism would lead to selfishness and nationalist chauvinism, thus, to potential international conflicts. For de Vries de Heekelingen, "true internationalism is about trying to improve relations between nations. [. . .]. It must establish an intellectual cooperation which will make all nations benefit from the intellectual progress of one of them and which will spread the spiritual and moral wealth of each tradition and each homeland".[54]

According to CINEF, only fascism would offer a genuine and peaceful internationalism by placing the interest of humanity above the interest of the individual person, such as the interest of the national society or people's community was placed above the interest of the individual person within fascist ideology. De Vries de Heekelingen referred to the fascist universal principles of discipline, authority, and solidarity, arguing that "this international, or better, supranational framework can only be solid if it is built according to the rules that govern the life of the family, the nation, the world".[55] Finally, de Vries de Heekelingen declared, "Those who love their fatherland first and foremost and who have learned to subordinate everything to its future, will be the best craftsmen of an international life, where the rights of all nations will be guaranteed".[56] Thus, he conceptualized nationalism and respect for other peoples as essential aspects of fascist internationalism.

This was a crucial message to potential followers of fascism abroad, maintaining that universal fascism would not constitute a geostrategic and expansion-

51 Mussolini, "Preface", xvii.
52 de Vries de Heekelingen, *Le Fascisme et ses Résultats*, 69–78.
53 de Vries de Heekelingen, *Le Fascisme et ses Résultats*, 71–72.
54 de Vries de Heekelingen, *Le Facisme et ses Résultats*.
55 de Vries de Heekelingen, *Le Facisme et ses Résultats*, 74.
56 de Vries de Heekelingen, *Le Facisme et ses Résultats*, 75.

ist danger of the Italian regime to other countries. Instead, it would provide a role model for how to apply historically grounded 'universal' fascist values centering around the importance of each nation's nationalism and traditions. Thus, although de Vries de Heekelingen briefly mentioned Italy's desire for an empire, he obscured potential Italian expansionist and imperialist claims throughout the rest of the text in order to describe fascism as the 'real' peaceful force of internationalism, in contrast to the Comintern and the League of Nations. Similarly, the absence of explicit racist or antisemitic references in the CINEF outlook is worth emphasizing.

Reception and Legacy of the International Centre of Fascist Studies

Most of the minor European fascist movements that became involved in fascist internationalism had not been created yet in the late 1920s. Still, the example of the British IFL, founded in late 1928, illustrates at least one successful attempt by CINEF to influence foreign nationalist thinkers to perceive themselves as 'fascists' and herald universal fascism within their home country. Intriguingly, the movement from predominantly protestant Britain seemed not alienated by CINEF's emphasis on Catholicism, highlighting that national differences did not hinder the transnational circulation of the concept of universal fascism. Explicitly, the IFL praised Barnes' *Universal Aspects of Fascism* in one of the first issues of the party organ and later referred to the CINEF yearbook *A Survey of Fascism* as a "semi-official account of Italian Fascism".[57] More importantly, a close reading of the IFL publications in its formative years outlines ideological conformity between the British movement and the CINEF ideology, especially regarding the IFL's take on potential fascist internationalism. As the Swiss think tank, the British movement argued for a "genuine" and "true internationalism", based on strengthening nationalism in each country and mutual respect among fascist nations.[58] Beyond the IFL, however, the international reception of the CINEF publications among nascent fascist movements remains a research desideratum.

Next to this impact abroad, CINEF foreshadowed internal Italian developments in the early 1930s because the official doctrine that Italian Fascism was 'not merchandise for export' was reevaluated and altered radically. During a pub-

57 "Fascist Articles in the Reviews", *The Fascist,* March 1930; Imperial Fascist League, *The Era of World Ruin*: *The Era of Democracy* (Southend-on-Sea: H. F. Lucas & Co, undated), 4.
58 E.g. "International Fascism", *The Fascist,* November 1930.

lic speech in Milan in October 1930, Benito Mussolini proclaimed the idea of universal fascism. "Today I hold that Fascism as an idea, a doctrine, a realization, is universal; it is Italian in its particular institutions, but it is universal in the spirit".[59] Surprisingly, Mussolini officially embraced universal fascism simultaneously as Italian funding for CINEF ended. Consequently, the think tank in Lausanne ceased its activities in late 1930. It remains unclear whether ideological or economic reasons led to this demise. Beate Scholz argues that the allegedly neutral and scientific propagation of universal fascism was no longer necessary when Mussolini made internationalism an official state policy.[60] Other historians suggest that the economic consequences of "the depression undoubtedly cut off funds".[61] Either way, CINEF's ideas of universal fascism were brought into the world and continued to circulate in Italy and abroad, nurturing the internationalization of Italian Fascism in the face of the rise of German Nazism in the early 1930s.

Disappointed by the end of Italian support and funding, Herman de Vries de Heekelingen radically recalibrated his theories of fascism, turning instead to German Nazism and its belief in the superiority of the Aryan race and antisemitism in the early 1930s. He transformed the remnants of CINEF into a less Italian-sounding International Documentation Centre of Political Organizations (*Centre International de Documentation sur les Organisations Politiques*) based in Yvorne, Switzerland, discretely financed by the British Nazi sympathizer Viscountess Dorothy Downe.[62] The main output of the new center was a book project on Nazi German *Weltanschauung* published in 1932, which was a collection of 500 *völkisch*, racist, and antisemitic quotations from leading Nazis such as Adolf Hitler and Alfred Rosenberg on various topics ranging from agriculture to Judaism.[63] De Vries de Heekelingen presented Italian Fascism and German Nazism in the book as equally important "related movements". Accordingly, both movements aimed to free Europe from the domination of materialism and combatted "corrosive ideologies", united in "Essence and Will", but different in "Expression and Form".[64]

59 Cited in Aristotle Kallis, *The Third Rome, 1922–1943*: *The Making of the Fascist Capital* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 226.

60 Cf. Scholz, "Italienischer Faschismus als 'Export'-Artikel (1927–1935)", 246–249.

61 Barbara Storm Farr, *The Development and Impact of Right-Wing Politics in Britain, 1903–1932* (New York: Garland, 1987), 76; Bradshaw and Smith, "Ezra Pound, James Strachey Barnes ('The Italian Lord Haw-Haw') and Italian Fascism", 676.

62 Cf. Hagemeister, "Vries de Heekelingen, Herrman de".

63 Herrman de Vries de Heekelingen, *Die nationalsozialistische Weltanschauung*: *Ein Wegweiser durch die nationalsozialistische Literatur: 500 markante Zitate* (Berlin: Pan-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1932).

64 Cf. de Vries de Heekelingen, *Die nationalsozialistische Weltanschauung*, 1–3.

But strikingly, de Vries de Heekelingen did not mention the idea of universal fascism any longer. Thus, the Dutch professor constituted a prime example of a European right-wing activist who was increasingly fascinated by the German NSDAP, the new rising star of the fascist cosmos that challenged ideological Italian hegemony even before the so-called Nazi 'seizure of power' in 1933.

The new center quickly disappeared into oblivion again but de Vries de Heekelingen remained an active agent of fascist internationalism in the 1930s, for whom ideas of Aryan superiority and antisemitism became increasingly focal. This became particularly evident in his conspiratorial and antisemitic work published in 1937 called *Israël. Son passé. Son avenir* (Israel. Its past. Its future).[65] Therein, he constructed a millennia-old insurmountable opposition between the Christian civilization of the Aryan peoples and the materialistic, revolutionary Judaism, shaped by the spirit of the Talmud and allegedly striving for world domination. The book was translated into several European languages and circulated among international antisemitic networks. Consequently, de Vries de Heekelingen developed close ties to the German organizations IAdN and WD, who, as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, developed their own variants of fascist internationalism. James Strachey Barnes, in contrast, continued to support the Fascist regime in Italy, although his writings also became gradually more antisemitic. In the 1930s, Barnes worked for the Reuter's news agency and later as foreign editor of the US periodical *Social Justice* published by the demagogue Charles Coughlin, while developing a close relationship with the fascist US poet Ezra Pound.[66] These divergent paths of the two leading figures of CINEF underscore the adaptability and fluidity of ideas around fascist internationalism.

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Despite its brief period of existence, CINEF constituted a crucial starting point for the history of fascist internationalism emanating from Fascist Italy. While acknowledging Italy's specific context and historical singularity, CINEF constructed fascism as a phenomenon with 'universal' implications, whose 'inexorable laws of nature' and 'universal principles' could be detached from the Italian role model. These fascist principles, such as nationalism, solidarity, disciplinary authority, religion, and a strong state, functioned as inclusive open signifiers to make the model more attractive abroad. Overall, the think tank stressed that fas-

65 Herrman de Vries de Heekelingen, *Israel, son passé, son avenir* (Paris: Libr. Académique Perrin, 1937).

66 On Barnes' career in the 1930s, see Bradshaw and Smith, "Ezra Pound, James Strachey Barnes ('The Italian Lord Haw-Haw') and Italian Fascism".

cism could not simply be copied from Italy but had to be adopted according to national conditions, traditions, history, and 'taste' in each country.

CINEF's key utopian message was that only implementing fascism in other countries beyond Italy would create the precondition to developing 'true' (fascist) internationalism based on mutual respect between fascist nations and movements. This internationalism was juxtaposed with the dangerous 'selfishness' and materialism of liberalism and communism, illustrating how fascist internationalism was conceptualized as a counter-reaction to competing forms of internationalism.

Significantly, CINEF did not present nationalism and internationalism as antonyms. As Paul Jackson points out, CINEF's "theme of promoting internationalism" was "somewhat at odds with a narrow and radical vision of the "palingenesis," or rebirth, of the national community that generic fascism theorists often highlight as forming the core of all true fascisms".[67] Similarly, I reason that CINEF conceptualized fascist internationalism as an ideology that accepted and even promoted each nation's own path to a national rebirth, as pursued by nascent fascist movements all over Europe, based on mutual respect, vague universal fascist principles, and nationalism. At the same time, CAUR downplayed potentially expansionist and geopolitical elements of the Italian Fascist regime while foregrounding a peaceful mission of fascist internationalism. Only if fascism based on a program of nationalism would succeed in each country, CINEF argued awkwardly, a new, utopian, long-lasting international peace order – one freed from the remnants of the French Revolution and the aberrations of modernity as epitomized by liberalism and communism – would become possible. This was a key legitimization of fascist internationalism, which we shall see in various permutations in the following chapters. As a think tank and propaganda center, CINEF did not itself enable direct international cooperation among fascist movements. Instead, the Lausanne-based organization prepared the intellectual ground and nurtured ideas on which later attempts to create a Fascist International could build.

67 Jackson, "James Strachey Barnes and the Fascist Revolution", 191.

Chapter 2
"Towards the Fascist International": The Action Committees for the Universality of Rome and the Montreux Front

Benito Mussolini repeated the universal mission of Italian Fascism and its superiority as a role model during the celebrations of the decennial of the March of Rome in October 1932, declaring, "In ten years Europe will be Fascist or Fascisized".[1] At this time, proponents from the NSDAP, on the upswing since their major election successes in July 1932 (gaining 37% in the German federal election), started repudiating Italian claims of political and ideological leadership within the European camp of ultranationalist political movements. The Volta Congress on Europe, which took place in Rome between November 14–20, 1932, revealed this new Italo-German ideological rivalry in a nutshell.[2]

From the perspective of the Italian organizers, the Volta Congress "proposed Fascist Italy, the heir to the traditions of ancient Rome, as a guiding force for a new Europe and as a model of order and stability".[3] In contrast, the Nazi German delegation headed by the Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg refuted the idea of Italian hegemony in Europe. This was demonstrated in Rosenberg's speech "Crisis and Rebirth of Europe" (*Krisis und Neugeburt Europas*), which was one of the first official speeches given by a German Nazi to an international forum.[4] For Rosenberg, the 'blood myth' and racial segregation came first as a solution to the European crisis, turning down any universal theories and implicitly the Italian idea of universal fascism.[5] Outraged Italian delegates reacted with 'anti-racist' criticism of Rosenberg's speech, which became a constant theme in the following years in the Italian argumentation against Nazism. A Spanish spectator at the Volta Congress, Ernesto Giménez Caballero, interpreted this Italo-German conflict in a his-

1 Cited in Bauerkämper, "Transnational Fascism", 214.

2 On the Volta Congress, see Bernd Sösemann, "L'idea dell'Europa: Die faschistische Volta-Konferenz von 1932 und der nationalsozialistische Kongreß von 1941 im Kontext der Europa-Konzeptionen des 20. Jahrhunderts", *Vigonianae* 1.1 (2010): 49–95.

3 Monica Fioravanzo, "Italian Fascism from a Transnational Perspective: The Debate on the New European Order (1930–1945)", edited by Arnd Bauerkämper and Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, in *Fascism without Borders. Transnational Connections and Cooperation between Movements and Regimes in Europe from 1918 to 1945* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2017), 243–263, 245.

4 Cf. Ernst Piper, *Alfred Rosenberg: Hitlers Chefideologe* (Munich: Pantheon, 2007), 163–164.

5 Cf. Fioravanzo, "Italian Fascism from a Transnational Perspective", 246; Scholz, "Italienischer Faschismus als 'Export'-Artikel (1927–1935)", 219–220.

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torical tradition: "they are destined to fight the eternal struggle of Austria against Italy, Luther against the Vicar of Christ, the Emperor against Rome".[6] Thus, "instead of a common (fascist) European consciousness, a fundamental ideological dissent" was revealed at the conference, presenting German Nazism to the public as a new competitor to Italian Fascism.[7]

Throughout the interwar period, the relationship between Italian Fascism and German Nazism remained highly ambivalent, even though Adolf Hitler personally admired Benito Mussolini and Nazi Germany copied various elements from Fascist Italy, including the Roman salute.[8] Especially in the early 1930s, both major European fascist movements foregrounded ideological differences to mark their particularism within a potential broader fascist party family. The German NSDAP constructed *völkisch* notions of Nordic-Aryan racism blended with radical antisemitism in opposition to Italian Fascism and its policy of a corporative society based on solidarity. The Italians, on the other hand, "felt their form of fascism superior to Nazism in transcending the limits of both mainstream liberal-positivists and Marxism", due to "their embrace of corporatism, totalitarianism and Gentilian 'spirit' as opposed to crudely deterministic biological racism".[9] This ideological rivalry played a decisive role when Italian fascist internationalism transformed in the early 1930s due to the rise of the NSDAP and the coming of the 'Third Reich' from 1933 onward.

Although Italian Fascism denounced German biological racism, it was itself, of course, not free of racism; quite the contrary. Racial ideas related to the degeneration and rebirth of peoples were a widespread European belief linked to the long history of European colonialism. Notions of natural hierarchies between different cultures, peoples, and races characterized this worldview. In the discourse of universal fascism, racism featured in the idea of a civilizing mission connected to the 'spiritual superiority' of Latin civilization emanating from Rome. Racism became particularly apparent in the Italian colonies, such as Fascist East Africa, which was formed in 1936 after the Italian victory in the Italo-Ethiopian War (1935–1936).[10] Thus, newer research questioned the dichotomy between German

6 Cited in Simone Muraca, "The 'New Catholicity' of Fascism", *Fascism. Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 13.1 (2024): 38–57, 54.

7 Scholz, "Italienischer Faschismus als 'Export'-Artikel (1927–1935)", 220.

8 See Christian Goeschel, "A Parallel History?: Rethinking the Relationship between Italy and Germany, ca. 1860–1945", *The Journal of Modern History* 88 (2016): 610–632; Christian Goeschel, *Mussolini and Hitler*: *The Forging of the Fascist Alliance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018).

9 Roberts, *Fascist Interactions*, 140.

10 See Angelica Pesarini, "'Blood Is Thicker than Water': The Materialisation of the Racial Body in Fascist East Africa", *Zapruder World: An International Journal for the History of Social Conflict* 4 (2017).

biological racism and Italian 'cultural' racism, highlighting that ideas of racism flourished in Mussolini's state and even impacted Nazi Germany long before the official implementation of racial laws in Italy in 1938.[11]

Nonetheless, in the early 1930s, for Italian Fascists, German Nazis, and some other nascent fascist movements, the role of explicitly biological racism and antisemitism in contrast to 'cultural' racism within fascist ideology was vital to differentiate between the two competing major fascist movements. As Patrick Bernhard argues convincingly, "making a sharp distinction between a 'German' [biological] and an 'Italian' [cultural] way of racism helped them to construct proper identities".[12] Leading Italian Fascists, even including ardent antisemites, attacked the biological and deterministic racism of German Nazism as ahistorical, utopian, and dangerously expansionist.[13] Furthermore, the Italian meaning of the term *razza* (race) was not equal to the German term *Rasse*.[14] Based on Italian linguistic tradition, Italian Fascists primarily used the term, at least before 1938, in a cultural sense synonymously with 'people' or 'nation'. It was thus closely tied to the idea of *romanità*, and not used as a biological category.[15] In contrast, in Nazi terminology, the Nordic-Aryan *Rasse* was both an allegedly 'scientific' as well as 'transcendental' deterministic category, which was crucial for underlining who belonged to the constructed German *Volk*, and who did not, particularly the Jews and other minorities. Marco Cuzzi coined the metaphorical term of the 'ideological Brenner pass' between the two rivals to describe this contemporary juxtaposition of Italian Fascism and German Nazism. The metaphor refers to the Brenner mountain pass through the Alps forming the border between Italy and Austria.[16]

In this vein, most historians interpret the 'internationalization' of Fascist Italy in the early 1930s, which led to the foundation of the Italian organization CAUR (1933–1939), primarily as a counter-reaction to Hitler's ascension to power

11 Cf. Patrick Bernhard, "Blueprints of Totalitarianism: How Racist Policies in Fascist Italy Inspired and Informed Nazi Germany", *Fascism: Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 6.2 (2017): 127–162.

12 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* 24.1 (2019): 97–114, 99.

13 Cf. Kye J. Allen, "An Anarchical Society (of Fascist States): Theorising Illiberal Solidarism", *Review of International Studies* 48.3 (2022): 583–603, 595.

14 On the conceptual history of the term *Rasse*, see Werner Conze, "Rasse", in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe 4. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland,* edited by Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, and Reinhart Koselleck (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1984), 135–178.

15 Cf. Andrea Hoffend, *Zwischen Kultur-Achse und Kulturkampf: Die Beziehungen zwischen 'Drittem Reich' und faschistischem Italien in den Bereichen Medien, Kunst, Wissenschaft und Rassenfragen* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1998), 362.

16 Cuzzi, *L'internazionale delle camicie nere*, 75.

in Germany in 1933. In his seminal work published in 1972, Michael Ledeen describes CAUR as "the first institutionalization of the ideology of universal fascism", envisioned as a counter-project to the rise of Nazi Germany.[17] Since then, various historians have agreed that CAUR was primarily directed against the increasing Nazi German appeal on foreign movements.[18] Daniel Hedinger criticizes that this reading of Italian fascist internationalism as a mere counter-product to the rise of Nazi Germany ignores contemporary relations of influence and dependence and only seems plausible ex-post.[19] Nevertheless, Italian Fascist protagonists, including *Il Duce*, perceived the new Nazi government in Germany from January 1933 onward as a double threat. "On the one hand, it casted Italian fascism into the shade, and with it Mussolini's own lustre as political and ideological leader, and on the other it acted as a magnet, or a pattern, for other fascist or quasi-fascist movements across Europe".[20]

In this broader historical context, the following chapter revisits CAUR, and the famous Montreux Congress hosted in December 1934, and offers a reinterpretation, in which the Italo-German rivalry appears as a dominant, but not the only, feature of Italian fascist internationalism. The competition between the two major fascist regimes was crucial because Italian 'internationalists' believed that fascist movements in other countries were essential in implementing universal fascism abroad, as outlined previously in CINEF's agenda. A critical precondition was that these foreign fascists recognized Italy's hegemonic position as a role model, a position that was jeopardized by Hitler's meteoric rise to power in 1933. On the other hand, the analysis moves beyond the Italo-German rivalry by emphasizing how the paternalistic visions of Italian fascist internationalism harmonized and clashed at once with various minor fascist parties.

By analyzing CAUR from a transnational perspective, it is demonstrated how certain European fascist politicians contested and transformed the agenda of the Italian organization, thereby reevaluating existing center-periphery relations in European fascism. In contrast to most other research on CAUR so far, this chapter pays specific attention to the aftermath of the Montreux Congress, including three international meetings of the permanent commission in 1935.[21] These meet-

17 Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*, 109.

18 See, for instance, Jerzy W. Borejsza, *Schulen des Hasses*: *Faschistische Systeme in Europa* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1999), 252; Arnd Bauerkämper, *Der Faschismus in Europa 1918–1945* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2006), 171; Garau, "The Internationalisation of Italian Fascism", 59; Allen, "An Anarchical Society (of Fascist States)", 595–597.

19 Hedinger, *Die Achse: Berlin, Rom, Tokio*, 91–92.

20 Manta, "The 'National Socialist Party of Greece' and its Contacts with Italy", 94.

21 For an exception, see Longo, "I tentativi per la costituzione di un'internazionale fascista".

ings were part of CAUR's attempts to represent a unified 'Montreux Front' of fascist movements directed against its liberal and communist adversaries. CAUR used this term 'Montreux Front' when referring to the resolutions published after the Montreux Congress, presumably to avoid the term 'Fascist International'. In the course of 1935, CAUR conceptualized the Montreux Front as a powerful antithesis to Geneva, meaning the League of Nations. The Montreux Front became a synonym for a transformed form of fascist internationalism that gradually included explicitly racist, colonialist, and antisemitic notions (in sharp contrast to CINEF's ideology).

The chapter chronologically traces how Italians and non-Italians envisioned a 'Fascist International' from 1930 on, leading to the foundation of CAUR in 1933. This organization orchestrated the Montreux Congress in December 1934, which became the starting point of the Montreux Front. Henceforth, international cooperation among fascist movements and regimes changed in the 'glocal' context of the Italo-Ethiopian War (1935–1936) and the establishment of the Rome-Berlin Axis (1936). In particular, the Montreux Front was galvanized by the actions of the Communist International and the discussion of sanctions against Fascist Italy by the League of Nations. The period from 1935 onward represents the discrepancy between far-reaching plans for organizing fascist international cooperation in the future and the failed implementation in practice. Ideologically, fascist internationalism transformed by including formerly contested ideas of colonialism, explicit racism, white supremacism, and antisemitism. Increasingly Italian Fascists also reached out to potential partners beyond Europe. Minor European fascist movements had an essential impact on the transformation of the Italian agenda. Simultaneously, they were challenged by Italy's new imperialist outlook, which was one of the various reasons that led to the decline of the Montreux Front and CAUR.

Visionaries of a Fascist International: Asvero Gravelli and Arthur Fonjallaz

In the early 1930s, several Italian intellectuals pondered the creation of a new institution that would propagate the cultural and ideological claim to the supremacy of Italian Fascism abroad.[22] Among these, Asvero Gravelli emerged as the "pre-eminent proponent of international fascism".[23] From the beginning of the

22 Cf. Griffin, "Europe for the Europeans", 142.

23 Allen, "An Anarchical Society (of Fascist States)", 589.

new decade, the editor of the influential journal *Antieuropa* outlined strategies to create a network of foreign movements detected as 'fascists' under the guidance of Italian Fascism.[24] Gravelli proposed the creation of a "Fascist International" (*Internazionale fascista*) to Mussolini in 1930. Two years later, Gravelli published these plans in a book with the revealing title *Verso l'internazionale fascista* (Towards the Fascist International, 1932).[25] Hence, the journalist became one of the first fascists who applied the term 'international' in an affirmative sense while still avoiding the tern internationalism (*internazionalismo*) because the latter was connoted with Marxist terminology.[26]

Gravelli's vision was essentially a defensive and geostrategic one directed against the Communist International, Richard Nikolaus Coudenhove-Kalergi's Pan-Europa movement, and the idea of a Federal European Union articulated in 1929–1930 by the French stateman Aristide Briand.[27] This illustrates a central argument of this book, which argues that visions of fascist internationalism emerged as counter-reactions to other forms of internationalism and Europeanism in the interwar period. Gravelli's project was based on the notion of *Antieuropa*, combining corporatism, Catholicism, a cult of youth, and a palingenesis of the entire European continent through the diffusion of fascism, which ought to transcend liberalism and democracy. Thus, Gravelli's vision was not against European cooperation per se, but *anti* in overcoming "the spiritual and material crisis" of current Europe "under the liberal principles of the French Revolution".[28] It is interesting to note Gravelli's opposition to the Pan-European Union and Coudenhove-Kalergi, who, as recent research shows, himself pushed for cooperation between democrats and fascists within Europe in the early 1930s.[29]

What was the position of non-Italian fascist movements in this vision of a Fascist International? Kye Allen suggests that Gravelli envisioned a "somewhat egalitarian Europe" based on "illiberal solidarism", without indicating any territorial domination of Fascist Italy.[30] In fact, in the tradition of CINEF, Gravelli did not demand potential participating fascist movements from abroad to concede their national integrity but merely asked them to cooperate in a "common search" for

24 Cf. Scholz, "Italienischer Faschismus als 'Export'-Artikel (1927–1935)", 23.

25 Asvero Gravelli, *Verso l'internazionale fascista* (Rome: Nuova Europa, 1932).

26 Cf. Scholz, "Italienischer Faschismus als 'Export'-Artikel (1927–1935)", 161–162.

27 Cf. Kallis, "From CAUR to EUR", 366.

28 Asvero Gravelli, "Towards a Fascist Europe", in *Fascism,* edited by Roger Griffin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 66–67, 66.

29 See Michael Thöndl, *Richard Nikolaus Graf Coudenhove-Kalergi, die „Paneuropa-Union" und der Faschismus 1923–1944* (Leipzig: Leipziger UV, 2024).

30 Allen, "An Anarchical Society (of Fascist States)", 597.

the "expression of national genius" under the spiritual guidance of Fascist Italy.[31] Gravelli discussed his plans with foreign sympathizers such as the German paramilitary Waldemar Pabst, infamously known for ordering the murder of Rosa Luxemburg in 1919. Pabst is a "paramount example" of a transnational "fascist broker", who mediated between fascist parties and milieus in Italy, Germany, and Austria in the interwar period.[32] In the early 1930s, Pabst briefly dreamt of establishing a so-called White International under the spiritual leadership of Fascist Italy, inspired by ideas of universal fascism, but later altered his vision due to the rise of Nazi Germany.[33] The role of Waldemar Pabst shows that fascist sympathizers from outside Mussolini's regime also articulated ideas of a Fascist International in the early 1930s.

The Swiss fascist Arthur Fonjallaz is another key example of a non-Italian agent of fascist internationalism, linked to admiration for the Italian regime. He was a former colonel of the Swiss army and leading member of the Swiss Home Guard (*Heimatwehr*), a paramilitary organization with an antisemitic, anti-Masonic, and anticommunist outlook. In 1929, Fonjallaz proposed to Italian officials in Berne to create a pro-Italian Swiss press agency (similar to the existing CINEF). In the following years, he was granted multiple audiences with Mussolini, whom he admired. At several of these meetings in 1932, Fonjallaz emphasized the necessity to form a "Fascist International" that could promote ideas of fascism in Europe and effectively combat the nemesis of all fascists, the Communist International.[34] A year later, Fonjallaz set up the FFS as a Swiss copy of the Italian PNF, encouraged and financed by Mussolini's regime.[35]

The visions of fascist internationalism articulated by CINEF, Gravelli, Pabst, and Fonjallaz all emphasized Italy's leading role in Europe in opposition to other competing forms of liberal, 'pan-European', and communist internationalism. However, the Italian state still lacked an official institution, which could implement fascist internationalism with other countries in practice. Adolf Hitler's appointment as Chancellor of Germany in January 1933 was the ultimate impetus to create such an organization while combatting the ideological German influence

31 Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*, 89.

32 See Toro, "Fascist Transnationalism", 15.

33 See Manfred Wichmann, "Die Konzeption einer Weißen Internationale bei Waldemar Pabst", in *Wegbereiter des Nationalsozialismus. Personen, Organisationen und Netzwerke der extremen Rechten zwischen 1918 und 1933*, edited by Daniel Schmidt, Michael Sturm, and Massimiliano Livi (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2015), 125–140.

34 Cf. Mauro Cerutti, "Mussolini bailleur de fonds des fascistes suisses: Les relations entre le colonel Arthur Fonjallaz et le Duce, à la lumière de nouveaux documents italiens", *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 35.1 (1985): 21–46.

35 On Fonjallaz, the FFS, and its relation to Fascist Italy, see Chapter 5.

on other potentially fascist movements. This culminated in the foundation of CAUR on July 15, 1933 as the first embodiment of a Fascist International.

Eugenio Coselschi and the Foundation of the Action Committees for the Universality of Rome in 1933

Benito Mussolini assigned Eugenio Coselschi to preside over CAUR, who was a war veteran, lawyer, and member of the Italian Chamber of Deputies.[36] He was born in Firenze in 1888 and belonged to the old guard of Italian Fascism. Coselschi had been part of Gabriele D'Annunzio's infamous Fiume conquest in 1919–1920 and became a member of the PNF in 1924. Mussolini saw him as a more suitable candidate than Asvero Gravelli because of Coselschi's experience as the leader of various organizations, such as the National Association of War Volunteers (*Associazione Nazionale Volontari di Guerra*), founded in 1919.[37] Coselschi had long pondered Italian irredentist ambitions concerning the region of Dalmatia in Yugoslavia, resulting in the foundation of the Dalmatic Action Committees (*Comitati d'Azione Dalmatica*, 1929). In the early 1930s, he also planned the foundation of organizations called the Italian Imperialist League (*Lega Imperialista Italiana*) and League of Rome (*Lega di Roma*). Beyond this irredentist outlook, Coselschi was a pragmatic figure who did not belong to any particular intellectual strand of Italian Fascism. Due to his many tactical and opportunistic ideological changes, Marco Cuzzi describes Coselschi as a "mysterious and almost Mephistophelian" character whose real intentions were often unfathomable.[38]

In its foundational years, CAUR operated relatively autonomous as an organization within the Italian Fascist state. At first, Coselschi only had to answer to Mussolini directly. Coselschi argued in a letter to the Italian dictator that the organization's "freedom (albeit apparent) from any official constraint may constitute an important organ of propaganda of Mussolini's thought in the world".[39] CAUR's headquarters were established in Rome, first in a house at Via Gregoriana 54 and from 1935 in the Palazzo Caetani, a still existing impressive building from the sixteenth century in Via Botteghe Oscure 32. The first statutes, published in

36 On Coselschi's biography, see Cuzzi, *L'internazionalee delle camicie nere*, 75–86.

37 See Michael Arthur Ledeen, *The First Duce*: *D'Annunzio at Fiume* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977).

38 Cuzzi, *L'internazionale delle camicie nere*, 14.

39 Cited in Scholz, "Italienischer Faschismus als 'Export'-Artikel (1927–1935)", 304.

1933, presented CAUR as a propagandistic cultural organization.[40] The organizational structure consisted of a president (Eugenio Coselschi), a secretary (Guido Baroni), a Central Council, a General Council, and individual action committees with their own presidents within and outside Italy. According to the statutes, Italians and foreigners of both sexes could become members if they had an "impeccable fascist attitude" and were committed to the Italian notions of *romanità* and *universalità*.[41] Accordingly, member fees, donations, and eventual contributions from private and public entities would ensure the financing. This obscured the fact that CAUR received a yearly budget of 300,000 lire from the Italian Foreign Ministry (and Coselschi was continuously haggling for more financial aid from Italian state authorities).[42] This obfuscation of funding from the state was, as also outlined in the case of CINEF, a typical feature of agencies of fascist internationalism.

CAUR disseminated journals, books, and brochures to its domestic and international partners, including *Roma Universa*, a weekly bulletin in Italian and French. These publications highlighted various themes linked to universal fascism, partly mirroring CINEF's agenda. One brochure emphasized Italian corporatism's universal character and role model effect for other peoples.[43] In a preface, Eugenio Coselschi praised Italian corporatism as a revolutionary way from individual to collective consciousness beyond Bolshevist materialism. Another booklet outlined several Italian youth organizations such as the National Balilla Foundation (*Opera Nazionale Balilla)* and the Combatant Juvenile Fasces (*Fascsi Giovanili di Combattimento)* as role models for foreign states and movements worldwide, including the Turkish, Japanese, and German governments.[44] Hence, CAUR repeatedly presented Fascist Italy as a vanguard of Europe and the world.

A manifesto that preceded the statutes summarized the ideology of CAUR in its foundational years. The text was articulated as an antithesis to Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto* from 1848, highlighting the mimetic character of CAUR in reaction to communist internationalism. The manifesto laid out the most important, recurring topics of CAUR's understanding of fascist internationalism. The in-

40 CAUR, *Manifesto statuto comitati d'azione per la universalità di Roma = Manifest Statut des Zentralrates der Aktionskomitees für die Universalität von Rom* (Rome: Le Bureau de Presse des Comités d'Action pour l'Universalité de Rome, 1933).

41 Cf. CAUR, *Manifesto statuto comitati d'azione per la universalità di Roma*, 5–8.

42 Cf. Scholz, "Italienischer Faschismus als 'Export'-Artikel (1927–1935)", 317–319.

43 CAUR, *Das Organisationsfundament der Korporationen*: *Mit einem Vorwort von E. Coselschi, Präsident der Aktionskomitees für die Universalität von Rom* (Rome: Le Bureau de Presse des Comités d'Action pour l'Universalité de Rome, 1934).

44 Cf. CAUR, *The Rising Generations in the Thirteenth Year of the Fascist Revolution* (Rome: Le Bureau de Presse des Comités d'Action pour l'Universalité de Rome, 1934), 10.

tellectual starting point was the conviction of a crisis and decay of Europe, regarded as endangered by Bolshevism and liberalism. Revolutionary palingenesis should overcome this crisis under the guidance of Mussolini and Rome, linked to the doctrine of corporatism. The manifesto outlined the cooperation among peoples and the creation of "international peace" as the ultimate goal of CAUR.[45]

In contrast to Gravelli's almost egalitarian outlook, Coselschi envisioned Italian fascist internationalism in an unambiguously "imperial and overtly paternalistic manner".[46] He stressed universal fascism as a spiritual global force enabling a moral and political renewal of Europe and the world. Coselschi rejected Asvero Gravelli's term of a 'Fascist International' despite building on his work ideologically. This was apparent at the Montreux Congress in December 1934 when Coselschi explicitly denied to speak of a 'Fascist International' due to the 'Marxist' implications of the term 'International'.[47] Instead, the CAUR president stressed the notion of the 'universality of Rome' (*Universalitá di Roma*), based on a palingenetic myth of the ancient and eternal city of Rome. For Coselschi, "the idea of Rome was more than the single most important inspiration for Italian Fascism; it was a force much bigger than any single historical agency, which had given Fascism an inter-national, pan-European, and indeed universalist thrust".[48] This belief in the myth of Rome was echoed in the Italian title of the new organization: Comitati d'Azione per *l'Universalità di Roma.*

Coselschi obfuscated his imperialist-paternalistic vision with a rhetorical focus on the more innocuous signifiers Rome and *romanità*, which could be filled with many meanings.[49] The CAUR statutes presented *Romanità* as Europe's most excellent 'spiritual' idea, heralding Mussolini as the builder and leader of a new world truth. CAUR also invoked the myth of ancient Rome in its symbol (used in letters and publications), which depicted the mythical founders of Rome, the twin brothers Romulus and Remus, and the she-wolf that suckled them on Capitoline Hill.[50] Thus, CAUR employed the term Rome as a powerful metonymy for Italian Fascism, functioning, as Aristotle Kallis puts it, "as a premise that appeared both less troubling to non-Italian movements and potentially more inclusive".[51]

In contrast to these initial plans, "the universality of Rome" became a troublesome term for many fascist movements from abroad. Foreigners often had no

45 Cf. CAUR, *Manifesto statuto comitati d'azione per la universalità di Roma*, 1–3.
46 Cf. Kallis, "From CAUR to EUR", 368.
47 Cf. CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 39.
48 Kallis, *The Third Rome, 1922–1943*, 230.
49 Cf. Scholz, "Italienischer Faschismus als 'Export'-Artikel (1927–1935)", 300.
50 Cf. Manta, "The 'National Socialist Party of Greece' and its Contacts with Italy", 93.
51 Kallis, *The Third Rome, 1922–1943*, 232.

idea about the deeper meaning of this intrinsically Italian notion. For instance, the term was wrongly translated into Norwegian in a letter sent from a Spanish CAUR member to the Norwegian party NS. The translator wrote "movements originating in Rome" (*som har sitt upspring i Roma*) with a question mark instead of "movements under the leadership of the universality of Rome".[52] Moreover, if fascists from other countries understood the term, they felt challenged by its hegemonic premises, as will be discussed further down.

Thus, from the beginning, Coselschi was confronted with the tension of how a hegemonic Fascist Italy could become a role model for other European nationalist parties without endangering their sovereignty. The issue was raised at a banquet celebrating the foundation of CAUR in the summer of 1933. Next to Coselschi, Asvero Gravelli, and other Italians, the Dutch journalist Simon P. Ooms participated as one of few foreigners. Ooms was loosely connected to the Dutch fascist group Black Front (*Zwart Front*). Mirroring claims that James Strachey Barnes from the CINEF had already made in *Universal Aspects of Fascism* five years earlier, Ooms pointed out that CAUR had to guarantee the independence of each particular fascist movement, if its project of fascist internationalism was to succeed.[53] This ambiguous interplay between the national autonomy of the international partners and Italian hegemony would become one of the many challenges for CAUR's project of building a transnational network with like-minded fascist movements.

Aspirations and Challenges of Building a Network of Fascist Movements

In the autumn of 1934, the Florentine Fascist Alberto Luchini traveled to the village of Bovrup in Southern Denmark to visit Frits Clausen, the leader of the small DNSAP. Luchini was sent by CAUR to approach putative fascist movements in northern Europe. The mission was to invite their leaders to the world's first international fascist congress, which would take place on December 16–17, 1934 in Montreux, Switzerland. When Luchini met Clausen, he explained CAUR's wish to unite all European fascist movements under the banner of "the universality of Rome" (*Universalità di Roma*).[54] For the Italian visitor, it was crystal clear what he meant when articulating the supremacy of Fascist Italy and the ideology of

52 Letter from Pedro del Real Arribas to Vidkun Quisling, and Norwegian translation, June 25, 1935: [RA Oslo], PA 0760 F Fd L0038.

53 Cf. Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*, 107–108.

54 Cf. Lauridsen, "*Føreren har ordet!*", 223.

universal fascism as a 'third way' beyond liberalism and communism. Clausen, in turn, a medical doctor from the Danish countryside, misunderstood Luchini when they communicated in a "poor mixture of Italian and German". Clausen, whose party tended to take German Nazism as its role model, had never heard of the Italian notion of the "universality of Rome" and erroneously concluded that the conference would take place in the "University of Rome".[55] The episode illustrates the aspirations and challenges of CAUR's undertaking to build a network of supposedly kindred fascist individuals and movements in Europe in the 1930s.

Eugenio Coselschi employed a group of Italian Fascists assigned to specific geographical regions and nations, acting as "area managers".[56] These associates such as Alberto Luchini traveled around the continent, reaching out to potential members who could join CAUR and establish national 'action committees' abroad. CAUR's activities resulted in a rapid growth of membership.[57] According to an exaggerated working report to Mussolini in October 1933, Coselschi 'succeeded' in establishing committees in Switzerland, Germany, France, Romania, Hungary, and Greece, but notably also in the United States and Tunisia, stressing that CAUR did not exclude the non-European world entirely.[58] However, due to the ideological emphasis on a European rebirth and practical reasons (travels to various parts of Europe were more feasible than to far-flung regions on other continents), Europe was predestined as the starting point and core region, from which a united fascist front under Italian leadership was to emerge.

From early on, Coselschi intended to host an international conference. The idea was to deepen the contact with the established national action committees, create a bond between important figures from European nationalist, anticommunist, and putative fascist parties, and proclaim a strong united front under Italian leadership as a counterweight to the Communist International. In April 1934, CAUR had already identified allegedly fascist movements in 39 countries.[59] In the second half of 1934, Coselschi started to invite these potential allies to the congress that would take place in Montreux in December 1934.

The underlying objective was to find international partners that would willingly adopt CAUR's main agenda and proclaim the message of universal fascism to Europe and the world. Furthermore, Coselschi and his associates pursued more

55 Cf. Lauridsen, "*Føreren har ordet!*", 223; 406.

56 Cf. Cuzzi, *L'internazionale delle camicie nere*, 171–172.

57 Cf. Manta, "The 'National Socialist Party of Greece' and its Contacts with Italy", 95; Stanley G. Payne, *Fascism in Spain 1923–1977* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 106.

58 Scholz, "Italienischer Faschismus als 'Export'-Artikel (1927–1935)", 319.

59 Stanley G. Payne, "Fascist Italy and Spain, 1922–45", *Mediterranean Historical Review* 13.1–2 (1998): 99–115, 105–106.

obscure objectives. Journeys abroad resulted in numerous reports sent directly to Mussolini about the political situation in the visited regions.[60] Similar to the subversive and conspiratorial activities of the International Liaison Department of the Communist International, CAUR thus became involved in "darker and often illegal external activities [. . .] most frequently espionage".[61]

For various foreign intellectuals, writers, and politicians, in turn, the main objectives often differed massively. For them, cooperation with CAUR promised unique opportunities, such as political access to the Italian government and state apparatus. The Italian organization often helped to organize political pilgrimages to Rome. In 1933–1934 alone, CAUR invited multiple high-ranking representatives from far-right parties to its headquarters in Rome, notably Arthur Fonjallaz from the FFS, Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg, the chief of the Austrian Home Guard (*Heimwehr*), and Aleksandar Tsankov Staliyski, the head of the Bulgarian National Fascist Union.[62] In January 1938, the Romanian CAUR committee organized the largest pilgrimage: 1,500 Romanians visited Rome and demonstrated their admiration for Mussolini's Italy. Such political pilgrimages to the capital of Fascist Italy included visits to historical sites, which the visitors often perceived as a profound spiritual experience, thus strengthening the myth of Rome.[63] Furthermore, these visits presented a distinctive occasion for leaders from minor parties to secure meetings with their role model, Benito Mussolini, and to obtain financial support.

The connection of a fascist movement to Italian Fascism in general and to CAUR in particular was not only a matter of ideological affiliation, but also of monetary interests. Several examples illustrate that material considerations played a crucial role during these visits, next to aforementioned case of Arthur Fonjallaz's FFS. Marcel Bucard from the Francist Movement (*Mouvement Franciste*, MF) became CAUR's partner in France after an audience with Mussolini in April 1934. In the following, Bucard participated in multiple CAUR meetings, and Fascist Italy rewarded his cooperation by funding the MF.[64] Another example was the Greek National Socialist Party (Ελληνικό Εθνικό Σοσιαλιστικό Κόμμα)

60 Cuzzi, *L'internazionale delle camicie nere*, 110.

61 Manta, "The 'National Socialist Party of Greece' and its Contacts with Italy", 95.

62 See Georgina Taranu, 'Romanians visiting Musollini's Italy: Interwar Ideological Pilgrimages as efficient Propaganda Tools', *Analele Universităţii „Ovidius" din Constanţa – Seria Ştiinţe Politice. Annals of the „Ovidius" University of Constanţa – Political Science Series* 6 (2017): 35–59, 52–56.

63 Cf. Kallis, *The Third Rome, 1922–1943*, 235–243.

64 Mussolini funded Bucard's party with 100,000 lira. Cuzzi, *L'internazionale delle camicie nere*, 122. On Marcel Bucard, see Arnaud Jacomet, 'Les Chefs de Francisme: Marcel Bucard et Paul Guiraud', *Revue d'histoire de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale* 25.97 (1975): 45–66.

headed by George S. Mercouris, which was financed by CAUR and, in return, acted as an advertiser of Italian Fascism in Greece.[65] This underlines the asymmetrical financial dependency between 'the center' of a Fascist regime with powerful resources and 'the periphery' of minor parties from abroad with restricted financial means.

In addition to the monetary interest, one of the desired benefits was to increase knowledge of the ideology, structure, and policies of Fascist Italy, which parties abroad (including those not on the CAUR payroll) regarded as a successful model for gaining political power in their own countries. One example was the head of the Swedish CAUR committee, Rütger Essén, a writer, journalist, and influential member of the Swedish SNU.[66] Becoming a member of CAUR was an attractive way to expand his existing international network and to gain access to Italian inside information, which Essén used in his articles and books on foreign political issues. Similarly, Coselschi persuaded Vidkun Quisling from the Norwegian NS to join CAUR because the latter wished for a learning effect. In the response to Coselschi's invitation to the Montreux Congress, Quisling explained that "our movement has so much to learn" from Fascist Italy.[67] Hence, cooperation between supposedly like-minded partners was an auspicious offer for both sides.

Numerous obstacles disturbed the genesis of CAUR's international network. A first issue was that CAUR lacked an official codification of Italian Fascist doctrine to decide which allegedly fascist movements abroad were considered 'fascist', illustrating that 'fascism' was contemporaneously a contested concept. This obstacle made the inclusion and exclusion of potential partners arbitrary and dependent on the personal opinions and skills of the different CAUR envoys. In many European countries, several competing parties could count as 'fascist', leading to the question of whom to contact and invite to the planned congress. Scandinavia provides a good case study for this issue, due to the "fragmented character of Nordic fascism" in the interwar period with various competing marginal parties.[68] In Sweden, CAUR associate Guido Cabalzar studied different right-wing parties and decided to avoid contact with several rivaling groups due the "racist Hitlerism" of

65 See Manta, 'The 'National Socialist Party of Greece' and its Contacts with Italy'.

66 Cf. Correspondence between Guido Baroni and Rütger Essén, 1935: [RA Marieberg], REA, Vol. 154. On the SNU and Rütger Essén, see Chapter 5.

67 Cited in Hans Fredrik Dahl, *Quisling*: *A Study in Treachery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 111.

68 Nicola Karcher, "National Socialisms in Clinch: The Case of Norwegian National Socialists in Interwar Germany", in *Nordic Fascism. Fragments of an Entangled History*, edited by Nicola Kristin Karcher and Markus Lundström (London: Routledge, 2022), 51–70, 64.

these groups, in accordance with CAUR's Germanophobia.[69] Instead, Cabalzar contacted Rütger Essén from the SNU, a youth organization still linked to the Swedish Conservatives at that point. In Denmark, in stark contrast, the outspoken Nazi and admirer of Hitler, Frits Clausen from the DNSAP, was deemed a good partner for CAUR. This points to a lack of consistency among the envoys in choosing potential partners abroad.

CAUR's activities in northern Europe also reveal how linguistic skills were crucial to developing a close relationship with potential partners. CAUR agent Nicola Pascazio traveled to Scandinavia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Finland.[70] However, he and his colleague Alberto Luchini had difficulties in establishing contacts with several movements because the Italians could not speak any Nordic languages or German, as an internal CAUR report criticized.[71] Thus, when Luchini visited Frits Clausen in the autumn of 1934, the latter complained about severe communication difficulties (as outlined above). In contrast, in the Swedish case, Luchini developed a friendship with Rütger Essén, a well-educated former diplomat who could understand Italian, even though both communicated in French.[72] Essén even visited Luchini in Florence in 1936, where the CAUR agent functioned as his tour guide.[73] These examples underline the importance of language skills and personal sympathies when organizing fascist internationalism in practice beyond ideological affinities.

CAUR was also challenged by the interventions of the international partners in attempts to oust their domestic rivals. For instance, in the Netherlands, CAUR approached both the Black Front headed by Arnold Meijer and, later on, the more successful National Socialist Movement in the Netherlands (*Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging in Nederland*, NSB).[74] Meijer reacted with an embittered request to CAUR's permanent commission, in which he accused the rival of being under the influence of Freemasonry and being subsidized by Nazi Germany. An NSB representative immediately rejected these allegations.[75] Likewise, when CAUR president Coselschi suggested at a meeting in September 1935 to cooperate

69 Cf. Marcos Cantera Carlomagno, "C.A.U.R.: Den fasicistiska internationalen", *Scandia* 60.2 (1994): 283–296, 289.

70 Cf. Jukka Nevakivi, "Three Aspects of Finnish-Italian Relations", *Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali* 73.3 (2006): 385–400, 393–394.

71 Cf. Scholz, "Italienischer Faschismus als 'Export'-Artikel (1927–1935)", 324–325.

72 E.g. Letter from Alberto Luchini to Rütger Essén, July 6, 1935: [RA Marieberg], REA, Vol. 10.

73 Cf. Letter from Alberto Luchini to Rütger Essén, December 16, 1936: [RA Marieberg], REA, Vol. 10.

74 Cf. CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 24; Letter from CAUR to Rütger Essén, February 2, 1935: [RA Marieberg], REA, Vol 154.

75 Cf. Longo, "I tentativi per la costituzione di un'internazionale fascista", 529–530.

with other French right-wing movements next to the MF, its leader Bucard reacted sharply by accusing his French rivals of representing 'capitalism' and for their lack of a genuine fascist theory.[76] These examples underline that minor movements not only passively reacted to the wishes of CAUR but also opposed and influenced the decisions of the Italian organization.

Another obstacle was that not all invited parties were interested in joining CAUR's project due to ideological differences and strategic motives that were often related to the tension between nationalism and internationalism. Some rejected or ignored CAUR's recruiting efforts because they did not consider themselves part of the ideological camp of fascism. The Irish party Fine Gael (Family of the Irish), for example, was established in 1933 with a corporatist program and briefly flirted with fascist ideas. However, its leadership turned down Coselschi's invitation to Montreux, foreshadowing that the party developed in a more conservative direction during the 1930s. Instead, CAUR had to make do with the much smaller spin-off from Fine Gael, the Irish Blueshirts led by Eoin O'Duffy, who gladly accepted the invitation.[77] For other movements, CAUR's hegemonic program promoting the universality of Rome was not acceptable. When a CAUR associate met Oswald Mosley, the leader of the British Union of Fascists (BUF) in June 1934, Mosley argued that the notion of the 'universality of Rome' was too foreign for a British movement.[78] Thus, Mosley decided to avoid affiliation with Coselschi's organization, even though he was an outspoken admirer of Italian Fascism in the early 1930s.

Mosley's refusal illustrates that the idea of belonging to a specifically 'fascist' and 'international' organization deterred some potential partners. George Oltramare, the so-called "petit Duce de Genève", withdrew the official participation of his Swiss National Union (*Union Nationale*) at the Montreux Congress when learning more about the objectives of CAUR, as a local socialist newspaper reported.[79] Immediately after the event, José Antonio Primo de Rivera, the founder of the Spanish Falange (*Falange Española*, FE), issued a press release clarifying that his party did not participate (even though he and another Falange member, Ernesto

76 Longo, "I tentativi per la costituzione di un'internazionale fascista", 563–564.

77 See Chapters 5 and 6.

78 Cf. Claudia Baldoli, "Anglo-Italian Fascist Solidarity? The Shift from Italophilia to Naziphilia in the BUF", in *The Culture of Fascism. Visions of the Far Right in Britain*, edited by Julie Gottlieb and Thomas Linehan (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2004), 147–161, 155–156.

79 See *Le Travail, Quotidien Socialiste*, December 17, 1934. On the Swiss National Union and Georges Oltramare, see Mauro Cerutti, "Georges Oltramare et l'Italie fasciste dans les années trente", *Studien und Quellen. Veröffentlichungen des Schweizerischen Bundesarchivs* 15 (1989): 151–212.

Giménez Caballero, had been present) because the FE did not consider itself to be fascist.[80] Curiously, Primo de Rivera appeared a year later at another CAUR meeting in Montreux in September 1935, where he gave the paradigmatic explanation that "Spain is not yet prepared to join, [. . .] a movement whose character is not only international but supranational, universal [. . .] because Spain has suffered a great deal from the leftist Internationals".[81] These examples illustrate the difficulties some of the potential partners of CAUR expected on a domestic level when being involved in an international project, which points to the fascist predicament outlined in Chapter 5. Nevertheless, CAUR's ambiguous attempt of building an international network culminated in the Montreux Congress, which took place from December 16 to 17, 1934.

Only "Quarrel and Dispute"? The Montreux Congress in December 1934

Montreux was an odd site for an organization that had chosen the universality of Rome as its main theme, as the Danish delegate Frits Clausen noted in his memoirs.[82] Instead of hosting the conference in Rome, which would have exposed the hegemonic-imperial objectives to promote Italian leadership, Eugenio Coselschi chose Switzerland to foreground CAUR's international character, similar to how CINEF used its headquarters in Lausanne to stress the think tank's alleged neutrality. Montreux is a Swiss city on the shores of Lake Geneva at the foot of the Alps, located in an important region of interwar internationalism, which hosted various international organizations, most notably the League of Nations and the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Geneva.[83] CAUR thus drew on a long tradition of international conferences hosted in the surrounding area. Instead of imposing the Italian language on the foreign delegates, French became the main language of the congress, even though some comments were also translated into German and English.[84] The fact that CAUR copied French, the *lingua franca* of liberal internationalism, illustrates the mimetic nature of the enterprise.

80 Cf. Frank Peter Geinitz, "Die Falange Española und ihr Gründer José Antonio Primo de Rivera (1903–1936): Im Rahmen der Bewältigung der Vergangenheit der Zweiten Spanischen Republik (1931–1939)" (PhD diss., Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, 2008), 207–208.

81 Cited in Payne, "Fascist Italy and Spain, 1922–45", 106.

82 Lauridsen, "*Føreren har ordet!*", 406.

83 Cf. Scaglia, *The Emotions of Internationalism*, 2.

84 Cf. Rütger Essén, Personal notes on the Montreux Congress, December 1934: [RA Marieberg], REA, Vol. 70.

New studies on internationalism emphasize the importance of international conferencing as "a distinctive form of political diplomacy" and "political practice" in the emergence and development of international relations. "Rather than viewing international conferences as expressions of pre-existing internationalism formulated elsewhere," this research illustrates how internationalism emerged *through* conference events "buzzing with life, potential futures, hope and despair", and the Montreux Congress was no exception.[85] CAUR spoiled the international delegates with the majestic Palace Hôtel as event location, including an evening gala. Colorful postcards about the venue were part of the distributed conference material. The conference ended with all the participants singing the "Fascist anthem" (probably the song *Giovinezza*, Italian for 'Youth') and enthusiastic ovations to Benito Mussolini, who was hailed as the creator of fascism during the conference.[86] For many delegates, this was their first official trip abroad as representatives of their parties. CAUR had paid for train tickets and accommodation for their partners, highlighting how the hegemonic role model facilitated the participation of 'peripheral' movements.[87]

The Montreux conference was shaped by masculinity and male bonding. In fact, the Montreux delegates were entirely white and primarily middle-aged men. Women and people of color remained excluded from CAUR's international congresses and meetings. According to Frits Clausen, his wife Ebba Clausen was the only female guest, but she was excluded from the congress itself and only allowed to join the gala dinner.[88]

According to the propagandistic conference proceedings that were published in the aftermath (see also Figure 2), "several hundred thousand people" were represented in Montreux by their leaders and delegates.[89] Representatives from seventeen movements from fourteen European countries participated at the conference, namely the Home Guard (*Heimwehr*) from Austria, the Belgian National League (*Légion Nationale Belge*, LNB) and the National Corporate Work League (*Ligue Nationale Corporative du Traveil*) from Belgium, the DNSAP and the Danish Home Guard (*Dansk Hjemmeværn*) from Denmark, the MF from France, the National Socialist Party from Greece, the Irish Blueshirts from Ireland, the Nationalist Union from Lithuania, the NS from Norway, the Black Front from the Netherlands, the Student Action Vanguard (*Accão Escolar Vanguarda*) from Portugal, the Iron Guard (*Garda de Fier*) from Romania, the FE from Spain, the SNU from Swe-

85 Legg et al., eds., *Placing Internationalism*, 2–4.
86 Cf. CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 90.
87 Cf. Lauridsen, "*Føreren har ordet!*", 228.
88 Cf. Lauridsen, "*Føreren har ordet!*", 462.
89 Lauridsen, "*Føreren har ordet!*", 27.

den, and the FFS and the National Union from Switzerland.[90] Importantly, the German NSDAP had not been invited and non-European movements were also absent, reflecting the anti-Nazi and Eurocentric outlook of CAUR. Next to a dominant group of Italian intellectuals such as Asvero Gravelli, only the delegates from Portugal and Lithuania represented governing parties.

Non-surprisingly, CAUR presented Fascist Italy as the main political inspiration for all parties in the information material distributed at the conference, and the ideological rival Nazi Germany was left entirely out of the picture. CAUR even described the Danish DNSAP, a party that initially had copied its entire party program from the German NSDAP, as running "parallel to Italian Fascism".[91] A mixture of exaggerations, whitewashing, and misinformation marked how CAUR presented the participating movements at the conference.[92] For example, the second Danish delegate (next to Frits Clausen), Thomas Damsgaard Schmidt, allegedly represented the National Corps, a "fascist organization" with 20,000 members.[93] In reality, this organization had already collapsed in the late 1920s and he represented only a minuscule splinter organization called the Danish Home Guard.[94] In the case of the Norwegian NS, CAUR inflated membership by more than ten times (from approximately 8,500 to 100,000).[95] CAUR described the participating movements as politically influential to strengthen the notion that universal fascism was on the rise to imminent victory. At the same time, this exaggeration of the political importance of the various parties served as a form of recognition, legitimacy, and self-assurance for these international partners, which appeared to be powerful, historical forces on the rise, in stark contrast to the factual marginal position of the parties in their domestic contexts. This exaggeration was a central facet of fascist internationalism's myths, as detailed in Chapter 7.

Eugenio Coselschi opened the conference with a long presidential address outlining CAUR's agenda, followed by many affirmative as well as critical reactions. The discussions concluded with six official resolutions prepared by several subgroups and published in the aftermath in newspapers and the conference pro-

90 Because of their withdrawal from the conference (as outlined earlier), the Spanish FE and the Swiss National Union were missing on the official list of participants published by CAUR in the aftermath. See CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 12.

91 CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 18.

92 Cf. CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 15–27.

93 Cf. CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 18.

94 Cf. Morten Thing, *De russiske jøder i København 1882–1943* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2008), 489.

95 CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 22. Cf. Stein Ugelvik Larsen, "The Social Foundations of Norwegian Fascism 1933-1945: An Analysis of Membership Data" in *Who were the Fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism*, edited by Stein Ugelvik Larsen (Bergen: Universitets Forlag, 1980), 595–620.

ceedings.[96] There was a good deal of consensus concerning various interconnected subtopics at the conference, as outlined in the following close analysis of its debates. Nevertheless, two major issues challenged CAUR's objective to unite the international fascist scene. The first obstacle was a schism between a Latin and a Nordic (racially grounded) understanding of Western civilization. A discussion about the so-called 'Jewish question' was the second issue, initiated by the Romanian delegate Ion Moţa from the extremely antisemitic Iron Guard. Both schisms were linked to the exclusion of German Nazism from Italy's version of fascist internationalism.

Fascism studies have characterized a sense of an overwhelming polycrisis beyond the reach of any traditional solution as a core element of fascist ideology.[97] In the European interwar period, fascists often connected a sense of crisis to the degeneration of the 'old' European continent, especially in contrast to the rise of 'new' non-European continents. Coselschi invoked this European crisis as the most critical common concern among the delegates at Montreux. He elaborated on the fatal political, economic, and spiritual crisis of 'old' Europe, caused by democracy, liberalism, parliamentarism, and the French Revolution of 1789, arguing that the existing international organizations and the current European governments were unable to create conditions for peace. Accordingly, the struggles of the future would move beyond battles between nations (such as in the First World War) to conflicts between continents, thus endangering Europe from the outside. For Coselschi, the continent's crisis was based on the absence of a "great unitary principle" that would enable Europe's salvation. He demanded a "complete renewal" of all political institutions in the "new Europe" enabled by the new generations, leading to an "era of serenity, mutual trust, and cohesion, after which the universe sighs".[98] The implicit argument was that the European civilization could only be saved by Fascist Italy and its vaguely formulated 'civilizing mission', thus legitimizing a hegemonic position of Italian Fascism in Europe.

Most attendees agreed that a "current crisis was traveling through Europe", as Vidkun Quisling put it, and that a "new Europe" had to be created.[99] They characterized the "old Europe" as "the rottenness of civilization" due to the failures of parliamentarism.[100] The Swedish delegate Rütger Essén pointed out the danger to

96 E.g. "Un congrès fasciste à Montreux: Un incident", *Journal de Genève*, December 19, 1934; CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 84–88.

97 E.g. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*, 41.

98 CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 30.

99 CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 58.

100 CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux* 75.

European peace posed by party politics and parliamentary intrigues.[101] Hence, the first resolution of the conference stated that the fascist doctrine was not a danger to peace between peoples, but on the contrary, it was the "only basis for the peaceful development of Europe".[102] This mirrors CINEF's conceptualization of fascist internationalism as the only 'peaceful' form of internationalism.

The question at stake was whether fascism, especially in its Italian corporatist understanding, was agreed upon as the 'universal principle' leading to the solution of the European crisis. Non-surprisingly, Coselschi portrayed Rome (again functioning as a metonymy for Italian Fascism) as the key solution with universal implications. Each nation was endowed with its glorious history, tradition, religion, and heritage through centuries of struggle, trials, and sacrifices. This would not prevent all the different nationalisms from commonly proclaiming the universality of the fascist doctrine on certain fundamental aspects. These included the reconstitution of a unitary, strong, and disciplined state; the establishment of order and justice; an agreement between social classes; coordinated and solidary collaboration between the producers; and thus, the implementation of corporatism as a universal principle in each country on its own terms. These 'fundamental fascist principles' remained vague, mythical, and therefore 'inclusive' – a feature that already characterized CINEF's agenda discussed in the previous chapter.

How did the international delegates react to CAUR's idea of universal fascism as a solution to the European crisis? The explicit notion of the universality of Rome sparked heated disputes, as we shall see later on, but an understanding of fascism as a generic, European, and potentially 'universal' phenomenon beyond Italy was widespread. Most saliently, the French delegate Marcel Bucard embraced fascism even as "a charter for the new Europe". Thus, the third resolution of the Montreux Congress confirmed universal fascism as the leading principle of fascist internationalism.[103]

The myth of corporatism as a successful solution to social injustice and the "principle of collaboration between the classes" was a crucial aspect of Coselschi's vision of fascist internationalism.[104] Coselschi conceptualized corporatism as a revolutionary force that could "conquer the world" while countering material communist class struggle and egoist liberal capitalism, although he remained vague on how corporatism was to function in political practice.[105] Nonetheless, many delegates such as Vidkun Quisling, Eoin O'Duffy, and Arthur Fonjallaz

101 Cf. CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 56.
102 Cf. CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 84–85.
103 Cf. CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 86.
104 CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 32.
105 CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 36.

openly agreed upon corporatism as a guiding principle of fascist internationalism. The Austrian delegate, Joseph Rinaldini, expressed approval because his Home Guard was actively involved in developing a corporative state (*Ständestaat*) in the so-called Austro-fascist Dollfuß regime.[106] The sixth resolution of the Montreux Congress confirmed corporatism as an uncontested core principle of fascist internationalism.[107]

CAUR attempted to portray Benito Mussolini as the undisputed vanguard and personification of a new form of internationalism connected to the fascist leader cult. The second resolution of the Montreux Congress hailed Benito Mussolini as "the brilliant founder" of fascism, and many delegates praised *Il Duce* as their role model. The Dutch fascist Arnold Meijer passionately insisted that "the situation would now be hopeless if the savior of Europe had not come: Mussolini, who alone saw light in the darkness. Now Fascism offers the possibility of restoring order and unity in Europe again".[108] The French delegate Bucard, who, as outlined earlier, stood on Mussolini's payroll, even initiated a round of applause as an expression of gratitude to Mussolini, the "unique creator and founder of fascism".[109] Bucard became one of the most loyal defenders of the notion of universal fascism, as it was expressed in numerous articles in his party journal *Le Franciste.*[110] All of this was grist to the mill of CAUR, whose main objective was to ensure Fascist Italy's hegemonic position as the leading force of the fascist universe.[111] This repeated portrayal of *Il Duce* as the creator of fascism and role model was a specific feature of Italian fascist internationalism. In reverse, this emphasis on Mussolini meant downplaying the significance of Mussolini's rival, Adolf Hitler.

Eugenio Coselschi argued that the "international forces" of Marxism and liberalism and their immediate threat "at all borders" legitimized the cooperation among nationalists from various countries.[112] Thus, he concluded his opening speech by dramatically calling for the unity of Europe and the "complete victory over brutal materialism", enabling the "final triumph" of fascism.[113] Numerous delegates agreed upon the 'internationalist' and 'materialist' ideologies of commu-

106 Cf. CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 53–54.
107 Cf. CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 88.
108 CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 75.
109 CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 43–47.
110 E.g. "Le fascisme universel", *Le Franciste,* December 23, 1934; "Le fascisme universel", *Le Franciste,* February 10, 1935; "Le fascisme universel. La réunion d'Amsterdam", *Le Franciste,* April 1, 1935.
111 Cf. CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 85.
112 CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 34.
113 CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 42.

nism, liberalism, parliamentary democracy, and 'plutocracy' as common enemies of their movements.[114] (The exception was a debate about Judaism, as will be discussed later). As the Swedish delegate Essén articulated, the underlying argument was that the "internationalist nature" of those enemies of fascism urged European nationalist governments and movements to cooperate internationally.[115] Accordingly, the second resolution confirmed that the congress "commits itself to fight Marxist materialism and its nation-negative internationalism, communism destroying morality and freedom, as well as capitalist egoism, false bourgeois nationalism, and the social injustices resulting from it".[116] These findings correspond directly with one key argument of this monograph, showing that fascist internationalism mainly emerged as a counter-reaction to other competing forms of internationalism.

The debates at the Montreux Congress illustrate the difficulties interwar fascists had with the term 'Fascist International' and the underlying tension between nationalism and internationalism. Coselschi maintained that "the 'super-national' idea" of universal fascism "harmonizes perfectly with the national idea".[117] He stressed that "Fascism is not an international phenomenon. It is even national to the highest degree", making it "antithetical to Marxism".[118] Therefore, Coselschi highlighted nationalism as a key feature of fascism and denied the existence of any contradiction between national and universal aspects. Arthur Fonjallaz from the Swiss FFS similarly insisted that fascism, defined as an inherently nationalist force, could only become universalist but never internationalist.[119] Thus, many delegates used different semantic terms for the joint fascist project. Joseph Rinaldini from Austria spoke about fascism as a "metanational idea".[120] In a similar wording, Rütger Essén conceptualized "metanationalism" as a way to achieve what he called "close and sincere cooperation" between "strong, authoritarian, unitary national governments". This cooperation, he argued, would be "contrary to what one might call a 'Fascist International' because the word 'international' with the meanings ordinarily attached to the term" did not express the wishes and hopes of the delegates in Montreux.[121]

114 See the speech by Marcel Bucard, CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 44–45.
115 CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 57.
116 CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 84–85.
117 CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 41.
118 CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 39.
119 Cf. CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 67.
120 Cf. CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 56.
121 CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 57.

To conclude, many delegates agreed that their own nationalism would not hinder cross-border 'solidarity', 'fraternity', and the pursuit of 'world peace'. As Vidkun Quisling insisted, "our movements do not constitute a danger to world peace, they are not excessive nationalism, but that, on the contrary, these self-aware nationalisms are quite appropriate for maintaining the general solidarity of the whole world".[122] The Portuguese delegate António Eça de Quiroz made a strong plea for fascist fraternity, based on the belief that "all the fascism of the world, whether Latin or Nordic, are brothers and must live as brothers".[123] The leader of the Belgian LNB, Paul Hoornaert, constructed fascist internationalism in a broader spiritual sense, fantasizing about a "common soul" of all delegates at the assembly despite diverse languages and differences in detail.[124] This illustrates that the alleged contradiction between nationalism and internationalism itself did not constitute the main issue among the delegates, who, in theory, agreed upon utopian ideas of world peace and fascist solidarity. The dispute ignited instead on the questions of Italian supremacy and antisemitism.

The Italo-German rivalry peaked half a year before the Montreux Congress due to a failed Nazi *coup d'état* in Austria in the summer of 1934 when both major fascist regimes supported different Austrian political far-right groups. Therefore, "an Italy-led 'Fascist international' campaign already in progress received a powerful political boost from Mussolini," strengthening its anti-German stance.[125] Consequently, and surprisingly for many delegates from the minor movements, the Italian organizers did not invite any German state officials or NSDAP members to Montreux.[126] CAUR had no intention to repeat the mistake of giving their ideological rival a public stage to advocate their Nordic racism and contempt for universal fascism, as had happened at the Volta Congress two years earlier. Furthermore, the official conference proceedings omitted almost all statements on Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany to obfuscate its influential role within the international fascist party family.[127]

122 CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 60.

123 CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 70–71.

124 Cf. CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 71.

125 Cf. Kallis, *The Third Rome, 1922–1943*, 229.

126 Furthermore, German press agents were – in contrast to other international media representatives – not invited to the congress. Cf. German Consulate in Geneva, Internationaler Faschistenkongreß in Montreux, December 19, 1934: [PAAA], RZ214 99289.

127 The text only mentions Nazi Germany once and Hitler not at all, whereas Mussolini appears at least 45 times. Intriguingly, CAUR even omitted negative statements about the 'Third Reich'. An example were statements by Fonjallaz, who argued that Hitler should refrain from the idea of a German-Austrian *Anschluss* and that the Swiss people should distance themselves from German

However, the Italo-German rivalry still marked the Montreux Congress as a troubling sword of Damocles. As Salvatore Garau argues, Nazi Germany "was physically absent from the conference" but "ideologically [. . .] present".[128] Montreux unmistakably revealed that not all delegates agreed with the hegemonic position of Fascist Italy and the exclusion of Nazi Germany. Instead, many perceived the 'Third Reich' as the second prominent representative of international fascism since its spectacular rise to power in 1933. Furthermore, some delegates heralded Nazism's distinctively antisemitic program and the belief in the superiority of the Nordic-Aryan race, and the congress became "a metaphorical Brenner Pass between the Latin and Germanic Weltanschauung".[129] This was illustrated in two major controversies that overshadowed the congress: first, the contestation of Italian dominance as marked in a divide between a 'Latin' and 'Nordic' camp, and second, the 'Jewish question'.

In his opening address, Eugenio Coselschi claimed that the idea of the universality of Rome "in no way implies the supremacy of one people, or one Nation, or one race over other peoples, other Nations, other races".[130] Coselschi argued that Rome was more than an expression of Latin civilization, conceptualized as a meeting point for Latin, Germanic, and Nordic cultures.[131] Despite these claims, the emphasis on Latin culture as the predominant bearer of European civilization within the CAUR project was apparent. This was supported by some of the participating movements from southwestern Europe. The French MF, for example, embraced 'Latinism' as a concept of ethnic and cultural unity of all peoples of Roman heritage.[132] However, as Aristotle Kallis outlines, many "otherwise supremely sympathetic 'fascist' participants evinced a degree of unease with CAUR's 'universality of Rome' formula, even as they wholeheartedly agreed with the benefits of the bulk of norms pioneered by Fascist Italy".[133]

Criticism against the hegemony of Latin civilization was, in particular, raised by two Nordic delegates, Vidkun Quisling from the Norwegian NS and Frits Clausen from the DNSAP. For Clausen, it was imperative to distance himself from "any form of hegemony from the major European states' side over the small na-

Nazism. See Rütger Essén, Personal notes on the Montreux Congress, December 1934: [RA Marieberg], REA, Vol. 70.

128 Garau, "The Internationalisation of Italian Fascism", 54.

129 Fabio Ferrarini, "'Mediterraneo Baltico': Italian Fascist Propaganda in Finland (1933-9)", *Modern Italy* 25.4 (2020): 1–14, 5.

130 CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 28.

131 Cf. CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 61.

132 Cf. Dietrich Orlow, *The Lure of Fascism in Western Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 29.

133 Kallis, "The Transnational Co-production of Interwar 'Fascism'", 211.

tions".[134] Quisling openly disputed Coselschi's core idea of the universality of Rome in Montreux and outlined his issue with the equation of European civilization with Roman civilization.[135] As Rütger Essén noted in his private report about the congress, "Quisling: Opposes Roman law and Roman spirit".[136] Referring to ancient Rome, Quisling stated that "it should not be forgotten that a part of Europe remained outside the Roman influence".[137] Quisling differentiated between a 'Latin' and a 'Nordic' contribution to European civilization and refuted the civilizing mission of Fascist Italy for the rest of Europe. This dualistic belief was deeply rooted in Quisling's Nordic racial ideology. As Quisling had outlined in his book *Russland og vi* (Russia and ourselves, 1930), he assessed the "Nordic race" as "the most important bearer of world civilization", next and even superior to the "Latin race".[138]

Quisling and others were upset because the most influential proponent of Nordic-Aryan fascism, the German NSDAP, had not been invited to the conference. According to a journalist from the US-American *TIME Magazine*, who witnessed the scene, Quisling's wording was very different than outlined in the official conference proceedings: "the Norwegian Nazi Vidkun Quisling, onetime Defense Minister, jumped up to bark: 'Why don't we talk about the Universality of Berlin? Adolf Hitler is just as much an exponent of Fascism as Benito Mussolini!'"[139] During the following heated debate with Coselschi, who ardently defended the universality of Rome, Quisling was seconded by other delegates from northwestern Europe, namely the Swede Essén, the Dane Damsgaard Schmidt, and the Dutch Meijer. These delegates even discussed creating a Nordic group within the Fascist International as a counterweight to the 'Latin' ideas of the universality of Rome.[140] Hence, in stark contrast to what Coselschi had hoped to achieve, the Montreux Congress became the starting point for a specifically Nordic form of fascist internationalism.[141]

The Romanian delegate Ion Moţa initiated a second, interrelated debate regarding the importance of antisemitism. Moţa represented the fiercely antisemitic Iron Guard and served as a correspondent of the antisemitic German organiza-

134 Lauridsen, "*Føreren har ordet!*", 463.

135 CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 58–61.

136 Rütger Essén, Personal notes on the Montreux Congress, December 1934: [RA Marieberg], REA, Vol. 70.

137 CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 60.

138 Vidkun Quisling, *Russland og vi* (Oslo: Jacob Dybwads Forlag, 1930), 195.

139 Cf. 'International: Pax Romanizing', *TIME Magazine,* December 31, 1934.

140 Cf. 'Snuonfarnas fascistbekännelse', *Folkets Dagblad,* December 19, 1934.

141 See Chapter 10.

tion WD.[142] He raised the 'Jewish question' even on behalf of WD at the Montreux Congress, with the objective to transform the Fascist International into a "worldwide anti-Jewish front".[143] Thus, Moţa pointed out in his speech that the "Jewish problem could constitute a danger for the future European unity of the fascist world".[144] He demanded an explicit resolution against 'international Judaism' and suggested closer cooperation between Fascist Italy and German Nazism in general and CAUR and WD in particular.[145] Frits Clausen seconded Moţa, outlining the importance of racism and the need to debate the "Jewish question". Repeating the distinction between cultural and biological racism, he admitted to being "more influenced by Rosenberg's theories than by the ideas professed in Italy by Fascism".[146]

The following debate revealed a schism at the conference between those movements that stressed antisemitism as a core element of fascism and those who were indifferent to the question or even defended Jews.[147] Eoin O'Duffy, whose Irish Blueshirts frequently condemned German biological racism and antisemitism in its early years, argued that there was no "Jewish issue" in Ireland.[148] At this point, the conference developed into a heated and emotional "Quarrel and dispute", as Rütger Essén noted.[149] As the journalist from *TIME Magazine* put it, "With a tenacity maddening to President Coselschi and General O'Duffy, who fought against facing the issue, the Rumanian, Danish and Swiss delegates chorused: 'We must discuss the Jews! *We must discuss the Jews!!* WE MUST DISCUSS THE JEWS!!!'"[150] Coselschi finally admitted that if the Jews represented the "Golden International" of capitalism and materialism, they would implicitly belong to the common enemies of universal fascism.[151] A special committee was assigned to work out a resolution that would satisfy the irreconcilable factions on

142 On Ion Moţa and WD, see Chapter 4.

143 'Letter from Ion Moța to Welt-Dienst, February 5, 1935', in *Corrispondenza col Welt-Dienst*, edited by Claudio Mutti (Parma: Edizioni all'insegna del Veltro, 1996), 43–48, 45.

144 CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 48.

145 Notably, these statements were omitted from CAUR's official conference proceedings. Cf. Rütger Essén, Personal notes on the Montreux Congress, December 1934: [RA Marieberg], REA, Vol. 70.

146 CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 70.

147 Moţa and Clausen were supported by the Belgian delegate Somville, Meijer, and Fonjallaz. CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 83.

148 CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 84.

149 Rütger Essén, Personal notes on the Montreux Congress, December 1934: [RA Marieberg], REA, Vol. 70.

150 "International: Pax Romanizing".

151 CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 84.

the 'Jewish question'. The resolution declared, on the one hand, "that a universal campaign of hate against Jews cannot solve the Jewish question".[152] On the other hand, it proclaimed that those Jews engaged in activities or political organizations that subverted patriotism and Christian civilization should be met with opposition of the sternest form. Thus, CAUR was willing to grant concessions to their political partners from minor fascist movements – a crucial finding concerning the reassessment of center-periphery relations in European fascist internationalism. This underlines that international conferences were "creative rather than confirmatory events and frequently defined the terms and conditions under which permanent international institutions operated".[153]

Between Fiasco and Triumph: Reception and Aftermath of the Montreux Congress

Contemporary observers and political opponents created an image of the Montreux Congress as a spectacular fiasco because of the evident tension between nationalism and internationalism. As the social democratic Swiss newspaper *Berner Tagwacht* commented, "one cannot be international after all, if one presents oneself as more than one hundred percent national".[154] Many international press reports ridiculed CAUR's undertaking due to its ideological contradictions, disputes, and limited political outcomes, as was illustrated by the caricature 'A Montreux' published by *Le Populaire* (Figure 1).[155] This negative reception of the Montreux Congress had immediate effects, particularly in Switzerland. The Swiss delegate, Arthur Fonjallaz, was suspected of treason, leading to an inquiry by the Swiss federal government as to why such a propagandistic fascist event had been permitted on Swiss grounds.[156] The Swiss legation in Italy even sent an official complaint to Italian authorities.[157]

152 CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 87.

153 Legg et al. eds., *Placing Internationalism*, 3.

154 "'Metanationalismus': die Internationale der Fascisten", *Berner Tagwacht,* December 21, 1934.

155 "A Montreux", *Le Populaire. Organ du Parti Socialiste*, December 18, 1934. See also the introduction of this book.

156 E.g. "Après le congrès international fasciste Montreux", *Le Travail, Quotidien Socialiste,* December 29, 1934; "'Metanationalismus'", *St. Galler Tagblatt,* December 19, 1934; "Fascistenoberst Fonjallaz als Landesverräter?", *Berner Tagwacht,* January 3, 1935. See also Chapter 5.

157 See various documents from Swiss authorities in Congrès international fasciste à Montreux, Amsterdam 1935 (Dossier), 1934–1935: [BAR], 637758551375670069.

Nazi Germany also contributed to this bad image of the event because various German newspapers and organizations massively criticized the congress. The German Consulate in Geneva noted with *schadenfreude* that "the whole event is seen as a not very successful attempt of Italian propaganda".[158] The NSDAP newspaper *Westdeutscher Beobachter* complained that Nazi German delegates had not been invited and attacked the resolution on Jews as a "foul compromise", assessing the results as "completely negative".[159] Likewise, the antisemitic WD attacked the "compromising" Montreux resolution on the "Jewish question" and Coselschi's weak position towards the "race principle".[160] Hans Keller from the rivaling German organization IAdN, which had hosted its own anti-Italian congress just weeks earlier in Berlin (see Chapter 3), unleashed a harsh campaign against Italian fascist internationalism and the hegemonic notion of the universality of Rome in the aftermath of the conference.[161] Naturally, the Italian press provided more favorable coverage, but Italian authorities were also disappointed.[162] A report for the Italian Undersecretary for Press and Propaganda criticized CAUR for being a "gigantic hoax", for working together with shady and self-proclaimed leaders of non-existing movements, and for electing an outspoken Nazi and "Hitlerite" such as Frits Clausen into its executive committee.[163] Thus, the Montreux Congress damaged CAUR's reputation particularly in Germany and within the Italian Fascist state.

Shaped by this contemporary negative image of the Montreux Congress, historians mostly present the conference as a complete "failure" (Michael Ledeen), "éclat" (Beate Scholz), or "fiasco" (Daniel Hedinger), interpreting the schisms at Montreux as "a microcosmic view of the conflicts implicit in any attempt to establish a viable Fascist International".[164] The congress seemed "to provide further

158 German Consulate in Geneva, Internationaler Faschistenkongreß in Montreux, December 19, 1934: [PAAA], RZ214 99289.

159 "'Faschismus ist keine Ausfuhrware'", *Westdeutscher Beobachter,* December 21, 1934. See also "Faschistische Internationale?: Der Kongreß von Montreux", *Neue Preussische Kreuzzeitung,* December 20, 1934.

160 "Zum 1. Weltkongress der Faszisten", *Welt-Dienst,* January 15, 1935. On WD and its assessment of the Montreux Congress, see Chapter 4.

161 See Hans Keller, "Warum 'Nationalistische Internationale'?", edited by IAdN, in *Am Internationalismus gehen die Völker zugrunde / Warum "Nationalistische Internationale"?* (Zurich: Albert Nauck, 1936), 17–35.

162 Cf. "Mussolini acclamato capo del Fascismo universale sull'esempio di Roma", *Il Popolo D'Italia,* December 18, 1934.

163 Cited in Scholz, "Italienischer Faschismus als 'Export'-Artikel (1927–1935)", 335–337.

164 Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*, 133; Scholz, "Italienischer Faschismus als 'Export'-Artikel (1927–1935)", 313; Hedinger, *Die Achse: Berlin, Rom, Tokio*, 114; Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*, 120.

and conclusive evidence of the impossibility of organising a fascist International, of uniting what cannot be united".[165] Newer research by Madeleine Herren, Kye Allen, and Aristotle Kallis offers a more nuanced picture.[166] But these studies, too, stress the flaws and internal contradictions underlying the entire CAUR project, for instance, by highlighting that "the 'universality of Rome' remained an alien and unsatisfactory ideological premise for such a transnational enterprise".[167]

However, from the propagandistic viewpoint of CAUR, the verdict was naturally far more positive. CAUR's conference proceedings praised the Montreux Congress as an triumphant event in which Fascist Italy "received the enthusiastic support and collaboration of 15 different movements".[168] The cover of the proceedings (Figure 2) displays a globe as a sign of fascism's universality and nine militant tall men marching in line with their national flags, symbolizing the supposed united front of fascists of the world. The man in the forefront is wearing the uniform of the Italian Blackshirts *squadristi* emphasizing Rome's leadership. The cover distorted the reality, as the other four flags on the cover could be interpreted as the Nazi swastika, the British Union Jack, and the national flags of the United States of America and Spain. None of these countries were officially represented at the Montreux Congress, demonstrating CAUR's attempt to inflate the conference's importance into an event with seemingly global reach, while whitewashing the Italo-German rivalry.

Most of the smaller fascist parties that were represented in Montreux also celebrated the congress as a sign of hope and fascism as a promising political alternative for Europe to the old decaying forces of liberalism and communism. The Irish Blueshirts used the conference to celebrate Italy as an "Example to all Europe".[169] In a special issue of their periodical *Le Franciste*, the French MF presented the conference as a "historical event" uniting different fascist movements under the banner of universal fascism.[170] The Swiss delegate Arthur Fonjallaz praised the congress as an event of "tremendous magnitude", proudly reporting that it had been organized on "Helvetic ground".[171] Even Coselschi's critic Vidkun Quisling reported enthusiastically about the meeting in his party journal *Nasjonal*

165 Morgan, *Fascism in Europe, 1919–1945*, 168.

166 Cf. Herren, "Fascist Internationalism"; Allen, "An Anarchical Society (of Fascist States)"; Kallis, *The Third Rome, 1922–1943*, 232.

167 Kallis, "From CAUR to EUR", 371.

168 CAUR, *Réunion de Montreux*, 15.

169 "Europe's Corporative Movements", *The Blueshirt*, February 2, 1935.

170 "Un événement historique", *Le Franciste,* Undated, 1934.

171 Arthur Fonjallaz, "1934-1935", *Der Schweizer Fascist,* December 27, 1934.

Samling, indicating the focal influence of the meeting on his thinking. For the first time, Quisling called his own movement "corporatist", openly declaring that the NS was now part of a "universal ideology" next to both Italian and German fascism.[172] He still stressed that international cooperation would not mean a restriction of the "full sovereignty" of the involved national movements and



Figure 2: Book cover, Comités d'Action pour l'Universalité de Rome, Réunion de Montreux: Décembre 16–17 1934, XIII (Rome: Le Bureau de Presse des Comités d'Action pour l'Universalité de Rome, 1935), unknown illustrator.

172 On Quisling's interview, the NS, and corporatism, see in more detail Martin Kristoffer Hamre, "'Organic Unity through a New Order': Ideas of Corporatism and the Norwegian Nasjonal Samling", *Laboratoire italien* 32 (2024), https://doi.org/10.4000/122lf.

avoided the term 'universality of Rome'.[173] This demonstrates that the reception of the Montreux Congress was highly ambivalent, thematically oscillating between fiasco and triumph.

Moreover, when taking into account its longer aftermath, the Montreux Congress had three concrete consequences for the history of fascist internationalism. First, the event enabled the transnational circulation of propaganda and knowledge between CAUR and the participating parties. Often, the minor movements like the French MF used the distributed material, the resolutions, and the conference proceedings to employ narratives of fascist internationalism in their party journals.[174] The parties did not simply reproduce the material passively. Instead, they actively emphasized what fitted best to their own program, such as the Irish Blueshirts, for whom corporatism was the most important common element among the fascist movements.[175]

Second, the Montreux Congress serves as an example of international conferencing as a node and meeting place where actors from various countries come together to articulate a specific form of internationalism based on ultranationalism, racism, and hatred for common enemies. These encounters led to new personal contacts and bonds. For example, Eoin O'Duffy asked the other participants to exchange their addresses and to send material to Ireland, including booklets, manifestos, and photos of their movements.[176] Thus, the congress enabled connections between several European movements, which were further developed independently from CAUR in the following years. A prime example was the relationship between the Dane Clausen and the Norwegian Quisling, who met for the first time in Montreux and ended up hosting their own Scandinavian Fascist Congress in November 1939. Thus, the conference constituted a starting point and facilitator of further activities of fascist internationalism, some even beyond the orbit of CAUR (as argued in Part II of this book).

Third, following a proposal by Vidkun Quisling, the delegates agreed on establishing a new, international body, which was named Coordination Commission for the Understanding of Universal Fascism (*Commissione di Coordinamento per l'Intesa de Fascismo Universale*). This permanent commission, which was formed in the style of the Comintern Executive Committee, was headed by Eugenio Coselschi and included delegates from seven countries: Vidkun Quisling, Marcel Bu-

173 "Årsskifte-Tidsskille: Europa under utformning i nasjonale folkesamfund", *Nasjonal Samling,* January 3, 1935.

174 E.g. "Ce que sont les divers Fascismes européen", *Le Franciste,* Undated, 1934.

175 "Europe's Corporative Movements", *The Blueshirt,* February 2, 1935. See also Chapter 7.

176 See the document "League de la Jeunesse" in Rütger Essén, Personal notes on the Montreux Congress, December 1934: [RA Marieberg], REA, Vol. 70.

card, Frits Clausen, George S. Mercouris, Arthur Fonjallaz, Eoin O'Duffy, and Thomas Damsgaard Schmidt.[177] The commission constituted a new institutional platform to enable further cooperation between the members of the so-called Montreux Front.

From Anti-Expansionism to Imperialism: The Meetings of the Montreux Front in 1935

Only a month after the Montreux Congress, the Commission for the Understanding of Universal Fascism held its first meeting in the Hotel Scribe in Paris on January 30, 1935.[178] The fascist leaders Vidkun Quisling from Norway, Marcel Bucard from France, George S. Mercouris from Greece, and Eoin O'Duffy from Ireland attended the meeting, which was organized by the Italians Eugenio Coselschi and Guido Baroni. The Danish DNSAP was represented by Frederik Marcus Knuth. Charles Oberndorff, a representative of the Dutch fascist party NSB, joined as well and declared his party's "adherence" to the Montreux resolutions.[179] Therefore, the next meeting took place in the Hotel Carlton Vijzelstraat in Amsterdam on March 29, 1935, which, in addition to the aforementioned Paris delegates, was attended by Arthur Fonjallaz from Switzerland, another Irish delegate named Cunning, and the Danes Thomas Damsgaard Schmidt and Frits Clausen.[180] As in the case of the Montreux Congress, CAUR presumably paid for the delegates' travel expenses in both meetings.

At the Amsterdam meeting, the NSB party leader Anton Mussert held a short speech in which he welcomed the visitors as "Foreign kindred spirits".[181] However, Mussert declared that he was too busy building his own movement to become a more active member of the Montreux Front.[182] Nevertheless, the permanent commission showcased international solidarity in front of thousands of Dutch fascists at the NSB party convention, which was deliberatively held just a day after the committee meeting. The Dutch paramilitary Blackshirts greeted the foreign guests

177 Cf. Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*, 122.

178 On the Paris meeting, see also Cuzzi, *L'internazionale delle camicie nere*, 150–154.

179 Cf. Letter from Guido Baroni to Vidkun Quisling, January 12, 1935: [SNO], 117153.

180 Cf. Letter from Guido Baroni to Vidkun Quisling, March 1, 1935: [SNO], 117141.

181 "Buitenlandsche Geestverwanten", *Volk en Vaderland,* April 6, 1935.

182 On Mussert, the NSB, and its relation to fascist internationalism, see Kunkeler and Hamre, "Conceptions and Practices of International Fascism"; Celestine S. Kunkeler, "A Dietsland Empire? The International and Transnational Dimensions of Dutch Fascism and the NSB, 1922-42", *Locus: Revista De História* 28.2 (2022): 124–145.

Marcel Bucard, Vidkun Quisling, Eugenio Coselschi, and Eoin O'Duffy with "applause and fascist salutes".[183] *The Blueshirt* triumphally reported that "a prolonged outburst of applause greeted the mention of General O'Duffy's name" at the rally, including "loud cheers for Ireland", and a "flow of autograph-hunters to the foreign visitor's tribune".[184] Quisling expressed in the NS party journal his admiration for the NSB as an "excellently organized" and "strongly developing" movement, with more than 30,000 participants at the party rally.[185] This must have been impressive for the Norwegian party leader whose own movement encompassed less than a third of these numbers. According to the NSB, the rally was "the largest political convention of its kind in the Netherlands ever".[186] Hence, the meetings in Paris and Amsterdam provided opportunities to demonstrate international fascist solidarity, to learn more about the national conditions of other fascist movements, and to deepen personal contacts between the various leaders.

At the meeting in Amsterdam, the CAUR commission debated how to organize and establish links between the youth movements of their parties through reciprocal visits, a planned congress, and a joint youth organization. Furthermore, the delegates discussed hosting a conference for representatives of corporate organizations and professionals in Milan in the following months.[187] They also pondered the creation of a new journal called *Le Front de Montreux* (Montreux Front). CAUR secretary Guido Baroni envisioned the magazine to be published in French, Italian, and German, and to be written for the intellectual elite of the participating movements. Frits Clausen argued, in contrast, that his party members from the Danish DNSAP, mainly consisting of workers and farmers, would not be able to read French or German. Thus, proper translations were needed, which would acquire more financial means.[188] This debate illustrates not only the importance of monetary aspects in organizing international cooperation among fascists, but also the different expectations. Baroni, the representative of Italian Fascism, conceived of the project as an intellectual enterprise among a pioneering elite, whereas the Scandinavian fascist leader Clausen, a doctor from a rural Danish region, intended to speak for a broader stratum of his nation.

183 "Het Interview-Coselschi Aan Vaz-Dias", *Volk en Vaderland*, April 6, 1935.

184 "Corporative Commission Meeting: Coincides with Great Dutch Rally in Amsterdam", *The Blueshirt*, May 1, 1935.

185 Vidkun Quisling, "Veien til nasjonal og internasjonal Fred og Forståelse", *Nasjonal Samling*, April 11, 1935.

186 Cited in Kunkeler, *Making Fascism in Sweden and the Netherlands*, 143.

187 Cf. CAUR resolutions from the Amsterdam meeting, April 11, 1935: [RA Marieberg], REA, Vol. 154.

188 Cf. Longo, "I tentativi per la costituzione di un'internazionale fascista", 527–529.

Discrepancies also became apparent in the question of where the next meeting of the permanent commission should take place in the summer of 1935. Coselschi suggested a city somewhere in southern Europe, for example, in Spain or Greece, to balance all the meetings in northern Europe so far. The Danish delegate Clausen objected to this idea that Paris and Amsterdam represented the North, illustrating the delegates' different geographical imaginations about Europe.[189] Thus, the commission also discussed the possibility of hosting another large congress in either Oslo or Copenhagen.[190] Strikingly, in the end, neither the planned conference in Milan, the journal *Le Front de Montreux,* nor the committee meetings in southern or northern Europe ever materialized, indicating an ambivalence between far-reaching plans and visions concerning fascist internationalism on the one hand, and limited implementation into practice on the other.

Content-wise, the first two meetings of the CAUR commission in Paris and Amsterdam were shaped by ideological debates about the core question of this monograph: what was more important, to foster ultranationalism and a national palingenesis in each country or to focus on internationalism and the building of a broader fascist front to resurrect Europe commonly? In the preface of the Paris resolutions, CAUR foregrounded a form of palingenetic Europeanism, stating that "the mission of universal fascism must above all consist in a work of peace, mutual understanding and reciprocal rapprochement between peoples, in order to achieve, through the renewal of institutions and minds, that European unity which alone can save our continent from economic and moral ruin".[191]

Frits Clausen from the Danish DNSAP, who had not been present at the Paris meeting, objected to this Europeanism when he gave a speech on the "European political future" at the Amsterdam meeting.[192] The lecture is a significant example of how fascist movements conceived differently of the relationship between fascist ultranationalism and internationalism. In contrast to Coselschi's 'spiritual' and European approach, Clausen used a forest metaphor to insist that Europe did not constitute an organic, spiritual unity. For Clausen, each nation was like a spe-

189 Cf. Longo, "I tentativi per la costituzione di un'internazionale fascista", 529.

190 Cf. Handwritten notes by Vidkun Quisling from the Paris meeting, 1935: [RA Oslo], PA-1308 Gc L0020.

191 "Corporative Committee of Seven", *The Blueshirt,* March 1, 1935; CAUR resolutions from the Paris meeting, January 30, 1935: [RA Marieberg], REA, Vol. 154.

192 The speech was later on published in the DNSAP party journal *National-Socialismen* and in an edited volume from 1939, containing Clausen's eight most important political speeches. Frits Clausen, "Europas politiske fremtid", *National-Socialisten,* April 13, 1935; Frits Clausen, "Europas politiske Fremtid: Tale holdt i Amsterdam for Generalraadet for C. A. U. R. den 28. Marts 1935", in *Med Frits Clausen for Danmarks Fremtid. 8 Taler om National-Socialismen,* edited by A. Langgaard-Nielsen (Bovrup: D.N.S.A.P. forlag, 1939), 83–90.

cific kind of tree with distinct characteristics, defining Europe geographically as the sum of all the different trees.[193] He depicted liberal and communist forces as vermin, endangering the health of each individual (national) tree and, thus, the (European) forest in general.[194] Clausen also revived one of the central debates at the Montreux Congress by adding "Jewish capitalists" to the list of vermin. His main message was nationalism first. "Only out of love for our own people can a respect and recognition of other peoples' right to assert themselves emerge, and only through this can peace in Europe be ensured". Therefore, the first task for all fascist movements was their own national revolutionary palingenesis. In a second step, this would facilitate a 'true peace' among the European nations, enabling the European forest to "be green again in a diversity of national peculiarities".[195] Clausen thus refrained from demanding concrete political international cooperation in his speech and emphasized instead national particularism combined with international fascist solidary. Clausen's speech also outlined that there was no space for a hegemonic tree called the 'universality of Rome' dominating the other trees (meaning smaller countries such as Denmark or Ireland).

Frits Clausen's view clashed with CAUR's agenda. Coselschi argued that the unity of a fascist Europe (implicitly meaning the domination of Fascist Italy) through increased international cooperation was vital to enable a new, long-lasting peace. Fusing his 'peace discourse' with xenophobic racism directed towards non-Europeans, he claimed that a war within Europe would stop all revolutionary fascist activities and play into the hands of non-European forces such as the "yellow race" (meaning Japan). Building on Clausen's forest metaphor, Coselschi maintained, "if we want to leave this forest as a wild forest in which a tree grows on one side and on the other; one day there will be war, this forest will be populated by invaders, from other countries and other continents, and the forest will be destroyed".[196] Hence, Coselschi's demand for European cooperation was grounded in fears that Europe would be provincialized and dominated by non-European powers. Fiercely defending his notion of universal fascism, Coselschi now even downplayed the nationalist nature of Italian Fascism, arguing that it did not limit itself to "exalting Italian nationalism". In contrast to his former statements at the Montreux Congress, Coselschi argued that fascism "is not nationalism or anti-Marxism, but a creation of the new order with the corporate state".[197] Hence, Coselschi placed Europeanism at the center of fascist internationalism.

193 Clausen, "Europas politiske Fremtid", 84.
194 Cf. Clausen, "Europas politiske Fremtid", 88–89.
195 Clausen, "Europas politiske Fremtid".
196 Longo, "I tentativi per la costituzione di un'internazionale fascista", 500.
197 Longo, "I tentativi per la costituzione di un'internazionale fascista", 504.

Among others, he was supported by the French delegate Marcel Bucard, who even proposed the creation of the "United States of Europe" during the debate.[198]

Contradictorily, Coselschi proudly announced at the same time the adhesion of the Argentine Fascist Party (*Partido Fascista Argentino*, PFA) to the Montreux Front.[199] The PFA had been founded by Argentines of Italian descent and existed from 1932 to 1939 (changing its name to the National Fascist Union in 1936).[200] This was the first case of a non-European party officially joining the Montreux Front. Prior to the Amsterdam meeting, CAUR's weekly bulletin published two celebratory articles about the PFA, presenting its program as "perfectly in line with the spirit of the Italian Revolution".[201] As an outspokenly Italian-friendly party, the PFA was embraced by CAUR despite its non-European background. Presumably, the Argentine party was regarded culturally (and racially) European enough to join the Montreux Front because of the Italian descent of most of its members. Nonetheless, this was a first step towards CAUR's attempt to build a new fascist world organization beyond Europe.

The metaphorical Brenner pass between Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany continued to shape the discussions in Paris and Amsterdam, culminating in the question of whether biological racism and the notion of the universality of Rome were compatible ideas. Unlike the Italian CAUR members, most minor fascist movements preferred to focus on the common features of Italy and Germany, such as anticommunism and anti-parliamentarism. Even the Blueshirt leader Eoin O'Duffy, whose party was not specifically pro-German, suggested inviting a German representative to the next CAUR meeting.[202] Coselschi, in contrast, complained about Nazi German expansionism grounded in its biological racism, which could lead to a potential new world war. Thus, Coselschi conceptualized 'spiritual' universal fascism as the absolute opposite of German Nazism's anti-universalist, materialistic, and dangerously expansionist racism:

198 Longo, "I tentativi per la costituzione di un'internazionale fascista", 506.

199 Cf. Longo, "I tentativi per la costituzione di un'internazionale fascista", 488.

200 On the PFA, see Sandra McGee Deutsch, *Las Derechas*: *The Extreme Right in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, 1890–1939* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 210; Federico Finchelstein, *Transatlantic Fascism*: *Ideology, Violence, and the Sacred in Argentina and Italy, 1919–1945* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 112–113.

201 "Mussolini 'chef spirituel' des fascistes Argentins", *C.A.U.R. Notizario settimanale d'Informazioni dei Comitati d'Azione per la Universalità di Roma,* February 20, 1935; "Les Martyrs du Fascisme Argentin", *C.A.U.R. Notizario settimanale d'Informazioni dei Comitati d'Azione per la Universalità di Roma,* February 27, 1935.

202 Cf. Longo, "I tentativi per la costituzione di un'internazionale fascista", 500–501.

> The exaggeration of the race cannot lead to a universal scope. [. . .]. When it [race] remains within the borders of a certain country, it is only a more or less exaltation of national pride, but when it wants to go beyond the borders, the race that believes itself to be all-powerful must end up fatally, and even in good faith, to seek to surpass and even suppress other races that it believes to be inferior, and it is for this reason that this exaggerated and particularistic conception can only lead to conflicts, because the race that believes itself to be superior will always believe it is right to take the place of the other or others, whom it considers inferior. In my opinion, the universality of fascism and the intransigent conception of the race cannot be in harmony.[203]

Coselschi explicitly contrasted Italian universalism with the race theory of the NSDAP ideologue Alfred Rosenberg and its potential expansionism, stating that fascism should be limited to the expansion of the mind and thought – an outlook one might summarize as a highly ambivalent form of 'anti-expansionism'. The two Nordic delegates, Frits Clausen and Vidkun Quisling, ideologically characterized by Nordic-Aryan racism, disagreed with the exclusion of the notion of race from CAUR's agenda. The Norwegian NS leader declared that the Italian distinction between nation and race was artificial. Furthermore, he argued that the Nordic race was present everywhere in Europe and constituted a central element of his version of fascism.[204] There was also a disagreement between the Swiss delegate Arthur Fonjallaz, who requested a general condemnation of Freemasonry, and Clausen, who argued that Freemasonry was not a problem in Denmark.[205] Almost ironically, this came from the same man who had favored a general condemnation of Jews at the Montreux Congress while strongly arguing against others who had stated that Jews did not constitute a problem in their countries. The debates in Paris and Amsterdam illustrate the many tensions in bringing together idiosyncratic fascist movements with distinctive ideological outlooks.

Ultimately, Coselschi's standpoint on race prevailed in the resolutions of the Amsterdam meeting. Accordingly, the commission condemned "any materialistic conception that preaches the exclusive domination of one race over the others".[206] This was only an ephemeral victory. CAUR's discourse in the year 1935 gradually replaced the notion of the universality of Rome and, thus, the hegemony of Italian Fascism with an emphasis on peace and mutual understanding among equal movements. This was apparent in the new CAUR statutes published in April 1935, which Beate Scholz summarizes as a product of "de-politicization

203 Longo, "I tentativi per la costituzione di un'internazionale fascista", 493.
204 Cf. Longo, "I tentativi per la costituzione di un'internazionale fascista", 508–510.
205 Longo, "I tentativi per la costituzione di un'internazionale fascista", 531–533.
206 CAUR resolutions from the Amsterdam meeting, April 11, 1935: [RA Marieberg], REA, Vol. 154.

and de-romanization".[207] Instead of presenting itself as a propaganda institute promulgating Italian hegemony (as in the statutes from 1933), the notion of *romanità* disappeared in the new statutes.[208] The text claimed that CAUR had "branches all over the world" (an implicit reference to the Argentine Fascist Party), declaring to accept diverse national traditions and to be open "for all the races and all the countries of the world" who accepted the new order of the corporative state.[209] These statutes reflected CAUR's willingness to compromise and were a first step toward the organization's global turn beyond Europe.

One objective of this book is to demonstrate how actions from various other competing players of internationalism prompted activities of fascist internationalism, as in the summer of 1935. At the end of July, the arch-enemy of CAUR, the Communist International, gathered in Moscow for its Seventh World Congress. The Comintern declared that fascism was an international power on the rise, mainly interpreted through a Marxist economic lens as a capitalist force.[210] After years of perceiving social democracy as its main enemy, the Comintern reacted to the ascendency of Nazi Germany. "In face of the towering menace of fascism [. . .], the Seventh Congress of the Communist International declares that at the present historic stage it is the main and immediate task of the international labour movement to establish the united fighting front of the working class".[211]

Only a month later, another main antagonist of CAUR, the Council of the League of Nations, gathered in Geneva to discuss sanctions against Fascist Italy due to the Italo-Ethiopian dispute. Already in December 1934, Italian North Africa (Italy's colony in Libya) had violated Ethiopia's sovereignty at the Wal-Wal oasis. In the first half of 1935, at the same time that CAUR was hypocritically promoting peace as the core element of universal fascism, Mussolini was preparing military action against Ethiopia (then known in Europe as Abyssinia), while bypassing the possibility of a League settlement through bilateral negotiations with the colonial powers of France and Britain. However, when it became apparent that the League of Nations member Italy was preparing for an actual war against the fellow

207 Scholz, "Italienischer Faschismus als 'Export'-Artikel (1927–1935)", 309.

208 For a comparison between the statutes from 1933 and from 1935, see also Scholz, "Italienischer Faschismus als 'Export'-Artikel (1927–1935)", 309–311.

209 CAUR, *Statute*: *Rome, April 21st 1935, XIII* (Rome: Le Bureau de Presse des Comités d'Action pour l'Universalité de Rome, 1935), 9–10.

210 The Communist International, *VII Congress of the Communist International*: *Abridged Stenographic Report of Proceedings* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1939), 572.

211 The Communist International, *VII Congress of the Communist International*, 574.

League member Ethiopia, the Council decided to discuss sanctions against Mussolini's regime.[212]

These potentially threatening actions of communist and liberal internationalism breathed new life into the Montreux Front, whose committee had not met since March 1935. Benito Mussolini, who had lost his interest in CAUR after the 'failure' of the first Montreux Congress, was now eager to justify his nascent imperialist policy against Ethiopia. For this purpose, CAUR appeared to be an adequate tool to create a counter-narrative to the anti-fascist statements promulgated by the Comintern and the League. Thus, Eugenio Coselschi organized a meeting of the CAUR commission in September 1935. Presumably, Mussolini suggested hosting the meeting simultaneously and in proximity to the summit of the League Council in Geneva.[213] Accordingly, Montreux, situated just at the other end of the Geneva lake, was again chosen as the meeting point of the commission. "Montreux has become the antithesis of Geneva", Coselschi insisted at the meeting, as emphasized by terms such as the 'Montreux Front' and the 'Montreux Declarations'.[214] Coselschi even denied Marcel Bucard's suggestion to host the next congress in Mussolini's Rome as a counterweight to Josef Stalin's Moscow because of the favorable ground provided by a "neutral" Swiss city.[215] Obsessed by this imaginary competition between Montreux and Geneva, Coselschi started preparing the foundation of an entirely new organization called New Order (*Ordine Nuovo*) with headquarters in Montreux, within striking distance of the League of Nations headquarters. This repeated attempt to portray the Montreux Front as a powerful counterweight to Geneva and Moscow illustrates how CAUR referred to, differentiated itself from, and measured itself against its liberal and socialist counterparts both ideologically and spatially.

The Montreux meeting of CAUR's permanent commission took place from September 11 to 12, 1935, again at the Palace Hôtel. But in stark contrast to the larger congress in 1934, the meeting was held covertly. None of the delegates wore party insignia or uniforms, and the organizers refrained from raising foreign flags. Journalists were excluded this time, and the CAUR secretary, Valeria Christiani, secretly booked the rooms without informing the hotel's owner about the real purpose of the delegates' stay.[216] This secrecy stood in striking contradic-

212 See Elisabetta Tollardo, *Fascist Italy and the League of Nations 1922–1935* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 48.

213 Cf. Scholz, "Italienischer Faschismus als 'Export'-Artikel (1927–1935)", 338–339.

214 Longo, "I tentativi per la costituzione di un'internazionale fascista", 559.

215 Longo, "I tentativi per la costituzione di un'internazionale fascista", 563.

216 Cf. Police report, Canton de Vaud Lausanne, Réunion de chefs fascistes au Montreux-Palace & Cygne à Montreux, du 9 au 13 Septembre 1935, September 17, 1935: [BAR], 637758551014617539.

tion to Coselschi's aim to present Montreux afterward publicly as the main counter-site to Geneva. Except for the female secretary Christiani, the delegates were again exclusively male and white, as was illustrated in a photograph from the meeting that Coselschi sent O'Duffy "with much sympathy".[217] The commission members Eugenio Coselschi, Guido Baroni, Vidkun Quisling, Marcel Bucard, Frits Clausen, and Eoin O'Duffy attended the meeting. New to the group was José Antonio Primo de Rivera from the Spanish FE, Paul Hoornaert, who had represented the Belgian LNB already at the first Montreux Congress, as well as the Czechoslovakian fascist leader Radola Gajda. His National Fascist Community (*Národní obec fašistická*, NOF) propagated the implementation of a corporate-state structure in Czechoslovakia inspired by Fascist Italy.[218]

The second Montreux meeting ended with the proclamation of two resolutions that heralded the foundation of a "new world federation growing out of the ruins of the League of Nations", allegedly supported by "national uprising movements" with millions of members in seventeen European states.[219] The resolutions announced that a group of three men would be in charge of creating the rules for the new planned world organization. This was an effort to overcome the Nordic-Latin division at the first Montreux Congress. The committee consisted of the 'Nordic' representative Vidkun Quisling, the 'Latin' representative Marcel Bucard, and Arthur Fonjallaz from the 'neutral' country Switzerland. Eventually, the delegates agreed to meet again at another congress planned to take place in Montreux in December 1935.[220]

The secrecy ended when CAUR published the new Montreux resolutions in the immediate aftermath, causing a local scandal in Switzerland. The socialist newspaper *Le Travail* attacked the Swiss Federal Council and the Canton Vaud for authorizing a meeting of representatives of "the worst propaganda instrument of imperialism and Italian irredentism". Thus, the newspaper interpreted the CAUR meeting as a sign of the Swiss government's sympathy for "warlike fascism".[221] Alarmed by this bad press and based on police reports on the secret meeting, the Swiss Federal Persecutor imposed a border ban on the CAUR organ-

217 See the photography in McGarry, Fearghal 'Violence, Citizenship and Virility: The Making of an Irish Fascist', *History Ireland* 13.6 (2005), accessed March 17, 2024, https://www.historyireland.com/violence-citizenship-and-virility-the-making-of-an-irish-fascist/.

218 On Gajda, see David Kelly, "The Would-be Führer: General Radola Gajda of Czechoslovakia", *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 12.3 (1999): 163–177.

219 "Et nytt Verdensforbund", *Nasjonal Samling,* September 19, 1935.

220 Cf. Longo, "I tentativi per la costituzione di un'internazionale fascista", 566–567.

221 Abol Sarrol, "Les fascistes en Suisse", *Le Travail, Quotidien Socialiste,* September 14, 1935.

izers Coselschi, Baroni, and Christiani.[222] Hence, Coselschi's dream of exploiting the alleged neutrality of Switzerland for a powerful myth of a Montreux Front crumbled due to the opposition by local anti-fascists and Swiss authorities.

The debates at the second Montreux meeting in September 1935 represent, in a nutshell, the modifiability of notions of fascist internationalism in the wake of foreign political transformations. The discussions stood entirely under the impression of the liberal and communist enemies of the Montreux Front: the resolutions against fascism of the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern on the one hand, and the potential threatening sanctions by the League Council against Italy on the other. Especially in the prospect of the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, the debates were shaped by questions of colonialism, imperialism, and irredentism. Moreover, due to the wish to create a more inclusive fascist unity front directed against the new 'popular front' of liberalism and communism, CAUR even attempted to bridge the formerly insurmountable ideological Brenner pass and stretched out a cooperative hand to the previous rival Nazi Germany.

CAUR had two aims in September 1935. The first objective was to convince the minor fascist movements to act as Italian mouthpieces to turn around the public opinion in their respective countries in favor of the Italian colonial enterprise in Ethiopia. Thus, Coselschi justified the upcoming war by emphasizing that the Italo-Ethiopian dispute was a 'rightful' colonial matter because Italy suffered from "no colonies and a very large population".[223] This alluded to the fascist concept of 'proletarian imperialism', legitimizing the creation of a colonial empire due to Italy's status as a political latecomer in the age of European imperialism during the nineteenth and early twentieth century.[224] Furthermore, Coselschi stressed the racial dichotomy between the "civilized Fascist state of the new order" and the "backward, barbarous, and primitive" Abyssinian Empire based on slavery. This argument was shaped by European imperial racism and the belief in natural hierarchies between European (white) and non-European (black) peoples, even though he insisted that the war was not a matter of "racial superiority", as a proponent of German Nazism would have argued, but a "question of civilization". Strikingly, Coselschi differentiated between 'rightful' Italian colonialism outside Europe and 'unjust' irredentism within Europe. "We take the map of Europe as it is. No kind of irredentism will be admitted to our discussions".[225] Hence, CAUR still propagated a primarily European form of fascist international-

222 Office of the Attorney General of Switzerland, Notizen für Herrn Bundesrat Motta, September 24, 1935: [BAR], 637758551375670069.

223 Cf. Longo, "I tentativi per la costituzione di un'internazionale fascista", 542.

224 Cf. Hedinger, *Die Achse: Berlin, Rom, Tokio*, 164–169.

225 Longo, "I tentativi per la costituzione di un'internazionale fascista", 542, 564.

ism directed against other continents, but with a new aggressive-imperialist agenda.

The second Italian objective was to counter the new anti-fascist popular front with a more inclusive front of fascist movements and other antiliberal and anti-communist parties and regimes. Accordingly, Coselschi refrained from emphasizing the theme of the universality of Rome, the leadership of Fascist Italy, and the label 'fascism' at the second Montreux meeting. Instead, CAUR envisioned the so-called New Order as "a stable organization of a broad permanent European and world-wide understanding, open to all national corporate and social movements in the various countries whatever their name, which, keeping spiritual and national values in the highest esteem, will replace the devious maneuvers of old diplomacy".[226] This shows the contested nature of fascism as a concept, which was now downplayed by CAUR to allow for a more 'inclusive' and broader front.

The underlying argument was that the united front of liberalism (as represented by the League Council) and communism (Comintern) was endangering the future of Europe by drawing Italy into a potential war with Britain, France, and the Soviet Union through its sanctions. Thus, Coselschi made "hypocritical old diplomacy" responsible for potentially unleashing a new world war. The other delegates fully agreed with Coselschi's depiction of a powerful common front against universal fascism. The Belgian representative Paul Hoornaert warned that there was a "struggle between two worlds: the Marxist world and the reactionary world on the one hand, and on the other hand, the world of the New Order".[227]

This was a form of fascist Manichaeism, meaning a constructed, dualistic black-and-white worldview of an eternal battle between two juxtaposed fronts of fascism and liberalism/communism, which was an essential feature of fascist internationalism.[228] For the Montreux Front, this dualistic thinking had crucial implications. The idea of an anti-fascist popular front opened the door for conspiratorial ideas of antisemitism and anti-Masonry, deeply rooted in the Judeo-Bolshevist myth. Thus, the delegates discussed "occult forces", "international Finance", "Freemasons", "Democrats", and even "Catholics" as allegedly united common enemies.[229] Therefore, the second resolution denounced "the monstrous alliance of plutocratic capitalism with the Marxist and Judeo-Masonic Internationals" that was aiming at destroying the work of "fascist and national movements" and carrying out the "Bolshevist revolution".[230]

226 Cited in Scholz, "Italienischer Faschismus als 'Export'-Artikel (1927–1935)", 341–342.

227 Longo, "I tentativi per la costituzione di un'internazionale fascista", 544.

228 On Manichaeism as a fundamental element of fascist internationalism, see Chapter 7.

229 Cf. Longo, "I tentativi per la costituzione di un'internazionale fascista", 560.

230 Longo, "I tentativi per la costituzione di un'internazionale fascista", 561.

The belief in a united front of fascist forces also facilitated a novel offer of friendship towards Nazi Germany. This contradicted the former Germanophobia of CAUR, which had been a constant source of opposition and dissatisfaction among the minor parties. At the meeting, Coselschi finally agreed to invite the NSDAP (and the Italian PNF) as observers to the next congress of the Montreux Front as an adequate counter-reaction to the broadening of the anti-fascist front.[231] Only Paul Hoornaert, whose Belgian LNB distanced itself from German Nazism from the outset, objected fiercely. For Hoornaert, Nazism had lost all its sympathizers in the German-speaking Belgian population because of religious persecution.[232] Outraged by the new Germanophile course, the relationship between the Belgian fascist leader and CAUR deteriorated significantly in the subsequent years.[233] However, most other delegates expressed their approval. CAUR officially asked German Nazism to cooperate with the Montreux Front in a declaration published on October 8, 1935. Directly referring to the Comintern resolutions, CAUR offered to support "German National Socialism with all its forces in its defense against the common threat coming from Moscow where German National Socialism has been defined as the most reactionary and aggressive form of Fascism".[234]

Strikingly, all the former ideological objections vanished into thin air when the Montreux Front was confronted with the anti-fascist politics of the Communist International and potential League sanctions against Fascist Italy. In October 1935, CAUR even sent its associate Manlio Barilli to Germany and initiated cooperation with the Nazi organization Anti-Komintern (*Antikomintern*).[235] On his trip, Barilli also met Julius Streicher, the publisher of the virulently anti-Jewish newspaper *Der Stürmer*, indicating that antisemitism was no longer a taboo for CAUR. Gradually, Coselschi's organization also established contact with the NSDAP Office of Foreign Affairs led by Alfred Rosenberg and the antisemitic German WD.[236] A piece written by Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels called *Noi tedeschi e li fascismo di Mussolini* (We Germans and the Fascism of Mussolini), published by CAUR in 1936, publicly underlined this Italo-German rap-

231 Cf. Longo, "I tentativi per la costituzione di un'internazionale fascista", 559.

232 Longo, "I tentativi per la costituzione di un'internazionale fascista", 562.

233 Cf. Francis Balace, "La droite belge et l'aide à Franco", *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis* 18.3–4 (1987): 505–689, 600.

234 Cited Scholz, "Italienischer Faschismus als 'Export'-Artikel (1927–1935)", 340–341.

235 Cf. Hoffend, *Zwischen Kultur-Achse und Kulturkampf*, 394–395; Morant i Ariño, "Mujeres para una 'Nueva Europa'", 78–79.

236 Cf. Cuzzi, *L'internazionale delle camicie nere*, 325–326.

prochement.[237] In January 1937, the local CAUR group in Florence even organized a celebratory event on the establishment of the Rome-Berlin Axis.[238]

CAUR's plans for a future congress were put on hold because the fascist regime focused (financially and ideologically) on the war effort after the brutal Italian invasion of Ethiopia in October 1935 instead of enforcing international cooper-

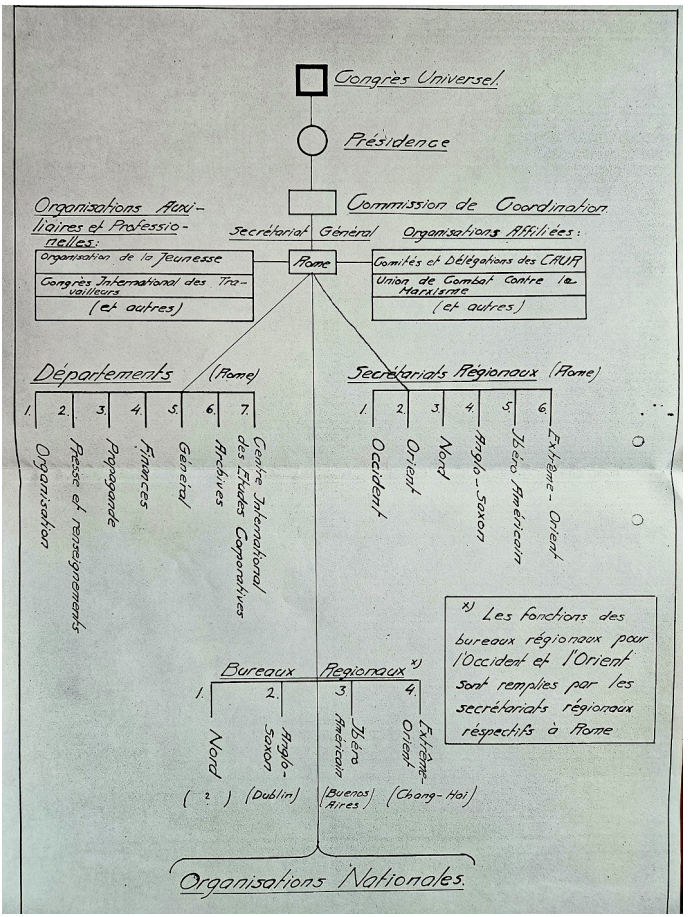


Figure 3: Vidkun Quisling, sketch of an organizational chart, mid-1930s. RA Oslo, Rolf Ingebrigtsen (Alfa bibliotek), PA-1308, Gc – L0020.

237 Joseph Goebbels, *Noi tedeschi e li fascismo di Mussolini* (Florence: Beltrami, 1936).
238 See the invitation to the event from Alberto Luchini sent to Rütger Essén, 1937: [RA Marieberg], REA, Vol. 71.

ation with minor fascist parties. NS leader Vidkun Quisling still drafted a detailed organizational chart for the "Organization of the New Order" (see Figure 3).[239] The chart included a universal congress, a president, a coordination committee, seven departments working on specific topics such as corporatism, finance, and propaganda, as well as six regional secretariats. Quisling foresaw four regional offices in the "Far East, Ibero-America, Anglo-Saxon, and the North".[240] This geographical scope foreshadowed CAUR's turn from a primarily European to a potentially globally operating organization. Quisling sent the organizational chart to Coselschi in February 1936.[241] Coselschi responded, but apart from a few friendly words, Quisling's draft petered out without further public notice. Quisling was repelled by the inadequate feedback, and, as discussed in Chapter 10, pondered the establishment of a Nordic World Federation based in Oslo instead of Rome.

The Decline of the Action Committees for the Universality of Rome, 1936–1939

Since Michael Ledeen's pioneering study on *Universal Fascism*, the primary explanation for CAUR's decline in the late 1930s "was the new direction of fascist foreign policy", because the Italo-German rapprochement that culminated in the Rome-Berlin Axis from 1936 onward "jeopardized" CAUR's former main task to prevent Nazi German influence on kindred fascist movements.[242] Various other factors, including the implosion of the Montreux Front from the inside, and the sidelining of Coselschi within the Italian state, also commenced the end of CAUR's project of fascist internationalism.[243] The Italo-Ethiopian War, in particular, constituted a cesura.

On October 3, 1935, only weeks after the second Montreux meeting, Italian troops invaded Ethiopia without a declaration of war. The League of Nations immediately imposed economic and financial sanctions upon Italy.[244] The invasion resulted in one of the most brutal conflicts of the early twentieth century, in

239 Vidkun Quisling, Organizational chart, 1935/1936 (undated): [RA Oslo], PA-1308, Gc - L0020.
240 Quisling, Organizational chart, 1935/1936 (undated).
241 Letter from Vidkun Quisling to Eugenio Coselschi, February 11, 1936: [RA Oslo], PA-1308, Gc - L0020.
242 Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*, 133.
243 Cf. Carlomagno, "C.A.U.R.: Den fasicistiska internationalen", 290; Longo, "I tentativi per la costituzione di un'internazionale fascista", 487.
244 See George W. Baer, "Sanctions and Security: The League of Nations and the Italian-Ethiopian War, 1935–1936", *International Organization* 27.2 (1973): 165–179.

which the Italian army committed severe atrocities and war crimes by using mustard gas in aerial bombardments against combatants and civilians (in violation of the Geneva Protocol and Geneva Conventions). The Fascist government portrayed the aggression as the "greatest colonial war of all time", which ended with Italy's victory in February 1937.[245]

CAUR helped legitimize the war of 'civilized' Italy against 'barbarous' Abyssinia by disseminating propaganda internationally.[246] However, the conflict made it difficult to advocate universal fascism because "the previous nimbus of Italian fascism as a peace-friendly regime was gone".[247] This challenged many movements involved in the Montreux Front. Any alliance with the colonial and imperialist warmonger Italian Fascism could damage the parties domestically, which used to connect imperialism and colonialism either to the British or French Empires and thus liberalism or to the Soviet Union and its desire for a world revolution.[248] Therefore, reactions to the war differed massively, ranging from full support based on CAUR's propaganda to renunciation from the former role model.

Most ardently, the Swiss FFS functioned as Italy's mouthpiece and warned about "Abyssinia, the black danger" while proclaiming that "Fascist thinking means nationalist and European thinking".[249] Paradigmatic was an article published only a week after the second Montreux meeting, in which the FFS conceptualized "fascist solidarity" (a phenomenon which will be scrutinized more closely in Chapter 9) in a white supremacist pattern as part of a historical "civilizational" mission of the entire West.[250] The article ended with statements of approval for Italian colonialism by various fascist leaders from abroad, namely Marcel Bucard, Paul Hoornaert, Oswald Mosley, José Antonio Primo de Rivera, Anton Mussert, and the FFS leader Arthur Fonjallaz. Only three days later, Bucard's French MF published a very similar statement in support of the war and European fascism.[251]

The Irish NCP (National Corporate Party, the successor of the Irish Blueshirts) also unleashed a pro-Italian campaign directed against Abyssinia and the League

245 Cited in Payne, *A History of Fascism*, 234.

246 See CAUR, *Italy denounces Abyssinian Atrocities to the League of Nations* (Rome: Le Bureau de Presse des Comités d'Action pour l'Universalité de Rome, 1936).

247 Borejsza, "Die Rivalität zwischen Faschismus und Nationalsozialismus in Ostmitteleuropa", 597.

248 On this form of fascist 'anti-imperialism', see also Chapter 6.

249 "Abyssinia, die schwarze Gefahr", *Der Schweizer Fascist,* September 5, 1935.

250 "Fascistische Solidarität", *Der Schweizer Fascist,* September 19, 1935.

251 "Le conflit italo-éthiopien et les fascismes européens", *Le Franciste,* September 22, 1935.

sanctions imposed on Italy by "Freemason Britain and Communist Russia".[252] The sources and historiography about the following statements are contradictory, but NCP leader Eoin O'Duffy allegedly even promised Benito Mussolini at the second Montreux conference (even though Mussolini was not present) a detachment of 1,000 Irish volunteers to fight alongside Italian troops in Abyssinia.[253] After being heavily criticized in Ireland for this proposal, O'Duffy insisted that the offer of military aid was an Irish grassroots movement, and ultimately decided that Italy needed "moral rather than military support".[254] Intriguingly, one 18-year-old NCP supporter from Cork named Barry Cagney approached Fascist Italy directly and offered to fight for its cause in Ethiopia, and even though his offer was declined, he was rewarded with a trip to Italy in 1936.[255] According to NCP propaganda, Mussolini even thanked O'Duffy in a personal letter in the spring of 1936, outlining his "profound appreciation of the brave stand taken by the National Corporate Party of Ireland on behalf of the Italian people".[256] The entire episode shows how far O'Duffy was potentially willing to go when expressing fascist solidarity, foreshadowing his later military involvement in the Spanish Civil War.[257]

Other members of the Montreux Front became increasingly critical of Italian Fascism due to the war. Vidkun Quisling from the NS first voiced support for Fascist Italy's aggression, as instructed by CAUR, but this triggered massive objections within his own party. In consequence, support for the war faded quickly.[258] Other CAUR partners showed no interest whatsoever in supporting the Italian imperial project. Most drastically, Frits Clausen's DNSAP voiced strong criticism against Mussolini, who allegedly had failed to replace Jews in powerful positions in Italy. Therefore, the DNSAP concluded that "international Jewry" had forced Fascist Italy into a war against Abyssinia, which no one else in Europe supported.[259] The DNSAP still remained in contact with CAUR in the following years.

252 E.g. "Italy and Ireland", *The Nation,* April 1936; "Sanctions against Italy: O'Duffy was right", *The Nation,* July 1936.

253 Cf. Jack Traynor, *General Eoin O'Duffy*: *The Political Life of an Irish Firebrand* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2023), 154.

254 Cited in Sarrol, "Les fascistes en Suisse". See also Fearghal McGarry, *Eoin O'Duffy*: *A Self-made Hero* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 281.

255 Cf. Traynor, *General Eoin O'Duffy*, 154–155.

256 "Italy and Ireland", *The Nation,* April 1936.

257 On the NCP and the Spanish Civil War, see Chapter 9.

258 See, in more detail, Chapter 5.

259 Cf. "Den international Situation i Dag", *National-Socialisten,* September 14, 1935; 'Europæisk Storpolitik', *National-Socialisten,* November 23, 1935.

In Portugal, in turn, there was a direct link between the Italo-Ethiopian War and the termination of CAUR's activities.[260]

This transformation of Fascist Italy from the *Pax Romana* to the *Imperium Romanum* ushered in the decline of CAUR, which was further fueled by the implosion of the Montreux Front from the inside from 1936 onward because many of the participating minor movements disappeared into political insignificance: Marcel Bucard was imprisoned for a few days in December 1935 and his party MF was banned in 1936 in France due to its violent behavior.[261] In Ireland, Eoin O'Duffy's short-lived NCP never stood for election and was dissolved in 1936, only a year after its foundation. The Swiss FFS, headed by Arthur Fonjallaz, was disbanded in the same year after Fascist Italy stopped its funding. In addition to these external setbacks, CAUR came under increasing internal pressure from various Italian state authorities in the second half of the 1930s.[262] Nevertheless, the organization continued with its activities in a reduced shape and published a new journal called *Antibolscevismo* (Antibolshevism) in 1937 in the context of the Spanish Civil War.

In the period 1936 to 1939, CAUR completely abandoned two of its former ideological principles of fascist internationalism, the exclusive focus on Europe, and the previously reluctant attitude towards antisemitism. CAUR's global turn was illustrated by a new youth organization called World University Union for the New Order (*Union Universitaire Mondiale d'Ordre Nouveau*, UMON) that CAUR secretly founded at some point in 1936 in Brussels.[263] The Belgian location helped to conceal that Italy financed the organization – a typical strategy of obfuscation we already saw in the Lausanne-based CINEF. Thus, media reports about UMON overlooked direct links between UMON and CAUR.[264] In line with CAUR's emphasis on corporatism and common adversaries, UMON – had "the aim of linking students from all countries of the world, in order to create a vast movement for the diffusion of new ideas, which, while being adopted by each country, have in common the following principles: constitution of strong, organic, disciplined national states. Establishment of an international corporate economy. Combat against the

260 Cf. Simon Kuin, "O Braço Longo de Mussolini: Os 'Comitati d'Azione per l'Universalità di Roma' em Portugal (1933–1937)", *Penélope: revista de história e ciências sociais* 11 (1993): 7–20, 18–19.

261 Cf. Philip Rees, *Biographical Dictionary of the Extreme Right since 1890* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990), 49.

262 Cf. Scholz, "Italienischer Faschismus als 'Export'-Artikel (1927–1935)", 343–346.

263 See Balace, "La droite belge et l'aide à Franco", 598.

264 E.g. "Ça et la", *Le Figaro,* September 30, 1937; "Internationell studentunion mot kommunismen", *Nationell Tidning,* February 27, 1937.

abuses of parliamentarism, capitalism, reaction, Marxism, secret societies".[265] Hence, UMON's ideological outlook matched CAUR's de-Romanized, 'inclusive' outlook and stressed the worldwide "rapprochement between peoples".[266]

UMON apparently planned a major international youth conference in Rome in late 1937.[267] But it remains unclear whether such a congress took place.[268] According to a letter from Coselschi to Mussolini in October 1937, UMON allegedly attracted 150,000 members in Europe, which is an exaggerated number no other source can confirm.[269] In contrast, Marco Cuzzi even refers to the organization as the "phantom groups of UMON" due to the few traces it left in the archives from late 1937 on, and the international impact was minimal.

CAUR's new outlook beyond Europe was also apparent in a publication by Eugenio Coselschi in 1938 called *Tre bandiere sul mondo* (Three flags over the world).[270] Coselschi wrote the book in light of the Italo-German-Japanese rapprochement in the years 1936 to 1939 that led to a "globalization of the Axis".[271] Thus, Italian fascist internationalism expanded its geographical horizons beyond Europe, especially when Italy signed the Anti-Comintern Pact alongside Germany and Japan in November 1937. This meant an abandonment of Coselschi's former argument of the 'yellow peril', when he had warned about the rise of Imperial Japan to demand closer European cooperation.

The novel antisemitic agenda of CAUR was linked to a broader fascist *Zeitgeist* in the late 1930s when Mussolini's government adopted antisemitism as an official policy through the implementation of racial laws in 1938.[272] CAUR's antisemitism became apparent when it cooperated with the antisemitic German organization WD. Alberto Luchini represented CAUR twice at the international WD congresses in Erfurt in 1937 and 1938.[273] In the summer of 1938, WD founder Ulrich Fleischhauer met Eugenio Coselschi in Italy and invited him personally to the next Erfurt Con-

265 Letter from Manlio Barilli to Rütger Essén, February 24, 1937: [RA Marieberg], REA, Vol. 10.

266 "Constitution Universitaire Mondiale de l'Ordre Nouveau", *C.A.U.R. Notizario settimanale d'Informazioni dei Comitati d'Azione per la Universalità di Roma,* July 26, 1936.

267 Letter from Finn Thrana to DNSAP, October 31, 1937: [RA Copenhagen], DNSAP arkiv, Rigspolitichefen, Politiets Efterretningstjeneste: Sager (1945–1950) 55–59 (R4): 3b Hovedkontoret Korrespondance, Vol. 26.

268 Cf. Cuzzi, *L'internazionale delle camicie nere*, 333.

269 Cuzzi, *L'internazionale delle camicie nere*, 314–315.

270 Eugenio Coselschi, *Tre bandiere sul mondo*. (Florence: G. Beltrami Editore, 1938).

271 Hedinger, *Die Achse: Berlin, Rom, Tokio*, 183–265.

272 However, antisemitic strands had existed since the early days of the Italian Fascist movement. See Salvatore Garau, "Between 'Spirit' and 'Science': The Emergence of Italian Fascist Antisemitism through the 1920s and 1930s", *Holocaust Studies* 15, 1–2 (2009): 37–58.

273 On WD and CAUR, see also Chapter 4.

gress. At that time, the responsible Minister of Popular Culture, Dino Alfieri, had become very critical of CAUR's activities and prohibited Coselschi from traveling to Germany.[274] The CAUR president wrote a message addressed to the WD congress in September 1938 in Erfurt, which Luchini read out on Coselschi's behalf.[275]

In this message, Coselschi fully embraced CAUR's global and antisemitic turn when he demanded an anti-Jewish alliance of "patriots of all countries and believers of all confessions". He recalibrated the notion of the universality of Rome as a Christian spiritual guide directed against the materialist Jewish race. As Coselschi explained, "in combating Judaism, Rome sees first of all the defense of the values of spirituality in the world [. . .] because Rome, in this struggle against materialism, considers all the great and noble professions of faith of mankind as being in solidarity".[276] Coselschi envisioned a 'spiritual' union of all Christian, Muslim, and Buddhist forces directed against 'materialist' Bolshevism and Judaism, explicitly offering his friendship and comradeship to the Arab people.[277] Thus, by the end of the late 1930s, CAUR's outlook turned into a form of global antisemitic internationalism, conspicuously mirroring the agenda of the German WD. Francis Balace even interprets CAUR as the "mediocre double" of the German antisemitic agency, which will be analyzed in Chapter 4.[278]

The fact that Coselschi was neither allowed to travel to a DNSAP rally in Denmark nor to the WD conferences in Erfurt in 1938 underlines the gradual downfall of CAUR within the Italian state.[279] In February 1937, an order from the Italian foreign minister Galeazzo Ciano forced Coselschi to suspend any activity of CAUR until further notice. CAUR lost its status as an independent organization within the Italian regime in October 1937. Ciano delegated CAUR's authority to the Ministry of Popular Culture headed by Dino Alfieri, which directly controlled and hindered its activities in its final years. Alfieri dissolved CAUR shortly after the outbreak of the Second World War on September 20, 1939.

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274 Cuzzi, *L'internazionale delle camicie nere*, 346.

275 Eugenio Coselschi, "Botschaft des Generals Eugenio Coselschi: Präsident der Aktionskomitees für die Universalität von Rom, Abgeordneter im italienischen Parlament an die Versammlung des Internationalen „Welt-Dienst"-Kongresses vom 1. bis 4. September 1938 in Erfurt", *Welt-Dienst,* October 1, 1938.

276 Cited in Cuzzi, *L'internazionale delle camicie nere*, 346–347.

277 Cuzzi, *L'internazionale delle camicie nere*, 346–347, 347.

278 Cf. Balace, "La droite belge et l'aide à Franco", 597.

279 Letter from Eugenio Coselschi to Frits Clausen, June 12, 1937: [RA Marieberg], DNSAP arkiv, Rigspolitichefen, Politiets Efterretningstjeneste: Sager (1945–1950) 60–63 (R5): 3b Hovedkontoret Korrespondance, Vol. 29.

The history of the rise and fall of CAUR and the Montreux Front underlines the specific mimetic characteristic of fascist internationalism as a counter-reaction to the Communist International and the League of Nations. At a time when world politics were shaped by international relations and international organizations, even the fiercest nationalists aimed at presenting a similarly united 'world front' of fascist movements in reaction to the anti-fascist popular front, signified by the attempt to present the Montreux Front as a powerful antithesis of Moscow and Geneva.

This chapter has demonstrated how the Italo-German rivalry fueled multilayered notions and activities of fascist internationalism. CAUR attempted to unite movements and actors with strikingly different ideological outlooks, like the conservative Swedish SNU and the national socialist Danish DNSAP, under the umbrella of universal fascism. CAUR's ideology transformed gradually from a cultural-hegemonic, paternalistic, self-proclaimed 'anti-racist' and even 'anti-expansionist' outlook to a territorial-hegemonic, imperialist, explicitly racist, and increasingly antisemitic agenda. This radical transformation becomes particularly apparent when comparing the CAUR agenda in the late 1930s, adapted to Mussolini's imperial project in East Africa, with CINEF's outlook promulgated in the late 1920s when the concept of universal fascism lacked explicit imperialist and antisemitic implications. CAUR also entirely abandoned the initial Germanophobia, underlining the adaptability and processual character of fascist internationalism.

The perspective on minor fascist movements enables a reinterpretation of CAUR and the Montreux Front beyond the objectives of the Italian organizers. The international partners willingly cooperated with Fascist Italy while pursuing their own ends, such as access to a powerful government and achieving financial support. By contesting CAUR's key notion of the 'universality of Rome' and the adamant demand to integrate antisemitism, delegates such as Vidkun Quisling and Frits Clausen also shaped CAUR's agenda. Instead of interpreting these contestations as mere failures of fascist internationalism, I propose that the engagement of Vidkun Quisling, Frits Clausen, Eoin O'Duffy, Arthur Fonjallaz, and others shows how minor fascist movements used the international stage for their own ends. The Scandinavian delegates, in particular, repudiated Italy's hegemonic position and foregrounded equality among the different movements while stressing their Nordic racist and antisemitic agenda. At one of its meetings in 1935, Quisling summarized this position in a nutshell: "we want collaboration, not supremacy".[280]

These findings do not deny the many challenges and failures when CAUR attempted to unite heterogeneous movements. On the contrary, this chapter has

280 Cited in Longo, "I tentativi per la costituzione di un'internazionale fascista", 511.

shown that tensions and obstacles already emerged in the preparation of the Montreux Congress. From this angle, the two schisms at the congress around the Latin-Nordic divide and the 'Jewish question' appear as crucial moments of contestation in the complex interplay between a major fascist regime and minor movements searching for the 'unitary principle' of fascist internationalism. The Montreux Front also reveals a profound discrepancy between megalomaniac pipe dreams and the small-scaled or non-existent practical realization of international cooperation among fascists. Eventually, CAUR and the Montreux Front remained an elitist, intellectual enterprise of a handful of white European men who considered themselves the influential avant-garde of universal fascism.

Notwithstanding, CAUR and the Montreux Front activities did not fade away without profound reverberations, as the following chapters will demonstrate. CAUR's network facilitated substantial practices of cooperation among various fascist movements beyond Fascist Italy, including the exchange of propaganda and knowledge.[281] In Scandinavia, Italian fascist internationalism became the starting point to pursue alternative forms of Nordic fascist regionalism.[282] CAUR's activities and anti-German agenda also provoked a concrete German counter-project headed by Hans Keller, who resembled Eugenio Coselschi's shrewdness on the international stage when creating his own specifically 'anti-fascist' (in the sense of anti-Italian) Nationalist International.

281 See Chapter 8.
282 See Chapter 7.

Chapter 3
"Nationalists of the World, Unite": The Nationalist International and *Volk* Nationalism

In early 1934, a 26-year-old German scholar of law and Nazi enthusiast named Hans Keller visited Italy to research the internationalism, international law, and "Fascist world ideology" of Benito Mussolini's dictatorship.[1] Despite initial curious openness and sympathy, he was soon alienated when he discovered the notion of universal fascism, which he linked to the idea of a new hegemonic Roman Empire. This discovery outraged Keller, who argued in a letter to the sponsor of his research trip, the Rockefeller Foundation, that "the 'law of nations' advocated by Fascism would be based upon subordination to Italian leadership, an arrogance, which [. . .] is a danger to world peace".[2] Keller was alarmed that the Italians even had founded the organization CAUR to promote their dangerous ideology abroad. Keller was certain that CAUR was only "posing as innocent cultural propaganda" but he had become aware of "the real purpose of these 'Committees'", namely "to 'fascistise' (*Fascistizzare*) the whole of the world".[3]

This experience in Italy gave Keller the impetus to create a German counterform of fascist internationalism. Soon he convinced his previous employer, the German Reich Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda (*Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda*, RMVP), to finance the undertaking with 50,000 Reichsmark, linked to the concrete mission to combat CAUR.[4] Thus, Keller founded the International Action of Nationalists (*Internationale Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Nationalisten*, IAdN) in the spring of 1934. In English, the organization was mainly referred to as the Nationalist International. By the end of the same year, Keller organized its first international congress, which attempted to united "nationalists of the world" in Berlin instead of Rome or Montreux.[5]

The analytical concept of *Nazi internationalism* is rarely used by historians because of the ultranationalist, *völkisch*, racist, expansionist, destructive, and ultimately anti-internationalist character of Nazi Germany, which largely denied any

1 Letter from Hans Keller to T. B. Kittredge, August 20, 1935: [BArch], N 1106/58.
2 Letter from Hans Keller to T. B. Kittredge, August 20, 1935.
3 Letter from Hans Keller to T. B. Kittredge, August 20, 1935.
4 Cf. Letter from the Academy for the Rights of Peoples to the Reich Ministry of Science, Education and Culture, May 25, 1938: [PAAA], RZ214 99290, 119–122.
5 IAdN, *Volksgemeinschaft und Völkerfriede: Sitzungsbericht der Berliner Tagung* (Zurich: Batschari, 1935), 69.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111469799-004

'universal' implications of its Germanic-Nordic-Aryan ideology.[6] Nevertheless, according to the broad approach of this book, several agencies from Nazi Germany became involved in fascist internationalism, though with different visions and objectives. These included the organization World-Service (*Welt-Dienst*, WD), which attempted to influence and unite various fascist movements based on antisemitism, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 4. Another example is the so-called Anti-Komintern (*Antikomintern*) led by Eberhard Taubert, which Joseph Goebbels's Propaganda Ministry orchestrated to spread anticommunist propaganda internationally and to unite people, movements, and regimes against so-called Judeo-Bolshevism.[7]

Among these agencies involved in Nazi internationalism, Hans Keller's IAdN stood out for explicitly attempting to 'Europeanize' or even 'universalize' German nationalism based on the Nazi notions of *Volk* (people) and *Rasse* (race). Significantly, Keller invoked the idea of a 'Third Europe', illustrating a form of fascist Europeanism that propagated the 'Third Reich' as a role model for other nationalists in Europe. Beyond such explicit notions and legitimization strategies of fascist internationalism, IAdN also initiated international cooperation with various European fascist parties from northwestern Europe, thus contributing to collaboration among internationally oriented fascists in the form of conferences, lecture series, and publications.

Especially in comparison to Anti-Komintern and WD, there has been a notable desideratum of research on IAdN and its founder Hans Keller.[8] Most historians who mention the undertaking correctly interpret it as a Nazi German counter-reaction to Italian Fascism with the "explicit intention of stonewalling CAUR".[9] Nevertheless, most studies downplay the significance of the organization due to its role as a sort of ideological outsider within Nazi Germany. Andrea Hoffend, for instance, claims that IAdN was only of "peripheral importance" in her study on the complex relationship between Italian Fascism and German Nazism.[10] This chapter argues, in contrast, that IAdN had an important propagandistic function for Nazi Germany in the mid-1930s because it portrayed the 'Third Reich' as a

6 On Nazi internationalism, see, among few others, Sandrine Kott and Kiran Klaus Patel, eds., *Nazism across Borders*: *The Social Policies of the Third Reich and their Global Appeal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

7 On the Anti-Komintern, see Lorna L. Waddington, 'The Anti-Komintern and Nazi Anti-Bolshevik Propaganda in the 1930s', *Journal of Contemporary History* 42. 4 (2007): 573–594.

8 As argued in more detail in Hamre, "Nationalists of All Countries, Unite!", 478–480. The article provides a first historical overview of the IAdN and forms the basis for this chapter.

9 Bauerkämper, 'Transnational Fascism', 227.

10 Hoffend, *Zwischen Kultur-Achse und Kulturkampf*, 397.

'peaceful' force and reliable international partner.[11] Furthermore, due to its peculiar 'internationalist' agenda, the Nationalist International constitutes a beneficial example for studying how an organization attempted to combine explicitly ultranationalist notions (in this case of *Volk* and *Rasse*) and 'anti-internationalism' with international cooperation and visions of 'counter-internationalism'.

In relation to the main themes of the monograph, this chapter first discusses Hans Keller as an archetypical agent of fascist internationalism, and demonstrates how the vision of combatting the legal international order established at Versailles, the Communist International, and even CAUR's Italian 'Fascist International', shaped Keller's thinking. The second part analyzes the activities emanating from the Nationalist International, including three large congresses in Berlin, London, and Oslo, and the foundation of a so-called Academy for the Rights of Peoples (*Akademie für die Rechte der Völker*) in 1936. Third, the chapter examines IAdN's interaction with various European fascist movements, outlining how these partly adhered to but also contested Keller's agenda. The fourth and fifth sections analyze IAdN's *Weltanschauung*, notably the notions of *Volk* nationalism, the 'Third Europe', white supremacism, and 'anti-internationalism'. The final part explores the intertwined histories of IAdN and CAUR, emphasizing how the Nationalist International operated as a counter tool of Nazism against Italy's universal fascism at the height of the Italo-German rivalry in 1934. However, IAdN was forced to modify its outlook due to the Rome-Berlin Axis in 1936, thus gradually losing its legitimacy and room for maneuver in Nazi Germany.

Hans Keller as an Agent of Fascist Internationalism

Hans Karl Ernst Ludwig Keller (abbreviated Hans K.E.L. Keller in his publications) constitutes an archetype of a fascist broker who agitated and mediated beyond borders and outside typical diplomatic channels. Born in 1908 in Speyer, Keller grew up in the politically unstable Weimar Republic and obtained three doctoral titles in the early 1930s (in Munich, Bordeaux, and Kiel, two in law and one in economy) while specializing in international law.[12] Ambitiously, he dreamt of establishing a new scientific discipline that he defined as "Comparative International Law Ideology".[13] Early on, he blended his academic interests with political activism, as when he founded the German-European Union (*Deutsch-Europäische Union*) in Munich.

11 See also Neulen, *Europa und das 3. Reich*, 23.

12 On Keller's biography, see Hans Keller, Fellowship Card, [RAC], RF, RG 10, F/S Recorder Cards, Social Sciences Germany; Personalakte Keller, Hans Karl Ernst Ludwig, [BArch], R55/24256.

13 Cf. Letter from Hans Keller to A. W. Fehling, April 15, 1933: [BArch], N 1106/58.

The association existed from 1931 to 1933 and was primarily directed against the Pan-European Movement led by Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, which was established in 1923. The German-European Union's main task was to promote "supranational international law based on a *völkisch* worldview," juxtaposed with the existing international law.[14] Keller repeatedly expressed his *völkisch*, racist, antisemitic, and palingenetic worldview in the quarterly journal of the union, demanding the "renewal of Europe based on the idea of the German *Reich* (empire)". Specifically, Keller rejected "the hypocrisy of internationalism as un-German".[15] Accordingly, he argued that "Germany, in her revolutionary rebirth of racial nationalism, necessarily opposes Western rational nationalism as well as its external counterpart, internationalism".[16]

Even though Keller never joined the NSDAP, he became an enthusiastic advocate of the 'Third Reich'. In late 1933, Keller explained in a letter to the newly established Reich Propaganda Ministry led by Joseph Goebbels that he wished "to activate my research assignment [. . .] politically".[17] He thus worked from December 1933 to early 1934 for the RMVP as a referent dealing with France, Switzerland, and northern Africa.[18] The ministry evaluated that "Dr. Keller is regarded here as having an impeccable character and a convinced supporter of the National Socialist worldview. He is not a party member but has enjoyed full confidence here in ideological matters".[19] Keller quit the job only after a few months because he wanted to continue his research on international law in Italy and Britain, explaining to his employer that he "could serve National Socialist Germany in the foreign front even more than in my present position".[20]

In the early 1930s, Keller enjoyed the cosmopolitan life of a young academic researcher, living and studying briefly in France, the United States, Italy, and Britain before settling in Berlin in 1936.[21] These international travels had two significant effects on the genesis of the Nationalist International. First, one intellectual result was that Keller sharpened his understanding of internationalism through

14 Hans Keller, 'Deutscheuropa', *Deutscheuropa. Vierteljahresschrift für die Erneuerung Europas aus dem Reichsgedanken* 2.3 (1933): 2.

15 Keller, 'Deutscheuropa'.

16 Hans Keller, 'Résumés — Abstracts — Riassunti', *Deutscheuropa. Vierteljahresschrift für die Erneuerung Europas aus dem Reichsgedanken* 2. 3 (1933): 13–14, 13.

17 Letter from Hans Keller to RMVP, December 13, 1933: [BArch], R55/24256.

18 See Personalakte Keller, Hans Karl Ernst Ludwig, [BArch], R55/24256.

19 Letter from RMVP to the University of Munich, January 22, 1937: [BArch], R55/24256.

20 Letter from Hans Keller to Hermann Demann, March 1, 1934: [BArch], R55/24256.

21 In 1931, Keller studied in Bordeaux. In the years 1932–1933, Keller went to Harvard, Washington DC, Chicago, and New York. In 1934, he traveled to Torino, Rome, Naples, Palermo, London, and Oxford.

the study of Western liberal internationalism in the US and Britain, as well as fascist internationalism in Italy. In Mussolini's regime, Keller not only met and discussed with several figures linked to the organization CAUR, such as the visionary of a Fascist International, Asvero Gravelli. He also diagnosed Fascist Italy as the main ideological competitor of Nazi Germany. In England, he realized in his own words that British policymakers regarded the League of Nations as a "glorified and magnified British Empire" and a "false internationalism" that would, in reality, support British imperialism and nationalism.[22] As Keller outlined in a concluding report on both research trips, he was shocked by the "discovery that the 'Internationalism' of the 'Internazionale Fascista' or 'Roma Universa' as well as that of the English 'League of Nations Unions' are but expressions of Italian and English nationalism".[23] These experiences shaped Keller's understanding of international relations and world order, and marked what he would come to see as the main enemies of his own 'nationalist' counter-internationalism.

Second, the research trips' practical effect was that Keller established a transnational network with like-minded thinkers. Frequently, Keller's personal acquaintances became political allies and vice versa. For example, in the US, Keller celebrated Christmas Eve with Professor Raymond Th. Rich in Massachusetts. In the late 1930s, Rich would become head of the US national committee of the aforementioned Academy for the Rights of Peoples established by Keller.[24] Moreover, Keller "peddled the names of leading personalities" from abroad to boost his political importance within the Nazi state, as a domestic rival, the Academy for German Law (*Akademie für deutsches Recht*) complained in an internal report.[25]

From 1932 to 1935, Keller's research trips were funded by the Rockefeller Foundation.[26] This marks a surprising overlap of funding and personnel between US-American philanthropism and fascist internationalism, underlining the latter's "infiltration of liberal internationalist networks" in the interwar period despite ideological antagonism.[27] Even though the Rockefeller Foundation offered expertise and funding to the League of Nations, it contradictorily still provided scholar-

22 Letter from Hans Keller to T. B. Kittredge, August 20, 1935: [BArch], N 1106/58.

23 Keller to T. B. Kittredge, August 20, 1935.

24 Cf. Letter from Hans Keller to Stacy May, October 1, 1933: [BArch], N 1106/58.

25 Letter from the Academy for German Law to the German Reich Ministry of the Interior, December 15, 1936: [BArch], R 61/614.

26 See Edward Berman, *The Ideology of Philanthropy*: *The Influence of the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations on American Foreign Policy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983).

27 Herren, 'Fascist Internationalism', 192.

ships and a template for international exchange for upcoming Nazis.[28] Another prominent example and acquaintances of Keller was Georg Leibbrandt, who would become a leading member of the Foreign Policy Office of the NSDAP and a participant at the infamous Wannsee Conference. This underlines the fluid boundaries between liberal and illiberal (increasingly fascist) internationalisms in the interwar period.[29]

The support of the Rockefeller Foundation was crucial to setting IAdN in motion. Its representative in Germany, August Wilhelm Fehling, helped Keller mobilize a network of former scholarship holders. These willingly made available their academic contacts and personal connections to fascist circles, for example, by suggesting Keller to contact José Antonio Primo de Rivera from the Spanish Falange.[30] Keller also joined events or obtained membership in various organizations and movements abroad with partly shared political beliefs. Among others, he became a member of the Friends of National Spain (FONS), a British lobby group advocating Francisco Franco's rebellion in Spain.[31] Keller was also invited to a planned conference on fascist movements in northern Europe hosted by the Finnish Patriotic People's Movement (*Isänmaallinen kansanliike*, IKL) in Helsinki in 1937 as well as a party convention by the Danish DNSAP in 1939.[32] The German Foreign Ministry intervened and thwarted Keller's participation in the latter case. This illustrates how Keller acted on the international stage as an agent of German Nazism beyond and partly even antagonized by ordinary diplomatic channels. Keller's cosmopolitan life is thus an intriguing example of a networking process at the intersection between academic research and political agenda, in which politicization through 'negative' experiences and 'discoveries' abroad fueled the development of a German counter-agenda.

28 As further explored in Martin Kristoffer Hamre, 'Hans Keller, the "parlor Nazi" and founder of the Nationalist International', *Rockefeller fellows* (2025), https://doi.org/10.58079/1337h. On Keller and the Rockefeller Foundation, see also Judith Syga-Dubois, *Wissenschaftliche Philanthropie und transatlantischer Austausch in der Zwischenkriegszeit*: *Die sozialwissenschaftlichen Förderprogramme der Rockefeller Stiftungen in Deutschland* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2019), 613–619.

29 Hetherington and Sluga, 'Liberal and Illiberal Internationalisms'.

30 Cf. Hamre, 'Hans Keller'.

31 On FONS, see Chapter 9.

32 Letter from Paavo Susitaival to Rütger Essén, April 6, 1937: [RA Marieberg], REA, Vol. 10.

The Activities of the Nationalist International and the Congresses in Berlin, London, and Oslo

In April 1934, approximately nine months after Eugenio Coselschi established CAUR in Rome, Hans Keller created his IAdN in Zurich. As a diligent networker, Keller mainly acted alone, unlike CAUR with its team of 'area managers' and the Communist International with its professional apparatus. His staff consisted only of the secretary, Käte Lüttgen, who remained for a long time the only woman directly associated with the Nationalist International. When Keller renamed his organization into Nationalist Action (*Nationalistische Aktion*) in the late 1930s, he introduced her in a publication as the "Head of the press office".[33] The German Secret State Police (*Geheime Staatspolizei,* Gestapo) reported in June 1935 that IAdN was "a loose association of a relatively small group of people" rather than a comprehensive professional organization.[34] In fact, the working group did not have official statutes or a board, and even though Keller charged a membership fee, he did not give "anyone any account of where the money he collects ends up", as the German lawyer Hans Georg Bodenstein complained in 1938. Accordingly, Keller, at times even "appointed" members without informing them, such as the Bulgarian poet Janko Janeff, who hired Bodenstein due to a legal dispute about the missing payment of membership fees.[35]

The only official membership list of the organization (which Keller distributed as late as March 1941) listed 149 members living in the German Reich, although their nationalities included numerous countries from Switzerland to Syria. Moreover, Keller claimed that there were "at least ten friends for every member" of his organization, a typical exaggeration of a man who was repeatedly labelled an "impostor" by his enemies within the Nazi state apparatus.[36] Nevertheless, IAdN became the institutional platform of a vast international network of political and academic partners emanating from Germany. Being a network, defined here as a non-binding and informal form of communication and cooperation, characterized by individuals with similar but not necessarily fully coinciding

33 Cf. Keller, ed., *Der Kampf um die Völkerordnung*, 294.

34 Report from Gestapo to AA, June 30, 1935: [PAAA], RZ214 99289, 44–50.

35 Letter from Hans Georg Bodenstein to the Academy for German Law, June 1, 1938, [BArch], R 61/614.

36 Nationalist Action, 'Programm. Mitglieder und Förderer im Deutschen Reiche 1940 1941', [BArch], R 61/614; Letter from the Academy for the German Law to the German Reich Ministry of the Interior, December 15, 1936: [BArch], R 61/614.

political attitudes, gave the Nationalist International an ephemeral character.[37] Instead of being bound by a strictly defined organization, some 'members' participated only at one event, whereas others remained loyal to Keller's undertaking throughout the 1930s.

IAdN developed impressively far-reaching activities. It distributed a bilingual publication series, hosted three annual international congresses in Berlin, London, and Oslo (1934–1936), and founded the Academy for the Rights of Peoples in 1936. Furthermore, the Nationalist International organized a lecture series in Berlin from 1936 to 1940. Hans Keller knew of the importance of sites for the reputation of international organizations and attempted to exploit different locations for his ends. When he created IAdN, he chose Zurich strategically as its official headquarters, the home of many other international organizations. As in the cases of CINEF (in Lausanne) and CAUR (in Montreux), he exploited the location in Switzerland to emphasize an allegedly neutral, independent, and yet internationally influential political position.

As Judith Syga-Dubois states rightfully, "outwardly, Keller emphasized the image of a private and independent organization, but in essence, his legal views hardly differed from those of the National Socialists".[38] This typical obfuscation tactic did not always bear fruit. Swiss newspapers criticized Keller for using an address in Zurich-Erlenbach as IAdN's official address without actually being based there. This created a minor local scandal about the "methods of the Nazis".[39] In the aftermath, the Swiss Federal Political Department suggested to the Federal Prosecutor to deny Keller further residence in Switzerland as an "undesirable foreigner", due to his "unseemly behavior".[40] Consequently, a border barrier was imposed on Keller in January 1935, ironically the same year his competitor, CAUR president Eugenio Coselschi, suffered the same fate. The episode illustrates how contestation by Swiss state authorities severely hindered activities of fascist internationalism on 'neutral' ground in the 1930s.

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37 For a similar definition of an international fascist network, see Martin Finkenberger, 'Johann von Leers und die „faschistische Internationale" der fünfziger und sechziger Jahre in Argentinien und Ägypten', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 59.6 (2011): 521–542.

38 Syga-Dubois, *Wissenschaftliche Philanthropie und transatlantischer Austausch in der Zwischenkriegszeit*, 619.

39 "Dreitägige Gastfreundschaft auf Kosten der Nazis", *Volksrecht,* December 18, 1934; "Das sind die Methoden der Nazis", *Volksrecht,* December 20, 1934; "Die Internationale Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Nationalisten und die Schweizerische Nationalbank", *Neue Züricher Zeitung,* December 20, 1934.

40 Cf. Letter from the Swiss Federal Political Department to the Swiss Federal Prosecutor, January 10, 1935 [BAR], E4320B#1968/195#60.

Henceforth, Keller moved the office to London in 1935 and to his private apartment in Kurfürstendamm 162 in Berlin in 1936, officially being announced as another branch office.[41] Frequently, he acted as if IAdN would run permanent offices in Zurich, London, and Berlin, giving it the appearance of a truly international research association. Thus, from the outset, a strong hubris marked how Keller presented his organization in letters, press statements, and publications. This pretentious behavior also disturbed some potential partners. The Polish professor Zygmunt Cybichowski, for example, described Keller's organization as "ill-conceived, immature, and the strangest foundation" he had ever experienced.[42]

However, Keller still managed to convince approximately 100 international delegates from twenty countries to attend the first congress of the Nationalist International, which took place from December 5 to 7, 1934 in Berlin at Hotel Kaiserhof. The venue, one of Berlin's first luxury hotels, was next to Adolf Hitler's Reich Chancellery at the Wilhelmplatz. In this sense, the location symbolized the predominant role Nazi Germany would play within IAdN and enabled insights into the everyday life of the German capital. During the congress, the participants were invited by the Reichs Labour Service (*Reichsarbeitsdienst*) to visit the labor camp Lanke in Brandenburg and to join the annual rally of the Reich Chamber of Culture (*Reichskulturkammer*) in the Berlin Sportpalast.[43] The congress ended "with a reception at which all the national anthems of the countries participating were played at length".[44]

The second congress of the Nationalist International was held in London from July 10–12, 1935, and many British delegates were among the representatives of 15 to 40 countries (the number varies in different sources).[45] As the capital of the British Empire and one of the leading centers of liberal internationalism, London was an astonishing site to promote German Nazism internationally. Keller, who was living in Britain at that time, wanted to improve the reputation of Nazi Germany as a potential partner of Great Britain.[46]

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41 IAdN, Deutsche Zweigstelle in Berlin, pamphlet, undated: [PAAA], RZ214 99289, 73.

42 Letter from Zygmunt Cybichowski to the German Ministry of the Interior, November 30, 1936, [BArch], R 61/614.

43 Cf. IAdN, *Volksgemeinschaft und Völkerfriede*, 35.

44 H. Powys Greenwood, "Nationalism and Peace", *The Contemporary Review* 147 (1935): 149–156, 152.

45 The DNSAP press reported about delegates from 15 countries, Keller about 30, and the *Daily Mirror* about delegates from 40 countries. "Kongressen i London", *Nationalsocialisten,* July 20, 1935; IAdN, ed., *Am Internationalismus gehen die Völker zugrunde / Warum "Nationalistische Internationale"?* (Zurich: Albert Nauck, 1936), 2; "Want another League!", *Daily Mirror,* July 11, 1935.

46 For a more detailed analysis of the London Congress, see Martin Kristoffer Hamre, "Promoting German Nazism in the Heart of the British Empire: The London Congress of the 'Nationalist

Already in 1934, the co-founder of the Norwegian NS, Frederik Prytz, suggested that Oslo would be a suitable "neutral" site (instead of Switzerland) to create a powerful Nationalist International that would bridge German and Anglo-Saxon differences.[47] Keller cooperated closely with the Norwegian fascist party, and therefore, he chose the Norwegian capital for the third conference held between July 23 and 29, 1936.[48] Herman Harris Aall, a pro-German NS party ideologue, became one of the most active international IAdN members and helped orchestrate the event in Oslo. Keller himself admitted in 1939, that "the greatest merit in the realization of the Oslo Congress is undoubtedly to be attributed to [. . .] Aall".[49] Even though party leader Vidkun Quisling did not join because he was on holiday, several other leading NS members participated, and the NS press promoted the congress massively as an "Eldorado for nationalists".[50]

With the help of his Norwegian friends, Keller managed to book the venue of the famous Nobel Prize Institute for his congress. Shamelessly, he then exploited the credibility and reputation of the supposedly neutral, worldwide-known Nobel Institute for his own purposes. However, Keller's plan backfired almost immediately. The chairman of the Norwegian Nobel Committee complained about the misuse of the Nobel Institute's name on official documents and medals handed out at the congress, which led to a media scandal in Norway.[51] In the aftermath, Keller's sponsor, the RMVP, decided not to fund Keller's undertaking any longer. Further conferences were planned to be held either in Bucharest or Madrid when the Spanish capital would be "liberated" from communism through Franco's nationalist army.[52] Both plans never materialized due to the ongoing Spanish Civil War and financial difficulties.

In June 1936, the Nationalist International created the Academy for the Rights of Peoples at the Oslo Congress, which Hans Keller headed as president. Its main task was to prepare a new inegalitarian "law of peoples" in contrast to the exist-

International' in July 1935", *German Historical Institute Blog* (2023), accessed September 21, 2023, https://ghil.hypotheses.org/1278.

47 Letter from Frederik Prytz to Vidkun Quisling, December 3, 1934: [RA Oslo], PA 0750 F L0001.

48 File note from AA, July 3, 1936: [PAAA], RZ214 99289, 140–142.

49 Keller, ed., *Der Kampf um die Völkerordnung*, 149.

50 Cf. R.F.K., 'Nasjonalistkongressen', *Fritt Folk,* July 28, 1936.

51 E.g. 'Fascistkongressen på Nobelinstittutet', *Dagbladet,* September 28, 1936.

52 Cf. 'La Roumanie au congres international des nationalistes d'Oslo: La Conference du professeur Ion San Giorgiu', *Le Moment*, August 13, 1936; Hans Keller, "Vorrede des Präsidenten der Akademie für die Rechte der Völker", edited by Hans Keller, in *Der Kampf um die Völkerordnung* (Berlin: Verlag Franz Vahlen, 1939), 9–13, 9.

ing egalitarian (liberal) international law.[53] According to an article from the *Völkischer Beobachter*, the academy aimed to restore a "world peace order" based on the right of peoples, instead of the right of states and their "state imperialism".[54] Keller chose the title of an 'academy' to demonstrate the 'scientific' character of the Nationalist International while simultaneously creating a new platform for promoting his political ideas.

Keller's plan was to create national branches of the academy all over the world in the style of CAUR's national committees. The Norwegian committee was the first national branch erected in the direct aftermath of the Oslo Congress, headed by Keller's loyal supporter Herman Harris Aall.[55] IAdN mirrored CAUR's global turn in the late 1930s, when Keller reached out to various partners beyond Europe. According to one of the academy's stationaries from February 1937, twenty two national committees had been created in countries as far as Bolivia, Brazil, and the Union of South Africa, headed mainly by the former delegates at the Oslo Congress.[56] A year later, Keller also reached out to Professor Mahmoud Azmi, based in Bagdad, to discuss the creation of an Iraqi national committee, suggesting that a Eurocentric worldview (as outlined later) did not a priori preclude alliances with non-European nationalists.[57]

In 1939, Keller published an extensive (and wildly exaggerated) report on the work of IADN and the Academy named *Der Kampf um die Völkerordnung* (The Struggle for International Order), falsely claiming that the latter had research committees on law, education and economics, and that national committees existed in 56 countries, including far-flung countries and colonies such as Manchukuo, the Dutch East Indies, and Haiti.[58] By deliberately using vague, obfuscating formulations, Keller made it impossible to fathom how far the Nationalist International and the Academy were organizations operating globally, or rather just his pompous phantasms. The German Association of Intergovernmental Organizations and Institutions (*Vereinigung zwischenstaatlicher Verbände und Einrichtungen*) wrote in an critical internal report that "this is an attempt – albeit a very transparent one – to feign a scientific activity and research work of the Academy

53 For more details on Keller's aim to create a new law of peoples, see Hamre, "'Nationalists of All Countries, Unite!'", 14–18.

54 "Gründung einer Nationalistischen Akademie für Völkerrecht", *Völkischer Beobachter,* July 26, 1936; 'Für eine neue Weltordnung', *Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro,* July 30, 1936.

55 Letter from Hans Keller to Lutz Mackensen, November 16, 1936: [PAAA], RZ214 99289, 184.

56 Letter from Hans Keller to Hinrichs (AA), November 20, 1937: [PAAA], RZ214 99290, 52.

57 Letter from Hans Keller to Mahmoud Azmi, May 23, 1938: [PAAA], RZ214 99290, 109.

58 Keller, ed., *Der Kampf um die Völkerordnung*.

that does not actually exist".[59] Indeed, the entire enterprise left few traces outside of Keller's inner circle and the media echo in the international press was relatively limited.[60] Thus, the Academy for the Rights of Peoples demonstrates a stark discrepancy between the often limited reality and the megalomaniac myth around its activities, pointing to the limits of organizing fascist internationalism.

Interactions with Fascist Movements

A significant difference between the Nationalist International and CAUR's Montreux Front was that the latter emphasized the cooperation between political movements, whereas the former foregrounded cooperation between individual self-proclaimed nationalists, who, according to Keller, "are truly chosen to speak on behalf of their peoples".[61] Nonetheless, the leaders and intellectuals of various European fascist movements were still crucial for Keller's undertaking. From the perspective of minor fascist parties, the character of IAdN as a supposedly independent organization detached from the Nazi German state apparatus with an 'academic' purpose was even helpful. On the one hand, informal contact with IAdN could serve as a secret gateway and access to more formal NSDAP foreign policy institutions. For example, Hans Keller handed a list of foreigners which could be invited to the party rally of the German Nazi party in 1937 to the NSDAP Office of Foreign Affairs (*Außenpolitisches Amt der NSDAP*).[62]

On the other hand, as Hans-Werner Neulen points out, the alleged independence served as a "label, which enabled IAdN to establish contacts even with those foreign personalities who would never have thought of entering closer contact with a National Socialist organization".[63] Moreover, as a rather loose network, politicians from fascist parties could make appearances at IAdN congresses without fearing a backlash within their national movements for being too involved in an international organization affiliated with a foreign regime, which would contrast their own nationalism according to the fascist predicament (as addressed in Chapter 5).

59 Association of Intergovernmental Organisations and Institutions, "Schlussbericht über Keller, Der Kampf der Völkerordnung", April 15, 1939: [BArch], R 61/614.

60 See the report from the German Legation in Oslo on the Oslo Congress, August 5, 1936: [PAAA], RZ214 99289, 154–157.

61 IAdN, *Volksgemeinschaft und Völkerfriede*, 8.

62 Cf. Academy for German Law, 'Betreff Dr. Dr. Dr. H. K. Keller', August 12, 1937: [BArch], R 61/614.

63 Neulen, *Europa und das 3. Reich*, 23.

IAdN frequently interacted with minor fascist parties in northwestern parts of Europe, corresponding with its Germanic and Nordic-Aryan worldview. As outlined earlier, an important figure from the Norwegian NS was Herman Harris Aall, who held multiple speeches at IAdN events and became Keller's pen friend.[64] Denmark was more than once represented at the congresses by the Professor in Social Economics Knud Asbjørn Wieth-Knudsen and the Nazi sympathizer Count Bent Holstein, who were both associated with the Danish DNSAP.[65] Their leader, Frits Clausen, who also belonged to CAUR's permanent commission, held a speech at the London Congress. He was, thus, the only fascist leader directly involved in both competing organizations. The Dutch fascist NSB was represented at the London Congress by its founding member and leading propagandist Herman van Houten, and the Swedish NSAP sent two members to the Oslo Congress.[66] Next to politicians from fascist movements, IAdN also invited individual fascist intellectuals from southern and eastern Europe to its events. Notable examples are the Italian Asvero Gravelli, Ion Sân-Giorgiu, a Romanian poet who would support the fascist Iron Guard during the Second World War, and Janko Janeff, the aforementioned Bulgarian authoritarian philosopher. In Switzerland, the Nationalist International cooperated closely with the National Front (NF).

The relationship between the NF and IAdN illustrates that, at least in some cases, the Nationalist International profoundly influenced the 'internationalist' outlook of smaller fascist movements. The NF, founded in 1933, initially demarcated itself propagandistically from foreign fascist movements and regimes and refrained from direct contact with individuals or groups abroad. However, after the NF ideologist Hans Oehler participated at the inaugural Berlin Congress in December 1934, a delegation of four men headed by party leader Rolf Henne joined the successive London Congress in summer 1935. The event fundamentally changed the NF's attitude towards fascist internationalism. Henne's report on the congress in the NF journal *Die Front* was tellingly called "International cooperation".[67] Accordingly, the NF leadership embraced IAdN's primary objective of strengthening *Volk* nationalism (as elaborated on later) and reinterpreted its own role because the conference had shown "how deep the understanding between

64 See the correspondence between Aall and Keller in [RA Oslo], PA 0756.

65 E.g. Knud Asbjørn Wieth-Knudsen, "Den nordiske Race", *National-Socialisten,* March 6, 1932; Knud Asbjørn Wieth-Knudsen, "Kampen mellem Nationl-socialisme og kommunisme", *National-Socialisten,* October 3, 1936; Bent Holstein, "Norden parlamenterer – Verden handler", *National-Socialisten,* June 6, 1936; Bent Holstein, "Det danske Neutralitetsforsvar og Tyskland", *National-Socialisten,* November 25, 1938.

66 Cf. Keller, ed., *Der Kampf um die Völkerordnung*, 145; 177.

67 Rolf Henne, "Internationale Zusammenarbeit", *Die Front,* July 20, 1935.

nationalists of different countries" could be. From now on, the NF advocated for "building bridges between the various European nationalisms, which are recognized in their diversity, but must nevertheless be brought to an all-European cooperation".[68] This radically transformed the NF's international agenda. Subsequently, Rolf Henne became one of the main speakers at the Oslo Congress in 1936, heralding Switzerland's new 'internationalist' role as a mediator between European peoples.[69]

Beyond fascist politicians and intellectuals in a narrow sense, Keller also invited delegates representing authoritarian and conservative political beliefs. The British section at the London Congress included two members of parliament from the conservative Tories.[70] The Norwegian committee at the Oslo Congress in 1936 consisted of fascists from the NS, moderate politicians, and esteemed scientists, illustrating this entanglement between fascism and conservatism in a nutshell.[71] Alongside politicians from political parties, there were also many individual delegates with an academic background, such as professors, lawyers, and journalists, who had one thing in common: as the Danish representative Wieth-Knudsen said with pride during the Berlin conference, "[. . .] we're all white men".[72] This was not entirely true: at least two women were present at the London Congress, as illustrated in an official group picture (see Figure 4).[73] A few women also participated in the Oslo Congress.[74] Nevertheless, Keller neither invited female nor Black speakers, excluding the latter due to IAdN's *völkisch*, racist, and white supremacist agenda.

68 Henne, "Internationale Zusammenarbeit".

69 Rolf Henne, *Die Rolle der Schweiz im kommenden Europa*: *Rede gehalten auf dem III. Kongress der Internationalen Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Nationalisten im Nobel- Institut zu Oslo am 27.7.1936* (Zurich: Nationaler Front-Verlag, 1936). For an analysis of the speech, see Chapter 10.

70 Cf. Martin Kristoffer Hamre, "Promoting German Nazism in the Heart of the British Empire".

71 Cf. IAdN, Third International Congress of Nationalists, Programme, 1936: [PAAA], RZ214 99289, 124–133.

72 IAdN, *Volksgemeinschaft und Völkerfriede*, 23.

73 Cf. Picture from the London Congress, 1935, [AfZ], ETH Zurich, NL Rolf Henne, 168.

74 The unnamed women at the Oslo Congress were a journalist from the NS newspaper *Fritt Folk* (probably Halldis Neegård Østbye, a leading antisemitic ideologue in the NS), as well as the wife of Ion Sân-Giorgiu. Cf. "Nasjonalister fra over 30 land i Nobelinstituttet"; Keller, ed., *Der Kampf um die Völkerordnung*, 293.



Figure 4: Group picture from the London Congress, July 1935, unknown photographer. AfZ, ETH Zürich, NL Rolf Henne, 168.

Volk Nationalism, the 'Third Europe', and White Supremacism

Volk nationalism was the fundamental yet contradictory notion on which the Nationalist International based its German variant of fascist internationalism. In its own words, IAdN promoted "the development of a genuine and organic *Volk* nationalism, based on the acceptance of the natural and cultural diversity of nations".[75] This agenda implied respect for other nations even though it was based on racial hierarchies and exclusion, notably of Jews and non-European indigenous populations. The aim of "nationalists of all countries" was to strengthen a new, organic, or "idealistic-socialistic" nationalism based on the inegalitarian and racist Nazi notions of *Volk* and *Volksgemeinschaft* (people's community). Keller contrasted this "new nationalism" with an old, liberal, and "rationalistic-imperialistic nationalism" based on the egalitarian idea of the state.[76]

IAdN promoted international cooperation among nationalists because it regarded various individuals, as well as fascist movements, as potential harbingers who could help to implement this 'new nationalism' abroad. The utopian core

75 IAdN, ed., *Volk und Staat im Grenzland* (Zurich: Albert Nauck, 1936), 29.
76 IAdN, ed., *Volk und Staat im Grenzland*, 29.

message was that implementing *Volk* nationalism in other countries beyond Nazi Germany would create the preconditions of a "supra-popular (*übervölkisch*) peace order" that would supersede the existing liberal order and system of Versailles.[77] According to a resolution from the London Congress, promoting *Volk* nationalism in all countries would lead to a new international order based on "real self-determination of the peoples" that "will universally secure peace with honour and social justice".[78] Although based on a different ideology, this message mirrored CINEF's utopian argument that implementing fascism in each country would constitute the precondition for a new, long-lasting peace order.

Instead of explicitly referring to the labels fascism or national socialism as the common denominator of all so-called new nationalisms, Keller drew on older German and *völkisch* conceptualizations of *Volk*.[79] Indicating a community defined by racial, ethnic, and cultural characteristics, Nazi ideology juxtaposed *Volk* with the model of the nation-state and France as its archetype because "the term Volk was much better than Nation for conveying an agenda of ethnicization, biological determinism, and Social Darwinism".[80] In this sense, *Volk* was not conceptualized as *demos,* meaning a civil society based on the ideals of constitutional solidarity and legal equality, but as *ethnos*, "which combined imaginary shared genetic inheritances, mythic histories, and fantasies of shared blood and soil".[81] Accordingly, Hans Keller explicitly opposed the French nation-state with the German *Volk*, emphasizing how the French Revolution had introduced an order of state equality as an antithetical "Counter-Empire" (*Gegenreich*) to the German Holy Roman Empire.[82]

Keller envisioned *Volk* as a 'spiritual' concept, contrasted with the 'rationalist' and 'materialist nationalism' of the nation-states. In the tradition of *völkisch* and Nazi ideology, he linked the notion of *Volk* implicitly to both race and antisemitism, defining in one text the "rootles Jewish World people" (*Welt-Volk*) as the main enemy of the German *Volk*.[83] Hence, he built on the Nazi German dualism

77 Keller, *Das Dritte Europa*, 34.

78 IAdN, ed., *Volk und Staat im Grenzland*, 29.

79 On the conceptual history of the terms *Volk* and *Nation*, see Reinhart Koselleck, 'Volk, Nation, Nationalismus, Masse', edited by Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, and Reinhart Koselleck, in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe 7, Verw - Z* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1992), 141–431.

80 Michael Wildt, "Volksgemeinschaft: A Modern Perspective on National Socialist Society", edited by Martina Steber and Bernhard Gotto, in *Visions of Community in Nazi Germany*. *Social Engineering and Private Lives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 43–59, 44.

81 Wildt, "Volksgemeinschaft: A Modern Perspective", 45.

82 Hans Keller, *Gegenreich Frankreich*: *Geschichte des westlichen Internationalismus* (Berlin: Batschari-Verlag, 1936).

83 Cf. Keller, "Warum 'Nationalistische Internationale'?", 18.

between the inclusion of the Volk comrades (*Volksgenossen*) and the exclusion of community aliens (*Gemeinschaftsfremde*).[84] Jews constituted from the outset the main antagonists of the Nazi German *Volksgemeinschaft*, legitimizing violent dynamics of racial exclusion.[85] This Nazi idea of a pure *Volksgemeinschaft* also legitimized persecution and even annihilation of other marginalized groups, including Roma, Sinti, people of color, the mentally and physically disabled, homosexuals, transgender people, and those categorized as 'asocial', such as homeless people, drug addicts, and prostitutes.[86]

Despite this inherently exclusionary function of the *Volk* concept, Hans Keller conceptualized *Volk* nationalism awkwardly as a starting point for his imagined forthcoming international peace order. Although presenting IAdN mainly as an anti-internationalist and anti-universalist agency (as outlined later), Keller argued in a text from 1936 that "the peace of Europe depends on whether the National Socialist concept of *Volk* gains the universal validity still conceded today to the Romanist concept of the state. This is our 'universalism'".[87] The particularity of Hans Keller's ideology was thus to use the notion of *Volk* as the base for a new European order, something he called the necessity of "*Volk*-affirming Europeanism" (*volkstumbejahendes Europäertum*).[88] This was highly contradictory because the spiritual-mythical notion of *Volk* was, at least for proponents of Nazi Germany, inextricably linked to the German past and present. The term *Volk* could not simply be exported or transferred to other nations and peoples. Keller attempted to bypass the issue by using vague formulations. Rather than 'universalizing' the notion, Keller stressed the importance of strengthening "*Volk* conscious-

84 See Detlev Peukert, *Volksgenossen und Gemeinschaftsfremde*: *Anpassung, Ausmerze und Aufbegehren unter dem Nationalsozialismus* (Cologne: Bund-Verlag, 1982).

85 On *Volksgemeinschaft*, see also George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins Of The Third Reich* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1964); Michael Wildt, *Hitler's Volksgemeinschaft and the Dynamics of Racial Exclusion*: *Violence against Jews in Provincial Germany, 1919-1939* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014); Martina Steber and Bernhard Gotto, eds., *Visions of Community in Nazi Germany*: *Social Engineering and Private Lives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

86 See Bodie A. Ashton, "Marginalisiert, unsichtbar? Der Kampf um die Anerkennung der vergessenen Opfer des 'Dritten Reiches'", edited by Jürgen Zimmerer, in *Erinnerungskämpfe*. *Neues deutsches Geschichtsbewusstsein* (Ditzingen: Reclam, 2023), 131–153.

87 Hans Keller, "Leitwort des Herausgebers", edited by IAdN, in *Volk und Staat im Grenzland* (Zurich: Albert Nauck, 1936), 5–10, 10.

88 Keller, *Das Dritte Europa*, xiii.

ness" among nationalists in all countries and preached respect for the "*volkliche Eigenart*" of all peoples (which could be translated into "ethnic peculiarity").[89]

IAdN's fascist Europeanism was first and foremost linked to the notion of a necessary rebirth of the European continent. Keller promoted this outlook in a booklet called *Das Dritte Europa* (The Third Europe, 1934), which he treated as the founding text of the Nationalist International.[90] Keller distributed the booklet to the delegates of the Berlin Congress and repeatedly referred to the concept of the Third Europe during the debates.[91] Keller elaborated on the concept through a mythical-historical lens.[92] For him, the German Holy Roman Empire of the Middle Ages constituted the First Europe, harmonically securing peace for all peoples united under its sphere of influence. Then, through the role model France, the concept of the nation-state was established as a dialectic antithesis to the First Europe with its heyday in the nineteenth century, thus introducing a Second Europe as a system of competing imperialist and expansionist nation-states. Hans Keller maintained that the 'new' nationalism of the twentieth century (under the leadership of Germany and based on the notion of *Volk*) ultimately enabled the synthesis of the First and Second Europe in a Hegelian logic: the Third Europe.[93] Keller constructed the concept as a 'peaceful solution' to the current decay and disorder of the entire continent, similar to CAUR's 'solution' of universal fascism.

There is also little evidence that international members of IADN took up Keller's specific notion of the Third Europe. Arguably, the hegemonic undercurrent was too obvious, in striking similarity to CAUR's notion of the universality of Rome, because there was no doubt about whom Keller considered the leader of his Third Europe and the role model of *Volk* nationalism: the 'Third Reich' led by Adolf Hitler, whom Keller hailed in one of his texts as "a peoples' doctor" (*Völker-Arzt*).[94] In Keller's worldview, *Völker* (peoples) would replace nation-states as the central unit of world order, which was a turn against fixed, egalitarian states and instead towards mythologized ideas of racial hierarchies among peoples. Although Keller argued that *Völker* allegedly respected each other's existence and peculiarities, certain strong *Völker,* such as the German one, would 'naturally' play a more dominant role. Underlying was the key message that the 'Third

89 "Nationalistische Inter-Nationale Aktion", edited by Hans Keller, in *Der Kampf um die Völkerordnung* (Berlin: Verlag Franz Vahlen, 1939), 295–299, 297.

90 Keller, *Das Dritte Europa*.

91 IAdN, *20 Nationen in Berlin*: *Internationale Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Nationalisten* (Zurich: Batschari, 1934), 16.

92 Cf. Keller, *Das Dritte Europa*, 2–5.

93 Keller, *Das Dritte Europa*, 4.

94 Keller, 'Leitwort des Herausgebers', 10.

Reich' not only functioned as a role model of how to implement *Volk* nationalism in other countries but that the German *Volk* 'naturally' would dominate the new utopian, fascist peace order. To appease his international partners, Keller claimed in *Das Dritte Europa* that his objective was not a "supremacy of Germanness in Europe" and not a "world conquest", but he still stressed the "global political responsibility and leadership" of the German Reich.[95]

Next to Keller, also other German IAdN delegates, such as the NSDAP attorney and member of the Reichstag Friedrich Grimm, constructed a picture of Nazism as a role model, a guarantee of a new international peace order, and Hitler as a 'Europeanist'.[96] Their key argument was that imperialism was only a tool of the internationalist enemies of all nationalists while downplaying the expansionist-colonialist Nazi plans for the so-called *Lebensraum* (living space) in the East. Grimm even argued in his speech on "Hitler and Europe" at the London Congress that "Adolf Hitler's nationalism is fundamentally alien to any imperialism".[97] For Keller, the alleged abandonment of imperialist ideas "through the self-evident renunciation of any power state imperialism" made Nazi Germany a role model for the rebirth of a "Europe of free peoples".[98] To downplay imperialism discursively and present it as a negative notion linked to fascist enemies was a semantic strategy IADN had in common with CAUR and the Montreux Front in the mid-1930s.

To disseminate its ideology beyond borders, IAdN attempted to be 'inclusive' and repeatedly embraced, to some degree, multilingualism. It distributed a bilingual publication series in German and French – the *lingua franca* of interwar internationalism – that was called *Internationale Stimmen der Nationalisten/La Voix Internationale des Nationalistes* (International Voices of Nationalists). At the Berlin Congress, the eloquent Keller held the opening speech in German, English, French, and Italian.[99] The aforementioned working report published in 1939 even included excerpts in Portuguese, Danish, English, French, Norwegian, Dutch, Italian, Greek, and Romanian, next to the primary language, German.[100] However, as an organization promoting notions of German Nazism, German naturally trumped French or English as the most important language.

95 Keller, *Das Dritte Europa*, 15.

96 See Friedrich Grimm, "Hitler und Europa", edited by IAdN, in *Die Wende auf dem Balkan / Hitler und Europa* (Zurich: Albert Nauck, 1936), 19–30. On Friedrich Grimm, see Ernst Klee, *Das Personenlexikon zum Dritten Reich*: *Wer war was vor und nach 1945?* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 2003), 200–201.

97 Grimm, "Hitler und Europa", 26.

98 Hans Keller, "Vorrede", edited by IAdN, in *Die Wende auf dem Balkan / Hitler und Europa* (Zurich: Albert Nauck, 1936), 5–9, 8.

99 Cf. IAdN, *Volksgemeinschaft und Völkerfriede*, 9.

100 See Keller, ed., *Der Kampf um die Völkerordnung*.

The dissemination of the main agenda of the Nationalist International was challenged by the fact that key Nazi terms, namely *Volk*, *Volksgemeinschaft*, *Nationalismus,* and *Rasse,* differed in meaning or lacked sufficient translations in other national contexts. Most delegates from abroad did not agree on clear definitions of *Volk* and other related terms. Some discussed a specific German, Norwegian, or Bulgarian race as if these were real existing entities. Others, such as Frits Clausen from the Danish DNSAP, emphasized more vaguely a common racial basis of the Nordic race encompassing all European peoples.[101] Hans Keller switched his terminology opportunistically when discussing *Volk* nationalism in German while preferring the less provocative term 'organic' nationalism in English publications.[102] Presumably, this was a deliberate choice not to scare off potential partners with Nazi terminology, which was contradictory since his objective was to spread Nazi ideology. This conceptual vagueness resulted in severe misunderstandings. Several German delegates complained at the Berlin Congress about "translation difficulties" concerning *völkisch* terms.[103] Max Hildebert Boehm, an influential *völkisch* publicist, referred to *Rasse* as an untranslatable "magic word" for Germans. Therefore, he regretted that "this misunderstanding is particularly tragic in the case of the words that are dearest to us nationalists".[104] Hence, issues of language, translation, and wording became a specifically damaging obstacle for the German version of fascist internationalism based on *völkisch* terminology.

Nonetheless, many foreign delegates were willing to cooperate with German Nazism, based on the diffuse and vague aim to establish a new peace order in which Nazi Germany would play a dominant role. Hitler' meteoric rise to power, the rapid transformation of German society, the radical exclusion of political opponents and the abolition of parliamentary democracy, the shared belief in the superiority of the white race(s) – all these elements made Nazi Germany a model for various European fascist movements in the mid-1930s. Hitler had achieved in Germany what they aimed for in their own countries. The DNSAP leader Frits Clausen explicitly described Hitler as a "peace-bringer".[105] Somewhat paradoxi-

101 Cf. Frits Clausen, *Nation und Rasse*: *Rede des Führers der nationalsocialistischen Arbeiter Partei Dänemarks, Frits Clausen, auf dem II. internationalen Kongress der Nationalisten in London am 11. Juli 1935* (London, 1935).

102 IAdN, *Organic Nationalism*: *What the "Nationalist International" means to the Anglo-Saxon World* (Zurich, 1935).

103 IAdN, *Volksgemeinschaft und Völkerfriede*, 32.

104 IAdN, *Volksgemeinschaft und Völkerfriede*, 60. On Boehm, see Ulrich Prehn, *Max Hildebert Boehm*: *Radikales Ordnungsdenken vom Ersten Weltkrieg bis in die Bundesrepublik* (Göttingen: Wallstein-Verlag, 2013).

105 Keller, ed., *Der Kampf um die Völkerordnung*, 48–49.

cally, many delegates recognized Germany's will to unite its entire *Volk* (beyond the existing borders of its state, as in the case of an Austrian *Anschluss*) while at the same time foregrounding the 'peaceful' nature of Nazism.[106] This form of advocacy for the 'Third Reich' was often linked to a vision of a new fascist international order based on Europeanism and white supremacism.

As outlined in previous chapters, many European authoritarian and fascist thinkers regretted that a new order of power had emerged globally after the First World War, contrasting the rise of the US, the Soviet Union, and Japan with the loss of Europe's privileged position. These fears of being marginalized in an ever faster-changing world also shaped the debates of the Nationalist International, often blended with a language of grievance, resentment, and defiance. Paradigmatic was the speech of the Swiss fascist NF leader Rolf Henne at the Oslo Congress, who invoked the idea of an "all-European community of destiny" directed against the "emancipation" of the rest of the world. Therefore, Henne called for a "European counter-organizational unit".[107]

Strikingly, IAdN's Europeanism did not preclude larger alliances and cooperation with non-European nationalists. Several non-European delegates even provided 'positive' and 'negative' examples from other parts of the world of how to organize a new European peace order. At the Oslo Congress, two diplomats from Bolivia and Mexico elaborated on the position of 'new nationalism' in Latin America. Charles E. Stangeland, a US-American Professor for American politics in Berlin, held a speech on the possibility of "The United States of Europe", modeled on the United States of America, which he described as a totally "impractical plan".[108] The delegate from the Union of South Africa of Dutch descent, Herman Dirk van Broekhuizen, presented the British Commonwealth of Nations "built upon a Germanic idea of peace" as a template for a new "European Peace Order" that would guarantee every self-governing member of this group of nations to master its own destiny.[109] Van Broekhuizen, who was an envoy of the Union of South Africa who also stood in contact with the Dutch fascist party NSB, juxtaposed his vision of a "Germanic" Commonwealth of white nations with "the Romanic idea of an equalitarian world state" as propagated by the League of Nations.[110]

106 See the speech by Zygmunt Cybichowski in IAdN, *20 Nationen in Berlin*, 7.

107 Henne, *Die Rolle der Schweiz im kommenden Europa*. See also Chapter 10.

108 Charles Stangeland, "The United States of Europe?", 1936: [BArch], R 61/614.

109 Cf. Edgar Tatarin-Tarnheyden, "Die Gründung der Akademie für die Rechte der Völker auf der Osloer Tagung der Internationalen Nationalistenbewegung", in Keller, ed., *Der Kampf um die Völkerordnung*, 15–26, 19.

110 Keller, ed., *Der Kampf um die Völkerordnung*, 199–200.

The Gestapo wrote in an internal report on the Nationalist International that its objective was "to promote a Third Europe in order to secure the position of Europe and the white race in general, which had been shaken by the world war".[111] Underlying was an understanding of white supremacism as a common denominator among most delegates of the Nationalist International, which would facilitate fascist internationalism. This was exemplified in a speech by Herman Dirk van Broekhuizen at the London Congress on "racial problems in South Africa". He argued that his country could function as a role model for cooperation among "white races and white civilization" because in South Africa, a small white minority would be "surrounded by black races, and [..] if we do not stand together, we are finished".[112] At the Oslo Congress, he again invoked the consciousness of the cohesion of the white race as a larger community of destiny.[113] Charles E. Stangeland seconded this white supremacist fear when warning about "the multiplication of the black races" in the United States.[114]

This IAdN discourse repeatedly constructed the Nordic-Aryan or 'white' race(s) in distinction from other 'black', 'yellow', and 'red' races, highlighting how ideas of racial kinship functioned as a cornerstone of a specific white supremacist form of fascist internationalism. Hans Keller outlined "race consciousness" as a precondition because it would be easier to find commonalities between "racially related people" and thus enable "supra-popular" cooperation.[115] Keller stressed the "natural inequality of humans, peoples, and races" based on "God-willed inequality".[116] For Keller, "the inequality between peoples" was next to the division of races, even a crucial precondition for world peace.[117] His worldview was based on the hierarchical differentiation between "culture peoples" (*Kulturvölker*) and "peoples in the making" (*Völker im Werden*), meaning indigenous and colonialized peoples, the first being politically responsible for the destiny of the latter.[118] This distinction was rooted in the understandings of Imperial German anthropologists in the nineteenth century who differentiated between European civilized

111 Report from Gestapo to AA, "Betrifft: Internationale Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Nationalisten", August 6, 1935: [PAAA], RZ214 99289.

112 Keller, ed., *Der Kampf um die Völkerordnung*, 197–199.

113 Tatarin-Tarnheyden, "Die Gründung der Akademie für die Rechte der Völker auf der Osloer Tagung der Internationalen Nationalistenbewegung", 19.

114 Keller, ed., *Der Kampf um die Völkerordnung*, 220.

115 Cf. IAdN, *Volksgemeinschaft und Völkerfriede*, 45.

116 Keller, Warum "'Nationalistische Internationale'?", 28.

117 Keller, Warum "'Nationalistische Internationale'?", 20.

118 Cf. Keller, ed., *Der Kampf um die Völkerordnung*, 178.

culture peoples and nature peoples, the latter supposedly lacking history and culture.[119]

The Nationalist International often combined the belief in the superiority of the white race with 'scientific' arguments. Paradigmatic was the lecture by the Norwegian race researcher and biologist Jon Alfred Mjøen at the Oslo Congress in 1936. Mjøen had a fundamental impact on racist and eugenic policies in Norway in the interwar period.[120] At the Oslo Congress, Mjøen discussed "A Biologist's View of the Future of the White Race", arguing that the reproduction of hereditary diseases and miscegenation were harmful.[121] Mjøen legitimized the antisemitic and racist Nuremberg Laws enacted in Nazi Germany in September 1935. His appearance at the Oslo Congress marked an important overlap between the Nationalist International and the so-called International of Racists, an international eugenic movement whose 'scientific' outcome proved that racism and internationalism did not exclude each other but were complementary.[122] Already in the early 1920s, one of its other leading figures, the German race researcher Fritz Lenz, outlined the idea of a so-called Blond International, a racially limited association of people representing the common interests of the Nordic race.[123]

Despite the repeated emphasis on the white race, Keller still invited delegates from China and Latin America to his conferences, leading to the question of whether peoples constructed as 'non-white' were eligible to become equal partners of the self-proclaimed 'nationalists of the world'. In an article from 1937, Keller explicitly asked whether colonized peoples would have the right of self-determination and, thus, the freedom to create their own independent states. He negated this claim by arguing that states were a misleading Western invention. A new law of peoples as promoted by IAdN and Nazism would not guarantee the "self-determination of peoples" (*Selbstbestimmungsrecht der Völker*) but "the

119 See Angela Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

120 See Nils Roll-Hansen, "Norwegian Eugenics: Sterilization as Social Reform", edited by Gunnar Broberg and Nils Roll-Hansen, in *Eugenics and the Welfare State. Sterilization Policy in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Finland* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2005), 151–193.

121 Cf. Tatarin-Tarnheyden, "Die Gründung der Akademie für die Rechte der Völker auf der Osloer Tagung der Internationalen Nationalistenbewegung", 20. Excerpts of the speech are reprinted in Keller, ed., *Der Kampf um die Völkerordnung*, 149–150.

122 See Stefan Kühl, *Die Internationale der Rassisten*: *Aufstieg und Niedergang der internationalen eugenischen Bewegung im 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2014).

123 See Fritz Lenz, *Menschliche Auslese und Rassenhygiene* (Munich: J.F. Lehmanns, 1923), 183.

right of peoples to be themselves" (*Selbstseinsrechts der Völker*).[124] Hence, indigenous people should be able to express their "national lifestyle" because Nazi ideology would show "respect for foreign peculiarities".[125] Significantly, this would not hinder Germany's 'rightful' claim to colonies. In January 1938, Keller went one step further when he defended expansionism within Europe in a speech on "The Rights of Peoples in Czechoslovak Democracy".[126] On this occasion, Keller legitimized within his legal category of 'the right of peoples to be themselves' the forthcoming seizure of the Sudetenland by Nazi Germany due to the purported suffering of the German minority in Czechoslovakia. Eventually, IAdN's outlook remained highly ambivalent, torn between the acceptance of 'foreign peculiarities' and German expansionism, as well as between Europeanism and a global community of white races.

"The Peoples Perish in Internationalism": Anti-Internationalism as Common Basis

A speech called "Nationalism and Internationalism" by the Polish delegate at the Berlin Congress, Professor Zygmunt Cybichowski, demonstrates the contradictory outlook of the Nationalist International in a nutshell.[127] Cybichowski, who would become a Nazi collaborator in the Second World War, fiercely criticized various forms of internationalism. At the same time, he welcomed the international exchange of ideas among nationalists from multiple countries. He even concluded the conference with a copy of the Communist Manifesto: "Nationalists of all countries, unite!"[128] Thus, from the outset, the Nationalist International was created as an organization encompassing the tension between nationalism and internationalism, even though Hans Keller emphasized that he wanted "an action for nationalism, not for internationalism".[129]

In her brief analysis of IAdN, Andrea Hoffend maintains that Keller's partners shared "certain common attitudes", but these were "no substitute" for a real

124 Hans Keller, "Selbstbestimmungsrecht in Mandatsgebieten?", *Rassenpolitische Auslands-Korrespondenz* 6 (1937): 2–3.
125 Keller, "Selbstbestimmungsrecht in Mandatsgebieten?".
126 The speech is reprinted in Hans Keller, "Die Rechte der Völker in der Tschechoslowakei", *Jomsburg: Völker und Staaten im Osten und Norden Europas* 2 (1938): 151–157.
127 IAdN, *Volksgemeinschaft und Völkerfriede*, 9–17.
128 IAdN, *Volksgemeinschaft und Völkerfriede*, 69.
129 IAdN, *Volksgemeinschaft und Völkerfriede*, 7.

community of interests or a "coherent ideology".[130] Although this is certainly true, one powerful connector hovered over all the debates and intellectual outputs of IAdN: anti-internationalism. If there was a basic agreement among the different self-proclaimed nationalists and fascists, it was the common rejection or hatred for internationalism rather than Keller's *Volk* nationalism. This ties into the broader theme of fascist internationalism as a counter-reaction to liberal as well as communist internationalism.

Paradigmatic was a lecture by the French novelist Louis Bertrand at the London Congress named "The Peoples Perish in Internationalism".[131] Bertrand, a historian who was profoundly influenced by Friedrich Nietzsche, maintained that internationalism, as the destroyer of nationalism, meant a complete downfall of the moral order. "Thus, in all spheres of life, internationalism leads to war, to confusion, to anarchy, in other words, to the negation of all natural orders of precedence, to the destruction of *völkisch* values and the original character of nations, so that these, debilitated and dishonored, may finally fall all the more easily prey to internationalist world domination".[132] Discursively, Bertrand and many other delegates attacked 'universalism' and 'imperialism' as central features of internationalism, contrasted with the 'new' nationalism's particularism and alleged anti-imperialist 'respect for other peoples'. The IAdN founder Keller even argued that the 'old' "imperialist nationalism and pacifist internationalism are one and the same".[133]

Hans Keller repeatedly stressed the difference between the exportable notion of 'state-internationalism' and the non-exportable, anti-universalist, and thus particularistic notion of *Volk* nationalism.[134] At the London Congress in 1935, he distinguished three Internationals competing for European and world supremacy: the "Jewish-Communist", the "Vatican-Fascist", and the "Masonic-Pacifist International".[135] For him, they all had universalism in common, defined as "World domination of the so-called civilization of a state thought and the triumph of a certain

130 Hoffend, *Zwischen Kultur-Achse und Kulturkampf*, 397.

131 Louis Bertrand, "Am Internationalismus gehen die Völker zugrunde", edited by IAdN, in *Am Internationalismus gehen die Völker zugrunde / Warum "Nationalistische Internationale"?* (Zurich: Albert Nauck, 1936), 7–15. On Bertrand's involvement in IAdN, his speech in London, and his intellectual outlook, see Christopher Alexander MacKenzie Churchill, "Neo-Traditionalist Fantasies: Colonialism, Modernism and Fascism in Greater France 1870-1962" (PhD diss., Queen's University, 2010), 220–291.

132 Bertrand, "Am Internationalismus gehen die Völker zugrunde", 12.

133 Keller, *Das Dritte Europa*, 9.

134 Cf. IAdN, *Volksgemeinschaft und Völkerfriede*, 3–4; Keller, *Gegenreich Frankreich*, 176.

135 Keller, Warum "'Nationalistische Internationale'?", 32.

race".[136] In the cases of liberal and (Italian) fascist internationalism, he rejected the promotion of the universal notion of the state. In the case of Jewish-Bolshevist internationalism, he attacked the alleged world domination of one race over all the other races, meaning the "rootless" Jewish race.[137]

Liberal internationalism received most of the attention as the antagonist of IAdN at the nationalist conferences. Many speeches dealt with the 'failing' and 'unjust' system of Versailles, including the "madness" of the German reparation payments, as Friedrich Grimm complained at the Oslo Congress.[138] Multiple delegates criticized the Parisian Treaties for denying "the self-determination of the peoples," like in the case of Austria after the First World War.[139] Typical for this critique was a speech on "The Decline and Fall of the Order of Versailles" by the Norwegian NS ideologue Herman Harris Aall.[140] The delegates also frequently criticized the League of Nations as the most important embodiment of liberal internationalism.

However, the assessment of the League also revealed inconsistencies between representatives from minor fascist movements and major states. Both Herman Harris Aall and Hans Oehler from the Swiss fascist party NF complained that Geneva would treat small states only as an "appendage of the Great Powers" and should, therefore, be replaced.[141] A British delegate, Daniel Gerald Somerville from the Tories, defended the League and suggested instead a reform to render it more satisfactory and effective.[142] Similarly to Somerville, Hans Keller envisioned a "transformation of the present ineffective League of Nations into a House of States and a House of Peoples" that would guarantee the "natural" differences between peoples.[143] Another common critique against liberal internationalism was the 'flawed' international law and its 'hypocritical' concept of equality among states. The Danish delegate Wieth-Knudsen declared at the Oslo Congress that "the old international law is dead".[144] All these statements illustrate the persistent dissatisfaction among fascist and authoritarian circles with the post-1919 liberal-

136 Keller, Warum "'Nationalistische Internationale'?", 17.
137 Cf. Keller, Warum "'Nationalistische Internationale'?", 18.
138 Cf. Tatarin-Tarnheyden, "Die Gründung der Akademie für die Rechte der Völker auf der Osloer Tagung der Internationalen Nationalistenbewegung", 19–20.
139 Cf. IAdN, *20 Nationen in Berlin*, 14; IAdN, *Volksgemeinschaft und Völkerfriede*, 69–71.
140 Cf. Tatarin-Tarnheyden, "Die Gründung der Akademie für die Rechte der Völker auf der Osloer Tagung der Internationalen Nationalistenbewegung", 23–24.
141 Cf. Keller, ed., *Der Kampf um die Völkerordnung*, 191.
142 Keller, ed., *Der Kampf um die Völkerordnung*, 88.
143 IAdN, *Organic Nationalism*, 2.
144 Keller, ed., *Der Kampf um die Völkerordnung*, 48.

internationalist political order, the League of Nations, and the legal system based on egalitarian modern international law.

The delegates perceived socialist, 'Marxist', or 'Judeo-Bolshevist' internationalism as the second main antagonist, and Louis Bertrand portrayed the Communist International even as the "mortal enemy" of the Nationalist International.[145] Therefore, IAdN exchanged propaganda material and invited representatives of anticommunist organizations, such as Théodore Aubert's Geneva-based International Anticommunist Entente (EIA) and the Swiss Patriotic Federation (*Schweizerischer Vaterländischer Verband*).[146] IAdN also collaborated with the antisemitic organization WD, whose leading figures Ulrich Fleischhauer and Georg de Pottere (under the pseudonym O. Farmer) participated at the Berlin Congress to disseminate their anti-Jewish hatred.[147] However, not everyone shared the same antisemitic hatred. The English journalist Powys Greenwood complained in the aftermath of the Berlin Congress about "two indefatigable anti-Semites", probably referring to the WD representatives Fleischhauer and de Pottere. Accordingly, these were "endeavoured to convince the conference that if only Jewish influence could be eliminated by international action, universal and perpetual peace would be assured".[148] This conspiratorial antisemitism stresses a significant ideological overlap between IAdN and WD, the main subject of the next chapter.

Often, notions of 'international Jewry' were used at the congresses to express a strong critique against processes of globalization, as in a debate on the world economy at the Berlin Congress.[149] The French historian Bernard Faÿ, who would become a Nazi collaborator in the Second World War as head of an Anti-Masonic Agency in the Vichy Regime, also articulated the Judeo-Bolshevist myth in the IAdN lecture series in Berlin in 1937.[150] Faÿ's speech constituted a typical attack on the two enemies of the Nationalist International, "Jewish" Bolshevism and liberalism, increasingly seen as two sides of the same coin. Accordingly, Hans Keller accused liberalism from 1937 on as being in the hands of Jews (and Freemasons)

145 Bertrand, "Am Internationalismus gehen die Völker zugrunde".

146 Cf. Keller, ed., *Der Kampf um die Völkerordnung*, 195.

147 IAdN, *Volksgemeinschaft und Völkerfriede*, 51–53. Cf. Keller, ed., *Der Kampf um die Völkerordnung*, 68.

148 Powys Greenwood, "Nationalism and Peace", 149.

149 See the statements by Karl Heusler and Ulrich Fleischhauer in IAdN, *Volksgemeinschaft und Völkerfriede*, 42–43; 52.

150 On Bernard Faÿ, see Antoine Compagnon, *Le cas Bernard Faÿ: Du Collège de France à l'indignité nationale*, La Suite des temps (Paris: Gallimard, 2009).

when he depicted the League of Nations as "a creature of Judeo-Masonic liberalism".[151]

The Italo-German Rivalry and Competitive Fascist Internationalism

The entangled histories of IAdN and CAUR show how competition within the broader fascist party family became a driving force of fascist internationalism in the 1930s. The German Foreign Ministry described IAdN internally as "a German defensive counter-action" against CAUR.[152] An Italian envoy in Norway portrayed Keller's organization as "similar to CAUR but in a German, Nazi direction, and expressly anti-Latin in its aims".[153] Other contemporaries also recognized the competitive relationship between CAUR and IAdN: Frits Clausen, the Danish leader of the DNSAP who was actively involved in both agencies, stated in his autobiography that it was hardly surprising that the Germans tried to establish a similar and competing organization to CAUR.[154] The historian Andrea Hoffend thus characterizes the Nationalist International as an "Anti-Montreux".[155]

Taken together, the Montreux Congress discussed in the previous chapter and the Berlin Congress organized by IAdN (both held in December 1934) underline the discursive incompatibility of two competing versions of fascist internationalism in the early 1930s. CAUR and IAdN based their respective approaches to internationalism on contrasting notions, universal fascism and corporatism on the Italian side, and *Volk* and *Rasse* on the German side, while resembling each other in their propagandistic objectives. Both attacked the agenda of the other for being imperialist, expansionist, hegemonic, and a danger to international peace, while portraying their own fascist regime as a role model and their own ideology as the natural path to 'international peace and understanding'. Thus, the two versions of fascist internationalism were more similar in design and overall objectives than the respective organizations would have admitted contemporarily.

The Berlin Congress, which started only eleven days before the conference in Montreux, fueled this Italo-German rivalry, even though Keller asked two promoters of Italian universal fascism to speak at his conference. These were Asvero

151 Press release by the Academy for the Rights of Peoples on Herman Harris Aall's lecture "Völkerrecht und Weltanschauung", December 20, 1937: [PAAA], RZ214 99290.

152 Cf. Report from Hinrichs, AA, February 14, 1936: [PAAA], RZ214 99289, 74–76.

153 Cited in Dahl, *Quisling*, 125.

154 Cf. Lauridsen, *"Føreren har ordet!"*, 231.

155 Hoffend, *Zwischen Kultur-Achse und Kulturkampf*, 397.

Gravelli, the leading visionary of a Fascist International, and Simon Ooms, a Dutch fascist writing for the Italian journal *Ottobre,* who pleaded that "Berlin and Rome are not opposite poles".[156] Both attempted to reconcile the ideological Brenner pass between Italian Fascism and German Nazism at the congress while still foregrounding the 'civilizational mission' of Fascist Italy, the 'spirituality of Fascism', corporatism, and the 'great work' conducted by Benito Mussolini.

However, instead of experiencing benevolent responsiveness, various German delegates massively criticized the two proponents of universal fascism. Keller reprimanded Ooms for his focus on the economic aspect of the social content of the "new nationalism" in Italy, thus disregarding "blood" and "spiritual" (meaning *völkisch*) aspects. For him, the German *Volksgemeinschaft* was more than a social program and superior to Italian corporatism.[157] Other German delegates seconded Keller, outlining the importance of the "race question" and illustrating the importance of constructed differences between the two leading fascist ideologies.[158] Keller attacked Gravelli directly after his speech verbally by outlining the "contradictory nature" of the "universality of fascism" due to its inherent imperialism and hegemony. "With the fascist theory identifying the State with the People (*Volk*), Italians believe that they must suppress, rightly, non-Italian cultures on their territory. How will they convince us that the expansion of their doctrine, which they propagate outside their territory, would be achieved by recognizing the culture and traditions of each people?"[159] Thus, Keller criticized Italian Fascism for exporting its state doctrine to other nations, and equated Italian universalism with territorial expansionism.

Asvero Gravelli was shocked by the dispute and Keller's anti-Italian stance. In the immediate aftermath, he launched an attack against the Nationalist International in his own journal *Ottobre*. He conceptualized German Nazism as a purely materialistic and anti-spiritual *Weltanschauung* based on the notion of race, which would offend all civilized peoples and other "new versions of nationalism". Accordingly, only the "true nationalism" of Italian Fascism would be able to bring peace to the world.[160] Gravelli, who was the only person who participated at both the Berlin and the rivaling Montreux Congress, repeated this criticism when he took the word at the CAUR conference in Switzerland on December 17, 1934. Based on his experiences at Keller's conference, Gravelli stated that "racism con-

156 IAdN, *Volksgemeinschaft und Völkerfriede*, 30; 36.

157 IAdN, *Volksgemeinschaft und Völkerfriede*, 29–30.

158 Cf. IAdN, *Volksgemeinschaft und Völkerfriede*, 31–32, 37. See also Chapter 2.

159 IAdN, *Volksgemeinschaft und Völkerfriede*, 36–37.

160 Cf. 'L'Azione Internazionale dei Nazionalisti all ricerca di un Nazionalismo', *Ottobre,* December 16, 1934.

tains the seed of war and international injustice; Fascism contains peace [. . .] and international justice".[161] Gravelli's reaction illustrates the contemporary juxtaposition of an Italian 'spiritual' civilizational mission with German 'materialist' racism.

To counter Italian influence, Keller approached minor fascist movements in more informal and obscure ways beyond his conferences. When Keller heard about Vidkun Quisling's participation at the Montreux Congress, he sent a letter to the Norwegian fascist leader in February 1935. Keller warned Quisling by outlining how the "Italian propaganda" in Gravelli's journal *Ottobre* exploited Quisling's positive attitude towards Italian Fascism. Accordingly, Keller wanted to ensure "that your party cannot be accused of dependence on Rome from the communist side, which would then make the main argument of the national parties – dependence of the communist party on Moscow – invalid".[162] Thus, Keller appealed to Quisling's nationalism to counter the project of Italian fascist internationalism while foreshadowing the fascist predicament (as discussed in Chapter 5).

The Italo-German rivalry also impacted the next IAdN congress in London in July 1935. Instead of inviting a proponent of universal fascism, Keller asked his acquaintance Julius Evola to represent Italy at the conference, and thus, an Italian intellectual who proclaimed a pro-German and racist ideology long before the Italo-German rapprochement in the mid-1930s. Evola, who later became an influential neo-fascist 'Europeanist', was unable to attend in person, but his text on "Christian or Pagan Nationalism" was read out for him.[163] In his concluding lecture, Hans Keller explicitly complained about Italy's universal fascism and its tendency to promote the Italian state as a role model for other countries.[164] Keller outlined that he was opposed to "launching 'fascist' parties or fronts all over the world whose 'leaders' draw their programs, their daily slogans, and perhaps more tangible things from Rome and, in return, degrade their fatherlands into provinces of an Imperium Romanum".[165] This was a direct attack against so-called imitation parties that were involved in the Montreux Front, such as Arthur Fonjallaz's Swiss FFS. Keller obfuscated in his speech that he, quite similarly, was invested in convincing various Eu-

161 Comités d'Action pour l'Universalité de Rome, *Réunion de Montreux*, 90.

162 Letter from Hans Keller to Vidkun Quisling, March 2, 1935: [RA Oslo], PA-0750 Gj L0001.

163 Excerpts from the text are reprinted in Keller, ed., *Der Kampf um die Völkerordnung*, 126–129. On Evola's pro-German and racist ideology, see Peter Staudenmaier, "Racial Ideology between Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany: Julius Evola and the Aryan Myth, 1933–43", *Journal of Contemporary History* 55.3 (2020): 473–491.

164 Keller, "Warum 'Nationalistische Internationale'?".

165 Keller, "Warum 'Nationalistische Internationale'?", 18.

ropean fascist movements to follow the 'Third Reich' as a role model. Keller attacked the Catholic aspect of Italian Fascism and referred to the 'Vatican Fascist International' as one of the three main enemies of IAdN.[166] He also juxtaposed the German *Volksgemeinschaft* with Italian corporatism as a wrong 'materialist' approach. Here, we see again the commonality between CAUR and IAdN: both attacked the other for being 'materialist' ideologies.

How did the Italo-German rivalry impact the minor fascist movements? For most parties from northwestern Europe, the appeal to *völkisch* and antisemitic notions was indeed strong. But they did not need to be convinced of the dangerous hegemonial stance of Fascist Italy. As members of the Montreux Front, the Scandinavian leaders Vidkun Quisling and Frits Clausen protested themselves against Italian domination within fascist internationalism. Instead, they conceptualized fascism as a general phenomenon, with Italy and Germany as distinctive national expressions of the same party family while regretting the Italo-German rivalry.[167] Only Rolf Henne, the leader of the Swiss NF, whose party members came mainly from the German-speaking part of Switzerland, openly followed Keller's anti-Italian direction. At the Oslo Congress, Henne insisted that the idea of the "universality of Rome" was unacceptable to him "because it contains within itself the absolute claim of the Latin race to supremacy and assumes the self-evident superiority of the Latin race over all other races".[168] Henne blended out that the notion of a Germanic, Nordic-Aryan race, likewise, was based on alleged superiority and racial hierarchies.

In the meantime, a political alliance between Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany was approaching when the international isolation of Mussolini's regime due to the invasion of Ethiopia in late 1935 drove Italy into the arms of Nazi Germany. This development was fueled by the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in July 1936, when both Mussolini and Hitler decided to intervene in support of the nationalist forces led by Francisco Franco.[169] In contrast to his antagonist Eugenio Coselschi, who reached out to German Nazism in late 1935, Keller misjudged the signs of the times and ignored this nascent Italo-German rapprochement. In

166 Keller, "Warum 'Nationalistische Internationale'?", 32.

167 As argued in more detail in the case of the Norwegian NS in Martin Kristoffer Hamre, "Norwegian Fascism in a Transnational Perspective: The Influence of German National Socialism and Italian Fascism on the Nasjonal Samling, 1933–1936", *Fascism. Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 8.1 (2019): 36–60.

168 Henne, *Die Rolle der Schweiz im kommenden Europa.*

169 On the Italo-German rapprochement, see also Nils Fehlhaber, *Netzwerke der „Achse Berlin–Rom": Die Zusammenarbeit faschistischer und nationalsozialistischer Führungseliten 1933–1943* (Cologne: Böhlau-Verlag, 2019).

particular, Keller decided not to invite any Italian representatives to the third conference in Oslo in June 1936. Even among the few German delegates, this led to criticism. One of them, Professor Ernst Wolgast, wrote a harsh complaint to the German Foreign Ministry about Keller's anti-Italian stance at the congress.[170] Wolgast also criticized Keller's new publication *Gegenreich Frankreich* (Counter Empire France, 1936), in which Keller depicted the "Roma Universa", next to the Communist International and the League of Nations, as an "Antichrist" of the "Third Reich".[171] The German Foreign Ministry, which had from the outset been critical of Kellers' independent international relations, also condemned these "antifascist tendencies" in an internal report.[172]

The new political alliance between Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, which culminated in the proclamation of the Rome-Berlin Axis in the autumn of 1936, changed the character of German fascist internationalism to the disadvantage of IAdN. The organization was deprived of its previous task of combating CAUR. Accordingly, the former financier, the RMVP headed by Joseph Goebbels, lost interest in Keller's activities in the years 1936–1939. Intriguingly, this coincided with the demise of the rival CAUR in Italy. Both organizations seemed to have fallen out of time, not only because of the end of the Italo-German adversary but also because a political, cultural propaganda battle about ideological supremacy among minor European fascist movements was superseded by *Realpolitik* and actual military and political alliances between governments such as the Rome-Berlin Axis and the German-Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact in November 1936.

This broader context gave momentum to the organization Anti-Komintern, which was involved in similar international cooperation and propaganda matters. While Keller struggled to find funding for another congress, the Anti-Komintern hosted a large "International Anticommunist Conference" in Feldafing in Bavaria in November 1936.[173] In contrast, Keller's anti-Italian internationalism was sidelined within Nazi Germany and also superseded by WD, which hosted three international anti-Jewish congresses in Erfurt in the years 1936–1938. While anticommunist and antisemitic propaganda flourished as elements of German fascist internationalism in the years leading to the Second World War, the Nationalist International slowly entered a phase of demise linked to its incorrigible Italophobia. Keller remained critical of Fascist Italy until Mussolini's government implemented racial and antisemitic laws in 1938. Keller interpreted this turn as "the commitment of the Italian government to the racial *Volk* concept". This signified to him

170 Letter from Ernst Wolgast to AA, August 5, 1936: [PAAA], RZ214 99289, 144–150.
171 Keller, *Gegenreich Frankreich*, 176.
172 File note from AA, July 3, 1936: [PAAA], RZ214 99289, 140–142.
173 Record of the conference proceedings, undated: [TNA], GFM 34/1265.

the victory of *Volk* nationalism over the notion of universal fascism, ultimately depriving him of his most important reason for his anti-Italian stance.[174] Thus, even Keller finally foregrounded the necessity of an Italo-German "community of struggle" (*Kampfgemeinschaft*) in the run-up to the Second World War.[175]

The ambiguous assessment of IAdN among various German state and party authorities constitutes an excellent example of the competition and contradictory decisions of different institutions with partly overlapping competencies within the polycratic multi-level governance of the Nazi regime.[176] Various ministries increased the pressure against the Nationalist International after the Oslo Congress. A report from the German Foreign Ministry stated that "there is absolutely no objective interest in this working group for the German state".[177] In April 1937, the formerly supportive RMVP ordered Keller to liquidate the entire organization.[178] Keller's frustration became evident in a letter sent to the Reich Education Ministry, in which he complained that the Propaganda Ministry had only financed his undertaking as a countermeasure against CAUR. With the new Rome-Berlin Axis, it had shown itself to be "completely disinterested" in his organization, which his private resources had financed for over a year.[179] In 1938, representatives from various German state authorities agreed in a meeting that Keller's international activities had to be stopped immediately.[180]

At the same time, Keller stood under the patronage of the Gestapo and received some funding from the Foundation of German Works Abroad (*Stiftung Deutsches Auslandswerk*), whose goal was to propagate a positive picture of the 'Third Reich' abroad.[181] The Foreign Ministry, in turn, continued to hinder Keller's international activities, for instance, by forbidding Keller's participation at the party convention of the Danish DNSAP in Kolding in the summer of 1939 (a fate Keller shared with his rival Eugenio Coselschi).[182] In September 1939, the Foreign

174 Keller, ed., *Der Kampf um die Völkerordnung*, 126.

175 Cf. Tatarin-Tarnheyden, "Die Gründung der Akademie für die Rechte der Völker auf der Osloer Tagung der Internationalen Nationalistenbewegung", 16.

176 See Thomas Schaarschmidt, "Multi-Level Governance in Hitler's Germany: Reassessing the Political Structure of the National Socialist State", *Historical Social Research* 42.2 (2017): 218–242.

177 File note from AA, July 3, 1936: [PAAA], RZ214 99289, 140–142.

178 Cf. Letter from Hasenöhrl (RMVP) to AA, March 6, 1937: [PAAA], RZ214 99290.

179 Letter from the Academy for the Rights of Peoples to the Reich Ministry of Science, Education and Culture, May 25, 1938: [PAAA], RZ214 99290, 119–122.

180 File note from AA, February 21, 1938: [PAAA], RZ214 99290. See also multiple reports and letters in [BArch], R 61/614.

181 Keller's academy received monthly 1,200 Reichsmark from January to April 1939. Cf. Letter from Springer to Hans Keller, January 20, 1939: [PAAA], RZ214 99290.

182 John T. Lauridsen, *Dansk nazisme*: *1930-45 - og derefter* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2002), 255.

Ministry even pressured the German security police to revoke Keller's passport to prevent him from traveling abroad.[183]

Thus, at a time when Nazi Germany was busy preparing and launching an imperialist war, the kind of fascist internationalism preaching 'respect for other peoples' as promoted by Hans Keller was not tolerated any longer. Under the rebranding as Nationalist Action, Keller still attempted to revitalize his organization and to mobilize his international network for the Nazi German war aims, for example through circulation of pro-German propaganda in neutral countries but Keller was finally forced to terminate these activities in 1941.[184]

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The genesis and evolution of the Nationalist International demonstrates how internationalist antagonists of liberalism, communism, and confusingly, in this case, even Italian Fascism, legitimized an organization in which ultranationalists, racists, and antisemites cooperated internationally based on shared contempt for internationalism. Hans Keller reached out to a wide range of nationalists from various countries, from conservatives to outspoken fascists, from politicians to professors, from poets to journalists. This shows, more than the previous Italian examples, the fluid interactions between fascism, the radical right, conservatism, academia, and elites in the interwar period, united in their opposition to the liberal order and the communist threat.[185] Nevertheless, this chapter has illustrated the focal influence of the Nationalist International on some fascist parties, like the Swiss NF, indicating how the German 'center' of fascism was able to shape the 'internationalist' outlook of the fascist 'periphery' in other countries.

The intertwined histories of CAUR and IAdN shed light on the competitive and transformative character of fascist internationalism, in which notions of *Volk* nationalism and universal fascism were constructed and disputed in demarcation from the rival while pursuing similar objects of hegemonic supremacy. Gradually, IAdN was forced to modify its outlook concerning the former rival Italy after the emergence of the Rome-Berlin Axis, highlighting that fascist internationalism was a processual phenomenon influenced by changing foreign political dynamics and *Realpolitik*. While at first stressing peace propaganda in the mid-1930s, the Nationalist International increasingly adjusted its contradictory ideas of a 'suprana-

183 Letter from AA to Jost, May 15, 1940: [PAAA], RZ214 99290, 232.

184 File note from AA, September 5, 1941: [PAAA], RZ214 101195, 298; see also the Epilogue of this book.

185 On these interactions, see, among many others, Shelley Baranowski, "Authoritarianism and Fascism in Interwar Europe: Approaches and Legacies", *The Journal of Modern History* 94.3 (2022): 648–672.

tional peace order' to German colonialism, ultimately even legitimizing German expansionism in Europe and a new world war.

The fascist internationalism as envisioned and practiced by Hans Keller and his Nationalist International was full of contradictions and frictions, the most obvious being the attempt to promote the Nazi notion of *Volk,* including its racial, antisemitic, hegemonic, and expansionist implications, as a tool of international peace and role model for others to follow. Misunderstandings and language barriers concerning *völkisch* terminology challenged this specific version of fascist internationalism emanating from Nazi Germany. Moreover, one must underline the limited practical outcomes of IAdN beyond mere discussions at pompous congresses. The Nationalist International and the Academy for the Rights of Peoples never became the fully-fledged European or global organizations that Keller desperately tried to form. IAdN's attempt to measure itself against the League of Nations and the Communist International illustrates the hubris around Hans Keller's undertaking. In this regard, the parallels to the far-reaching ideas of the Montreux Front that never materialized in practice are striking.

However, this does not reduce the curious organization to a mere footnote in the history of Nazi Germany. On the contrary, Hans Keller's fascist Europeanism, based on his concept of the Third Europe, illustrates the variety of fascist conceptions of a 'New Europe' that flourished in the interwar period even before the establishment of the New European Order by Nazi Germany during the Second World War, linked to ideas of a 'Geater European Space'.[186] Particularly in the field of international law, IAdN demonstrates important German attempts to prepare internationally a new law of nations directed against egalitarian concepts of the state and the system of Versailles. Keller's contradictory attempt to reconcile ultranationalist and *völkisch* ideas based on exclusionary racism and German leadership with international cooperation and 'respect' for the patriotism of other peoples stands out as one of the most explicit formulations of a theory of fascist internationalism in the interwar period. And although Keller's megalomaniacal attempt to form a powerful front of nationalists of all countries remained a pipe dream, the brief history of the Nationalist International potentially reveals the roots of contemporary far-right internationalism by foreshadowing the ideas of ethnopluralism of the European New Right, as will be argued in Part III of this monograph.

Hans Keller, however, was not the only influential German agent of fascist internationalism. As outlined above, his paths crossed with Ulrich Fleischhauer, the leader of another inscrutable organization that wanted to unite ultranational-

186 Cf. Oded Heilbronner, "Großraum Europa: The Nazi Concept of 'Greater European Space' in Recent Literature", *The English Historical Review* 136.583 (2021): 1574–1594, 2.

ists, fascists, and anti-communists of all countries under the banner of a powerful Antisemitic International. As the anti-Jewish agitator Fleischhauer declared at the Berlin Congress of the Nationalist International in December 1934: "the Jewish question is not a German question, it is an international question. This factor must be recognized and eliminated, then we will be united among all peoples".[187]

187 IAdN, *Volksgemeinschaft und Völkerfriede*, 52.

Chapter 4
"The Antisemitic International": The World-Service and Antisemitism

Just a few months after the German defeat in the Second World War, Hannah Arendt wrote a thought-provoking essay named "The Seeds of a Fascist International".[1] The text mainly served as a warning that Nazi Germany's collapse would not automatically lead to the disappearance of fascism from international politics in the postwar era. Arendt argued that "modern anti-Semitism was never a mere matter of extremist nationalism: from the very beginning it functioned as an International".[2] Thus, she conceptualized fascism not as a (specific German) ultranationalist movement but as an international movement essentially rooted in antisemitism, as a global conspiracy directed against nations. Intriguingly, Arendt turned the argument of fascists themselves – and most historians of fascism – upside down, for whom fascism was anti-internationalist and based on ultranationalism. For fascists all around Europe, in stark contrast to Arendt, it was 'international Jewry' that constituted a global conspiracy directed against nations.

Rather than negating ultranationalism as a critical aspect of fascism, as argued in Arendt's essay, this chapter focusses on the interplay between antisemitism and fascist internationalism, illustrating how shared anti-Jewish hatred sparked activities of international cooperation among various fascist individuals and movements in Europe and beyond. Two interrelated case studies illustrate this link between antisemitism and fascism: the so-called *Antisemitic International*, an ephemeral, conspiratorial network during the 1920s, and its successor, the news agency World-Service (*Welt-Dienst*, WD), which operated out of Erfurt, Germany. Drawing on the rich literature on the intertwined histories of these two networks and organizations,[3] as well as numerous archival sources, this chapter

1 Hannah Arendt, "The Seeds of a Fascist International", edited by Jerome Kohn, in *Essays in Understanding 1930–1954: Formation, Exile, and Totalitarianism. Hanah Arendt* (New York: Schocken Books, 2005), 140–150; and the German translation: Hannah Arendt, 'Antisemitismus und faschistische Internationale', edited by Eike Geisel, in *Hannah Arendt: Nach Auschwitz. Essays & Kommentare* (Berlin: Tiamat, 2014), 31–48.

2 Arendt, "Antisemitismus und faschistische Internationale", 32.

3 Louis W. Bondy, *Racketeers of Hatred: Julius Streicher and the Jew-baiters' International* (London: Newman Wolsey, 1946); Magnus Brechtken, *"Madagaskar für die Juden": Antisemitische Idee und politische Praxis 1885–1945* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1997); Eckart Schörle, "Internationale der Antisemiten: Ulrich Fleischhauer und der »Welt-Dienst«", *Werkstatt Geschichte* 51 (2009): 52–72; Hanno Plass, "Der Welt-Dienst: International Anti-Semitic Propaganda", *Jewish Quarterly Review*

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111469799-005

revisits WD and its forerunner by focusing on international cooperation with minor fascist parties – a hitherto understudied aspect.

Before turning to the case studies, the complex relationship between antisemitism and fascism in the interwar period needs to be addressed in terms of a fundamental question raised by Lene Sofie Bak and Terje Emberland: "[w]as antisemitism just a subordinate part of an overarching fascist *Weltanschauung*, or was fascism merely a practical political tool for spreading an antisemitic worldview?"[4] Antisemitism was crucial and ubiquitous in the ideology of German Nazism, which constructed the Jewish race as the main enemy of the German *Volk* and *Volksgemeinschaft*. In Adolf Hitler's worldview, Jews were responsible for an all-encompassing existential polycrisis in Germany and Europe, which made the solution of the so-called 'Jewish question' an unavoidable "Quest for sustainable security", ultimately 'legitimizing' the genocidal antisemitism in the Holocaust.[5]

However, not all European fascist movements embraced antisemitism from the outset as a key element of their ideology. The Irish Blueshirts condemned the Nazi German attacks on Jews in their formative years. In some northern European movements, such as the Norwegian NS, antisemitism featured at first only 'subliminal' before it was fully embraced from the mid-1930s on, linked to conspiracy theories.[6] Most famously, Italian Fascism 'added' antisemitism officially only in 1938 to its ideology when it implemented its racial laws (even though antisemitic strands of the fascist party existed from early on).[7] Thus, at least during the interwar period, the relationship between antisemitism and fascist internationalism appears less straightforward than Arendt's essay in 1945 suggested, when fascism was inextricably linked to the mass murders of European Jews by Nazi Germany and its international collaborators during the Second World War.

103.4 (2013): 503–522; Michael Hagemeister, *Die "Protokolle der Weisen von Zion" vor Gericht*: *Der Berner Prozess 1933–1937 und die "antisemitische Internationale"* (Zurich: Chronos, 2017); Dirk Rupnow, "'The Anti-Semite Internationale': The Exporting of Anti-Jewish Scholarship and Propaganda" by the Third Reich, edited by Johannes Dafinger and Dieter Pohl, in *A New Nationalist Europe under Hitler*. *Concepts of Europe and Transnational Networks in the National Socialist Sphere of Influence, 1933–1945* (London: Routledge, 2019), 259–270.

4 Lene Sofie Bak and Terje Emberland, "Early Nordic Fascism and Antisemitic Conspiracism", edited by Nicola Kristin Karcher and Markus Lundström, in *Nordic Fascism*. *Fragments of an Entangled History* (London: Routledge, 2022), 15–51, 18.

5 Thomas Weber, "Germany in Crisis: Hitler's Antisemitism as a Function of Existential Anxiety and a Quest for Sustainable Security", *Antisemitism Studies* 7.1 (2023): 152–179.

6 On so-called conspiracist antisemitism in northern Europe, see Nicola Karcher and Kjetil Braut Simonsen, "The Rise and Impact of Conspiracist Antisemitism: An Introduction", *Nordisk judaistik/Scandinavian Jewish Studies* 35.1 (2024): 1–14.

7 Garau, "Between 'Spirit' and 'Science'". See also Chapter 2.

This chapter analyzes the Antisemitic International and WD as case studies of what Saul Friedländer calls *redemptive antisemitism*, meaning that "the struggle against the Jews is the dominant aspect of a worldview in which other racist themes" and the question of ultranationalism and fascism "are but secondary appendages".[8] Hence, conspiratorial ideas of Judeo-Bolshevism were omnipresent in both cases, defined by Paul Hanebrink as "the belief that Communism was a Jewish plot" and "proof of a transhistorical global conspiracy by Jews to destroy Western civilization".[9] Nevertheless, both the Antisemitic International and WD regarded fascist movements as crucial partners in their 'international' battle against the demonized Jewish enemy. Moreover, for many fascist movements and organizations, the boundaries between antisemitic, fascist, and explicitly national socialist worldviews were in flux. Consequently, despite the fact that the German organization WD regarded the battle against 'international Jewry' as its ultimate objective, it transformed into an organizational entity that envisioned and practiced fascist internationalism.

Activities of the Antisemitic International in the 1920s

International cooperation specifically based on antisemitism emerged in the late nineteenth century, and was, therefore, older than the political phenomenon of fascism itself. After the foundation of a Jewish aid organization in France called Universal Israelite Alliance (*Alliance Israélite Universelle*) in 1860, several antisemites attempted to establish a counter-part called Universal Anti-Jewish Alliance (*Alliance Antijuive Universelle*) at two conferences held in Dresden in 1882 and in Chemnitz in 1883.[10] The delegates, mainly from the German and Austro-Hungarian Empire, stressed the European nature of their undertaking and the congress chairman Otto Glagau insisted that "the Jewish question is by its very nature an international one".[11] After the First World War, these early attempts

8 Saul Friedländer, *The Years of Persecution: 1933–1939* (London: Phoenix, 2014), 87. On redemptive antisemitism, see also Nicola Karcher and Kjetil Braut Simonsen, "Antisemitism without Jews: the Impact of Redemptive Antisemitism in Norway before the Nazi Occupation", *Scandinavian Journal of History* 49.2 (2023): 196–217.

9 Hanebrink, *A Specter Haunting Europe*, 4.

10 Cf. Dominique Trimbur, "Alliance Israélite Universelle (Frankreich)", edited by Wolfgang Benz, in *Handbuch des Antisemitismus*: *Organisationen, Institutionen, Bewegungen. Band 5* (Berlin: De Gruyter Saur, 2012), 14–16.

11 Cited in Ulrich Wyrwa, "Die Internationalen Antijüdischen Kongresse von 1882 und 1883 in Dresden und Chemnitz: Zum Antisemitismus als europäischer Bewegung", Clio-Online (2009), accessed September 15, 2023, https://www.europa.clio-online.de/essay/id/fdae-1481.

were taken up by several antisemitic activists from different European countries who developed transnational connections.

Thus, an international network of antisemites emerged, defined as ephemeral, non-binding, informal, and conspiratorial forms of communication and cooperation between individual agents who shared antisemitic beliefs. This so-called Antisemitic International coordinated anti-Jewish agitation by disseminating propaganda material and hosting conferences in multiple European cities. Even though most of these events remained secret to avoid monitoring by state authorities, contemporary Jewish observers called early attention to its activities.[12] Still, the early phase of the network until 1933 remains obscure because the Antisemitic International left few written accounts or conference proceedings to investigate.

Geographically, the network's activities were widespread in Europe. It held one of its first secret conferences in Vienna in 1921, and after more meetings in Florence (1923), Paris (1924), Salzburg, and Budapest (both 1925), an "Antisemitic International" was officially established.[13] According to an Austrian newspaper, delegates from Denmark, Germany, Austria, England, France, Poland, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and the Russian Emigration participated at the next meeting in Springforbi close to Copenhagen in 1926, highlighting the European character of the network.[14] Further meetings took place in Stockholm (1927), Lucerne (1930), Munich, Paris (both 1932), and Bellinzona in Switzerland (1933).[15] There was no fixed spatial center of the network and no singular dominating national power before the establishment of the organization WD in 1933 in Erfurt in Thuringia.

Due to its ephemeral, secret, occult, and thus elusive nature, only a few members of the Antisemitic International are known. Its own sources avoided mentioning the names of delegates to 'protect' these from the Jewish press. One could differentiate analytically between a group of writers and activists on the one hand, and a group of leading politicians from various nascent fascist movements on the other. Among the first group were publicists such as Georg de Pottere from Austrian-Hungary, the German war veteran Ulrich Fleischhauer, the French

12 E.g. Oskar Stillich, "Eine antisemitische Weltorganisation?", *Central-Verein-Zeitung. Organ des Central-Vereins deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens,* August 17, 1922.

13 Cf. Hagemeister, *Die "Protokolle der Weisen von Zion" vor Gericht*, 68–78; Brechtken, *"Madagaskar für die Juden"*, 31–80.

14 Cf. "Der internationale Antisemitenkongreß", *Wiener Morgenzeitung,* August 22, 1926; "Weltkongreß für Frieden, Freiheit und Arbeit", *Welt-Dienst,* October 15, 1934.

15 Cf. Nick Toczek, *Haters, Baiters and Would-Be Dictators*: *Anti-Semitism and the UK Far Right* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2015), 130.

priest Ernest Jouin, and the British "voice of conspiracy" Nesta Helen Webster.[16] Her participation shows that women were not excluded from the Antisemitic International, even though the majority were male, white, European men.

The Budapest meeting in 1925 sheds light on the second group of participants, namely right-wing and potentially 'fascist' politicians such as Gyula Gömbös (who would later become Hungarian Prime Minister from 1932–1936) and Henry Hamilton Beamish, the founder of the antisemitic organization called *The Britons* and later on a leading figure of the British IFL.[17] Another delegate was Ion Moţa, a young student whom the congress commissioned to edit the statutes of a future world antisemitic youth section. Moţa would later become deputy leader of the Romanian fascist Iron Guard, founded in 1927, and turn into one of the most active advocates of fascist internationalism in the 1930s.[18] Among the attendees at the two congresses in 1925 were also high-ranking members of the German NSDAP – a relatively small party at that time. These included Heinrich Himmler and the leading Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg, who had briefly replaced Hitler as chairman of the Nazi movement while the latter was imprisoned in 1924. Rosenberg attended the conferences regularly until 1933 when the participation in secret meetings contradicted the new role of the NSDAP as a state party.[19]

"Pan-Aryanism": The Agenda of the Antisemitic International

Even though it is challenging to outline a clear program of the Antisemitic International due to the lack of official resolutions and documents, one could argue that the network's agenda combined three intertwined, but to some extent also contradictory notions. First, it invoked the Jewish enemy as a threat to the destiny of European 'civilization', meaning that 'international Jewry' was held responsible for the decay of the 'old' continent (Europe). Second, the network constructed Jews as a 'materialist' threat to the common religious-cultural European heritage (Christianity). Third, the Antisemitic International portrayed the 'Jewish race' as

16 On Nesta Webster, one of the "most influential conspiracy theorists of the 20th century", see Martha F. Lee, "Nesta Webster: The Voice of Conspiracy", *Journal of Women's History* 17.3 (2005): 81–104.

17 On Beamish and the IFL, see Chapter 5.

18 See Raul Cârstocea, "Native Fascists, Transnational Anti-Semites: The International Activity of Legionary Leader Ion I. Moţa", edited by Arnd Bauerkämper and Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, in *Fascism without Borders. Transnational Connections and Cooperation between Movements and Regimes in Europe from 1918 to 1945* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2017), 216–242.

19 On Rosenberg, see Piper, *Alfred Rosenberg*.

the counterpart to the common racial descent of Europeans (Aryanism).[20] These three notions were rooted in older ideas of antisemitism, which had emerged in the late nineteenth century in protest against liberalism, materialism, capitalism, globalization, and the legacies of the French Revolution.[21]

The first notion, defending European civilization against an alleged Jewish world conspiracy, was expressed when the network publicly announced its foundation in 1924 as a counterweight to the (allegedly Jewish) Communist International.[22] Accordingly, European civilization was disintegrated by "the Jewish spirit", which was not defined "as a religion or a nationality or a race, but rather as a secret organization that – due to its materialistic ideas – strives for the world domination of the Chosen People".[23] Jews were not only made responsible for communism but also for the 'failures' of modern liberal capitalism, which was seen as part of the same coin due to the common feature of materialism. That the Moscow-led Communist International saw itself as an alternative to liberal internationalism was ignored within the network's conspiratorial view. Instead, the Antisemitic International combined anti-Jewish hatred and prejudices with a critique of the increasing globalization and mechanisms of the world economy. Accordingly, the network accused the international gold standard of being a tool of Judaism. Hence, fighting against "the enslavement of all peoples by the international, Jewish-led high finance" became one main task of the network.[24]

The second notion of the Antisemitic International was to contrast Jewry with Christianity, rooted in religious anti-Judaism that can be traced back to ancient times and the Middle Ages.[25] Christianity was, for instance, stressed by Ion Moța, who emphasized throughout his political career that antisemitism had to be grounded religiously.[26] His party, the Iron Guard, differed from other European fascist movements through its specific religiously grounded faith based on Romanian Orthodox Christian mysticism. The emphasis on Christianity was also reflected in the organization's first name, Legion of the Archangel Michael, when

20 Cf. Hagemeister, *Die "Protokolle der Weisen von Zion" vor Gericht*, 60.

21 See Thomas Nipperdey and Reinhard Rürup, "Antisemitismus", edited by Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, and Reinhart Koselleck, in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe 1, A - D. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1974), 129–153.

22 Cf. Emmanuel Kreis, *Quis ut Deus?: Antijudéo-maçonnisme et occultisme en France sous la IIIe République* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2017), 685.

23 Cited in *Hagemeister, Die "Protokolle der Weisen von Zion" vor Gericht*, 71.

24 "Der internationale Antisemitenkongreß", *Wiener Morgenzeitung,* August 22, 1926.

25 See Walter Laqueur, *The Changing Face of Anti-Semitism: From Ancient Times to the Present Day* (Cary: Oxford University Press, 2006).

26 Cf. Cârstocea, "Native Fascists, Transnational Anti-Semites".

it was founded in 1927 by Corneliu Codreanu.[27] As Moța later underlined in a letter sent to WD, religion with its "divine essence" was for him superior to questions of the "materialistic" race.[28] This focus on Christianity left room for conflict between Moța and delegates from other fascist movements since the Christian religion was not equally important to all and because the diverse (Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox) beliefs in Europe could clash. Especially for the German NSDAP, antisemitism was racially and not religiously grounded.

The idea of a Jewish race in opposition to an Aryan race (or races) constituted the third element of the Antisemitic International's agenda. Most importantly, the Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg invoked Aryanism while openly despising Christianity in his book *Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts* (*The Myth of the Twentieth Century*, 1930), and the Protestant and Catholic Churches in Germany harshly criticized Rosenberg because of his anti-religious outlook.[29] *Der Mythus* became one the most influential books on Nazi ideology next to Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. Rosenberg argued that a "Germanized" religion of blood should replace Christianity, which was allegedly pervaded by Jewish influences. As Ernst Piper outlines, Rosenberg interpreted Nazism as a theological substitute for Christian religion (*Religionsersatz*), and not as a substitute religion (*Ersatzreligion*) itself (which is a crucial distinction in debates about whether fascism constitutes a form of 'political religion' or not).[30] Rosenberg constructed Jews as a counter-race (*Gegenrasse*) to the Nordic-Aryan race.[31] Alfred Rosenberg's antisemitic and anti-Christian worldview stood thus in apparent contradiction to Ion Moța's Christian worldview, underlining the difficulty of uniting different fascist movements with conflicting ideological foci.

Pan-Aryanism, a specific concept that the Antisemitic International propagated in the early 1930s, combined the three key ideas (the decay of European civilization, Christianity, and racist Aryanism). The notion was developed by Georg de Pottere, a former Austrian-Hungarian diplomat and antisemitic publicist from Graz who organized many of the network meetings.[32] He conceptualized

27 See Constantin Iordachi, *The Fascist Faith of the Legion "Archangel Michael" in Romania, 1927–41*: *Martyrdom and National Purification* (London: Routledge, 2023).

28 'Letter from Ion Moța to Welt-Dienst, February 5, 1935', 45.

29 Alfred Rosenberg, *Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts*: *Eine Wertung der seelisch-geistigen Gestaltenkämpfe unserer Zeit* (Munich: Hoheneichen, 1930). On the reception of the book in Germany, see Piper, *Alfred Rosenberg*, 179–231.

30 Piper, *Alfred Rosenberg*, 223–231. See also Emilio Gentile, 'Fascism as Political Religion', *Journal of Contemporary History* 25.2 (1990): 229–251.

31 Cf. Ekkehard Henschke, *Rosenbergs Elite und ihr Nachleben*: *Akademiker im Dritten Reich und nach 1945* (Cologne: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020), 80–81.

32 On Georg de Pottere, see Brechtken, *"Madagaskar für die Juden"*, 38–44.

Pan-Aryanism in his main work named *Arische Rasse, Christliche Kultur und das Judenproblem* (Aryan Race, Christian Culture and the Jewish Problem), published in 1931 under his pseudonym Egon van Winghene.[33] The book circulated among the members of the antisemitic network, and the *Welt-Dienst* bulletin later reprinted its central messages. In the book, de Pottere claimed that Europe was built on a 2000-year-old common Aryan-Christian culture, which had made Europeans the rightful masters of the world. He held the Jewish race, with its alleged imperialism, responsible for the contemporary decay of this 'glorious' culture. De Pottere outlined various reasons for the European deterioration due to the "Jewish omnipresence" in Bolshevism, the League of Nations, Americanism, and even Anthroposophy, and due to the "Jewish popular overgrowth" in Western countries.[34] The decay of Europe could only be stopped by an absolute separation between the "Pan-Aryan race" and the Jewish race, which he constructed as eternal opposites. As de Pottere argued in a letter sent to Ion Moța "let us not forget that there is no Romanian race or German race: there is only the Aryan race (divided into various nations) and the Jewish race".[35]

De Pottere used the concept of Pan-Aryanism to ask for international cooperation among different 'Aryan nations' and nationalist movements, illustrating the link between antisemitism and fascist internationalism. De Pottere praised German Nazism, Italian Fascism, and all other "anti-revolutionary movements of regeneration" as essential allies in the fight against Judaism.[36] De Pottere argued that "the supranational cooperation of natural interest groups does not represent a betrayal of nationalism, but is rather the only and last means of protecting the distinctiveness and the individual life of each of the peoples endangered by Jewish cultural forms and the Jewish desire for power".[37] Hence, only fascist internationalism (without using these terms explicitly) would enable the survival of distinctive peoples and nations in their common anti-Jewish battle. De Pottere evoked an "Aryan-Christian community of destiny" and stressed "Pan-Aryan solidarity" against the alleged Jewish world domination.[38] Regardless of national or confessional differences, all Aryan nations should form a "Pan-Aryan" front of unity against Judaism and support each other through the mutual exchange of knowledge and experiences.

33 van Winghene, *Arische Rasse, Christliche Kultur und das Judenproblem.*

34 Cf. van Winghene, *Arische Rasse, Christliche Kultur und das Judenproblem*, 19–33.

35 'Letter from O. F. (Georg de Pottere) to Moța, February 1935', edited by Claudio Mutti, in *Corrispondenza col Welt-Dienst* (Parma: Edizioni all'insegna del Veltro, 1996), 71–75.

36 Cf. van Winghene, *Arische Rasse, Christliche Kultur und das Judenproblem*, 73.

37 van Winghene, *Arische Rasse, Christliche Kultur und das Judenproblem*, 59.

38 Cf. van Winghene, *Arische Rasse, Christliche Kultur und das Judenproblem*, 57–60.

Most importantly, such a united Pan-Aryan front ought to achieve a solution to the 'Jewish question'. De Pottere rejected in his book from 1931 the physical elimination and extermination of Jews not because it was as morally reprehensible but because it was "technically impossible".[39] Approximately ten years before the beginning of the Holocaust, the genocide of six million European Jews was not even imaginable for the most hateful antisemites. Instead, de Pottere demanded so-called "Total-Zionism" (*Voll-Zionismus*), meaning the deprivation of all rights of Jews in 'Aryan' countries and their expulsion into a country or island under "Pan-Aryan" control.[40] Henry Hamilton Beamish, the British proponent of the Antisemitic International, also promoted this idea of 'compulsory segregation' of the Jewish people from the rest of the world. His solution to the Jewish problem was the forced deportation of the entire Jewish population to the island of Madagascar.[41] The cruel plan went beyond mere emigration and consciously intended Jewish annihilation because of the planned deportation of millions of Jews to areas where chances of survival were low due to poor nutrition soil. This so-called Madagascar plan became one of the central political measures demanded by the Antisemitic International.

In conclusion, despite its ephemeral, informal, and clandestine nature in the 1920s and early 1930s, the Antisemitic International linked future fascists from different countries at a time when most fascist movements were still marginal (including the German NSDAP) or had yet to be founded (such as the British IFL). Notwithstanding different emphases on the role of Christianity and Aryanism, the network agreed that the 'Jewish question' had to be solved internationally and developed concepts such as Pan-Aryanism, which explicitly asked for international cooperation among 'Aryan' fascist movements. They combined the older tradition of fighting the common Jewish enemy internationally with their ultranationalist and racist ideologies, promulgating that antisemitism and fascism had to join forces in a common international cause. From 1933 on, the situation changed massively when German Nazism rose to power, and the new organization WD attempted to formally unite and dominate the Antisemitic International.

39 van Winghene, *Arische Rasse, Christliche Kultur und das Judenproblem*, 70–71.
40 Cf. van Winghene, *Arische Rasse, Christliche Kultur und das Judenproblem*, 71.
41 Cf. Brechtken, *"Madagaskar für die Juden"*, 32–36; 68–70.

Ulrich Fleischhauer and the Foundation of the World-Service in 1933

Few people combined antisemitism and fascist internationalism as passionately as Ulrich Fleischhauer, the mastermind behind WD. Born in 1876 in Thuringia, Fleischhauer served as a lieutenant colonel (*Oberstleutnant*) in the German army in the First World War.[42] He felt politically disoriented and unsatisfied with the Weimar Republic. Like many other radicalized war veterans, he was influenced by the so-called Stab-in-the-back myth, meaning the belief that Jews were responsible for the German defeat in the war and the postwar crisis and revolutions. In 1919, Fleischhauer founded a publishing house called *U. Bodung-Verlag* (U. Bodung was his pseudonym) and disseminated antisemitic articles, booklets, and books henceforth. From the mid-1920s onward, he attended the conferences of the Antisemitic International. During this period, Fleischhauer belonged to the *völkisch* strand of the German National People's Party (*Deutschnationale Volkspartei*, DNVP) and held antisemitic lectures at events organized by the paramilitary organization The Steel Helmet. Fleischhauer's *völkisch* and antisemitic worldview coincided with Nazi ideology even though he joined the NSDAP first in 1942.[43]

When Hitler came to power in 1933, it seemed opportune for Fleischhauer to create a news agency for the 'Aryan press' in Germany, which could coordinate the activities of the Antisemitic International more professionally. The anti-Jewish agitator Georg de Pottere had pondered similar plans and joined Fleischhauer as his right hand. Their shared vision was to connect antisemitic movements and organizations in many countries while serving the 'Third Reich' as a "foreign propaganda agency", as Fleischhauer suggested in a memorandum sent to different German state authorities in May 1933.[44] Despite not achieving immediate support, Fleischhauer founded the Aryan World-Service (*Arischer Weltdienst*) in Erfurt in September 1933 (the 'Aryan' disappeared later in the title). Henceforth, German authorities such as the local Gestapo in Erfurt closely moni-

42 On Fleischhauer, see Schörle, "Internationale der Antisemiten"; Martin Finkenberger, "Ulrich Fleischhauer", edited by Wolfgang Benz, in *Handbuch des Antisemitismus. Personen A-K. Band 2* (Berlin: De Gruyter Saur, 2009), 235–236.

43 Cf. Oliver Hilmes, *Im Fadenkreuz: Politische Gustav-Mahler-Rezeption 1919-1945; eine Studie über den Zusammenhang von Antisemitismus und Kritik an der Moderne* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2003), 110.

44 Ulrich Fleischhauer, Einige Gedanken über die Notwendigkeit der Schaffung einer Auslands-Propagandastelle, May 1933: [BArch], R 58/988.

tored WD, assessing it as an "exemplary institution for combating international Jewry and Freemasonry".[45]

However, similar to the Italian and German agencies discussed previously, the relationship between WD and the Nazi state was highly ambivalent.[46] On the one hand, Fleischhauer was financed by the German Propaganda Ministry, even though WD's bulletin falsely claimed that it had never received "a penny" from Goebbels' ministry.[47] WD continuously asked its readers for private funding to appear financially independent from Nazi authorities – a typical strategy of concealment seen earlier. On the other hand, when Fleischhauer attempted to organize the first international congress of antisemites in Germany in 1934, Nazi deputy *Führer* Rudolf Heß prohibited the event, which had to take place in Belgium instead without German participation.[48] It took the WD several years until it was allowed to host its international conferences in Erfurt. Due to this ambivalence, the WD correspondent and former head of CINEF Herman de Vries de Heekelingen argued in 1938 that the WD "is not an institution of the National Socialist regime".[49] There is some truth in this statement, at least in the period from 1933 to 1939.

From the beginning, the organization repeated the mantra that it was a private enterprise that was historically, ideologically, and financially independent of Nazi Germany, stressing its international, 'Pan-Aryan' orientation beyond Germany. In several articles, WD placed itself instead in the tradition of the antisemitic publicist Theodor Fritsch, the antisemitic congresses in the 1880s, and the Antisemitic International in the 1920s. WD maintained that the "Pan-Aryan movement" had been active for a far longer time than Hitler, Rosenberg, and the NSDAP.[50] In Fleischhauer's speech at the Berlin Congress of the Nationalist International in 1934, he even argued that he was "not speaking as a German, but as an employee of an international *völkisch* general staff".[51] Thus, in contrast to the Italian agencies of fascist internationalism CINEF and CAUR, WD operated semi-independently within the Nazi German regime, at least until its *Gleichschaltung*

45 Letter from Stapostelle Erfurt to Gestapo Berlin, 27 August 1934: [BArch], R 58/988.

46 On the ambigous relationship between WD and Nazi state, see also Brechtken, *"Madagaskar für die Juden"*, 53–61; Schörle, "Internationale der Antisemiten", 59–62.

47 "In eigener Sache", *Welt-Dienst,* October 15, 1935. Cf. Schörle, "Internationale der Antisemiten", 69.

48 Cf. Brechtken, *"Madagaskar für die Juden"*, 50.

49 Herrman de Vries de Heekelingen, "Pourquoi je vais à Erfurt", *Welt-Dienst,* September 1, 1938. On de Vries de Heekelingen and CINEF, see Chapter 1.

50 E.g. "Juda wird unruhig", *Welt-Dienst,* February 15, 1934; "Unsere gemeinsame Front ist nach jüdischem Urteile stärker als die jüdische Internationale", *Welt-Dienst,* August 15, 1934.

51 IAdN, *Volksgemeinschaft und Völkerfriede*, 51.

in late 1938. This illustrates the multifaceted organizational forms of fascist internationalism in the 1930s, ranging from state and ministerial authorities to independent institutions and individual agents operating beyond ordinary forms of diplomacy.

Activities of the World-Service and Interactions with Fascist Movements

Former research has emphasized WD's function as an international propaganda news agency that served as a "prime interface between anti-Semitic journalism and activism".[52] This section focusses instead on WD's role as a mediating agency that cooperated with and attempted to influence various fascist movements and agencies from abroad through its publications, intermediaries, and correspondence. From December 1933 on, WD published a bi-monthly bulletin in German, English, and French titled *Welt-Dienst*. To address a wide international audience, WD gradually broadened its linguistic scope, including translations into Spanish, Dutch, Romanian, Polish, and the Scandinavian languages during the 1930s. Among the targeted audience were important figures of various European fascist movements. For instance, an alphabetical list of *Welt-Dienst* subscribers in Switzerland included many leading Swiss fascists, notably Arthur Fonjallaz (FFS), Hans Oehler, and Robert Tobler (both NF).[53] The foreign partners, in turn, often used the WD propaganda material in their own press, demonstrating the knowledge circulation and practical cooperation on an international scale. For instance, Danish DNSAP journals and newspapers often republished WD articles about the alleged Jewish-Bolshevist world conspiracy.[54]

Next to some staff members based in Erfurt, WD used voluntary international correspondents recruited from the aforementioned network of the Antisemitic International, such as Henry Hamilton Beamish and Ion Moța.[55] Another WD correspondent was the DNSAP member Curt Carlis Hansen, who had previously fled

52 Plass, 'Der Welt-Dienst', 503.

53 See Papers of Weltdienst and the Bern trial re the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, 1930-1972: [WHL], 540 Weltdienst, 5–11.

54 E.g. "Højgradfrimurene forbereder en ny verdenskrig", *National-Socialisten,* January 18, 1936; "Demokratiet bevæpner Bolsjevikerne", *National-Socialisten,* November 6, 1937; "Norge som bolsjevistisk Indfaldsport til Europa", *D.N.S.A.P.s Maaneds-Breve,* August 1, 1938. The DNSAP also reported positively about the Erfurt congress 1938: "I Verdens Tjeneste", *D.N.S.A.P.s Maaneds-Breve,* September 1, 1938.

55 For a list of WD associates in 1938, see the internal SD report, Mitarbeiterstab des "Weltdiensts", undated: [BArch], R58/7425, 14.

from Denmark to Germany after a failed attempt to kidnap a German communist.[56] Even though most correspondents were European, there was also a very active agent from Cairo named Mahmoud Saleh, who distributed copies of *Welt-Dienst* in Egypt. Saleh, who had studied in Berlin and Paris, apparently even organized a 'Pan-Aryan Congress' in Cairo in 1938.[57]

Indeed, although Europe received most of the attention in its news coverage, WD had a global outlook, as already outlined in its self-description as a *World*-Service. The bulletin *Welt-Dienst* repeatedly stressed that Judaism had to be combatted around the globe because the 'Jewish question' could not be resolved in one country alone. The aim was "to oppose for the first time in the history of the world the Jewish International with an International of experts on Jews".[58] WD constantly monitored real or imagined 'Jewish' politicians, newspapers, and publications, and constructed Jews as a "parasitic counter-race" of the Nordic-Aryan race.[59] The WD bulletin held Jews, but also 'Gentile' communists, and Freemasons responsible for the Reichstag fire in Germany, a revolt in Brazil, the Italo-Ethiopian War, the Spanish Civil War, conflicts in Southeast Asia, turmoil in Palestine, poisoning children in South Africa, and for evoking a new world war, and so on and so forth.[60] Thus, WD was shaped by conspiracism and chimeric illusions, defined by a "worldview or disposition [. . .] towards viewing events and circumstances as the product of conspiracies".[61]

WD's bulletin also commented on the development of many primarily European and some non-European fascist movements as potential allies. For instance, in the first edition of *Welt-Dienst*, Fleischhauer published an article on Vidkun Quisling's NS and Eoin O'Duffy's Irish Blueshirts, but also on Canadian and Japanese "fascist parties". The article argued that "everything that is healthy strives towards national renewal in the world; hence hostility towards Jews, hence National Socialism, hence Fascism".[62] The main idea was to counter the Jewish "Underground International" with the "solidarity of the *Völkisch* of all countries".[63]

56 On Curt Carlis Hansen alias Otto Schlager, see Lauridsen, "*Føreren har ordet!*", 430.

57 Cf. Finkenberger, "Johann von Leers und die 'faschistische Internationale' der fünfziger und sechziger Jahre in Argentinien und Ägypten", 538–540.

58 Fleischhauer, "Welt-Dienst Freunde!" .

59 E.g. "Juda wird unruhig", *Welt-Dienst,* February 15, 1934.

60 E.g. "Zusammenhänge", *Welt-Dienst,* January 1, 1934; "Juden als Führer der kommunistischen Revolte in Brasilien", *Welt-Dienst,* January 15, 1936; "Wie lange noch?", *Welt-Dienst,* November 1, 1936; "1938", *Welt-Dienst,* January 15, 1938.

61 Bak and Emberland, "Early Nordic Fascism and Antisemitic Conspiracism", 18.

62 "Fascistische Bewegung in verschiedenen Ländern", *Welt-Dienst,* December 1, 1933.

63 "Die Zustände in Rumänien", *Welt-Dienst,* January 1, 1934.

However, WD's descriptions of fascist movements also illustrate friction between fascism and antisemitism. The organization praised foreign fascist parties only as long as these were dedicated to the antisemitic cause. Georg de Pottere, for instance, differentiated in a lecture (reprinted in the *Welt-Dienst*) between "real and false movements of regeneration".[64] Accordingly, the 'real' movements called "white fascism" based their national rebirth on a racist-*völkisch* worldview, enforcing the "elimination" of every foreign (meaning Jewish) racial element. As positive examples, he mentioned German Nazism, the British IFL, and some Scandinavian movements. The 'false' movements called "black fascism" (such as Italian Fascism, the BUF in Britain, and Marcel Bucard's MF) allegedly based their national rebirth only on nationalism and imperialism, thus missing the crucial issue: the "purification from Judaism".[65] Hence, WD stressed the 'Jewish problem' as the common and, therefore, necessarily unifying issue of all fascist movements around the globe, thus placing antisemitism above fascism.

WD's ambiguous relationship with the Italian organization CAUR was shaped by this distinction between 'good' and 'bad' fascists along the lines of their antisemitic program. Fleischhauer closely observed and commented on the activities of the Italian attempt to form a Fascist International at the Montreux Congress in 1934. Accordingly, *Welt-Dienst* welcomed CAUR's form of fascist internationalism "with honest sympathy" as a movement countering common enemies such as Bolshevism, liberalism, democracy, and parliamentarism. Nevertheless, WD harshly criticized the "compromising" Montreux resolution on the "Jewish question". In particular, it denounced the "arbitrary separation of revolutionary and non-revolutionary Jews", CAUR's cooperation with Marcel Bucard, who allegedly allowed Jews in his MF party, and Eugenio Coselschi's weak position towards the "race principle".[66]

The Montreux Congress in late 1934 also shows that WD was much more than 'just' a news agency providing information and political commentaries. Instead, Ulrich Fleischhauer and Georg de Pottere attempted to influence the Montreux Front directly through one of their foreign partners, Ion Moţa.[67] A letter from the Romanian fascist to de Pottere reveals how Moţa raised the question of antisemitism on behalf of WD at the CAUR congress to establish a "worldwide anti-Jewish

64 "Echte und unechte Erneuerung", *Welt-Dienst,* April 15, 1934.

65 "Echte und unechte Erneuerung", *Welt-Dienst,* April 15, 1934.

66 "Zum 1. Weltkongress der Faszisten", *Welt-Dienst,* January 15, 1935.

67 On the cooperation between WD and Ion Moţa, see also Mircea Platon, "The Iron Guard and the 'Modern State': Iron Guard Leaders Vasile Marin and Ion I. Moţa, and the 'New European Order'", *Fascism: Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 1.2 (2012): 65–90, 82–88.

front".[68] Alienated and disappointed by the outcome of the congress, de Pottere argued in his reply to Ion Moţa that there was no need for fascist movements such as the ones led by Mussolini, Mussert, and Mosley, if they did not dedicate themselves properly to the "Jewish question".[69] Consequently, WD first established closer cooperation with CAUR after the latter's antisemitic turn in the late 1930s (as discussed in Chapter 2).

Like Hans Keller, Ulrich Fleischhauer approached minor fascist parties directly to influence their ideology. For example, WD sent antisemitic propaganda material to the Norwegian member of the Montreux Front, Vidkun Quisling. In this case, WD also functioned as an intermediary between Norwegian fascism and German Nazism because Fleischhauer invited Quisling to the NSDAP party rally in Nuremberg in September 1935, offering free accommodation. Quisling declined, even though the invitation coincided with increasing antisemitic expressions from the Norwegian *Fører*, who was simultaneously also approached by another antisemitic German agency, the Anti-Jewish World League (*Antijüdische Weltliga*).[70]

WD cooperated with at least two European fascist movements on a more material and financial basis: the British IFL and the Swiss NF. In both cases, WD served as an organization that provided supportive 'expertise' and funding when fascist politicians were confronted in domestic courts. Connections between WD and the British IFL dated back to the 1920s when Fleischhauer met Henry Hamilton Beamish at the meetings of the Antisemitic International, becoming allies united by their conspiracism and hatred against Jewry and Freemasonry. The IFL frequently reprinted WD material in its organ, *The Fascist*, and reciprocally, an unnamed IFL correspondent under the pen name "Mac-L" wrote for the *Welt-Dienst* bulletin.[71] In 1936, the IFL Director-General Arnold Spencer Leese was brought to trial in Britain for accusing Jews of ritual murder by telling lies about alleged blood libels. This was an anti-Jewish conspiracy from the Middle Ages that claimed that Jews kidnapped, abused, tortured, and slaughtered Christian infants and consumed their blood for Jewish religious purposes.[72] In reaction to the

68 "Letter from Ion Moța to Welt-Dienst, February 5, 1935", 45.

69 "Letter from O. F. (Georg de Pottere) to Moța, February 1935".

70 Letter from WD to Vidkun Quisling, August 2, 1934: [RA Oslo], PA-0750 Gj L0001; Letter from Ulrich Fleischhauer to Vidkun Quisling, August 9, 1935: [RA Oslo], PA-0750 Gj L0001. On Quisling and the Anti-Jewish World League, see Hamre, 'Norwegian Fascism in a Transnational Perspective', 56–57.

71 On the link between WD and the IFL, see Graham Macklin, *Failed Führers*: *A History of Britain's Extreme Right* (London: Routledge, 2020), 35–36.

72 Cf. Laqueur, *The Changing Face of Anti-Semitism*, 55–57.

trial, Fleischhauer raised money for the "British Aryan Defence Fund", which the IFL had created to help its leader.[73] Furthermore, *Welt-Dienst* praised Leese's booklet *My Irrelevant Defence* (1938), which detailed fifty alleged cases of ritual murder, with "gratitude" for the "brave" Leese.[74]

During the so-called Berne Trial (1933–1935), Ulrich Fleischhauer also organized funding for the defendants from the Swiss fascist party NF, which had claimed the authenticity of the fraudulent *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. The text described an alleged Jewish plan for global domination and was (and still is) paramount in popularizing antisemitic conspiracy theories.[75] In a letter sent to his correspondents and allied fascist movements abroad, Fleischhauer asked to send booklets, periodicals, and newspaper articles about the protocols to prove their authenticity. He also organized a funding committee and asked to send money for the "penniless" defendants confronted by a superior power with "filled purses", characterizing this support as an explicit act of "Aryan solidarity".[76] Fleischhauer also attended the trial personally as an 'expert' on Jewish conspiracies. Publicly, he defended the alleged authenticity of the fabricated text, and his bulletin pathetically heralded the trial as a "duel [. . .] between International Jewry and the Aryan World".[77] This time, the British IFL helped to raise funding for Fleischhauer's case, and the IFL celebrated the WD founder in the aftermath for enabling "a major Jewish defeat".[78] These examples demonstrate how ideological alliances based on fascist solidarity and antisemitism could lead to material support among fascist agents and movements from various countries. However, as discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, such international cooperation with an organization from abroad could also damage minor fascist movements severely, as when the Swiss press exposed a secret collusion between WD and the former NF member Boris Tödtli, who supplied Fleischhauer with information on the political situation in Switzerland.

73 "Prozess gegen Arnold Leese", *Welt-Dienst,* October 1, 1936; "Bericht über die internationale Organisations-Besprechung des „Welt-Dienst" in Erfurt vom 3. bis 7. September 1936", *Welt-Dienst,* October 1, 1936.

74 "Welt-Dienst Bücher-Dienst", *Welt-Dienst,* May 15, 1938.

75 On the Protocols, see Michael Hagemeister, "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion: Between History and Fiction", *New German Critique* 35.1 (2008): 83–95. On the Berne trial and WD's role, see Hagemeister, *Die "Protokolle der Weisen von Zion" vor Gericht*.

76 Letter from WD to Vidkun Quisling, November 5, 1934: [RA Oslo], PA-0750 Gj L0001.

77 "Zum Berner Prozess und die 'Protokolle der Weisen von Zion'", *Welt-Dienst,* March 15, 1935.

78 "A major Jewish Defeat: Protocols Saved in Switzerland by Colonel Fleischhauer", *The Fascist,* January 1938.

From Pan-Aryanism to a Worldwide Anti-Jewish Front: The Erfurt Congresses 1936–1938

Seeing itself as the successor of the Antisemitic International, WD aimed from the outset to form a more substantial, united, and institutionalized antisemitic movement. In September 1934, the first meeting of the Antisemitic International took place after the WD foundation in Belgium, demanding "a united confederation of peoples". Accordingly, WD praised the meeting as crucial to "make friends", even though German authorities had prohibited Fleischhauer and other Germans from participating.[79] In the following, Ulrich Fleischhauer attempted to establish Erfurt as the new world center of antisemitic activism and gradually achieved more support from Nazi authorities. From 1936 to 1938, WD hosted three annual international congresses in Erfurt that served as meeting points to connect different antisemitic agents and fascist parties. A close analysis of these congresses sheds light on an ideological change in the outlook of WD, which replaced 'narrow' Pan-Aryanism with the more 'inclusive' idea of a worldwide anti-Jewish front.

In the period between 1936 and 1938, the Italo-German rapprochement gave new momentum to WD, next to a general increase of antisemitism among various European fascist movements. Fleischhauer invited the well-known Italian Fascist intellectual and extreme racist Julius Evola to the Erfurt Congress in 1937, who held a speech presenting Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy as new centers of resistance against Jewry and Freemasonry.[80] The same year, the former anti-German CAUR became a partner of WD, and Alberto Luchini represented CAUR at two congresses.[81] Similarly, the French MF led by Marcel Bucard, whom the WD had formerly branded for allowing Jews in his party, was now welcomed as a partner.[82] As the *Welt-Dienst* propagated victoriously in an article on the BUF (another new partner): "[i]n every *völkisch* movement of regeneration, even if it is not initially antisemitic, there inevitably comes a moment when it encounters the Jewish question and has to deal with it".[83] This statement points to the ambiguous relationship between antisemitism and fascism: if the doors of international cooperation had previously been closed to some fascist movements and regimes be-

79 "Antijüdischer Weltkongreß für Frieden, Freiheit, Arbeit", *Welt-Dienst,* October 1, 1934; "Weltkongreß für Frieden, Freiheit und Arbeit", *Welt-Dienst,* October 15, 1934.

80 "Die Haltung des neuen Italien zur Judenfrage", *Welt-Dienst,* November 1, 1937. Cf. Staudenmaier, "Racial Ideology between Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany", 481.

81 See Chapter 2.

82 "Ein enger Mitarbeiter des 'Franciste' (Bucard-Bewegung) aus Frankreich", *Welt-Dienst,* September 1, 1938.

83 "Sir Oswald Mosley contra Juda", *Welt-Dienst,* June 1, 1936.

cause of their lack of antisemitism, WD was now more than willing to include them as long as they adhered to the common fight against 'international Jewry'.

WD attempted to establish Erfurt publicly as a counterweight to Moscow and Geneva (both conceived of being in the hands of Jews). Fleischhauer organized the first congress with 76 delegates from 24 countries in Erfurt in September 1936, which was still held in privacy.[84] The following year, WD changed the formerly secret nature of the meetings of the Antisemitic International to create more publicity. Under the protective shield of the Nazi state, WD visibly organized conferences from September 2–5, 1937 and September 1–4, 1938 at the famous hotel *Erfurter Hof* (which would become a historical site in 1970 where the first meeting between a Federal Chancellor from West Germany, Willy Brandt, and a Prime Minister from East Germany, Willi Stoph, took place). The WD bulletin covered these two WD conferences in great detail and announced publicly, for the first time, the identity of many speakers, delegates, and senders of greeting messages.[85] Furthermore, WD celebrated the fact that the Jewish press acknowledged Erfurt as the new "Mecca of anti-Judaism".[86]

A brief analysis of the delegates at these Erfurt conferences illustrates the close relationship between WD and several fascist parties. For example, among the 75 delegates at the congress in 1937 was Curt Hansen from the DNSAP and an entire IFL delegation headed by Henry Hamilton Beamish, who once again stressed his plan to deport Jews to Madagascar.[87] Among the speakers was also the former CINEF leader Herman de Vries de Heekelingen, who, as outlined in Chapter 1, had turned from an advocate of universal fascism to conspiratorial antisemitism.[88] The last day of the congress, a Sunday, was reserved for sight-seeing and "sociable gathering", emphasizing how these meetings enabled networking processes and new personal bonds.[89] Moreover, the congress in 1937 ended intentionally one day before the beginning of the NSDAP Nuremberg Rally, to which many foreign delegates were invited, illustrating how the WD functioned as an intermediary between European fascists and the German Nazi party. At the conference in 1938, there were 76 representatives from 17 nations (33 alone from Germany), including Arnold Meijer, the leader of the Dutch Black Front, who held a

84 "Bericht über die internationale Organisations-Besprechung des 'Welt-Dienst' in Erfurt vom 3. bis 7. September 1936", *Welt-Dienst,* October 1, 1936.

85 See *Welt-Dienst*, October 1, 1937; October 15, 1937, November 1, 1937.

86 Fleischhauer, "Welt-Dienst Freunde!".

87 Cf. Security Service (*Sicherheitsdienst*, SD), Aufstellung der Welt-Dienst-Freunde, 1937: [BArch], R58/5992.

88 See Chapter 1.

89 Cf. SD, Programm: September 4, 1937: [BArch], R58/5992.

speech on the "Jewish question in the Netherlands".[90] Meijer had also been present at the Montreux Congress four years earlier. Erling Hallas and Einar Bach Pedersen represented the Danish DNSAP, and Gaston Brismée participated on behalf of the Belgian LNB.[91] The *Welt-Dienst* published greeting messages from 19 countries in a dozen languages to the Erfurt assembly from representatives who could not attend in person.[92] The international outlook of WD was demonstrated in one of the two mottos proclaimed for the 1938 congress: "let each respect the others' country, and cherish the country which is his own".[93]

At this point, the question was not whether nationalism and internationalism excluded each other but which international partners and peoples were allowed to join the common fight against 'international Jewry'. WD increasingly questioned the initial focus of the Antisemitic International on Europe, Christianity, and Aryan peoples. Already at the congress in Belgium in 1934, descriptions such as a 'Christian-Aryan alliance' were dismissed because the delegates from Hungary, Turkey, and Arabia were not conceived as Aryans and because the Christian theme excluded Muslims from the undertaking.[94] Likewise, in February 1934, a *Welt-Dienst* article pronounced that an unnamed "Muslim leader" had joined the WD battle against Jews and asked to abandon the terms "Aryan" and "Semite" because, according to contemporary linguistic and racial theories, Arabs counted as "Semites" as well.[95] Therefore, WD promised to replace the term 'Semites' with 'Jews' or 'Juda' and the term antisemitism with 'anti-Judaism' in the future. This mirrored a broader trend within official Nazi terminology that preferred the term 'Jewish question' over the term antisemitism.[96] Consequently, the self-descriptions as 'Antisemitic International' and as a specifically 'Aryan' World-Service disappeared in the course of the 1930s. WD's new outlook beyond Europe and Christianity challenged Georg de Pottere's concept of Pan-Aryanism. This ideological turn coincided with a personal split between Fleischhauer and de Pottere, who left WD in 1936 to found a new Christian 'Pan-Aryan Union' instead.

A year later, the CAUR delegate Alberto Luchini argued at the Erfurt congress in 1937 that the 'Jewish International' had to be confronted by a common Chris-

90 Cf. Reich Security Main Office (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, RSHA), Teilnehmer am Kongress nach Nationen, 1938: [BArch], R58/7425, 18; see RSHA, Die Judenfrage in den Niederlanden, Vortrag des Herrn Arnold Meijer, 1938: [BArch], R58/7425.

91 Cf. RSHA, Besucher des Weltdienst-Kongresses, 1938: [BArch], R58/7425, 15–17.

92 See *Welt-Dienst*, September 1, 1938; October 1, 1938.

93 "Internationaler Welt-Dienst-Konferenz", *Welt-Dienst,* September 1, 1938.

94 "Antijüdischer Weltkongreß für Frieden, Freiheit, Arbeit", *Welt-Dienst,* October 1, 1934.

95 "Muselmanen schliessen sich dem Kampfe des 'Welt-Dienst' an", *Welt-Dienst,* February 15, 1934.

96 Cf. Nipperdey and Rürup, 'Antisemitismus', 151.

tian front. In his reply, Fleischhauer repeated the new 'inclusive' agenda, arguing that one should not only focus on the "Christian World" but include others, such as Japanese, Indian, and Arab forces, "all are welcome".[97] Furthermore, one should avoid using the term 'Pan-Aryan' to include Hungarians, Turks, and others. This gradual broadening of the fascist front was embodied in the message of CAUR's president Eugenio Coselschi to the WD assembly at the Erfurt Congress in 1938. According to Coselschi, "the holiness of the Christian cross, the wisdom of the Qur'an, and the insightfulness of Buddha" should join forces to fight the materialist Jewish race.[98] The difference between WD and CAUR was that Coselschi proposed that an "anti-Jewish alliance of patriots of all countries and believers of all confessions" had to be spiritually guided by the "universality of Rome", a concept German proponents of fascist internationalism dismissed.[99]

Furthermore, many delegates did not agree that categories of 'Aryan' and 'Christianity' should be rejected, exemplifying how questions of inclusion and exclusion were debated and contested within WD. Even some of the non-European partners considered themselves 'Aryans'. A notable example was Louis T. Weichardt, the leader of the South African National Party (the so-called Greyshirts), who was of German descent.[100] The US delegate George E. Deatherage, president of the American Nationalist Confederation, even evoked an "Aryan-racial alliance". In his speech on Jewish influence in the US, he insisted that "we are brothers in race and culture, devoting our lives to a common cause, a cause which ultimately must mean the salvation of the world for Christian and Aryan people".[101] Significantly, these contestations and frictions were often whitewashed in WD's publications.

Nevertheless, the new 'inclusive' trend led, in fact, to increased WD cooperation with non-European and non-Christian agents and parties, such as from Japan, South America, and Canada. Two years after Nazi Germany and the Empire of Japan had signed the Anti-Comintern Pact, WD invited General N. Fujiwara from the Japanese Embassy in Berlin to the Erfurt Congress in 1938, who gave a speech on the ongoing Sino-Japanese War. In line with the antisemitic organizers, Fujiwara claimed that the Chinese government was in the hands of a Jewish-Masonic-Bolshevist government and emphasized, therefore, a "common front" with the

97 See SD, Welt-Dienst-Kongress, 1937: [BArch], R58/5992, 76.

98 Coselschi, "Botschaft des Generals Eugenio Coselschi".

99 Coselschi, "Botschaft des Generals Eugenio Coselschi". On Coselschi and his turn to antisemitism, see Chapter 2.

100 See Louis T. Weichardt, "Auszug aus einer Botschaft an den 'Welt-Dienst'-Kongreß aus Süd-Afrika", *Welt-Dienst,* September 1, 1938.

101 George E. Deatherage, "Will America be Jewry's Waterloo?", *Welt-Dienst,* September 1, 1938.

other delegates.[102] Indeed, antisemitic narratives flourished in Japan at that time. However, the Jewish population under Japanese domination was largely protected, and a formal policy implemented in December 1938 would even declare racial equality between Japanese and Jews.[103] This was silenced at the Erfurt Congress, illustrating how different prioritizations of antisemitism were downplayed at WD events for the sake of evoking broader political alliances.

To conclude, WD and its Erfurt congresses foregrounded two ideological aspects of antisemitism in the late 1930s. First, WD aimed to form a more 'inclusive' worldwide anti-Jewish front beyond a pure 'Pan-Aryan' and European-Christian orientation, juxtaposed with 'Jewish materialism'. The idea of a global front was still based on extreme racism directed against the alleged Jewish race as a common scapegoat. Furthermore, indigenous and 'Black' African movements were entirely excluded from the Erfurt Front, linked to the extreme white supremacism of some participating movements like the IFL and the South African Greyshirts. Second, WD relied on international cooperation with various fascist movements to create this global front, as long as these agreed on the 'Jewish question' as the main reason to cooperate internationally. In 1938, more and more organizations seemed willing to accept this prerequisite. Unlike Hans Keller's IAdN, WD shied away from collaborating with conservative and less-radical antisemitic movements and organizations (often with more political influence). Instead, WD formed its 'powerful' front of fragmented movements with members and leaders of only marginal influence within their own countries, and none of the represented parties such as DNSAP or LNB were particularly successful in national elections.

This cooperation with marginal movements even complicated the relationship between WD and German state authorities such as the Security Service (*Sicherheitsdienst*, SD), the intelligence service of the SS (*Schutzstaffel*, lit. Protection Squadron), and specifically its Department for Jewish Affairs (*Referat für Judenfragen*) in Berlin. Adolf Eichmann, the infamous SD member who would become one of the main architects of the Holocaust, attended the Erfurt Congress in 1937. He was not impressed by the other delegates. In an internal report, he concluded disparagingly: "[t]he majority of these 'Welt-Dienst' members gave the impression of more or less questionable existences, some of them obsessed with the fixed idea of being called as leaders of parties and organizations in their coun-

102 General Fujiwara, "Der chinesisch-japanische Konflikt", *Welt-Dienst,* September 1, 1938.
103 See Gerald David Kearney, "Jews under Japanese Domination, 1939-1945", *Shofar* 11.3 (1993): 54–69, 57–58.

tries".[104] To be clear, it was not the radical antisemitic ideas put forward by the Erfurt Front that alienated Eichmann. His SD agreed that the 'Jewish question' had to be solved internationally, outlining in internal reports that Nazi Germany should support the foundation of a Jewish state. Later on, SD even pondered the Madagascar plan briefly, and Eichmann mainly pushed the so-called *Entjudung* of Nazi Germany through Jewish emigration in 1937.[105] However, SD was less convinced that a solution could be found with the help of those marginal fascist movements. Thus, Eichmann assessed not the ideas but the personnel of the international congresses as the wrong path to the solution of the 'Jewish question'.

According to Magnus Brechtken, the struggle for independence turned WD into a "foreign body" in the Nazi state, causing its end as an independent institution.[106] In addition, the organization backed the wrong horses through their cooperation with questionable figures from marginal parties. Thus, directly after the last Erfurt Congress in the autumn of 1938, Fleischhauer was removed as WD leader and replaced by August Schirmer.[107] The organization was incorporated into the Amt Rosenberg, an official body for cultural policy and surveillance within the Nazi party headed by Alfred Rosenberg. This *Gleichschaltung* of WD thwarted Fleischhauer's aim of establishing Erfurt as a new global center for antisemitism. Instead, Rosenberg moved the comprehensive WD archive and library on Judaism to Frankfurt am Main, where he established a new propagandistic 'academic' center on the 'Jewish question'. Rosenberg even used the international WD network during the Second World War to host another huge conference on the 'Jewish question' in Frankfurt in 1941, as outlined in the epilogue of this book.

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During the 1930s, antisemitism became a powerful notion that facilitated and fueled cooperation and a feeling of community between diverse ultranationalist movements and regimes, incorporating racism, anti-materialism, antiliberalism, anti-globalism, and anticommunism in the idea of an all-encompassing 'internationalist' Jewish enemy. Using all-explanatory conspiracy theories, fascists held this imagined nemesis responsible for the polycrisis of the world. Underlying was an understanding "that national sovereignty is no longer a working concept of politics", which instead was dominated by "global politics" and "worldwide interdependence", as Hannah Arendt's had argued in her essay on the "Seeds of the

104 Cited in Brechtken, *"Madagaskar für die Juden"*, 69–70.

105 See Michael Wildt, *Die Judenpolitik des SD 1935 bis 1938*: *Eine Dokumentation* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1995).

106 Cf. Brechtken, *"Madagaskar für die Juden"*, 55.

107 Cf. Schörle, "Internationale der Antisemiten", 68–70.

Fascist International".[108] In the fascist minds, the Jewish enemy operated internationally. Hence, Judaism had to be combatted internationally, legitimizing *through its alleged international nature* fascist internationalism as a counter-reaction. Accordingly, the Antisemitic International and WD insisted that their "supranational cooperation" would never constitute a "betrayal of nationalism", but was "rather the only and last means of protecting the distinctiveness and the individual life of each of the peoples" allegedly endangered by the Jewish enemy.[109] This illustrates how conspiratorial antisemitism transcended the tension between nationalism and internationalism in the 1930s.

Nevertheless, both the Antisemitic International and WD, underline the limits and contestations of fascist internationalism in the interwar period. Frictions emerged, for instance, concerning the role Christianity ought to play. Another example was Georg de Pottere's concept of Pan-Aryanism, which was increasingly challenged in WD's discourse due to its exclusion of non-Aryans. Limits were also apparent in the ambiguous interplay between WD and Nazi German state authorities, which ultimately ended WD's Erfurt conferences through an act of *Gleichschaltung* and the ousting of Fleischhauer as leader.

In stark contrast to these limitations, the Antisemitic International and later WD portrayed themselves as powerful counter-phenomena to the Jewish "Underground International" which was juxtaposed with the "solidarity of the *Völkisch* of all countries".[110] This antagonism was illustrated in the attempt to establish Erfurt as a site of antisemitic internationalism in juxtaposition to 'Jewish' Moscow, mirroring CAUR's strive to anchor Montreux as the antithesis of Geneva. Both attempts outline the mimetic character of fascist internationalism, which saw itself ideologically and spatially in a constant political struggle with liberal, communist, and Jewish internationalism. However, in distinction from Italian fascist internationalism, the best version of a 'Fascist International' remained for WD an 'anti-Jewish International', which the Montreux Congress had failed to achieve. Eventually, international cooperation among fellow ardent antisemites remained a strategy for WD to combat and expel worldwide 'international Jewry', showcasing how ideas and activities of fascist internationalism could be used as means for sinister ends.

Nazi German persecutors would enable an eliminatory 'final solution' of the 'Jewish question' during the Second World War, which went even far beyond the terrific genocidal visions of the Antisemitic International and WD in the interwar

108 Arendt, "The Seeds of a Fascist International", 143.
109 van Winghene, *Arische Rasse, Christliche Kultur und das Judenproblem*, 59.
110 "Die Zustände in Rumänien", *Welt-Dienst,* January 1, 1934.

period. During the Holocaust, Nazism could count on the ideological and partly factual support of numerous fascist allies abroad, who willingly collaborated with the 'Third Reich', even though this challenged the credibility of their own nationalism. This tension between foreign allegiance and national independence troubled many fascist parties and posed a fundamental challenge to fascist internationalism.

Part II: **Fascist Internationalism and Fascist Movements from Northwestern Europe**

Chapter 5
"Hitler's Foreign Apostles": The Fascist Predicament between Nationalism and Internationalism

In an interview that Frits Clausen gave to the German newspaper *Berliner Illustrierte* in May 1934, the leader of the small fascist party DNSAP declared that he would fight for amity with Germany as "Hitler's apostle" in Denmark. "Swastika does not fight Swastika" was the title of the article, in which he proclaimed a "community of destiny" between Danish and German Nazism, arguing that Hitler and his ideas "do not belong to Germany alone, they have something to say to all Nordic-Germanic tribes".[1] Initially, these statements were made for a German audience only, but Clausen's self-description as Hitler's apostle provoked strong reactions in the Danish media.[2] The DNSAP leader reacted with a half-hearted disclaimer by assuring that he was against political cooperation with German Nazism in the narrow sense and just wanted to express an ideological fellowship. Nevertheless, from then on, both the Danish press and political rivals from left to right repeatedly discredited Clausen as Hitler's traitorous henchman while portraying the DNSAP as a poor imitation of the German NSDAP.[3]

The DNSAP was not the only minor fascist movement in northwestern Europe that domestic media and political competitors portrayed as a mere vassal of a foreign power. The Norwegian labor newspaper *Arbeiderbladet* denounced the NS as "the Norwegian form of fascism".[4] In Britain, the IFL was ridiculed for having "Hitler as its God" and *Mein Kampf* as its bible.[5] The Irish Republican Army (IRA) attacked their rival, the Irish Blueshirts headed by Eoin O'Duffy, as "lackeys and fascists".[6] Thus, whether they called themselves fascist, national socialist, or used idiosyncratic self-descriptions, minor fascist movements in the 1930s, similar to

1 "Hakenkreuz kämpft nicht gegen Hakenkreuz", *Berliner Illustrierte Nachtausgabe,* May 12, 1934.

2 On the negative reception of the article, see Lauridsen, *"Føreren har ordet!",* 612–618.

3 Cf. Lauridsen, *Dansk nazisme*, 152.

4 "Hvad er Nasjonal Samling?", *Arbeiderbladet,* October 4, 1934.

5 "Fascists Come to Eastbourne", *Eastbourne Gazette,* April 19, 1933.

6 Cited in Maurice Manning, "The Irish Experience: The Blueshirts", in *Who were the Fascists*: *Social Roots of European Fascism,* edited by Stein Ugelvik Larsen, (Bergen: Universitets Forlag, 1980), 557–567, 561.

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their successors and heirs in today's world – were challenged by a dilemma, which I refer to as the *fascist predicament*.[7]

On the one hand, minor fascist movements conceived of themselves as proud patriots loyal to the fatherland, often rooted in racist assumptions of some sort of national superiority. They propagated an ultranationalist program of national rebirth and foregrounded native roots, traditions, and history while neatly differentiating their movement from anything 'international'. On the other hand, the nascent parties were profoundly inspired by political events, movements, and regimes abroad, specifically by the rise of Italian Fascism and German Nazism. Through their ruthlessness and success, both fascist regimes offered a new template for political solutions that could be 'implemented' in other countries. Accordingly, the success of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany "opened up the space of possible alternatives and legitimized new, radical ways of thinking about the future".[8] Minor fascist parties conceptualized their ideology as part of a European or even worldwide *Zeitgeist* and a new fascist epoch, as opposed to the decaying age of democracy, liberalism, and communism. Hence, they interpreted themselves, as Aristotle Kallis argues, in a "dual capacity, both as harbingers of national regeneration within their respective countries and as loyal agents of a pan-European and universal project of rebirth in opposition to established ideologies and political forces".[9]

However, as the debacle of the Clausen interview shows, political opponents and potential supporters alike frequently equated the minor fascist parties' inspiration from abroad with loyalty to foreign powers, challenging their nationalist credibility. As Celestine Kunkeler states, "nationalism, [. . .] expressed by fascists in terms of xenophobia, racism, reverent respect for national traditions and history, [. . .] was in constant tension with the persistent notion that fascism was inherently foreign".[10] Salvatore Garau summarizes this challenge as the *non-imitation problem*. Especially when confronted with German or Italian projects of fascist internationalism, the minor fascist movements, "needed to present themselves as genuinely

7 See also Martin Kristoffer Hamre "Traitors to the Fatherland? Historical Perspectives on the Patriotic Predicament of Fascism and the Far Right", *RightNow! C-Rex,* June 24, 2024, accessed March 26, 2025, https://www.sv.uio.no/c-rex/english/news-and-events/right-now/2024/traitors-to-the-fatherland.html.

8 António Costa Pinto and Aristotle Kallis, "Conclusion: Embracing Complexity and Transnational Dynamics: The Diffusion of Fascism and the Hybridization of Dictatorships in Inter-War Europe", in *Rethinking Fascism and Dictatorship in Europe,* edited by António Costa Pinto and Aristotle Kallis (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 272–282, 276.

9 Kallis, "Transnational Fascism", 47.

10 Celestine S. Kunkeler, "The Evolution of Swedish Fascism: Self-identification and Ideology in Interwar Sweden", *Patterns of Prejudice* 50.4–5 (2016): 378–397, 384.

homegrown and not imitative of any foreign model".[11] In addition, the contemporary derogatory meanings of the labels 'Nazism' and 'fascism' constituted a significant problem for all minor fascist parties. As contested signifiers, political opponents used these terms to denounce their adversaries as mere products of import and as Hitler's respective Mussolini's deputies and vassals. Such accusations intensified in the prospect of a new world war in the late 1930s, which confronted the minor fascists with a significant "patriotic dilemma" regarding their loyalty.[12]

In consequence, anti-fascist, liberal, democratic, conservative, and even other far-right opponents repeatedly portrayed the smaller fascist parties as potentially treasonous, anti-patriotic collaborators, and 'fifth columnists', a term deriving from the Spanish Civil War. This criticism was often combined with the (often justified) suspicion of financial support from Berlin or Rome, which meant an asymmetrical dependence in apparent contradiction to the supposed national independence and indigenous roots proclaimed by the fascist movements. Cooperation with agencies pursuing fascist internationalism as portrayed in the previous chapters, notably the German Nationalist International (IAdN), the World-Service (WD), and the Italian Action Committees for the Universality of Rome (CAUR), thus often had negative consequences for their partners abroad. These links generated more evidence of the dependence on foreign powers, indicating treason beyond ideological, stylistic, and organizational mimicry of the role models.

This chapter focuses on the fascist predicament of being torn between ideological affiliation with foreign regimes and movements on the one hand, and ultranationalism on the other. It demonstrates in a threefold manner that this dilemma was a critical precondition that challenged and shaped the relationship between minor fascist movements and fascist internationalism in the interwar period. First, the genesis, development, and some of the leading figures of seven different movements from northwestern Europe are introduced in the chronological order of their foundation: the British IFL, the Danish DNSAP, the Irish Blueshirts, the National Front and the FFS from Switzerland, the SNU/SNF from Sweden, and the NS from Norway. Second, the complex relationship between them and their Italian and German fascist role models is analyzed, demonstrating the aspirations and challenges of affiliation with foreign powers. Third, the chapter examines how the parties responded to the fascist predicament by identifying distinct but overlapping strategies, showing that most of the minor parties felt an

11 Garau, "The Internationalisation of Italian Fascism in the Face of German National Socialism", 50.

12 Richard Griffiths, *Patriotism Perverted*: *Captain Ramsay, the Right Club, and British Anti-Semitism, 1939–1940* (London: Constable and Company Limited, 1998), 2.

imperative to distance themselves from Italian Fascism and German Nazism for the reasons discussed above. This analysis ties in with one of the broader aims of this study, which is to outline the ambivalences and limitations of fascist internationalism.

The Imperial Fascist League (IFL)

The Imperial Fascist League (IFL) was created in late 1928 and headed by a directorate of three people, who all had been members of the first party in Britain that had labeled itself fascist, the British Fascisti. One of these founders was Arnold Spencer Leese, a veterinary surgeon and camel expert, who soon dominated the IFL and became its Director General. When Leese was still a member of the British Fascisti, he had become the first British fascist elected to a local town council in the mid-1920s.[13] Being more interested in cultivating an inner circle and avant-garde than establishing a mass party, the IFL remained an "arche-typical fascist groupuscule" with a membership somewhere between 400 and 1,000, including a strong foothold in the county Surrey, south of London.[14] The IFL never appointed a candidate for election but mainly focused on disseminating fascist propaganda. Politically, the IFL was soon overshadowed by the far more successful rival: the British Union of Fascists (BUF), created by Oswald Mosley in 1932.[15]

In its formative years, the IFL repeatedly presented Fascist Italy as the example to follow in Europe. Leese had admired Italian Fascism already in the 1920s as a role model for Britain.[16] He became the British correspondent of the propaganda think tank CINEF, which influenced his thinking on fascism as a universal movement beyond Italy.[17] The first official manifesto of the IFL was shaped by CINEF's universal fascism and ideas of corporatism.[18] Inspired by the Italian role model, the IFL created a uniformed militia called Fascist Legions, dressed in black shirts as the Italian *squadristi*. From March 1929 onward, the IFL published a monthly organ called *The Fascist* and established a tiny office in Craven Street,

13 On Arnold Leese, see Macklin, *Failed Führers*, 22–91, as well as the autobiography Arnold Spencer Leese, *Out of Step*: *Events in the Two Lives of an Anti-Jewish Camel-Doctor* (London: The Carmac Press, 1951).

14 Macklin, *Failed Führers*, 29. See also Steven Woodbridge, "Local and Vocal: Arnold Leese and British Fascism in Small-town Politics", *Socialist History* 41 (2012): 43–59.

15 On the rivalry between the BUF and the IFL and their leaders Mosley and Leese, see Woodbridge, "Fraudulent Fascism", 502–505; Macklin, *Failed Führers*, 30–32.

16 Arnold Spencer Leese, *Fascism for Old England* (Self-published, 1923).

17 On the relationship between CINEF and the IFL, see Chapter 1.

18 Cf. "Editorial Notice: Making Britain safe from democracy", *The Fascist*, March 1929.

London. However, the IFL was not "a slavish imitation of Italian Fascism but a movement that had indigenous characteristics".[19] Its contempt for "Jewish Money Power" and the international gold standard was a particularity that clearly distinguished it from Fascist Italy in the 1920s and early 1930s.[20] The IFL countered early criticism against fascism as an import by arguing that "the word Fascism comes from a Latin root and is no more foreign than the word conservatism, which is derived from the Latin (*Conservo*)".[21]

The IFL was hostile to modernism, liberalism, democracy, and communism, but radical antisemitism soon became its ideological cornerstone, connected to the belief in the superiority of the Nordic-Aryan race.[22] Arnold Leese became obsessed with Jews who allegedly controlled the British government, the British Empire, and the League of Nations. Henry Hamilton Beamish, from 1937 IFL vice president and one of the central figures of the Antisemitic International, also influenced the movement's antisemitism.[23] Accordingly, the IFL propagated the compulsory segregation of Jews via the Madagascar plan throughout the 1930s. As early as 1935, Leese even recommended the extermination of the Jews through "some humane method such as lethal chambers", illustrating his dangerous antisemitic mania.[24]

In the early 1930s, the German NSDAP became the IFL's new primary role model due to its increasing obsession with antisemitism, Nordic-Aryan racism, and white supremacism. As an article in May 1931 put it: "[w]e see in the Hitler movement something far-reaching for the White Man than there is even in the Italian movement" because the NSDAP faced the real enemy of the white men, "the Jew".[25] As Graham Macklim puts it, as "enthusiasm for Nazism soared, Leese's admiration for Mussolini plummeted".[26] From 1931 on, the IFL frequently attacked Mussolini and his entourage for being influenced by Jews and hailed Hitler, in contrast, as the new messiah, with Leese as his "devoted mouthpiece" in

19 May, 'Breaking Boundaries', 111–112.

20 Cf. "The League of Nations", *The Fascist,* November 1929.

21 "Answers to Criticism", *The Fascist,* May 1930.

22 On the role of antisemitism and biological racism in the IFL, see John Morell, "Arnold Leese and the Imperial Fascist League: the Impact of Racial Fascism", in *British Fascism. Essays on the Radical Right in Inter-war Britain,* edited by Kenneth Lunn and Richard C. Thurlow (London: Croom Helm, 1980), 57–76.

23 On Beamish and his antisemitism, see Gisela C. Lebzelter, "Henry Hamilton Beamish and the Britons: Champions of Anti-semitism", in *British Fascism. Essays on the Radical Right in Inter-war Britain,* edited by Kenneth Lunn and Richard C. Thurlow (London: Croom Helm, 1980), 41–56.

24 Arnold Spencer Leese, "The Segregation of the Jews", *The Fascist,* February 1935.

25 "The Nazis: A Warning to British Readers", *The Fascist,* May 1931.

26 Macklin, *Failed Führers*, 32.

Britain.[27] To showcase its new allegiance to German Nazism publicly, the IFL adopted the Nazi swastika at the turn of the year 1932 to 1933, a month before Hitler's so-called 'seizure of power' in January 1933. Henceforth, the IFL took pride in defending German Nazism and frequently attacked British individuals, newspapers, and organizations who made anti-Hitler comments.[28] The movement also organized German language classes and became engaged in the translation, circulation, and selling of Nazi propaganda.[29]

The IFL established direct contacts with Nazi functionaries in London and Germany, who in return published articles in *The Fascist* on the developments in Germany and sold IFL material in Germany. The German contacts included Hans Wilhelm Thost, the London correspondent for the *Völkischer Beobachter*, Hans-Rolf Hoffmann, the head of the Nazi's Foreign Press Bureau in Munich, and Julius Streicher, the publisher of the antisemitic journal *Der Stürmer*.[30] These mediators enabled a financial injection from the NSDAP to the IFL in 1931. Remarkably, the IFL openly acknowledged "gratefully a donation to our funds from German 'National Socialists' in London" in an article, tellingly called "Fascist internationalism".[31] After being invited by Julius Streicher, IFL member Cecil Serocold Skeels also held a speech in Nuremberg in 1933, declaring "Nordic solidarity" between British fascism and German Nazism.[32] Crucially, these forms of international co-operation, financial support, and inspiration were, at least until the late 1930s, not interpreted as contradicting the ultranationalist program of the IFL.[33] Instead, the movement interpreted "Anti-patriotism" as a "democratic virtue" linked to the enemies of fascism.[34]

Important financial and propaganda links existed between the antisemitic WD and the IFL, as outlined in the previous chapter. In 1937, several Brits aligned to the IFL, including Henry Hamilton Beamish and Margaret Bothamley, attended a conference hosted in Erfurt by Ulrich Fleischhauer.[35] But the leader Arnold Leese refused to travel to Germany and reminded the British delegation that "the Englishman's place was not in Erfurt but in England". As Beamish noted in a let-

27 Gisela C. Lebzelter, *Political Anti-Semitism in England 1918–1939* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1978), 85.

28 Cf. "A Ridiculous Attack on Hitler", *The Fascist,* February 1934.

29 Cf. May, "Breaking Boundaries", 138–150.

30 See James J. Barnes and Patience B. Barnes, *Nazis in Pre-War London 1930–1939*: *The Fate and Role of German Party Members and British Sympathizers* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2005).

31 "Fascist Internationalism", *The Fascist,* April 1931.

32 "Streicher and Skeels", *The Fascist,* December 1933.

33 Arnold Spencer Leese, "Fascism in England", *The Fascist,* June 1930.

34 H. H. L., "Anti-patriotism – a Democratic virtue", *The Fascist,* June 1938.

35 Cf. Macklin, *Failed Führers*, 35–36.

ter afterward, this "took some explanation on my part explaining to delegates many of whom had travelled thousands of miles to attend the Conference! According to Leese they all should have remained in their own countries!"[36]

In the wake of Nazi German rearmament, the question of a potential war between Britain and Germany hit the IFL at the core of its allegedly nationalist outlook, providing an "interesting example of the predicament of racial nationalists" all over Europe.[37] If Britain, as the IFL claimed in countless articles throughout the decade, was dominated and run by Jews – so far as to speak of the United Kingdom as "A New Jerusalem" – and if Nazi Germany was the savior of the Nordic races (including Britain), would it not be the rightful cause to support the foreign power instead of the own nation?[38] In fact, with the prospect of war looming during the Czechoslovak crisis in the summer of 1938, *The Fascist* called "white solidarity" the "all-important principle" instead of narrow nationalism.[39] The IFL even initiated a "Leese for Peace" campaign arguing for an alliance between Britain and Nazi Germany directed against Jewry and Freemasonry. In a personal letter sent to Hitler, to which the Führer never replied, Leese proclaimed, "I with the Imperial Fascist League, am your best friend in this country".[40] The Second World War caused the small group to fall apart, linked to the insurmountable contradiction between British patriotism and support for Nazi Germany.[41]

The National Socialist Workers' Party of Denmark (DNSAP)

In November 1930, Cay Lembcke founded the National Socialist Workers' Party of Denmark (*Danmarks Naionalsocialistiske Arbejderparti*, DNSAP) under the direct impression of the sudden electoral success of the German NSDAP in September 1930. Lembcke was a cavalry officer who had previously gained some prestige as a co-founder of the Danish Boy Scouts Organization. In the 1920s, he had been forced into the reserve of the Danish army because of his fascist views as a member of the so-called Resurrection Association (*Gjenreisningsforeningen*), one of several

36 See Henry Hamilton Beamish to unknow person, September 28, 1937: [LMA], ACC/3121/E3/141/1.

37 Richard C. Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain*: *A History 1918–1998* (London: I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd, 1998), 138.

38 Imperial Fascist League, *The New Jerusalem*: *Our Contemplated Kosher Government* (London: I.F.L. Printing and Publishing Co, undated).

39 Gyron, "On the Economics of Race: This Talk of Civil War", *The Fascist*, June 1938.

40 Cited in Macklin, *Failed Führers*, 49.

41 On the destiny of the IFL as well as the other following six fascist movements during the Second World War, see the Epilogue of this book.

short-lived paramilitary movements in Denmark inspired by Italian Fascism and characterized by anti-parliamentary and anti-communist attitudes.[42] In the 1930s, his DNSAP would become the most successful among multiple minuscule Danish parties with a self-proclaimed national socialist ideology. Almost ironically, Marlene Djursaa states that "Denmark was perhaps the country in Europe where there were most Nazi parties but fewest Nazis".[43] The party attracted approximately 39,000 members from 1930 to 1945, with a stronghold in North Schleswig. A minor success was gaining three seats in the Danish parliament (*Folketing*) after the elections in the spring of 1939 when 31,000 people (1,8 %) voted for the party. Nevertheless, especially in comparison to its role model in the south, the DNSAP remained marginal and excluded from governmental power in Danish politics.[44]

The influence of the German Nazi movement on the Danish party was obvious.[45] The first DNSAP party manifesto was a direct copy of the German NSDAP 25-point program published in 1920.[46] Lembcke also adopted the Nazi leadership principle, the swastika, and formed stormtroopers called SA, such as the German *Sturmabteilung* (SA), and the DNSAP newspaper named *National-Socialisten* (The National Socialist) hailed Hitler as "a savior of the whole Nordic-Germanic culture".[47] Hence, there were manifold stylistic, terminological, and ideological overlaps between the Danish and German Nazis.

Next to a strong belief in Nordic-Aryan racism, the DNSAP propagated radical antisemitism, even though the party at times downplayed its anti-Jewish hatred and expelled members with too extreme opinions to attract more moderate voters. In former research, this led to the misconception that the DNSAP's antisemitism was 'moderate' and imported from Nazi Germany, concealing native traditions of Danish antisemitism.[48] Shaped by a conspiratorial belief in the Judeo-Bolshevist myth, the DNSAP wanted to solve the 'Jewish question' by enforcing segregation and emigration from Denmark, which had a very small Jew-

42 On Cay Lembcke, see Ole Ravn, *Fører uden folk*: *Frits Clausen og Danmarks National Socialistiske Arbejder-Parti* (Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag, 2007), 74–77.

43 Malene Djursaa, *DNSAP*: *Danske nazister 1930–45* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1981), 17.

44 On election results and details on the DNSAP membership, see Malene Djursaa and Henning Poulsen, "Social Bases of Nazism in Denmark: The DNSAP", edited by Stein Ugelvik Larsen, in *Who were the Fascists*: *Social Roots of European Fascism* (Bergen: Universitets Forlag, 1980), 702–714, 702–703.

45 Cf. Djursaa, *DNSAP*, 38–44.

46 For a direct comparison of the DNSAP and the NSDAP program, see Lauridsen, *Dansk nazisme*, 140–144.

47 "Nytaar i Tyskland", *National-Socialisten,* February 5, 1933.

48 Cf. Bak and Emberland, "Early Nordic Fascism and Antisemitic Conspiracism", 30.

ish population. One example was a book on "Jewish imperialism" written by the fanatical antisemite and DNSAP member Max J. Arildskov.[49] Despite Adolf Hitler's focal influence, John T. Lauridsen has shown that the DNSAP was more than a mere imitation party that "absorbed ideas from Germany but received no direct political or organizational help from there".[50] Furthermore, the party also embraced Italian-style corporatism, facilitating cooperation between the DNSAP and the Italian CAUR.[51]

When Frits Clausen replaced Cay Lembcke as the party leader, he formulated a more independent eight-point program in 1934.[52] This was a reaction to the fascist predicament, because "Clausen's deepest problem was how to be a Danish nationalist with a foreign ideology".[53] The DNSAP illustrates that even those movements that copied the self-description as national socialists from the German neighbor emphasized national independence and sovereignty. A specific reason for presenting the DNSAP as an ultranationalist Danish party was the fierce rivalry with the German minority in the Schleswig border region and other competing Danish radical right movements. In particular, the former leader of the local DNSAP group in Copenhagen, Wilfred Petersen, who founded his own Nazi splinter group in 1932, fought Clausen and his movement fiercely, launching a smear campaign against the DNSAP as a treacherous imitation party.[54]

The DNSAP reacted with several strategies towards these accusations as a mere foreign copy. The party admitted that Denmark should follow the examples of Italy and Germany by replacing parliamentarism in Denmark but "adapted to national traditions and the Danish people".[55] Moreover, the party press repeatedly insisted that the Conservatives, Liberals, and Social Democrats had also taken their names and inspiration from abroad, including foreign symbols such as the hammer and sickle that symbolized communism. Most importantly, the DNSAP attempted to 'naturalize' the central concept of its ideology, 'national socialism'.[56] Thus, the DNSAP often presented national socialism as a "Nordic"

49 Max J. Arildskov, *Den Jødiske Imperialisme* (Copenhagen: Fredericia, 1935).

50 Lauridsen, *Dansk nazisme*, 59.

51 Cf. "Den nationalsocialistiske korporative Stat", *National-Socialisten*, November 22, 1931.

52 Cf. Djursaa, *DNSAP*, 27–28.

53 Djursaa, *DNSAP*, 41.

54 Cf. Claus Bundgård Christensen and Terje Emberland, "Nordic Heretics: A National Socialist Opposition in Norway and Denmark", in *Nordic Fascism. Fragments of an Entangled History,* edited by Nicola Kristin Karcher and Markus Lundström (London: Routledge, 2022), 95–117, 103–108.

55 "Fascisme – Nazisme – Danisme", *National-Socialisten,* October 15, 1933.

56 Frits Clausen, "Nationalsocialistisk Livsanskuelse paa Baggrund af vor tid", *National-Socialisten,* November 8, 1933/ November 15, 1933.

movement beyond Nazi Germany, defined generically "as the people's rebellion against [. . .] the parliamentary rulers and the mysterious powers behind governments".[57] Curiously, one DNSAP publication even applied the term "national socialism" to movements "all over the world", including Turkey, Persia, Japan, and South America.[58] The DNSAP used a similar strategy concerning Fascist Italy as an alleged role model when referring to corporatism as a political tool rooted in the old Norse state constitution instead of admitting inspiration from abroad.[59]

The most compelling illustration of this strategy of 'naturalizing' elements associated with a foreign power is evident in the DNSAP's utilization of the swastika. This ancient religious symbol was used in various Eurasian cultures long before German Nazism adopted and engrossed the swastika for its own sake via the *völkisch* movement.[60] To stress its Danish independence from Germany, the 'true' origin of the swastika became a recurring topic in the DNSAP press.[61] It used the Snoldelev Stone, a ninth century runestone found in Denmark in the 1770s with an engraved swastika, to show that the "Aryan symbol" was as Danish as it was German, Indian, and Asian.[62] The British IFL used a similar strategy when it replaced the Italian fasces with the swastika (superimposed on a Union Jack) as the party symbol in 1933, presenting the swastika as a sign of Aryanism, white supremacism, and antisemitism beyond German Nazism.[63] Such articles often whitewashed the tension between white supremacism and the supposed non-European origin of the Aryan race. However, both the DNSAP's domestic rival, Wilfred Petersen, and its main foreign partner, the Swedish NSAP, dropped the swastika as a party symbol during the 1930s because of its association with Nazi Germany, illustrating diverse reactions to the fascist predicament.

Due to its focus on a common destiny of the Nordic races and peoples, the DNSAP would become the driving force of Scandinavian fascist regionalism.[64] As outlined earlier, the DNSAP also cooperated with various European fascist agencies of fascist internationalism, including the Italian CAUR and the German organizations IAdN and WD. Political rivals attacked the DNSAP leader Frits Clausen

57 DNSAP, *Hvorfor?*.

58 Hans Carl Bryld, "Nationalsocialisme", *Jul i Norden* 1 (1938): 21–24, 21.

59 Cf. Djursaa, *DNSAP*, 41–43.

60 Cf. Elisabeth Weeber, *Das Hakenkreuz*: *Geschichte und Bedeutungswandel eines Symbols* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2007).

61 "Vort Hagekorsflag er danks", *National-Socialisten,* January 25, 1936; "Hagekorset er dansk!", *National-Socialisten,* November 11, 1938.

62 Viggo J. von Holstein Rathlou, "Hagekorset Svastika", *Jul i Norden* (1938): 12–16, 16.

63 Arnold Spencer Leese, "The Nordics. The Swastika Symbol: What it means", *The Fascist,* April 1933.

64 See Chapter 10.

harshly "for joining the Montreux International".[65] In response to such criticism, Frits Clausen emphasized a program of 'Denmark first' and the necessity of political independence from the two leading forces of fascism in Italy and Germany. However, the description of Clausen as Hitler's apostle in Denmark haunted him throughout his political career. This ambivalent navigation between nationalism and internationalism would also massively challenge the DNSAP during the German occupation of Denmark in the Second World War.

The Irish Blueshirts and the National Corporate Party (NCP)

Colonel Austin Brennan founded the Army Comrades Association (ACA) in early 1932 to honor war veterans from the Irish Civil War (1922–23). The organization initially described itself as a non-political movement and changed its name several times to National Guard, Young Ireland, and finally League of Youth, explaining why most contemporaries and historians prefer the all-encompassing nickname *Irish Blueshirts* due to its distinctive blue uniform. The genesis of Irish fascism must be seen in the context of major transformations in Irish politics rather than broader European developments in the early 1930s. The Blueshirts emerged in a wider anticolonial setting, rooted in Irish nationalism that rose as a republican movement formed in opposition to Great Britain. Thus, it is surprising how "many figures involved in an anti-imperial, republican revolution in 1916 came to endorse some species of fascism in the 1930s".[66]

Southern Ireland became independent from Britain after a period of political violence and upheaval from 1916 onward. These conflicts culminated in the War of Independence (1919–21), ending with the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1922. The treaty resulted in the foundation of the Irish Free State as a semi-independent dominion of the British Empire, comprising 26 counties in Southern Ireland. However, Northern Ireland (Ulster) remained, with its six counties, an integral part of the "United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland". In the following, Irish nationalists split into a pro-treaty faction and an anti-treaty faction (the latter most famously represented by the IRA). Both groups attempted to mobilize republican nationalism for their sake during the Irish Civil War, which lasted until 1923.[67] The war was won by the pro-treaty forces, who benefited from substantial support provided by the British government. From 1923 to 1932, the Free Irish

65 Bundgård Christensen and Emberland, "Nordic Heretics", 105.

66 Seán Donnelly, "Michael Tierney and the Intellectual Origins of Blueshirtism, 1920–1938", *Fascism. Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 10.1 (2021): 85–107, 87.

67 Cf. Joseph Coohill, *Ireland: A Short History* (London: Oneworld, 2014), 141.

State was governed by the pro-Treaty party Cumann na nGaedheal (Society of the Gaels). In 1932, the anti-Treaty party Fianna Fáil (Soldiers of Destiny), based on the defeated civil war group, came into power for the first time. The new government radically changed Irish politics, unleashing an "economic war" on the United Kingdom. As a counter-reaction, the Irish Blueshirts emerged within the pro-treaty camp. Many members had fought for the Anglo-Irish Treaty, including the future leader of the Blueshirts, Eoin O'Duffy, who had served as Chief of Staff of the National Army.[68] His movement soon became involved in violent clashes with anti-treaty opponents from the IRA and Fianna Fáil.

Historians have debated for decades whether the Irish Blueshirts in the period 1933–1934 were a fully-fledged fascist organization corresponding with a definitory fascist minimum or ideal type typology. The verdicts ranged from a "moderate authoritarian" to a "pseudo-fascist" and "potential para-fascist" movement.[69] Rather than aiming to replace the Irish Republic with a dictatorship and a revolutionary palingenesis, the Blueshirts presented themselves as defenders of Irish parliamentarism, which they saw threatened by the new government. The Blueshirts supported the former ruling party while arguing that they defended "the right to free speech".[70] Under Eoin O'Duffy as the new leader, the organization peaked in 1933 at approximately 30,000–40,000 members. These mainly consisted of middle-class farmers and shopkeepers who were furious about the damaging economic war of the new government on Britain. Noteworthy is that women comprised around a quarter of the membership of the Blueshirts, referred to as the 'Blueblouses'.[71] The party was, nonetheless, shaped by a masculine identity and adopted fascist practices and styles such as paramilitary parades, the fascist salute, the cry 'Hoch O'Duffy!' (Hail O'Duffy), and a uniform copied from the Italian Blackshirts.[72]

The movement was characterized by ultranationalism, blending subliminal racism, cultural imperialism, Catholicism, Anglophobia, and irredentism towards Northern Ireland.[73] Moreover, it took some ideological inspiration from Italian Fascism, particularly concerning ideas of corporatism, anticommunism, an em-

68 On Eoin O'Duffy, see McGarry, *Eoin O'Duffy*; Jack Traynor, *General Eoin O'Duffy*: *The Political Life of an Irish Firebrand* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2023).

69 Cf. Payne, *A History of Fascism*, 306; Mervyn O'Driscoll, *Ireland, Germany and the Nazis*: *Politics and Diplomacy, 1919–1939* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 82; Traynor, *General Eoin O'Duffy*, 102.

70 Cf. Manning, "The Irish Experience"), 559.

71 On the Blue Blouses, see Dale Montgomery, "Gender, Ritual and Power: The Irish Blueshirts and Irish Political Culture" (PhD diss., Queen's University Belfast, 2011).

72 Cf. Traynor, *General Eoin O'Duffy*, 102.

73 On Blueshirt irredentism, see Chapter 6.

brace of violence, and its faith in youth and action. Hence, the European fascist era influenced the Blueshirts. This was exemplified in August 1933, when O'Duffy presented the idea of a March on Dublin in remembrance of Mussolini's March on Rome. Because of this plan, the movement was briefly banned before merging with two former pro-treaty parties in the autumn of 1933, forming the new (and today still existing) party Fine Gail (Family of the Irish), which O'Duffy briefly headed as president.

At that time, *The Blueshirt*, the official organ of the Irish Blueshirts, repeatedly praised Fascist Italy as a role model. Nonetheless, the organization declared to be neither "fascist, Nazi or anti-Semite".[74] Thus, the movement never took up fascism as a self-description and emphasized national traditions, costumes, and history. Therefore, the organization chose blue shirts as its uniform based on the color of the Irish national hero Saint Patrick. The significance of the color blue goes back to early Irish mythology, in which the ruler of Ireland was often represented by a woman in a blue robe. Today's green-colored St. Patrick Day celebrations are historically misleading.

Eoin O'Duffy was more attracted to Italian-style fascism than most other leading figures of Fine Gael. This difference culminated in O'Duffy's downfall and replacement by more moderate leaders in the fall of 1934, fueled by the revelation that O'Duffy had been in contact with a Norwegian right-wing organization, which the local Irish press portrayed as "fascist".[75] In September 1934, O'Duffy resigned as leader of Fine Gael after failed election results, and a fraction of the Blueshirts under his leadership split from the party. These new, radical Irish Blueshirts hailed Italian Fascism more openly as a historical template, especially regarding corporatism.[76] Consequently, O'Duffy agreed to participate in the first Montreux Congress in late 1934 and joined the orbit of the Italian CAUR.

Parts of the Irish press and some political rivals saw the participation at the Montreux Congress as proof that O'Duffy had become a European fascist instead of an Irish nationalist, which delegitimized him as a political figure in Ireland.[77] Especially O'Duffy's former partners from Fine Gael exploited the event for bad

74 "Random Notes for all Ranks", *The Blueshirt,* August 3, 1933.

75 "Gen. O'Duffy and Greyshirts", *The Longford Leader,* August 18, 1934. The contact was the journalist Terje Baalsrud (his name was misspelled in the Irish press and subsequently also in Irish historiography), who was a member of the Fatherland League (*Fedrelandslaget*, FL). This was a right-wing organization not to be confused with the Norwegian NS. Cf. McGarry, *Eoin O'Duffy*, 239–240.

76 E.g. "This 'Dreadful' Fascism: What It Has Done for Italy", *The Blueshirt,* November 3, 1934; "The Italian Corporative State: Launched by Mussolini at Historic Assembly", *The Blueshirt,* November 24, 1934.

77 "General O'Duffy at Secret Fascist Congress", *Irish Press,* December 17, 1934.

press. Although being invited to Montreux themselves, they attacked their rival O'Duffy for joining CAUR and portrayed him as an Irish traitor: "[w]e believe, at any rate, that political policies are to be determined by Irishmen [. . .] and no resolutions or decisions of any International body should have any influence upon the decision and policies of an Irish party, however small".[78] O'Duffy, in contrast, condemned these statements, claiming that the conference was neither secret nor fascist but corporatist.[79] The episode illustrates the contested nature of the label fascism, which was used pejoratively to delineate political differences and identities.

From early 1935 on, Eoin O'Duffy used the CAUR meetings to create an image of international importance, recognition, and legitimacy in front of an Irish audience.[80] The Blueshirt press repeatedly outlined that its Director General was an important member of the CAUR commission.[81] O'Duffy also reported proudly about a meeting between him and Mussolini in Rome.[82] When returning to Ireland after a CAUR meeting in Amsterdam in April 1935, O'Duffy allegedly even "thumped his chest" and claimed, "I'm the third greatest man in Europe" in line with Mussolini and Hitler.[83] As Martin White notes, O'Duffy was "milking CAUR" to gain esteem among his domestic followers.[84] As O'Duffy biographer Jack Traynor states, the Blueshirt leader "intermittently wavered between open sympathy for and identification with fascism and a tendency to 'put the green jersey on' and claims his political views were authentically Irish and infused with Catholic social teaching".[85] This illustrates a typical ambivalence of minor fascist movements in relation to fascist internationalism, on the one hand denying allegiance with foreign powers, and, on the other, exploiting the international fascist sphere to gain political legitimacy domestically.

In June 1935, O'Duffy formed his Blueshirt fraction into a new political entity, the National Corporate Party (NCP), whose agenda was characterized by palinge-

78 "An International Fascist Conference", *United Ireland,* December 22, 1934.

79 "Corporate System Discussed", *The Blueshirt,* December 22, 1934.

80 E.g. "Corporative committee. International Body's recent Paris Meeting. Text of the Resolutions", *The Blueshirt,* March 1, 1935.

81 Cf. "Corporative Commission Meeting: Coincides with Great Dutch Rally in Amsterdam", *The Blueshirt,* May 1, 1935.

82 Cf. Eoin O'Duffy, "Blueshirt Agricultural Policy: The Corporative System", *The Blueshirt,* January 12, 1935.

83 Cited in Martin White, "The Greenshirts: Fascism in the Irish Free State, 1935–45" (PhD diss., University of London, 2004), 275.

84 White, "The Greenshirts", 275.

85 Traynor, *General Eoin O'Duffy*, 141–142.

netic ultranationalism, anti-parliamentarism, and corporatism.[86] The NCP continued to hail Mussolini's Fascism as a role model. German Nazism, on the other hand, was attacked for its antisemitism and even interpreted as a "danger to the human race in the intolerant and tyrannical persecution of religion".[87] The NCP changed the color of the uniforms to green, and thus the nickname from Blueshirts to the Greenshirts, symbolizing the Emerald Isle (a poetic nickname for Ireland due to its green countryside). The title of the party organ was changed from *The Blueshirt* to *The Nation*, illustrating the nationalist stance of the party. The NCP never participated in elections, and the number of members remains unknown, underlining its marginality and political lack of success. NCP activism ended in the summer of 1936 when O'Duffy formed the Irish Brigade – consisting of many former Blueshirt and Greenshirt members – which fought in the Spanish Civil War from 1936 to 1937 (as discussed in Chapter 9).

The National Front (NF)

While fascism never attained a position of central authority in Switzerland, a number of significant political currents emerged in the early 1930s that have been identified as 'fascist' by previous scholarship. Two factors benefitted the emergence of fascism in Switzerland, particularly in the year 1933. Domestically, an economic crisis resulted in a sharp increase in unemployment and political dissatisfaction. Internationally, Adolf Hitler became German Reich Chancellor in the powerful neighboring country in January 1933. This event had a massive political impact on Switzerland. Many new right-wing movements sprung up like mushrooms in the immediate aftermath. Swiss historiography describes this phenomenon as the 'Front spring' (*Frontenfrühling*). Despite some profound individual differences, these 'Front organizations' (*Frontisten*) shared notions of antiparliamentarism, anticommunism, and support for corporatism, and many were involved in antisemitic agitation.[88] However, a tendency toward particularism

86 On the NCP, see White, "The Greenshirts".

87 "The Terror in Germany", *The Nation,* July 27 1935.

88 See Daniel Gerson, "'Sechshundert Jahre lang sind wir antisemitisch gewesen, und es ist uns weiß Gott nicht schlecht bekommen.': Antisemitische Agitation der faschistischen 'Frontenbewegung' in den Berichten schweizerisch-jüdischer Beobachter (1933–1935)", in *Vorurteil und Rassenhass. Antisemitismus in den faschistischen Bewegungen Europas,* edited by Wolfgang Benz, Hermann Graml, Angelika Königseder et al. (Berlin: Metropol, 2001), 297–312.

prevented an orderly growth and unification of the fronts.[89] This unification was thwarted by Switzerland's historical regionalism, including three major cultural language groups (German, French, and Italian) with different foreign political orientations.

The National Front (*Nationale Front*, NF) became the most influential among these movements in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. It originated in a study group called New Front (*Neue Front*), founded in 1930 by young academics headed by Robert Tobler. The group wanted to replace the Swiss party system with "an allegiance of leaders and ideas" based on a corporative economic system.[90] Hans Oehler and Rolf Henne, who would become leading figures of the NF, soon joined the elitist intellectual group. The NF was established as a political party on May 13, 1933, when the New Front merged with a proletarian-*völkisch* organization (also called the National Front).[91] The NF achieved minor successes in municipal elections in Schaffhausen and Zurich. However, on the national level, the party gained only one seat in the parliament in 1935 and remained restricted to a maximum of 9,000 members.

The German NSDAP inspired the NF both ideologically and stylistically. *Völkisch* notions of Nordic-Aryan racism and antisemitism became core features of its ideology. For instance, the lawyer Rolf Henne, the NF leader from 1934 to 1938, repeatedly used the term *Volksgemeinschaft* in the sense of a racially determined blood and fate community of the Swiss people.[92] Mirroring the organizational structure of the NSDAP, the NF was organized in regional groups called *Gauen*. The party created a paramilitary unit and introduced the fascist salute, using the Old Swiss battle cry 'Harus'.[93]

In consequence, the Swiss press repeatedly attacked the NF as an "Offshoot of the Hitler Movement".[94] Therefore, the official party organ *Die Front* declared in

89 Cf. Walter Wolf, *Faschismus in der Schweiz*: *Die Geschichte der Frontenbewegungen in der deutschen Schweiz, 1930–1945* (Zurich: Flamberg-Verlag, 1969), 106.

90 Cf. Peter Gilg and Erich Gruner, "Nationale Erneuerungsbewegungen in der Schweiz 1925–1940", *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 14.1 (1966): 1–25, 10.

91 On the NF, see Glaus Beat, *Die nationale Front*: *Eine Schweizer faschistische Bewegung: 1930–1940* (Zurich: Ex Libris, 1979); Glaus Beat, 'The National Front in Switzerland', in *Who Were the Fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism,* edited by Stein Ugelvik Larsen (Bergen: Universitets Forlag, 1980), 457–478.

92 On Rolf Henne, see Jonas Roth, "Rolf Henne, ein Schweizer Faschist: Gründe und Kontexte der Faszination Faschismus in der Schweiz der Zwischenkriegszeit" (MA thesis, Universität Zürich, 2020).

93 Peter Gilg and Erich Gruner, "Nationale Erneuerungsbewegungen in der Schweiz 1925–1940", 10–12.

94 "Ableger der Hitlerbewegung . . .!", *Der Eiserne Besen,* January 27, 1933.

its first issue "that the National Front has nothing whatsoever to do with either domestic or foreign national socialist, fascist or similar political associations".[95] Rolf Henne also criticized the so-called Night of the Long Knives (in Nazi Germany referred to as the *Röhm-Putsch*) in the summer of 1934 as "a method that no longer has anything to do with the great and mighty idea of National Socialism".[96] Hence, the NF underlined its independence from the 'Third Reich' in its formative years.

Contradictorily, the NF cooperated internationally with the German organizations WD and IAdN in the mid-1930s, which changed the policy of constantly distancing the party from Nazi Germany (as outlined in Chapter 3). In February 1936, Henne surprised his party members and political opponents with an article called "More Courage!"[97] Henne demanded a closer "*Anschluss*" (which, in this context, had the double meaning of both connection and annexation) to German "*Geistesleben*" (intellectual life) and a political rapprochement between Switzerland and Germany (which would not mean a political *Anschluss* though). Openly, Henne advocated Nazi Germany as the leader of a new European era and the article constituted a clear commitment to Nazi ideology. In the following, Rolf Henne also visited the NSDAP party convention in Nuremberg in 1937.

This open support for the 'Third Reich' and the NF's cooperation with the German organization WD, in particular, severely affected the party, resulting in a bad image of collaboration and treason. During the so-called Tödtli affair in 1936, several Swiss newspapers revealed publicly that the Swiss-Russian NF member Boris Tödtli had colluded with Ulrich Fleischhauer from the antisemitic organization WD. Tödtli fled to Germany, and he was sentenced to prison for treason in his absence.[98] In the wake of the affair, the leading Swiss newspaper *Neue Züricher Zeitung* described Tödtli as a "branch manager" of WD in Switzerland and an "agent of the Third Reich", denouncing Tödtli's connection to the NF leadership in Berne.[99] Even the *New York Times* took up the story and reported about the "Swiss Convict Nazi as Spy-Provocateur".[100] In the aftermath, the NF attempted to whitewash accusations of treason and dependence on the 'Third

95 Werner Niederer, "'Nationale Front', 'Bund nationalsozialisitscher Eidgenossen' und 'N.S.D.A.P.'", *Die Front,* August 29, 1933.

96 Rolf Henne, "Zu den Ereignissen in Deutschland", *Die Front,* July 7, 1934.

97 Rolf Henne, "Mehr Mut! Ein Wort zum Verhältnis zwischen der Schweiz und Deutschland", *Die Front,* January 30, 1936.

98 On the Tödtli affair, see Tödtli, Boris (Dossier), undated: [BAR], E2001D#1000/1551#575, Aktenzeichen a.45.11; Boris Tödtli: Papers and correspondence, 1934–1938: [WHL], 543.

99 "Deutsche Propagandastellen unterstützen die Aktion gegen schweizerische Freimaurer", *Neue Züricher Zeitung,* November 23, 1937.

100 "Swiss Convict Nazi as Spy-Provocateur", *New York Times,* April 7, 1938.

Reich' by presenting Tödtli as Swiss "only on paper", arguing that he had only briefly been a party member in 1934 and had not acted on behalf of the NF.[101] Either way, the damage was done, and in the following, the NF was monitored and restricted by Swiss authorities.

Pressure came not only from outside the party concerning the allegiance to a foreign power. Rolf Henne's outspoken support for German Nazism also led to discord and ideological disputes within the leadership of the NF, ultimately forcing Henne to resign as party leader in January 1938. His successor, Robert Tobler, retracted the party's open advocacy for Nazi Germany.[102] Shocked by this retraction, a group around Hans Oehler split from the NF to found a new organization in March 1938, whose name indicated its strong allegiance to Nazi Germany: League of loyal Confederates of National Socialist Ideology (*Bund treuer Eidgenossen nationalsozialistischer Weltanschauung*). The Nazi state even financed its journal *Schweizerdegen*.[103] Eventually, the NF was doomed to failure because of the fascist predicament between adherence to Nazi Germany and Swiss loyalty as well as neutrality, fueling the self-dissolution of the party in 1940.

The Swiss Fascist Federation (FFS)

The foundation of the Swiss Fascist Federation (*Fédération Fasciste Suisse*, FFS) in 1933 was orchestrated and financed directly by the role model Fascist Italy, leading to a specific form of financial dependence and public allegiance to Benito Mussolini.[104] The FFS founder and leader was Arthur Fonjallaz, a former colonel of the Swiss army (in the rank of *Oberstbrigadier*) and a great admirer of *Il Duce*.[105] After several audiences with Mussolini in the early 1930s, both agreed to set up a Swiss copy of the Italian PNF in Switzerland in the autumn of 1933, secretly financed by Fascist Italy.[106]

The FFS illustrates that the Swiss Front spring from 1933 was not reduced to the German-speaking cantons. Its headquarters were in Lutry, close to Lausanne,

101 "Der Prozeß gegen Boris Tödtli", *Die Front,* September 7, 1938.

102 Cf. Roth, "Rolf Henne, ein Schweizer Faschist", 83–87.

103 Cf. Catherine Arber, *Frontismus und Nationalsozialismus in der Stadt Bern*: *Viel Lärm, aber wenig Erfolg* (Bern: Historischer Verein des Kantons Bern, 2003), 33.

104 On the FFS, see Yves Schumacher, *Nazi! Fascistes! Fascisti! Faschismus in der Schweiz: 1918–1945* (Zurich: Orell Füssli Verlag, 2019), 87–111.

105 On Arthur Fonjallaz, see Claude Cantini, *Le colonel fasciste suisse, Arthur Fonjallaz* (Lausanne:-M. Favre, 1983).

106 See Cerutti, "Mussolini bailleur de fonds des fascistes suisses".

in the Francophone part of Switzerland. Fonjallaz also established sections in the German-speaking cantons called *Schweizerische Faschistische Bewegung* and the Italian-speaking cantons called *Federazione Fascista Svizzera*. Accordingly, the FFS published its main organ in German (*Schweizer Fascist*), French (*Fasciste Suisse*), and Italian (*Fascista Svizzero*). The FFS peaked at 4,000 hierarchically organized members in 80 so-called *Fasceaux* sections across the country.[107] In 1934, the FFS formed the so-called Helvetic Action, an alliance with the paramilitary organization Home Guard (*Heimatwehr*). Nonetheless, its political influence remained marginal within and outside Switzerland, partly due to its open support for Fascist Italy.

The FFS mainly copied Fascist Italy's program, style, and ideology, enthusiastically embracing the self-description as a fascist party. The FFS also promoted the Italian concept of universal fascism and outlined the Italian Fascist state as its political, economic, and 'spiritual' role model. Repeatedly, the FFS heralded *Il Duce* personally. Fonjallaz even published a hagiography on Mussolini, presenting him as the savior of humanity, the most splendid statesman alive, and a role model that all nationalist-minded movements should follow.[108] According to Fonjallaz, this open submission to Italy did not contradict the FFS's own nationalism: "[s]tudy Mussolini's Italy, enter into Latin culture without giving up anything of your own patriotic feeling. You will come to the unanimous conviction that the salvation of our civilization comes from Rome and that the man of the future can only be one, the DUCE!"[109]

Thus, the party stressed its native Swiss character and argued in an article from 1934 – tellingly called "Not copyists, but fascists" – that fascism "wants to do justice to nationalism, to history, to tradition, to individual peoples".[110] This demonstrates how the FFS navigated between an idolization of Italian Fascism and an emphasis on Swiss patriotism. In distinction from Italy, the FFS was characterized by outspoken hatred towards Freemasonry as the main 'internationalist' enemy of fascism. This emphasis culminated in a failed people's referendum against "masonic influence" in Switzerland in 1937, hitherto known as the Fonjallaz initiative.[111] However, unlike most of the other fascist parties portrayed in this study,

107 Cf. Schumacher, *Nazi! Fascistes! Fascisti!*, 104.

108 See Arthur Fonjallaz, *Energie et volonté: un chef: Mussolini: étude politique et militaire* (Paris: Ed. de la Revue mondiale, 1933); Arthur Fonjallaz, *Mussolini als Kämpfer und Führer*: *Politische Studie* (Zurich: A. Bopp, 1933).

109 Fonjallaz, *Mussolini als Kämpfer und Führer*, 146.

110 "Nicht Kopisten, sondern Fascisten!", *Der Schweizer Fascist,* August 9, 1934.

111 On the Fonjallaz initiative, see Boris Schneider, "Die Fonjallaz-Initiative: Freimaurer und Fronten in der Schweiz", *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 24.4 (1974): 666–710.

the nationalism of the FFS lacked the central fascist facet of an ultra-nation as a mythical, imagined, organic, and personified entity, due to its obsession with Italy.

The Swiss press and political opponents regularly accused the FFS of treason due to its open admiration for and mimicry of Fascist Italy. For instance, Arthur Fonjallaz was heavily criticized for leading a 40-man delegation of the Swiss Home Guard that visited Rome and met with Mussolini in October 1933. The *Neue Züricher Zeitung* complained about the "confused" Swiss fascists who wanted to create a "Swiss fascist Branch" of Rome.[112] The rival NF publicly speculated that Fonjallaz was involved in treason and used the incident to emphasize that the NF would never tolerate interference from foreign powers.[113] After the trip to Rome, Fonjallaz was sacked as a lecturer on military history at the Federal Institute of Technology Zurich and discharged from military service in late 1933.[114] Even the paramilitary Home Guard departed from Fonjallaz in late 1934 due to his constant glorification of Italy.[115]

The almost symbiotic relationship between the FFS and the Italian organization CAUR fueled this bad image of Fonjallaz as a foreign agent. Behind the scenes, he had been one of the men most invested in the project to create a Fascist International under Italian leadership.[116] After the foundation of his party (only months after the set-up of CAUR), Fonjallaz openly proclaimed his allegiance to CAUR by printing its manifesto in the newspaper *Der Schweizer Fascist*. Subsequently, the FFS press treated all major CAUR events in great detail while stressing Fonjallaz's important role within Italian fascist internationalism. *Der Schweizer Fascist* even presented Fonjallaz as a co-host of the Montreux Congress in 1934.[117] In the aftermath, a labor newspaper from Winterthur denounced that the traitor Fonjallaz had conspired in Montreux to make Western Switzerland and Ticino a part of the Italian empire.[118] *Der Schweizer Fascist* rejected this claim fiercely while maintaining that the NF under Rolf Henne planned to integrate the German-speaking part of Switzerland into "Greater Germany" under Hitler.[119] This highlights how the fascist predicament could shape the competitive relation-

112 "Schweizer Fascisten bei Mussolini", *Neue Züricher Zeitung,* October 21, 1933.

113 Cf. Roth, "Rolf Henne, ein Schweizer Faschist", 53.

114 Meeting minutes of the Swiss Federal Council, Entlassung Oberst Fonjallaz aus der Wehrpflicht, November 7, 1933: [BAR], 637813068226143027.

115 Cf. Arber, *Frontismus und Nationalsozialismus in der Stadt Bern*, 12.

116 See Chapter 2.

117 E.g. "Fascistenkonvent in Amsterdam", *Der Schweizer Fascist,* April 4, 1935; Arthur Fonjallaz, "Montreux", *Der Schweizer Fascist,* September 26, 1935.

118 "Der schwarze Fascismus", *Arbeiter Zeitung,* January 7, 1935.

119 "Universalität und Universalität", *Der Schweizer Fascist,* April 4, 1935.

ship between fascist parties in the same country when one party denounced the other as a foreign traitor to foreground its own loyalty to the fatherland.

The image of an unpatriotic traitor clung to Fonjallaz and his party. As Yves Schumacher put it, "for the conspiracy theorist Fonjallaz and his followers, all organizations dedicated to internationalism were of the devil", without realizing the paradox that they, too, appeared as internationalists in the service of a foreign power.[120] In January 1935, the FFS leader was even briefly arrested and dragged into the spotlight because some left-wing newspapers published letters indicating that the FFS leader was involved in espionage for Fascist Italy. These reports outlined Mussolini as the secret financier of the party.[121] In the wake of the affair, conservative newspapers also started questioning the large sums Fonjallaz had been able to pay to the Ticino section of his party.[122] An official Federal Department of Military investigation soon proved the documents to be forgeries, and Fonjallaz was exonerated.[123] Nevertheless, the affair occupied the Swiss press landscape for months, fostering Fonjallaz's reputation as Mussolini's henchman. Eventually, as Phillip Rees puts it, the FFS leader Fonjallaz was shaped by a peculiar "vision of Switzerland as a province of Italy with himself as head of a Swiss branch".[124] This fundamentally undermined Swiss sovereignty as well as Fonjallaz's credibility as a patriot, and ultimately failed to attract the masses. Thus, Mussolini lost interest in his devoted spokesman and the FFS was dissolved when Italian funds were cut off in 1936.

The National Youth League of Sweden (SNU) and The National League of Sweden (SNF)

Several antidemocratic and anticommunist minuscule parties emerged in Sweden during the interwar period, with self-descriptions ranging from fascist to national socialist, and the National Socialist Workers' Party (*Nationalsocialistiska Arbetarepartiet*, NSAP) under Sven Olov Lindholm prevailed as the dominant fascist

120 Schumacher, *Nazi! Fascistes! Fascisti! Faschismus in der Schweiz: 1918–1945*, 101.

121 E.g. "Die Affäre Fonjallaz: Die italienischen Gelder", *Berner Tagwacht,* January 15, 1933.

122 "Woher stammen die Finanzen der Schweizer Fascisten?", *National Zeitung,* January 25, 1935.

123 See Numa Graa, "L'affaire Arthur Fonjallaz contre Marcel Jaquier et consorts: Les autorités vaudoises et fédérales face à un règlement de comptes politique dans les années 1930", *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 64.3 (2014): 470–505.

124 Rees, *Biographical Dictionary of the Extreme Right since 1890*, 130.

party, operating from 1933 to 1950.[125] Yet the Swedish case also illustrates another way into European fascism: the increasing radicalization of youth organizations of already well-established conservative parties, which was apparent in all Scandinavian countries.[126] However, this radicalization led only in Sweden to a long-lasting split and the emergence of a new party with an antiparliamentary and fascist outlook. The National Youth League of Sweden (*Sveriges Nationella Ungdomsförbund*, SNU) was founded in 1915 as a youth organization that was attached to the General Electoral League (*Allmänna Valmansförbundet*) commonly known as the Right (*Högern*, nowadays the Moderate Party). In the early 1930s, the SNU radicalized, founded a paramilitary wing that was, as in the Irish case, called Blueshirts, and embraced a political style inspired by Italian Fascism.[127] However, in distinction from other fascist parties, it lacked a prominent, charismatic fascist leader figure. The party became fully independent from the conservative party in 1934 under its chairman Elmo Lindholm.

However, the former conservative youth party was still hesitant to embrace the label fascism officially. The main organ, *Nationell Tidning*, repeatedly declared that the SNU had no intention to copy either German or Italian methods. "Our program is purely Swedish".[128] Nevertheless, the Italian CAUR chose to cooperate with the SNU in Sweden and invited one of its leading members, Rütger Essén, to the Montreux Congress. In the aftermath, a Swedish communist newspaper stressed that the mask of the SNU had finally fallen, and after denying its allegiance to both Italian Fascism and German Nazism earlier, the event had shown SNU's real face as a promoter of the "fascist plague".[129] Essén immediately clarified publicly that he had not represented any organization in Montreux, but had attended in a private capacity.[130] Furthermore, the SNU refrained from mention-

125 On Swedish fascism in the interwar period, see, among others, Lena Berggren, "Swedish Fascism – Why Bother?", *Journal of Contemporary History* 37.3 (2002): 395–417; Heléne Lööw, *Nazismen i Sverige 1924–1979*: *Pionjärerna, partierna, propaganda* (Stockholm: Ordfront, 2004).

126 Cf. Ulf Lindström, *Fascism in Scandinavia, 1920–1940* (Stockholm: Almquist & Wiksell, 1985), 29–31; Stein Ugelvik Larsen, "Conservatives and Fascists in the Nordic Countries: Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland, 1918–45", in *Fascists and Conservatives: The Radical Right and the Establishment in Twentieth-Century Europe,* edited by Martin Blinkhorn (London: Routledge, 1990), 240–263.

127 Cf. Berggren, "Swedish Fascism – Why Bother?", 405. On the SNU/SNF, see also Eric Wärenstam, *Sveriges nationella ungdomsförbund och högern 1928–1934* (Stockholm: Svenska bokförlaget, 1965).

128 "Två sorters nationalsocialism", *Nationell Tidning,* July 29, 1933.

129 "Snuonfarnas fascistbekännelse", *Folkets Dagblad,* December 19, 1934.

130 Rütger Essén, Manuscript for a telegram to Svenska Dagbladet, December 22, 1934: [RA Marieberg], REA, Vol. 70.

ing the organization CAUR nor its international meetings or resolutions in its press. Thus, unlike the FFS or the Irish Blueshirts, the party's strategy was to publicly distance itself from Montreux and Italian fascist internationalism, rather than to milk these international relations to boost its own importance domestically.

In 1935, the party was renamed the National League of Sweden (*Sveriges Nationella Förbund*, SNF). The same year, three elected representatives from the former conservative mother party joined the SNF, thus providing the party with three seats in the Second Chamber of the Swedish Parliament from 1935 to 1936. The SNF was marked by an anti-democratic, authoritarian program and increasing influence from both Italian Fascism and German Nazism. With up to 40,000 members, it became by far the most successful of the Swedish right-wing parties of the interwar period.[131] After the 1936 election defeat with 31,015 votes and three lost seats, the SNF merged with the National Federation of the New Sweden (*Riksförbundet Det nya Sverige*) in October 1937, which meant that Per Engdahl, one of the most influential Swedish fascist intellectuals of the twentieth century, joined the SNF.[132]

From then on, Engdahl influenced the party and its new program massively with his so-called New-Swedishness ideology, characterized as a "form of indigenous fascism unique to Sweden", combining elitism, socialism, anticommunism, racism, corporatism, and the aim of a palingenetic national revolution within Sweden.[133] Engdahl openly admitted that "new nationalism" in Sweden was related to other examples of "new nationalism", notably Italian Fascism, German Nazism, and Franco's Spain.[134] Despite placing the SNF in the camp of European fascism, Engdahl still differentiated his authoritarian ideas, including freedom of thought and an exchange of different opinions, from the "brutal" and "dictatorial" Nazi ideology.[135] This illustrates how the SNF ambivalently navigated between fascist ultranationalism and internationalism despite its gradual radicalization from a former conservative youth organization to a party that would become a mouthpiece of the 'Third Reich' during the Second World War.

131 On the SNF, see Lööw, *Nazismen i Sverige 1924–1979*, 66–72.

132 On Per Engdahl, see Mikael Rahm, "Från nationell folkgemenskap till europeisk kulturgemenskap: en ideologianalytisk studie av Per Engdahl 1930–1968" (PhD diss., Umeå University, 2025).

133 See Lena Berggren, "Intellectual Fascism: Per Engdahl and the Formation of 'New-Swedish Socialism'", *Fascism: Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 3.2 (2014): 69–92.

134 Per Engdahl, "Nynationalismen vill en svenks insats i arbetet på det nya Europa!", *Nationell Tidning,* April 17, 1937.

135 Per Engdahl, "I europeiskt perspektiv", *Nationell Tidning,* January 15, 1938.

The National Unity (NS)

Several ultranationalist groups and movements emerged in Norway in the 1920s and early 1930s, due to fears of growing communism and the rise of the Norwegian Labor Party (*Det norske Arbeiderparti*), which governed the country from 1935 onward. One example was the minuscule organization Nordic People's Rising in Norway (*Nordisk Folkereisning i Norge*) founded by Vidkun Quisling, a former military officer who served as the Norwegian Minister of Defense from 1931 to 1933. Once out of office, Quisling established a political party in May 1933 under the impression of NSDAP's rise to power in Germany, named National Unity (*Nasjonal Samling*, NS).[136]

Quisling led the new party as the so-called NS *Fører* (leader), equipped with the unconditional and anti-democratic leader principle that also characterized Hitler's and Mussolini's leadership. Several liturgical and stylistic aspects mirrored the fascist role models abroad, such as the fascist salute, the Old Norse greeting 'Health and Happiness' (*Heil og sæl*), and a paramilitary wing in the style of the German SA.[137] In the first two years, the party membership peaked at approximately 8,500. Despite minor successes in municipal elections, the party never gained more than 2% in national elections.[138] Ideologically, the party was shaped by "anti-parliamentarism, opposition to democracy, praise for authoritarianism, corporatist tendencies, an increasing closeness between politics and the military, firm antisocialism and occasional racism".[139] In its early years, the NS was also characterized by a Christian outlook, as illustrated by its party symbol, a sun cross based on the Norwegian Saint Olaf.

The fascist predicament challenged the image of the party from the outset. The opposing Norwegian Labor Party denounced NS members immediately as "Hitler's agents in Norway".[140] In reaction, Quisling insisted that he had not established "an offshoot of Germany" but an absolutely "national, Norwegian move-

136 On the NS, see, among many others, Øystein Sørensen, *Hitler eller Quisling: Ideologiske brytninger i Nasjonal Samling, 1940–1945* (Oslo: Cappelen, 1989); Hans Olaf Brevig and Ivo de Figueiredo, *Den norske fascismen. Nasjonal Samling 1933–1940* (Oslo: Pax Forlag, 2002); Lars Borgersrud, *Vi er jo et militært parti! Den norske militærfascismens historie 1930–1945, Bind 1* (Oslo: Scandinavian Academic Press, 2018).

137 On the relationship between Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and the NS, see Hamre, "Norwegian Fascism in a Transnational Perspective"; Hamre, "'Organic Unity through a New Order'".

138 On the NS membership, see Larsen, "The Social Foundations of Norwegian Fascism 1933–1945".

139 Salvatore Garau, "Anticipating Norwegian Fascism: The Radicalization of Urban Right-Wing Nationalism in Inter-war Norway", *European History Quarterly* 43.4 (2013): 681–706, 701–702.

140 "Hvad er Nasjonal Samling?", *Arbeiderbladet*, October 4, 1934.

ment".[141] Consequently, the NS denied throughout the 1930s both labels fascism and Nazism as self-description and emphasized the Norwegian "spiritual and national distinctiveness" of the party.[142] The NS press claimed repeatedly that liberalism and Marxism were the actual foreign, "un-Norwegian" imports.[143] Contradictorily, the NS still admitted a learning effect from both Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, and gradually evolved into a propagandistic mouthpiece for both fascist regimes.

Vidkun Quisling's involvement in the Montreux Front incriminated the alleged national independence and native roots of the NS. At first, Quisling attempted to exploit his international connections to boost his party's significance by speaking of a broad "new order" represented by Fascism in Italy, Nazism in Germany, and the NS in Norway on an almost equal footing that "will break through to victory on our entire continent".[144] At the same time, all articles in the NS press on Quisling and the Montreux Front eschewed mentioning CAUR explicitly as an organization, illustrating the NS's reluctance to adhere directly to Italian leadership and the 'universality of Rome'.[145]

Despite these assurances, both the political left and right criticized Quisling massively for his prominent role in the Montreux Front. Criticism from the left (as by the leading Norwegian social democrat Olaf Scheflo) came as no surprise, but attacks from the own party members arguably hit Quisling harder.[146] Those critical voices came to the fore after the NS newspaper *Nasjonal Samling* reported on the second Montreux meeting of CAUR in September 1935, propagandistically defending the upcoming Italian assault on Ethiopia.[147] Georg Vedder, head of the NS organization in Western Norway, complained in a private letter sent to Quisling that the article had come "like a bomb" to the party branch in Bergen.[148] Vedder was deeply sorrowed that the main argument of the NS – that it was a Norwegian movement independent from foreign dictatorships – had been thwarted by Quisling and his international activities. The NS, which criticized its domestic liberal and socialist opponents for traveling to Geneva and for secretly being steered

141 "NS er en nasjonal, norsk bevegelse", *Nasjonal Samling,* March 15, 1934.

142 "Vår bevegelses ideologiske grunnlag", *NS – Organ for Nasjonal Samling,* September 27, 1933.

143 Gulbrand Lunde, "Nasjonal Samling og utlandet", *Nasjonal Samling,* August 16, 1934.

144 "Årsskifte-Tidsskille: Europa under utformning i nasjonale folkesamfund", *Nasjonal Samling,* January 3, 1935.

145 E.g. Vidkun Quisling, "Veien til nasjonal og internasjonal Fred og Forståelse", *Nasjonal Samling,* April 11, 1935; "Et nytt Verdensforbund", *Nasjonal Samling,* September 19, 1935.

146 Cf. Hans Fredrik Dahl, *Quisling*: *En norsk tragedie* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 2004), 178.

147 "Et nytt Verdensforbund", *Nasjonal Samling,* September 19, 1935. See also Chapter 2.

148 Letter from Georg Vedeler to Vidkun Quisling, September 21, 1935: [RA Oslo], PA-0750 F L0007.

by Moscow, now had to defend Quisling's travel to Montreux and, even worse, imperialist Italian policies.

Especially after the outbreak of the Italo-Ethiopian war, Quisling's affiliation with CAUR provoked massive public objection within the NS.[149] Hans S. Jacobsen and his *Ragnarok* circle, a group of "Nordic heretics" to "mainstream" Norwegian fascism, fueled this criticism from the outside.[150] Jacobsen depicted the NS leader as a traitor for becoming a spokesman of the foreign forces of "Judea and Rome".[151] Quisling's connection to the Montreux Front also alienated the moderate Christian-nationalist strand.[152] One of its most important representatives, the priest Martin Tveter, explained his disappointment in the article called "Why I left the Nasjonal Samling", which was damagingly even published in the opposing labor press. Tveter argued that the NS ideology and its new antisemitic course increasingly mirrored Italian Fascism and German Nazism and that Quisling's central role in "creating a Fascist International" under the leadership of a foreign organization was intolerable.[153] This public resignation was a significant setback for Quisling, fueling the slow decline of the NS. From 1935, many conservative and Christian members left the party due to a process of radicalization characterized by increasing antisemitism and Nordic racism. Thus, the NS transformed from "a party to a political sect" in the late 1930s.[154]

The Norwegian media continued to denounce the NS's advocacy for the 'Third Reich'. For instance, it criticized the party's involvement in the German Nationalist International and its third congress in Oslo in 1936, which had been orchestrated by the NS ideologue Herman Harris Aall.[155] The professor also had to defend his talk at the IAdN lecture series in Berlin in January 1938, reassuring that Hans Keller's organization was not a "Fascist International".[156] The same year, the NS general secretary Rolf Jørgen Fuglsang also reported a politician from the Norwegian

149 Cf. Hans Fredrik Dahl, *En fører blir til* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1991), 364–369.

150 Bundgård Christensen and Emberland, "Nordic Heretics". See also Terje Emberland, "Neither Hitler nor Quisling: The Ragnarok Circle and Oppositional National Socialism in Norway", *Fascism: Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 4.2 (2015): 119–133, 120.

151 Kamban, Kjartan, pseudonym for Hans S. Jabocsen, "Quisling og fascismen", *Ragnarok* 1 (1935): 195–196.

152 Cf. Dag Olav Bruknapp, 'Ideene splitter partiet: Rasespørsmålets betydning i NS's utvikling', in *Fra idé til dom. Noen trekk fra utviklingen av Nasjonal samling,* edited by Rolf Danielsen (Bergen: Universitetsforlag, 1976), 9–47.

153 Martin Tveter, "Hvorfor jeg forlot Nasjonal Samling", *Arbeiderbladet,* December 3, 1935.

154 Cf. Hans Olaf Brevig, "NS – fra parti til sekt 1933-1937", edited by Hans Olaf Brevig and Ivo de Figueiredo, in *Den norske fascismen. Nasjonal Samling 193–1940* (Oslo: Pax Forlag, 2002), 19–110.

155 See Chapter 3.

156 Herman Harris Aall, "Folkerett, men ikke fascisme", *Fritt Folk,* January 22, 1938.

Conservative Party, who called the NS "national socialist", to the Oslo Police for defamation because "these untruthful statements [. . .] are most likely to damage the good name and reputation of Nasjonal Samling".[157] Tellingly, Fuglsang himself described the NS as a "national socialist movement" in an internal letter directed to the foreign organization of the NS in Germany.[158] This demonstrates not only the party's hypocrisy when dealing with the fascist predicament but also how fascist labels and self-descriptions were used differently and opportunistically, depending on the respective audience. During the Second World War, the term 'Quisling' itself would become synonymous with traitor due to the NS's role as a collaborationist party when Nazi Germany occupied Norway.

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To conclude, all seven fascist movements from northwestern Europe were characterized by a dilemma regarding nationalism and internationalism during the 1930s. On the one hand, fascists ranging from Ireland to Sweden were, to various degrees, inspired by the radical ideologies, politics, and styles of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, and often confessed to a certain learning effect from their foreign role models. On the other hand, they attempted to portray themselves as independent and rejected all allegations of being traitors and henchmen of foreign forces. Thus, the smaller parties constructed narratives of national independence, sovereignty, and separation from Italy and Germany. Typically, they argued against accusations of 'import' by emphasizing indigenous roots, traditions, and national history, and by 'naturalizing' symbols such as the swastika and political concepts such as national socialism. Another strategy was to accuse political opponents from left to right of importing foreign, 'internationalist', and 'unpatriotic' concepts, programs, and symbols.

There was no uniform solution to the fascist predicament. Some parties openly proclaimed allegiance with foreign regimes from early on, such as the Swiss FFS and the Danish DNSAP. Other parties changed their tactics in the course of the 1930s, foregrounding independence at first, such as the Swedish SNU/SNF and the Swiss NF, while later proclaiming ideological affiliation with German Nazism. This was often linked to increasing radicalization and fascination with the internal developments and successes of the 'Third Reich'. This ambivalence becomes particularly evident regarding the 'peripheral' movements' connections to internationally operating fascist organizations from Italy and Germany like CAUR, IAdN, and WD. The domestic press and political opponents used these

157 Letter from Rolf Jørgen Fuglsang to Oslo Police, 1938: [RA Oslo], PA-0760 G L0007.
158 Letter from Rolf Jørgen Fuglsang to Elisa Brochmann Moe, 23 July 1938: [RA Oslo], PA-0760 G L0007.

'toxic' links in anti-fascist campaigns to denounce the hypocritical nationalism of the fascist movements. Moreover, contact with international organizations could lead to dissatisfaction and outcry within the fascist parties, which, in some cases, even resulted in a split between competing factions on a domestic level.

The fascist predicament between foreign loyalty and domestic patriotism was not the only major challenge for the emergence of fascist internationalism in the 1930s. These internal conflicts were exacerbated and transformed to an international level when divergent national interests over disputed borders, territories, and colonies clashed between fascist movements or regimes from different countries. Conflicts over Italian policies of repression against the German-speaking minority in South Tyrol, for example, initially thwarted closer cooperation between the two dominant forces of European fascism, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. Similar fears preoccupied the smaller parties from northwestern Europe as well, especially regarding the expansionist and imperialist tendencies of other fascist movements. What if, in a reference to Frits Clausen's infamous interview, swastika in fact had to fight against swastika?

Chapter 6
"Swastika against Swastika"? Expansionist and Imperialist Limitations of Fascist Internationalism

Throughout the 1930s, German expansionist claims troubled Arnold Spencer Leese, the leader of the IFL, who portrayed himself as Hitler's most loyal friend in Britain. Loud voices in Nazi Germany such as the NSDAP Office of Colonial Policy (*Kolonialpolitisches Amt der NSDAP*) and the Reich Colonial League (*Reichskolonialbund*) demanded the return of old German colonies from the Wilhelmine Empire.[1] A majority of these colonies on the African continent had come under British mandatory control since the end of the First World War. In March 1937, Leese's journal *The Fascist* told the Germans to back off. "However much we may be Fascists, we are first of all Englishmen; because of that, whilst we favour friendship on the highest plane with Nazi Germany, that will not blind us to the fact that our overseas possessions are ours as a sacred trust, and must be ceded to nobody".[2] Another article put it more bluntly: "[t]hese are mine; hand off, what I have, I hold".[3] These reactions illustrate the IFL's balancing act of expressing pro-German allegiance while authentically defending British nationalist-imperialist interests. This contradiction strained Leese's relationship with his beloved role model, Hitler, and showed how territorial demands complicated and hampered fascist internationalism.

This chapter scrutinizes the complex relationship between expansionism and fascist internationalism through the lens of northwestern European minor fascist movements in the 1930s, embedded in a larger historical context of European imperialism and colonialism.[4] Older research has often interpreted fascism as a phenomenon that was detached from the broader political spectrum while conceptionally downplaying continuances and shared colonial, white supremacist traditions

1 See Willeke Sandler, *Empire in the Heimat*: *Colonialism and Public Culture in the Third Reich* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018). On the German colonial empire, see Sebastian Conrad, *German Colonialism*: *A Short History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

2 "Germany and Colonies", *The Fascist,* March 1937.

3 "The German Claim to the Return of Her Former Colonies", *The Fascist,* May 1939.

4 On the relationship between fascist internationalism and imperialism, see also Christopher Szabla, "Fascist Entanglements with Empire, Internationalism, and Migration," *Political Proteus: Nationalism's Entangled Histories*, (Graduate Institute Geneva 2021), accessed March 27, 2025, https://youtu.be/jmJJ-8WhxFc.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111469799-007

with ideologies such as liberalism, conservatism, and authoritarianism. As Michael Ortiz argues in his ground-breaking study of *Anti-Colonialism and the Crises of Interwar Fascism*: "[u]ntil recently, scholars had largely ignored the role that imperial ideologies played in the formation of interwar fascisms".[5] German historiographical (and broader political) debates about fascism and memory cultures, in particular, are shaped by an understanding of the "uniqueness of Nazism" as an unparalleled historical phenomenon in modern history due to its truly exceptional acts of violence, genocide, and crimes against humanity.[6] Consequently, numerous German historians characterize Nazism primarily by the singularity of the Holocaust while neglecting racist and genocidal traditions, legacies, and links to the broader history of European colonialism and other permutations of European fascism.[7] This specific research tradition has complicated the relationship between German historiography on Nazism and more Anglophone comparative fascism studies, which tend to treat Nazi Germany as one, albeit very exceptional, case of European fascism alongside other case studies.[8]

In contrast, the following analysis builds on another, older historiographical tradition that has emphasized crucial links between interwar fascism and European imperialism in modern history. Already contemporary anticolonial activists perceived fascism and colonialism as closely interlinked "blood brothers".[9] After the Second World War, political thinkers like Hannah Arendt outlined how the legacy of violent imperialism and racism had shaped European fascism.[10] Postcolonial studies and historians such as Jürgen Zimmerer also foreground the connections and continuities between imperial and fascist genocidal violence, for example by reinterpreting the Nazi German conquest in Eastern Europe as a colonial war.[11]

5 Michael Ortiz, *Anti-Colonialism and the Crises of Interwar Fascism* (London: Bloomsbury, 2023), 5.

6 See Ian Kershaw, "Hitler and the Uniqueness of Nazism", edited by Constantin Iordachi, in *Comparative Fascist Studies. New Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2010), 238–255.

7 See Michael Wildt, "Was heißt: Singularität des Holocaust?", *Zeithistorische Forschungen* 19.1 (2022): 128–147. These debates culminated in the so-called *Historikerstreit 2.0*. See Susan Neiman and Michael Wildt, eds., *Historiker streiten*: *Gewalt und Holocaust – die Debatte* (Berlin: Propyläen-Verlag, 2022); Mirjam Brusius, "Memory Cultures 2.0: From Opferkonkurrenz to Solidarity. Introduction", *German Historical Institute London Bulletin* 44.2 (2022): 3–20; Jürgen Zimmerer, ed., *Erinnerungskämpfe*: *Neues deutsches Geschichtsbewusstsein* (Ditzingen: Reclam, 2023).

8 As argued in more detail in Martin Kristoffer Hamre, "Die besondere Rolle der Faschismusforschung in Deutschland: Eine Einleitung des Übersetzers", edited by Roger Griffin, in *Faschismus. Eine Einführung in die vergleichende Faschismusforschung* (Stuttgart: ibidem, 2020), 9–20, 9–10.

9 Leslie James, "Blood Brothers: Colonialism and Fascism as Relations in the Interwar Caribbean and West Africa", *The American Historical Review* 127.2 (2022): 634–663.

10 Cf. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Schocken, 1951).

11 Jürgen Zimmerer, *Von Windhuk nach Auschwitz? Beiträge zum Verhältnis von Kolonialismus und Holocaust* (Berlin: Lit, 2011).

Novel approaches in the field of transimperial history too highlight entanglements between older 'liberal' and newer fascist forms of imperialism.[12] Recent research also stresses how European empires drew on international organizations such as the League of Nations and the International Colonial Institute to enable transfers of knowledge that fostered colonial power structures, exploitation, and the dominance of the (white) West, demonstrating a close link between imperialism and internationalism.[13]

There were nevertheless significant structural, ideological, and temporal differences between fascism, a product of the early twentieth century, and older European imperialism. The peace discourse of the Italian CAUR and the German IAdN in the previous chapters showed how both regimes rhetorically downplayed their imperialism in the early 1930s. At the same time, fascist concepts of 'proletarian imperialism' emerged to legitimize the creation of a German respectively Italian colonial empire based on the status of both nations as 'political latecomers'.[14] This 'new imperialism' was deeply intertwined with supposedly 'anticolonial' positions directed against antagonized 'liberal' and 'classical' forms of British, French, or Dutch imperialism.[15]

In the course of the 1930s and 1940s, both major fascist regimes developed projects of colonialism, which even helped to forge an alliance between Italy, Germany, and Imperial Japan. Fascist Italy legitimized its imperial project in East Africa as a recreation of the ancient *Imperium Romanum*. Nazi Germany dreamt of recreating the lost German colonial empire and was obsessed with *Lebensraum* in the East. As Mark Mazower argues, Hitler's priority on colonizing Eastern parts of Europe instead of overseas colonies still marked a stark contrast to 'older' European empires.[16] The Italian and German expansionist projects culminated in a form of *Axis internationalism*, which aimed at a territorial reorganization of the world during

12 See, among others, Florian Wagner, "The Myth of "Liberal" Fascism at the Transimperial Volta Congress on Africa in Rome, 1938", *Transimperial History Blog* (2021), accessed November 16, 2022, https://www.transimperialhistory.com/the-myth-of-liberal-fascism/; Alexis Rappas, "The Fascist Temptation: British and Italian Imperial Entanglements in the Eastern Mediterranean", *Contemporary European History* 33.2 (2022): 651–668.

13 See, among others, Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo and José Pedro Monteiro, eds., *Internationalism, Imperialism and the Formation of the Contemporary World*: *The Pasts of the Present* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017); Jens Steffek, *International Organization as Technocratic Utopia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021); Florian Wagner, *Colonial Internationalism and the Governmentality of Empire, 1893–1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

14 Cf. Hedinger, *Die Achse: Berlin, Rom, Tokio*, 164–169.

15 As argued by David Motadel, "The Global Authoritarian Moment and the Revolt against Empire", *The American Historical Review* 124.3 (2019): 843–877.

16 Mazower, *Hitler's Empire*, 3–6.

the Second World War. This global conflict illustrates the nexus of fascism, imperialism, and expansionism from the perspective of major fascist regimes.[17]

Due to the imperialist nature of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, comparative fascism studies often interpret fascist ideology by definition as expansionist.[18] Expansionism, here defined as the aim to obtain a larger territory through military or political action, was linked to the fascist idea that the territory of the nation "belonged to a (semi-mythical [sic.]) larger racial entity" that had to be "recreated" by force.[19] For example, Italian Fascists drew on the notion of irredentism, a term that originated in nineteenth-century Italy, to describe the program of expanding the newly unified state into areas considered Italian but politically outside the existing state borders. In the following, irredentism became a generic term for this form of expansionism aiming at integrating territory perceived as part of the nation on cultural, linguistic, racist, and historical grounds.[20]

However, a specific drive for expansionism and colonialism was no prerequisite of fascist movements (beyond Italy and Germany) because the connection between fascism and "territorial expansion was conditional and context-specific, not directly causal and deterministic".[21] Some interwar fascist parties combined their ultranationalism with irredentist dreams of a 'Greater Finland', respectively a 'Greater Croatia', Hungary, or the Dutch-Flemish 'Greater Dietsland'.[22] In distinction, other movements emerged in 'satisfied' national or imperialist states, and their foreign political outlook was "generally defensive rather than aggressive", and in some extreme cases even "anti-imperialist".[23] Hence, some fascist movements directed their violence rather at internal opponents deemed as 'foreign elements' and not necessarily at peoples on foreign territory. Moreover,

17 See Hedinger, *Die Achse: Berlin, Rom, Tokio*; Hofmann and Hedinger, "Editorial – Axis Empires". On Italo-German collaboration in the field of imperialism, see also Patrick Bernhard, "Colonial Crossovers: Nazi Germany and its Entanglements with Other Empires", *Journal of Global History* 12.2 (2017): 206–227.

18 For example, Stanly Payne's influential typological description of fascism lists "The goal of empire, expansion, or a radical change in the nation's relationship with other powers" as a key characteristic of fascist ideology. Payne, *A History of Fascism*, 7.

19 Cyprian Blamires, "Expansionism", in *World Fascism*: *A Historical Encyclopedia,* edited by Cyprian Blamires (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 217–218.

20 Philip Morgan, "Irredentism" in *World Fascism*: *A Historical Encyclopedia*, edited by Cyprian Blamires (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 343.

21 Aristotle Kallis, "Imperialism", in *World Fascism*: *A Historical Encyclopedia,* edited by Cyprian Blamires (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 331–333, 332.

22 Cf. Kunkeler, "A Dietsland Empire?".

23 Payne, *A History of Fascism*, 11; Johan Stenfeldt, "The Fascist Who Fought for World Peace: Conversions and Core Concepts in the Ideology of the Swedish Nazi Leader Sven Olov Lindholm", *Fascism: Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 8.1 (2019): 9–35, 22–23.

many fascist movements (except the British IFL) neatly differentiated themselves from 'classical' colonialism in their propaganda because imperialism was mainly a negatively connoted phenomenon linked to liberal, communist, and 'Jewish' enemies.

Focusing on peripheral fascist movements in northwestern Europe, this chapter offers a new perspective on the complex relationship between territorial expansionism and fascist internationalism. It demonstrates that most of these fascist movements developed some form of expansionist or imperialist visions, and the colonial and (and in some cases even anticolonial) heritage of their countries informed their foreign political outlook. The analysis thus builds on and contributes to a recent trend of rewriting imperialism into the history of interwar fascism, inspired by postcolonial studies, global history, and transimperial history.[24]

This chapter pursues three objectives when revisiting expansionism and imperialism in the foreign political outlook of the minor fascist movements through the lens of cross-border relations. First, it shows that fascist territorial claims linked to irredentism or colonialism, either defensive or aggressive, played a more important role than often admitted by previous research. These claims were based on alleged historical 'rights' and embedded in longer imperial traditions and colonial thinking. Second, these expansionist aims thwarted bilateral connections, highlighting the limits and obstacles of fascist internationalism. Simultaneously, the analysis shows the complexity of the seemingly natural and non-surprising incompatibility between expansionism and internationalism. Third, I argue that notions of fascist internationalism, constructed on racial, white supremacist lines, were also used to bypass some of the bilateral territorial disputes.

These hypotheses are tested on the basis of four case studies of the ambiguous interplay between fascist expansionism and internationalism, each highlighting different facets. The first example addresses the imperialism of the British IFL and its complicated relationship with the role model Nazi Germany, which was troubled by the issue of former German colonies. The second section analyses the Irish Blueshirts/Greenshirts and their anticolonial positioning vis-à-vis British fascism and irredentism concerning Northern Ireland. The third case study is the territorial conflict about national belonging between the Danish DNSAP and the German NSDAP in the North Schleswig borderland, challenging Frits Clausen's maxim that "Swastika was not fighting against Swastika".[25] The fourth and final part examines the

24 For other recent examples, see Liam J. Liburd, "The Eternal Imperialists: Empire, Race and Gender on the British Radical Right, 1918–1968" (PhD diss., University of Sheffield, 2019); Ortiz, *Anti-Colonialism and the Crises of Interwar Fascism*; Kunkeler, "A Dietsland Empire?".

25 "Hakenkreuz kämpft nicht gegen Hakenkreuz", *Berliner Illustrierte Nachtausgabe,* May 12, 1934.

so-called Greenland case as an example of historical revisionism that constituted a bone of contention between Danish and Norwegian fascism.

British Imperialism and the Issue of Former German Colonies

Historians have for a long time "mostly neglected to consider British fascism in light of the history of the British Empire and the influence of the legacy of imperialism", as Liam Liburd argues in his ground-breaking dissertation on the British Empire and the Radical Right.[26] Only recently has this dichotomy between British fascism and imperialism been questioned by a new generation of historians, underlining that "imperialism was a formative influence on British fascism".[27] The best example is Arnold Leese and his IFL, which was obsessed with imperialism, as illustrated in the name of the organization: *Imperial* Fascist League. But the imperial outlook was highly ambivalent. On the one hand, the movement perceived the British Empire with immense pride, presenting the "History of the British people" as a "great epic of sacrifice, through which has been built up the greatest Empire the world has seen".[28] According to Paul Stocker, the Empire represented for the IFL "the highest achievements of the Nordic race and was proof of the innate superiority of white European civilization".[29] Therefore, the IFL argued for the preservation of the Empire at any cost, and even though it mainly refrained from claiming new territories, it repeatedly questioned the independence or mandatory status of former colonies.

On the other hand, the IFL developed in the course of the 1930s a distinct antisemitic perception because "Jewish conspiracy pervaded every single aspect of the IFL's relationship with the British Empire".[30] In one leaflet, entitled "Destroy British imperialism!", the IFL even sarcastically advocated a "union of Britain and India" under the control of Judeo-Soviet Russia.[31] In March 1939, the IFL demanded a "Fascist regeneration" of the Empire, which had to be reorganized on anti-democratic, corporatist lines according to "Aryan planning". Otherwise, the

26 Liburd, "The Eternal Imperialists", 30–31.

27 Liburd, "The Eternal Imperialists", 29. See also Paul Stocker, "'The Imperial Spirit': British Fascism and Empire, 1919–1940", *Religion Compass* 9.2 (2015): 45–54.

28 "The League of Nations", *The Fascist,* April 1930.

29 Stocker, "'The Imperial Spirit'", 49.

30 Stocker, "'The Imperial Spirit'", 49.

31 "Destroy British Imperialism" (undated flyer), in Imperial Fascist League, Miscellaneous leaflets and pamphlets: [BL], W.P.10608.

Empire would "perish" under the influence of Jewry.[32] Because the IFL perceived the 'impure' imperial metropolis of London as perverted by Jews, the article even suggested initiating a fascist regeneration from the 'pure' Canadian periphery. This shows the ambivalence of the IFL towards the British Empire, navigating between nationalist pride and antisemitic perceptions of the Empire as being in a state of decay.

An extreme form of conspiratorial antisemitism distinguished the IFL from the political mainstream in Britain. However, its white supremacism was rooted in the long history of British imperialism, which also impacted Arnold Leese's life trajectory. He had worked and lived in several British colonies as a veterinary surgeon and camel specialist before becoming Director General of the IFL in 1930. Leese was stationed for six years in India between 1907 and 1913, before working in the British East Africa Protectorate, and for two years in Somaliland during the First World War.[33] His experience as a field researcher in North-West India fueled his belief in peoples' "natural" inequality, convincing him "that one man was not half as good as another", as he maintained in his autobiography.[34] Leese merged his personal experiences with racist white supremacist theories, not only inspired by Nazi German and *völkisch* ideology but also by orientalist-imperialist writings on 'Aryan civilization' from Britain and the United States in the nineteenth century. Therefore, Liam Liburd claims that "Leese's political views owed a greater deal more to the alarmist white supremacy of the 1920s than to European fascism of the 1930s," contradicting previous research stressing the focal influence of Nazi Germany on the IFL ideology.[35]

The IFL made no point in hiding its white supremacism concerning British colonial territories and any form of equal cooperation with anticolonial forces was an absolute anathema to the fascist movement. At times, the IFL perceived some 'non-Aryan' groups, such as Indian Muslims, as potential "friends" but never as equal, kindred partners compared to other fascist movements constructed as white.[36] The IFL supported the Arab cause in Mandatory Palestine because Zionism served as another proof of the omnipresence of 'Jewish money power' that allegedly controlled the British Empire. But while expressing that injustice had been done to the Arab population, there were clear imperialist limits to the 'friendship' with Arabs: "[o]ur outlook is pro-British rather than pro-Arab", Leese declared. As a territory that was "conquered" by British troops, Palestine

32 H. H. L., "The Empire: Organize or Perish!", *The Fascist,* March 1933.

33 Leese, *Out of Step*, 16–41.

34 Leese, *Out of Step*, 48.

35 Liburd, "The Eternal Imperialists", 116.

36 Arnold Spencer Leese, *Devilry in the Holy Land* (London: I.F.L. Printing & Publishing Co, 1938), 16.

"should be proclaimed forthwith a British Colony", because the "World needs cheap Potash and the British Navy needs Oil".[37] This demonstrates the frustration of the IFL that Palestine had not become a British colony but a mandatory territory after the First World War due to the League of Nations mandate system.[38] Moreover, the IFL often argued in a typical colonial narrative that the indigenous population in the British colonies were 'unfit' to govern themselves, denouncing any measures that would question white superiority. In one booklet, Indian nationalism was described as "humbug" because India supposedly constituted of "several different races", and the "Aryan blood of the upper castes [. . .] has worn too thin to give them any claim to rule".[39] The IFL warned about "native paramountcy" in East Africa which raised fears that the "White Man is to play second fiddle to the Black!"[40]

This form of fascist imperialism could create synergies with fascist internationalism; linked to the dream of a global (rather than European) 'White Supremacist International' fighting Jews throughout a colonially and hierarchically organized world while protecting the interests of the British Empire. Hence, the IFL established ties with other white supremacists and fascist parties in the Empire and British Commonwealth, notably in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. However, the IFL only formed such bonds when the partners abroad were "loyal to the British connection," as the IFL insisted concerning the South African Greyshirts.[41] Despite continuously reporting favorably on the development of this 'brother' movement, the IFL leader Leese remained resolute in his belief "in South Africa only as part and parcel of the Empire".[42] This illustrates the limits of fascist internationalism when it came to preserving the interests of the British Empire.

As outlined earlier, the German demand for the return of former German colonies from the Wilhelminian era to the 'Third Reich' worried the IFL during the 1930s. These colonies had been ceded during and after the First World War and transformed into League of Nations mandates in the Treaty of Versailles. Most of the political parties in the Weimar Republic shared revisionism on this matter, but when Nazism rose in Germany, voices calling for the return of the colonies

37 Leese, *Devilry in the Holy Land*, 13; 15–16.

38 On the British Empire and Mandatory Palestine, see Rory Miller, ed., *Britain, Palestine, and Empire*: *The Mandate Years* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010).

39 Imperial Fascist League, *The Destruction of India*: *Its Cause and Prevention* (Southend-on-Sea: H. F. Lucas & Co, 1934), 2; 5.

40 "What Paramountcy means in Africa", *The Fascist,* February 1931.

41 "The South African National Socialists", *The Fascist,* February 1934.

42 Cited in Liburd, "The Eternal Imperialists", 111.

became louder. This revisionist policy was very much to the displeasure of the IFL, which had to decide between allegiance to German Nazism or the British Empire.

At first, the IFL counted on Hitler's goodwill and a voluntary waiver on the colonies. Leese even cited Hitler's *Mein Kampf* to stress that his idol was not interested in retaking the colonies.[43] The British movement downplayed the conflict and invoked instead the mutual Jewish enemy. For example, the IFL expressed in 1934 gratitude that the local "Nazi movements in Tanganyika and South-West Africa" had received official instructions from Berlin to refrain from revisionist ambitions.[44] As the colonial claim was raised more frequently within the 'Third Reich' during the 1930s, the IFL developed a counterproposal to resolve the conflicting territorial interests. From June 1935 on, it suggested that Nazi Germany should colonize South America with its "degenerate race-mixture" as its new "place in the sun" instead of the old colonies.[45] The IFL repeated this plan to create a "tropical" German colony and "to scrap the Monroe-Doctrine" by destroying "Jewish" US dominance in South America until the end of the 1930s.[46] This megalomaniac IFL proposal to reconcile imperialism and fascist internationalism was ignored in Berlin, leading to public complaints of the British fascist movement against the German colonialist ambitions.[47]

The disagreement between British and German interests became visible in a personal letter from Leese to his German ally Hans-Rolf Hoffmann in March 1939. Hoffmann, who cooperated with the IFL throughout the 1930s, was the head of the Nazi's Foreign Press Bureau in Munich, responsible for editing the English-language propaganda sheet *News from Germany*.[48] "I am with you in everything except the Colonial policy," Leese wrote, but "absolutely opposed to any surrender whatsoever". Leese objected to the idea that the German colonies were "stolen" from Britain and denied "the slightest ground, moral or otherwise" for the Nazi claims, suggesting again "tropical colonies but not on our cabbage patch".[49] This source has attracted specific attention among historians concerning Leese's allegiance to either British nationalism or German Nazism.[50] Against the back-

43 "Hitler's Real View of Tropical colonies", *The Fascist,* December 1938.

44 "The Fascist Outlook", *The Fascist,* March 1934.

45 "A Place in the Sun", *The Fascist,* June 1935.

46 Arnold Spencer Leese, "The Matter of Colonies for Germany: Scrap the Monroe-Doctrin", *The Fascist,* November 1938.

47 Cf. "The German Claim to the Return of Her Former Colonies", *The Fascist,* May 1939.

48 See Macklin, *Failed Führers*, 40–41.

49 Letter from Arnold Spencer Leese to Hans-Rolf Hoffmann, March 13, 1939: [TNA], KV 2/1365.

50 E.g. Macklin, *Failed Führers*, 40–41.

drop that the British counter-intelligence agency MI5 observed IFL activities, Robert May concludes that Leese "clearly staged the 'disagreement' with the Nazis in his letter to Hoffmann (and in *The Fascist*) to make the British security services believe that he was above all else a patriot defending his country".[51]

Based on the overall importance given to the British Empire in the IFL outlook, I conclude differently. On the one hand, the IFL deemed the British Empire, its colonies, and mandatory territories indispensable, constituting an ideologically red line the IFL never wanted to cross, not even as a concession to its role model Nazi Germany. Thus, the IFL's imperialist outlook became a clear obstacle to fascist internationalism. On the other hand, antisemitic narratives about the Empire fueled beliefs in white supremacism beyond national borders, based on an omnipresent common enemy that legitimized international cooperation among 'Aryan brother movements'. This indicates the Janus-faced relationship between fascist imperialism and internationalism, which could contain, at once, elements of hostility and alliance.

In contrast to countless favorable comments on other European fascist movements, the IFL press avoided commenting on the Irish Blueshirts because Eoin O'Duffy's movement operated in the oldest and 'lost' British colony, Ireland.[52] Instead, the IFL promised to support Northern Ireland against "any domination by the active enemies of the Empire who govern Southern Ireland", led by "half-Jews, half-Spaniards and half-New Yorkers".[53] This was an attempt to discredit and delegitimize the Irish president Éamon de Valera who was born in New York as a son of an Irish mother and Spanish father, but without any Jewish background. In June 1939, when de Valera announced that Southern Ireland had no interest in "remaining friendly to Britain," the IFL even argued that it would be "utterly foolish to allow the present state of affairs to continue".[54] Radicalized by the prospect of an upcoming European war, the IFL demanded nothing less than the British re-occupation of Ireland from the British government: "END THE IRISH STATE; AND DO IT NOW AND QUICKLY".[55] This Anglo-Irish enmity was reciprocal and thwarted any sustained cooperation between Irish and British fascists.

51 May, "Breaking Boundaries", 143.

52 On Ireland as Britain's oldest colony, see Kevin Kenny, ed., *Ireland and the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

53 "Our Policy in Ireland – Realism", *The Fascist,* December 1938.

54 "The Necessity for Re-occupying Ireland", *The Fascist,* June 1939.

55 "The Necessity for Re-occupying Ireland".

Irish Anticolonial Irredentism and the Northern Ireland Dispute

The ultranationalism of Irish fascism was highly contradictory. On the one hand, the Irish Blueshirts grew out of a strongly nationalist and anticolonial republican movement formed in opposition to the British Empire. On the other hand, the movement was rooted in the pro-British camp of the Irish Civil War (1922–23), which had benefited from substantial support provided by the British government. The political opponents, the IRA, which had fought for complete Irish independence on the other side of the civil war, even denounced the Blueshirts as anti-Irish "defenders of British imperialism" due to their commitment to the Anglo-Irish Treaty from 1921–1922.[56] Some historians questioned the "fascist nature" of the Blueshirts, misinterpreting it as "not particularly nationalistic" due to its trajectory as an offspring of the pro-British camp.[57]

Nonetheless, newer research has emphasized the intense nationalism of the Blueshirts, foremost concerning the issue of Northern Ireland (so-called Ulster).[58] This territory was separated from the Irish Free State and had remained integral to Great Britain since the Anglo-Irish Treaty. The nationalism of Blueshirt leader Eon O'Duffy, in particular, was imbued with the idea of a superior Irish race based on notions of European 'civilization', juxtaposed with African "savages, without culture or civilization".[59] Due to the anticolonial Irish tradition and the small size of his country, the Blueshirt leader refrained from envisioning Ireland as an imperialist nation in a geopolitical, expansionist sense. Instead, he stressed the potential cultural importance of Ireland on the international scene.[60]

Thus, the nationalism of the Irish Blueshirts (and later the NCP) contained contradictory facets such as racism, cultural imperialism, anticolonialism, Anglophobia, and irredentism towards Northern Ireland. Notably, this anticolonialism did not lead to intersections with, or offers of rhetorical support for, anticolonial activists elsewhere in the British Commonwealth or the world beyond Europe. Rather, the Blueshirts and later Greenshirts attempted to prove the Irish (racially and culturally grounded) 'equivalence' with other European nations and mainly practiced cooperation with fascist movements within the Eurocentric CAUR network.

56 Manning, "The Irish Experience: The Blueshirts", 561.
57 Manning, "The Irish Experience: The Blueshirts", 566.
58 E.g. McGarry, *Eoin O'Duffy*, 235–240.
59 O'Duffy, *Crusade in Spain*, 200–203.
60 Cf. White, 'The Greenshirts', 284–285.

This subchapter emphasizes the importance of irredentism in the outlook of Irish fascism by showing how the dispute about Ulster led to a split between Eoin O'Duffy and with him a radical section of the Blueshirts, and the more moderate parts of Fine Gael. This party had been formed in 1933 as a merger of the former pro-Treaty party Cumann na nGaedheal, the National Centre Party of Ireland, and the Blueshirts. The analysis shows how Blueshirt irredentism affected potential cooperation with the so-called Ulster fascists in Northern Ireland and Oswald Mosley's BUF in Britain, providing another example of how fascist expansionism hampered fascist internationalism.

The contradictory Blueshirt irredentism was illustrated by Eoin O'Duffy's brief period as president of Fine Gael from September 1933 to September 1934. In contrast to the governing Fianna Fáil, which under President de Valera unleashed an economic war against Britain in 1933 while demanding complete independence from the British Empire, Fine Gael propagated a policy of allegiance to the British Commonwealth. Personally, O'Duffy revived in his speeches civil war hatred against so-called anti-treatyites, such as de Valera's party Fianna Fáil and the IRA. On the other hand, O'Duffy repeatedly undermined the pro-British policy of his own party driven by his nationalist revisionism. In one speech, he advocated military action against Britain if the economic war spilled over into an armed confrontation, declaring that his organization would back the Irish side. "I believe that 95 per cent of the Blueshirts [. . .] would be with me in that war if it was declared".[61] Moreover, O'Duffy demanded a unification of Ireland and insisted that his party would "not play second fiddle to anybody in the matter of Nationality".[62] This irredentism meant a return to the anti-treatyite claims of his enemies during the Irish Civil War. O'Duffy's aggressive rhetoric concerning demands for unification with Northern Ireland alienated Fine Gael's more moderate leaders and those members who had traditionally supported a union with Great Britain.

Therefore, Ulster irredentism contributed to a schism within Fine Gael in the summer of 1934.[63] O'Duffy resigned as Fine Gael's president in September 1934, leaving the party with one fraction of loyal Blueshirt supporters. Soon thereafter, O'Duffy attacked his former colleagues as "the pan-British party of the Free State" and formed the rivaling NCP (the Greenshirts) in the summer of 1935.[64] Unification with Northern Ireland remained a fundamental mission of O'Duffy and his loyal followers. In January 1935, their journal *The Blueshirt* presented the "Ulster Question" as "The Most Difficult National Problem of the Moment". Pathetically,

61 Cited in McGarry, *Eoin O'Duffy*, 239.
62 Cited in McGarry, *Eoin O'Duffy*, 235.
63 Cf. McGarry, *Eoin O'Duffy*, 239–240.
64 Cited in McGarry, *Eoin O'Duffy*, 239.

the article understood the rebirth of Ireland in a temporal pattern, linking the "heroic" Gaelic past to the future "salvation" of the nation through unification. "If our Blueshirt boys and girls desire a golden page in future Irish history, their ideals must be centred on building up a free Gaelic state that will boast of Belfast as well as Dublin".[65] In a speech held at an NCP party congress hosted in Dublin in July 1936, O'Duffy laid out that parliamentary party politics would never achieve the unification, but only the "Irish Corporative State".[66] Accordingly, he presented Irish fascism (which he always referred to as corporatism) as the only solution to the Ulster question.

This illustrates the NCP's ideological move away from the more moderate nationalism of the Fine Gael to palingenetic ultranationalism combined with irredentism. Unmistakably, Ulster was part of the Irish 'ultra-nation' envisioned by the NCP. Accordingly, the movement pursued an anti-British campaign linked to the Northern Ireland question that legitimized violence and warfare as an ultima ratio. The NCP journal *The Nation* warned unmistakably in 1935: "[t]he first item of Blueshirt policy declares for the complete and unfettered freedom of all Ireland. To attain this even the gun, if all else fails, may be justly used".[67] O'Duffy personally turned to "intense Anglophobia", as Martin White notes, blaming "the backward state of the Irish nation on centuries of colonialism and the continued neo-colonialism of the British which had prevented the rejuvenation of the Irish spirit which alone could inspire Ireland's greatness".[68] The NCP employed an anti-British attitude and irredentism towards Northern Ireland to mobilize support, juxtaposing its radical nationalism with the "weak, anglophile" nationalism of all the other political Irish movements, including the former mother party Fine Gael.[69]

How did this particular form of anticolonial irredentism affect Irish fascist internationalism? Quite paradoxically and in contradiction to these expansionist claims towards Northern Ireland, the Blueshirts initiated some form of cooperation with the Ulster Fascists in Northern Ireland. These so-called Blackshirts were loyal to Britain, emerging in September 1933 as an autonomous movement yet closely associated with the main BUF in England.[70] In the summer of 1934, O'Duffy reached out for cross-border cooperation with the Ulster Fascists. Briefly, they

65 "Letter to the editor: The Ulster Question", *The Blueshirt,* January 19, 1935.

66 Cf. "Director-Generals Address", *The Nation,* August 1936.

67 "Hatred in Irish Politics", *The Nation,* July 6, 1935.

68 White, "The Greenshirts", 70.

69 Cf. White, "The Greenshirts", 284.

70 On the Ulster Fascists, see James Loughlin, "Northern Ireland and British Fascism in the Inter-War Years", *Irish Historical Studies* 29.116 (1995): 537–552, 543–548.

discussed merging the two movements based on supposed ideological kinship due to a common 'corporative' (the Southern Irish term) and 'fascist' (the Northern Irish term) outlook. However, according to a pamphlet by the Ulster Fascists, it was clear "From a fascist point of view" that the "only hope for the salvation of Ireland is to remain within the Empire".[71] This clearly contradicted O'Duffy's emphasis on Irish independence from Britain. Therefore, the initiative failed on behalf of the Ulster Fascists, who allegedly even expelled 200 treasonous members after they had met O'Duffy in Cork.[72] As Martin White states, the "ideological bond between the two movements was not as strong as their historical antipathy towards each other".[73]

Between 1935 and 1936, further attempts to establish ties between the pro-British Ulster Fascists and the anti-British NCP failed. O'Duffy reflected on this ambiguous relationship at a party event in the summer of 1936. He argued that there were points in which both parties "totally disagree". But their shared belief in the corporative system constituted, nonetheless, a sign of hope for O'Duffy to win over the youth of Northern Ireland for the sake of a "free and sovereign Irish Corporative State".[74] Ultimately, O'Duffy hoped that the common belief in fascism would facilitate an alliance between Southern and Northern Irish fascists despite irreconcilable political territorial aims, illustrating at once the limits and unrealistic hopes linked to fascist internationalism.

Anticolonial republicanism also strained the Irish Blueshirts' relationship with British fascist movements such as the British Fascisti, the IFL, and the BUF. In July 1933, O'Duffy ordered that members of the Dublin branch of the British Fascisti, a forerunner of the BUF that had been active in Ireland since 1924, were not eligible for membership in the Irish Blueshirts. The reason was their attachment to British monarchy and imperialism.[75] Despite this historically grounded antagonism, the NCP agreed in May 1936 to exchange its newspaper *The Nation,* in return for the BUF journal *Action* – a typical form of practical cooperation among European fascist movements, as discussed in more detail in Chapter 8. There was also a brief exchange of ideas between O'Duffy's acolyte, Liam Walsh, and the BUF director of policy, Alexander Raven Thomson.[76] This private, and in Walsh's own words, "entirely unofficial and confidential" correspondence ena-

71 Cited in White, "The Greenshirts", 48.

72 Historians have doubted these expulsion numbers, see Loughlin, "Northern Ireland and British Fascism in the Inter-War Years", 548.

73 White, "The Greenshirts", 49.

74 "Director-Generals Address", *The Nation,* August 1936.

75 Cf. McGarry, *Eoin O'Duffy*, 264.

76 On this letter correspondence, see also Traynor, *General Eoin O'Duffy*, 145.

bles unique insights into the complex ideological links between fascist ultranationalism, internationalism, and imperialism.[77] Both sides assured "interest" and "utmost goodwill" towards the other movement, and one of Thomson's letters ended with a plea for mutual understanding. "We at least start with the great advantage of mutual respect which is common to all Fascist or Corporate movements".[78]

However, the NCP and BUF clashed regarding territorial issues because the latter fiercely defended British imperialism.[79] Thomson insisted that it would be a "catastrophe for Ireland if she were to cut herself off from the Commonwealth of the British Empire". In the imperialist BUF view, smaller countries could not "maintain a decent standard of life" when isolated from the British Empire. Thomson promised to "repudiate any desire to coerce Southern Ireland by force even in the event of her declaring a Republic, but we would equally resist any endeavour to coerce Northern Ireland into the Union by force".[80] Walsh objected with an unyielding and "magnificent outburst of Irish feeling", as Thomson commented, illustrating how fascist territorial disputes were indebted to nationalistic feelings.[81]

Walsh outlined three cornerstones of NCP policy in his answers. The first was anticolonialism. He made it unmistakably clear that there "never can be a united Ireland within the Commonwealth", because the NCP's agenda was "Ireland, undivided and free".[82] The second cornerstone was Irish ultranationalism, envisioned in opposition to Britain, and Walsh proudly described Irish tradition and history as "greater and nobler than Britain". The third facet was irredentism concerning Northern Ireland. Walsh compared the issue to other European border disputes, arguing that "The North is to us what Alsace was to France, what the Saar was to

77 Letter from Liam Walsh to Alexander Raven Thomson, June 3, 1936: [NLI], Eoin O'Duffy Papers, MS 48,288.

78 Letter from Alexander Raven Thomson to Liam Walsh, May 21, 1936: [NLI], Eoin O'Duffy Papers, MS 48,288.

79 On the BUF and its relation to the British Empire, see Liam J. Liburd, "Beyond the Pale: Whiteness, Masculinity and Empire in the British Union of Fascists", *Fascism: Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 7.2 (2018): 275–296.

80 Letter from Alexander Raven Thomson to Liam Walsh, May 21, 1936: [NLI], Eoin O'Duffy Papers, MS 48,288.

81 Letter from Alexander Raven Thomson to Liam Walsh, June 4, 1936: [NLI], Eoin O'Duffy Papers, MS 48,288

82 Letter from Liam Walsh to Alexander Raven Thomson, May 15, 1936: [NLI], Eoin O'Duffy Papers, MS 48,288.

Germany".[83] This reference indicates how the NCP envisioned Ireland as a European country on equal footing with France and Germany, instead of emphasizing relations with other, non-European, British colonies. "What more can I say?" Thomson asked when concluding the letter exchange. "Perhaps we may yet meet in a Fascist World Order, but I still grieve for the Irish elements in our widespread Empire [. . .] I do not regard Ireland as a Colony, but as one of the Motherlands of Empire, and we offer her her rightful place on that account in our Imperial system".[84]

The correspondence shows that – despite a commitment to a friendly tone, mutual expressions of respect, and shared beliefs in corporatism/fascism – the revisionist-imperialist ambitions rooted in nationalist sentiments thwarted cross-border cooperation between the NCP and the BUF. The case of Irish fascism illustrates, on the one hand, how firm irredentism towards Northern Ireland prevented any form of sustained Anglo-Irish as well as Southern-Northern Irish partnership in a future 'Fascist World Order'. On the other hand, the NCP's racist-Eurocentric outlook and desire to represent an equal European 'civilized' nation also impeded any form of anticolonial solidarity and internationalism beyond the old continent with other (former) British colonies whose inhabitants it did not consider as 'civilized'. The NCP thus represents a very peculiar nexus of fascism, anticolonialism, and irredentism, shaped by the broader history of European racism and imperialism.

National Belonging and the Danish-German North Schleswig Borderland

Cay Lembcke faced amusement and ridicule from several Danish journalists when he presented the 25-point manifesto of the newly formed DNSAP at a press conference in November 1930. One sentence in particular from the program (§ 3) was the cause of strong reactions: "[w]e demand land and soil (colonies) so that our people can live and there is space for population growth".[85] This was a reference to the Nazi concept of *Lebensraum*, and was, as the entire manifesto, a direct

83 Letter from Liam Walsh to Alexander Raven Thomson, May 15, 1936: [NLI], Eoin O'Duffy Papers, MS 48,288.

84 Letter from Alexander Raven Thomson to Liam Walsh, June 4, 1936: [NLI], Eoin O'Duffy Papers, MS 48,288.

85 Cited in Lauridsen, *Dansk nazisme*, 141.

translation into Danish from the German NSDAP program formulated in 1920.[86] The Danish journalists ridiculed Lembcke's demand for colonies because the Danish public, across party lines and political affiliations, regarded expansionist imperialism as a long-overcome policy of the past. Denmark had sold its last overseas colony, the Danish West Indias, to the United States in 1917. Apart from independent Iceland (which became a fully sovereign kingdom in 1944), only Greenland and the Faroe Islands remained from the Danish Empire, which once encompassed territories in Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America.[87]

After this embarrassing prelude, the DNSAP refrained from seriously demanding a new imperialist Danish policy in the following years.[88] Instead of territorial "materialistic quantity", a "greater Denmark" was to be achieved through the "idealistic quality" within the existing borders, as the party defensively argued in 1932 on the question of colonialism.[89] Frits Clausen, Lembcke's successor as party leader, omitted the demands for living space and colonies in the new party manifesto published in 1933. Instead, the program emphasized the national rebirth of the Danish people "on a cultural and racial basis".[90] Significantly, this emphasis on Danish ultranationalism did not imply indifference towards the still-existing Danish colonies. These were regarded as indispensable for "greater Denmark" (as we will see in the Norwegian-Danish dispute about Greenland).[91]

Instead of imperialism, the DNSAP's most challenging foreign policy issue was revisionism regarding the disputed border between Denmark and Germany in the former Duchy of Schleswig. The complicated history of the area also affected Frits Clausen's biography. He was born into a Schleswigian family in Aabenbraa in nowadays Southern Jutland (*Sønderjylland* in Danish). Historically, the region had belonged to Denmark, but Schleswig became Prussian territory after the Second Schleswig War (1864) and subsequently integrated into the German Empire.[92] In Schleswig, the question of national belonging was often fluid

86 "Das Programm der Nationalsozialistischen Deutschen Arbeiter-Partei vom 24. Februar 1920", edited by Heinz Hürten, in *Deutsche Geschichte in Quellen und Darstellung. Band 9, Weimarer Republik und Drittes Reich 1918–1945* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1995), 66–71.

87 On the history of Danish colonialism, see Mikkel Venborg Pedersen, *Danmark*: *En kolonimagt* (Copenhagen: Gads Forlag, 2017).

88 John T. Lauridsen, for instance, argues that the party showed no sign of imperialist ambitions except for party founder Cay Lembcke. Cf. Lauridsen, *Dansk nazisme*, 467; 507.

89 "Et større Danmark", *National-Socialisten,* July 17, 1932.

90 Cf. Djursaa, *DNSAP*, 27.

91 "Et større Danmark", *National-Socialisten,* October 16, 1932.

92 On the Danish-German history of Schleswig and processes of nation-state building, see Bernd Henningsen, "Schleswiger? Holsteiner? Dänen? Deutsche? Wie aus Untertanen Staatsbürger wurden (1815–1920)", in *Grenz|Raum. Dänisch-deutsche Geschichte(n), 1920–2020*, edited by Bernd

and ran along language lines rather than strict 'ethnic' categories. The local inhabitants were not called Danes or Germans, but pro-Danish (*dansksinded*, lit. Danish-minded in Danish) and pro-German (*deutschgesinnter*, lit. German-minded in German) – "implying that nationality was a matter of sympathy and will".[93]

This national fluidity even divided families. Clausen's father was pro-German, but his son grew up to become a fanatical Danish nationalist.[94] Frits Clausen was drafted into the German army during the First World War (and was briefly imprisoned in Russia), which fostered both his anti-German and anti-Russian stance. Clausen's baptismal name was actually *Fritz*, and the fact that he called himself *Frits* (according to Danish custom) throughout his political career "was one of his many attempts to mark his Danish attitude" and to demarcate himself from Germany.[95] Clausen's rival Wilfred Petersen, the leader of a small competing Danish Nazi movement, repeatedly spelled his first name *Fritz* "to suggest that Clausen represented something German and un-Danish".[96]

In the wake of the Treaty of Versailles, a people's referendum was held in Schleswig in 1920, and the area was divided into North Schleswig, becoming Danish national territory, and Central Schleswig, as well as South Schleswig, remaining German.[97] Overall, Danish territorial claims were satisfied by this electoral result, but the new border (still existing today) left substantial and, in part, revisionist minorities on both sides. Modern Danish nationalism emerged explicitly in opposition to its German counterpart because of this particular borderland dispute and the proximity to Germany.[98] The matter was particularly complicated

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Henningsen, Clemens Räthel, and Paul Greiner (Baden-Baden: Rombach Wissenschaft, 2022), 61–68.

93 Steffen Werther, "Nazi, German and Danish Identities in Danish North Schleswig, 1932–38", in *Bordering the Baltic. Scandinavian Boundary – Drawing Processes 1900–2000,* edited by Madeleine Hurd (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2010), 69–104, 70.

94 See Steffen Werther, "›Volksgemeinschaft‹ vs. ›Rassegemeinschaft‹: Nationalsozialisten in der dänischen Grenzregion Nordschleswig/Sønderjylland 1933–39", in *Gemeinschaft als Erfahrung. Kulturelle Inszenierungen und soziale Praxis 1930–1960,* edited by David Reinicke, Kathrin Stern, Kerstin Thieler et al. (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2014), 35–61, 46; 51.

95 Ravn, *Fører uden folk*, 12.

96 Bundgård Christensen and Emberland, "Nordic Heretics", 106.

97 On the people's referendum, see Jens E. Olesen, "Folkeafstemningerne om den dansk-tyske grænse 1920", edited by Bernd Henningsen, Clemens Räthel, and Paul Greiner, in *Grenz|Raum. Dänisch-deutsche Geschichte(n), 1920–2020* (Baden-Baden: Rombach Wissenschaft, 2022), 81–90.

98 Thorsten Wagner, "Ein vergebliches Unterfangen?: Der Antisemitismus und das Scheitern des dänischen Nationalsozialismus", in *Vorurteil und Rassenhass. Antisemitismus in den faschistischen Bewegungen Europas,* edited by Wolfgang Benz, Hermann Graml, Angelika Königseder et al. (Berlin: Metropol, 2001), 275–296, 283.

for the Danish fascist party because the DNSAP had a stronghold in Clausen's constituency in North Schleswig.

In line with the fascist predicament discussed in the previous chapter, the contested border became a balancing act for the party between a pro-German outlook on the one hand, and its credibility as a nationalist Danish party on the other. The German minority in North Schleswig (around 30,000 inhabitants considered themselves Germans) further complicated this matter. The German Nazis in Schleswig had other aims than the Hitler government in Berlin, demanding a revision of the border and the integration of North Schleswig into Germany. As the local Nazi Johann Peterkorn blustered in a speech in 1933: "[c]ertainly we are fighting against international Marxism, but a German Social Democrat stands us a thousand – indeed a hundred thousand times closer – than a Danish National Socialist".[99] In 1935, parts of the German minority even formed the National Socialist Workers' Party of North Schleswig (*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei Nordschleswig*, NSDAP-N), which combatted the Danish DNSAP fiercely as a political rival. In contrast, the Nazi government in Berlin refrained from revisionist demands in the 1930s because it was not interested in a hostile relationship with the Danish government.[100]

The Danish DNSAP did not openly advocate for revisionism and the integration of the entire Schleswig region into Denmark. This would have been a political declaration of war against the Nazi German role model. Instead, the DNSAP pursued a more subliminal policy of "absorption" (*opsugning*) of the German minority in North Schleswig, as Steffen Werther's research convincingly demonstrates.[101] The party was open to German members and cooperated with a small militant German Nazi group called North Schleswig Battalion, which promised electoral support among the German minority in the Danish elections in 1935.[102] A DNSAP newspaper celebrated this cooperation as a sign of a common Danish-German "battle to create a national socialist Denmark", symbolized by two lions (the traditional coat of arms of Schleswig) united in a red-white swastika flag.[103] However, the cooperation outraged nationalist members within Clausen's party.[104] It also triggered critique

99 Cited in Werther, "Nazi, German and Danish Identities in Danish North Schleswig, 1932–38", 72.

100 On the conflicting aims between the local Nazi German minority in North Schleswig and the 'Third Reich', see Werther, "Nazi, German and Danish Identities in Danish Noth Schleswig, 1932–38", 71–75.

101 Cf. Werther, "Nazi, German and Danish Identities in Danish North Schleswig, 1932–38", 81.

102 Cf. Werther, "›Volksgemeinschaft‹ vs. ›Rassegemeinschaft‹", 51–55.

103 "Tysksindede Nordslesvigere anmoder DNSAP om at komme med i Kampen for et nationalsocialistisk Danmark!", *National-Socialisten,* May 11, 1935.

104 Cf. Lauridsen, "*Føreren har ordet!*", 221.

among the Danish majority in North Schleswig and among other competing Danish fascist groups, who opposed Clausen for being too German-friendly and for neglecting the national aspect of *national* socialism. Hence, this Danish-German cooperation in the borderland fueled Clausen's image as a traitor and 'Hitler's apostle' in Denmark.

The DNSAP's policy of 'absorption' attempted to slowly transform the German minority into Danes, based on the racial belief that all Schleswigians (whether pro-Danish or pro-German) were of the same Nordic race and blood. This long-term policy was characterized by an inherent tension within Nazi racial ideology between the constructed concepts of *Volk* and race. Steffen Werther has thoroughly analyzed this "antagonism between the nationalist-*völkisch* and the racial community construction of the National Socialist ideology" in the Danish-German borderland.[105] On the one hand, the Nazi imaginary of the *Volksgemeinschaft* centered on an idealized construct of the German (respectively Danish) *Volk* as an organic unity of the nation. In theory, *Volk* included all the members of the German race, constituting in a biological or organic sense its so-called *Volkskörper* (collective body), determined by a racial predisposition and not by actual state borders. On the other hand, some race researchers in the interwar period claimed that race was not limited to the German nation but conceived of race more broadly in terms of a Nordic-Aryan race, which included other nations, particularly the Scandinavian countries.

The racial theorist Hans F. K. Günther popularized this belief in the 'supranational' Germanic race in the Nazi movement in the 1920s, based on the notion of the Nordic idea (*Nordischer Gedanke*), which was also advocated by the leading Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg.[106] The "pan-Germanic focus on the Nordic Race Community" was also evident in Heinrich Himmler's racial elitism of the SS.[107] Thus, the Nordic Idea led to a heated discussion in the *völkisch* movement about the question of which was of more importance: the supranational Nordic-Aryan race or the national German *Volk*.[108] Theoretically, the Nordic idea even threatened Germany's supposed racial superiority. According to some Nazi racial theo-

105 Werther, "›Volksgemeinschaft‹ vs. ›Rassegemeinschaft‹", 38.

106 On Günther, Rosenberg, and the Nordic idea, see, among others, Hans-Jürgen Lutzhöft, *Der Nordische Gedanke in Deutschland, 1920–1940* (Stuttgart: Klett, 1971); Brigitte Almgren, Jan Hecker-Stampehl, and Ernst Piper, "Alfred Rosenberg und die Nordische Gesellschaft: Der 'Nordische Gedanke' in Theorie und Praxis", *NORDEUROPAforum 2* (2008): 7–51; Nicola Karcher, "Schirmorganisation der Nordischen Bewegung: Der Nordische Ring und seine Repräsentanten in Norwegen", *NORDEUROPAforum* 19.1 (2009): 7–35.

107 Bundgård Christensen and Emberland, "Nordic Heretics", 110.

108 See Stefan Breuer, "Der Streit um den 'nordischen Gedanken' in der völkischen Bewegung", *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 62.1 (2010): 1–27.

ries, a 'Nordic' Norwegian could be deemed racially more valuable than, for example, a 'Dinaric' Bavarian.[109] Within the 'Third Reich', this question was mostly perceived as academic and theoretical. In the contested 'racially-related' borderlands, however, this ideological contradiction was highly relevant, with direct implications for questions of fascist internationalism.

This tension was inherent to the DNSAP ideology, which built heavily upon the Nazi idea of a national people's community (called *Folkefællesskab* in Danish) and the supranational Nordic idea based on Günther's 'scientific' research. DNSAP leader Clausen drew explicitly on Günther's definition of race, as outlined in a booklet called *Dansk-Tysk* (Danish-German), published in 1933 and updated in 1934.[110] The text was later translated into German and published as part of Hans Keller's IAdN series, showcasing the DNSAP's willingness to collaborate with the powerful German role model.[111] In the booklet, Clausen eschewed any firm stance on the border issue and refrained from demanding a political revision. Instead, he portrayed "national socialism" as a broader (international) phenomenon beyond Germany, based on blood, race, and a people's community, and directed against the common Jewish enemy. Clausen declared that nationality was not identical to race but that national culture would constitute an expression or manifestation of race.[112] The booklet stressed a common "blood community" between the two "brother nations", Germany and Denmark, based on "the heritage of the ancient Nordic-Germanic cultures common to both peoples, of the same eternal values at work in the common race".[113] Hence, Clausen described the Danish-German borderland as a racial unit based on the same "blood", which had to be saved through "national socialism".

Clausen foresaw a Manichaean battle between a materialist (meaning Jewish) and an idealist (meaning national socialist) *Weltanschauung* in Schleswig, in which the national differences between German and Danish were secondary.[114] If "Marxist world Jewry" would prevail, Clausen claimed, there would be neither a Danish nor a German culture, replaced by "international civilization" (seen as a negative concept in contrast to the positive "blood community") and an "Asiatic

109 Cf. Werther, "›Volksgemeinschaft‹ vs. ›Rassegemeinschaft‹", 38.

110 Frits Clausen, *Dansk-tysk*: *Nationalsocialistiske tanker til det slesvigske spørgsmaal* (Copenhagen: Fredericia 'Landsoldaten', 1934), 7–8.

111 Frits Clausen, "Volk und Staat im Grenzland", in *Volk und Staat im Grenzland,* edited by IAdN, (Zurich: Albert Nauck, 1936), 15–28.

112 Cf. Clausen, "Volk und Staat im Grenzland", 17.

113 Frits Clausen, "Grænsespørgsmaalet", *National-Socialisten,* January 21, 1934.

114 On Manichaean worldviews as a fundamental element of fascist internationalism, see Chapter 7.

Jewish Negro culture".[115] Accordingly, "the *common* spiritual claims of the Nordic-Germanic peoples tribes must be defended, but not any national peculiarities".[116] Clausen concluded that the issue of whether Schleswig would belong to Denmark or Germany was subordinate to whether national socialism (as a broader historical force) would triumph against 'international Jewry'.

In concrete, practical terms, Clausen remained surprisingly vague, walking a tightrope concerning the question of whether Denmark should expand its state borders into Southern Schleswig or whether Germany had a right to expand into Northern Schleswig. This balancing act became increasingly challenging when the Danish fascist party was confronted with Nazi expansionism concerning German minorities all over Europe in the late 1930s, and in particular, the Sudeten Germans. These were not identical cases. In contrast to North Schleswig, which was according to the Nazi *Weltanschauung* ruled by a 'racial brother people', Nazi Germany regarded the German minorities in Czechoslovakia and Poland as being ruled by 'inferior' Slavic races. Thus, the DNSAP initially welcomed and defended Germany's expansionist policies, including the annexation of Austria and parts of Czechoslovakia inhabited by German Sudeten in 1938.[117] As the Czechoslovakian journalist Walter Tschuppik noted, this approval was "quite irreconcilable with Danish patriotism".[118] Especially in the case of the Sudetenland, the parallels were evident between the Sudeten as a German minority allegedly 'oppressed' by Czechoslovakia and the German minority in Denmark, even though the DNSAP publicly disputed any parallels.[119] For the Danish Prime Minister Thorvald Stauning, Clausen's statements were nothing less than "the talk of a traitor".[120]

The Nazi German invasion of Czechoslovakia and the creation of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia in March 1939 reinforced Danish fears that North Schleswig could share the same fate. Thus, Clausen proclaimed a propagandistic U-turn and declared in the British *Daily Express* that he wanted "no outside interference in Denmark". He even insisted that if "Hitler attempted to come to Denmark I would be the first one to oppose him, fight him to the bitter end".[121] At this point, Clausen had long gambled away his credibility as an 'upright' nationalist among his internal and external critics, a year before the Nazi German occupation of Denmark exacerbated the situation in 1940.

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115 See Clausen, "Grænsespørgsmaalet", January 21, 1934.

116 Clausen, "Volk und Staat im Grenzland", 26.

117 E.g. "Østrig – befriet!", *National-Socialisten,* March 19, 1938.

118 Walter Tschuppik, *The Quislings*: *Hitler's Trojan Horses* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1942), 55.

119 "Det sydertyske Problem", *National-Socialisten,* September 9, 1938.

120 Cited in Tschuppik, *The Quislings*, 55.

121 "Denmark's Nazi Chief says: 'I'd fight Hitler'", *Daily Express,* March 27, 1939.

As many contemporary critics of the DNSAP pointed out, the North Schleswig border issue concerning national belonging demonstrates many fascist contradictions, notably between the concepts of *Volk* and race, ideological allegiance and *Realpolitik*, and revisionism and internationalism. Three elements of Clausen's 'solution' to the issue are striking: First, he conceptualized race as a uniting factor that could bring 'racially related' or even 'racially equal' peoples beyond national borders and identities together, rooted in ideas of a common Nordic-Aryan race and a Danish-German blood community. Second, he regarded fascism (conceptualized in this case as national socialism) as a broader (international) phenomenon beyond the Danish-German borders, which even trumped the importance of nationalism in the borderland. Third, Clausen used the common Judeo-Bolshevist enemies to legitimize cooperation beyond borders between fascist 'brother nations'. Therefore, the Danish-German border constitutes a peculiar case in which notions of fascist internationalism and affiliation with a foreign fascist power even helped bridge a major territorial conflict between two fascist movements.

Historical Revisionism and the Norwegian-Danish Greenland Conflict

Imperialist ambitions over Greenland complicated foreign policy relations long before Donald Trump's arrival on the world political stage. When Frits Clausen met Vidkun Quisling from the Norwegian NS for the first time at the Montreux Congress in December 1934, he expected a friendly exchange of thoughts among fellow Scandinavian colleagues. But he was astonished and shocked by Quisling's "almost bitter and quite obviously hostile outlook against Denmark", as he noted in his memoirs.[122] The Norwegian fascist leader immediately reminded Clausen "of the injustice done to Norway when the North Sea Islands were separated from the (Norwegian) mainland".[123] This was a reference to the Treaty of Kiel in 1814, which guaranteed Danish ownership of the Greenland colony when the Danish-Norwegian Union (existing since 1524) was dissolved. Clausen seemed unaware of this Norwegian claim, and the two fascist leaders ended up in a heated discussion about the historical 'right' to the colony. Despite becoming political allies later, this so-called Greenland dispute (*Grønlandsaken*, lit. Greenland case), rooted in historically grounded imperialist-revisionist ideas of territorial belonging, re-

122 Lauridsen, "*Føreren har ordet!*", 229.
123 Lauridsen, "*Føreren har ordet!*", 230.

mained a Norwegian-Danish controversy that thwarted for years cooperation between two supposedly kindred fascist movements.

Northern European historians traditionally have deemphasized the small-scaled but substantial colonial past of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, even regarding the study of fascism. This was linked to ideas of so-called Nordic exceptionalism, based on long-lasting misconceptions of the supposedly peaceful, humanitarian, and progressive Nordic countries that developed functioning welfare states after the Second World War and projected their postwar success into the past.[124] Hence, many historians did not portray aggressive territorial political aims as a central feature of the NS movement either, even though some characterized the NS as a "military fascist party".[125] Some historians have listed the non-existing tradition of imperialist ambitions even as one of the characteristics that differentiated Norwegian fascism from German Nazism.[126] These judgments are supported by the fact that the NS advocated a strict policy of non-intervention and neutrality and largely avoided expansionist and colonialist demands throughout the 1930s, with the exception of the Greenland dispute.

The NS contributed with an 'anti-imperialist' self-image of Norway as a neutral and nonviolent state to ideas of Nordic exceptionalism. The party frequently denounced "warmongering" British, French, and Soviet "great power imperialism", which it opposed to the peaceful nature of minor nations such as Norway. NS ideologue Herman Harris Aall fostered from a legal point of view the image of Norway as a peaceful small state.[127] Moreover, due to the long history of foreign rule from Copenhagen (1524–1814) and Stockholm (1814–1905), "nationalism in Norway implied taking a firm stance against the former Danish and Swedish domination of the country," as Quisling pointed out to the other Scandinavian fascist leaders when they met in person in 1939.[128] This almost anticolonial self-image stood in contrast to the Norwegian colonial past and present, which informed the party's expansionist ultranationalism.

Postcolonial studies criticize this historiographical tradition of Nordic exceptionalism, arguing that "the European North has not until recently begun to con-

124 Cf. Patricia Purtschert, Francesca Falk, and Barbara Lüthi, "Switzerland and 'Colonialism without Colonies': Reflections on the Status of Colonial Outsiders", *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 18.2 (2016): 286–302, 290.

125 On the military background of the NS, see Borgersrud, *Vi er jo et militært parti!.*

126 Cf. Hans Olaf Brevig and Ivo de Figueiredo, "Innledning", in *Den norske fascismen. Nasjonal Samling 1933–1940,* edited by Hans Olaf Brevig and Ivo de Figueiredo (Oslo: Pax Forlag, 2002), 1–18, 12.

127 E.g. Herman Harris Aall, "Folkeforbundets sanksjoner og Norges grunnlov", *Nasjonal Samling,* November 7, 1935.

128 Cited in Dahl, *Quisling*, 138.

sider the ways in which this region contributed to, benefited from, and now inhabits its colonial histories".[129] Thus, newer research questions the status of "colonial outsiders" of the Nordic countries (and other smaller countries such as Switzerland), which used to be constructed in opposition to the vast British, French, and Dutch Empires. So-called polar imperialism, for instance, has received more attention among Norwegian historians in the past few years.[130] Building on this newer research, I propose a more nuanced portrayal of the relationship between Norwegian fascism and imperialism by analyzing the NS's attitude towards the Greenland dispute.[131] The following analysis demonstrates that so-called polar imperialism and revisionism featured prominently in the NS and beyond, deeply rooted in ideas of an allegedly legitimate historical right to former Norwegian colonies.

Norwegians had been involved in creating an empire spanning several continents before and as part of the union with Denmark until 1814, to which the NS claimed its 'legitimate right' in the interwar period. Greenland, in particular, had been discovered and settled by seafarers from (geographical) Norway led by Erik the Red in 986.[132] When the Danish-Norwegian Union was dissolved in 1814, the Treaty of Kiel left its dependencies from medieval times under Danish control, namely Iceland, the Faroe Islands, and Greenland. Steered by revisionist ambitions, some Norwegian fishermen occupied uninhabited parts of Eastern Greenland with the blessings of the Norwegian government in July 1931. They called the region Erik the Red's Land to legitimize Norway's alleged historical right to the territory.[133] Norway and Denmark agreed to submit the matter to the Permanent Court of International Justice. The Hague decided in favor of Denmark, and Norway ended the occupation in April 1933.[134] But the decision left revisionist dreams of vengeance among embittered Norwegian nationalists and fascists.

129 Höglund, Johan, and Linda Andersson Burnett, "Introduction: Nordic Colonialisms and Scandinavian Studies", *Scandinavian Studies* 91.1–2 (2019): 1–12, 1.

130 See Steinar Aas, "Roald Amundsen vs Umberto Nobile: The Role of the Newspapers in the Age of Nationalism and Polar Imperialism", edited by Marco Armiero, Roberta Biasillo, and Stefano Morosini, in *Rethinking Geographical Explorations in Extreme Environments. From the Arctic to the Mountaintops* (London: Routledge, 2022), 34–55.

131 See Kirsti Laura W. Langsholdt, "Å gjenerobre gammelt norsk land: Norsk ekspansiv nasjonalisme i Grønlandssaken og Nasjonal Samlings Austrveg-prosjekt" (MA thesis, University of Oslo, 2016).

132 See Søren Rud, *Colonialism in Greenland: Tradition, Governance and Legacy* (Cambridge: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

133 See Ida Blom, *Kampen om Eirik Raudes land: Pressgruppepolitikk i grønlandsspørsmålet 1921–1931* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 1973).

134 See Janice Cavell, "Historical Evidence and the Eastern Greenland Case", *Arctic: Journal of the Arctic Institute of North America* 61.4 (2008): 433–441.

The occupation of Greenland in 1931 was the climax of Norwegian polar imperialism, which emerged after Norway had become independent from Sweden in 1905. At that time, the Arctic and Antarctic regions were perceived as *terra nullius* – no man's land. Pioneered by polar explorers like Fridtjof Nansen, Roald Amundsen, and Adolf Hoel, Norway pursued an imperialist policy towards the Arctic and the Antarctic. This resulted in the annexation of various uninhabited territories, including Svalbard. Broad sections of Norwegian society across the political spectrum supported this polar imperialism, which was linked to Norwegian nationalism and nation-state building. The anticommunist and anti-parliamentary Fatherland League (*Fedrelandslaget*, FL), among others founded by the national 'polar hero' Nansen in 1925, drew heavily on these imperialist ideas and demanded a revisionist military policy concerning the Danish colony Greenland.[135] Several leading members of the NS, notably the deputy leader Johan B. Hjort, started their political careers as members of the FL. Most importantly, Quisling had served as Fridtjof Nansen's close associate on a League of Nations humanitarian relief mission in Ukraine in the 1920s and saw himself as Nansen's political heir.

The NS was created in May 1933, only a month after the Greenland case had been settled in The Hague, and from the outset, the party attempted to capitalize on these revisionist sentiments. In the party manifesto from 1934, the NS aligned itself to polar imperialism by declaring in § 29 of the party program that "Norway's interests in the polar regions are asserted vigilantly and strongly".[136] The polar scientist Adolf Hoel, one of the most iconic driving forces behind the Norwegian Greenland occupation, immediately joined the party. In the 1920s, Hoel had even imagined the Arctic as a kind of living space for Norway in reminiscence of the Nazi German concept of *Lebensraum.*[137] Due to his prominence in Norwegian society, he was listed as number two behind Quisling on the NS ballot in the parliamentary elections in September 1933.[138] Next to Hoel, the NS cooperated with Gustav Smedal, another key figure among the Norwegian Greenland revisionists. Smedal was a lawyer with a passion for Norwegian history who initiated the Norwegian-Danish order *(Norsk-Dansk Ordning*), established in 1936. This was a cross-party movement that sought to resolve the Greenland issue. Along with several important NS members, other leading Norwegian right-wing and conserva-

135 As argued by Garau, "Anticipating Norwegian Fascism", 695.

136 "Program for Nasjonal Samling", *Nasjonal Samling,* March 15, 1934.

137 As argued by Einar-Arne Drivenes, "Adolf Hoel – polarforskeren i politikkens tjeneste", Norsk Polarhistorie (2016), accessed September 6, 2023, https://polarhistorie.no/artikler/2008/Adolf%20hoel.html.

138 On Adolf Hoel, see Forde Skarstein, "*Men så kom jo den 9. april i veien . . .*": *Adolf Hoel – den glemte polarpioneren* (Bergen: Happy Jam Factory, 2008).

tive politicians joined the association, emphasizing that Greenland revisionism mobilized broader parts of the political spectrum beyond narrow fascism.[139]

Greenland became a bone of contention between the Norwegian NS and the Danish DNSAP, even though both parties shared a colonial-racist view of the colony's indigenous population and completely ignored the interests of the Greenlandic Inuit. Another shared feature was the fear that the Danish government would sell Greenland to the United States.[140] Nonetheless, in an article from 1932 on "Greater Denmark", the Danish fascists declared that Norwegians, "regardless of the decision in The Hague", had to be "denied access to Greenland" and demanded their immediate removal from the Danish colony.[141] The Greenland matter became particularly urgent in the spring of 1936, fueled by fears that Norwegian interests in establishing a flight route to the United States via Greenland would be denied by the Danish government.[142] In reaction, the NS organized a so-called Greenland meeting in Oslo in May 1936. The speakers included the leader of the Norwegian Farmer's Party (*Bondepartiet*), Johan Mellbye, the geologist Werner Werenskiold, Vidkun Quisling, and Gustav Smedal, who lectured on the "historical injustice of 1814", referring to the Treaty of Kiel.[143]

At the Greenland meeting, Quisling made historical revisionism an essential precondition for increased Scandinavian fascist collaboration. He argued that Nordic cooperation was a "sacred duty" but "all injustice must be made right again – because cooperation can never be built on injustice".[144] When Quisling presented his plan for a Nordic World Federation in the summer of 1936, he repeated this argument: "we will not give up Norway's rights and honor. Greenland shall once again become Norwegian and open to Norwegian fishermen and trappers and to our Norse relatives in Iceland and the Faroe Islands".[145] Gustav Smedal took up Quisling's argument in the book *Nordisk samarbeide og Danmarks*

139 Among the members of the Danish-Norwegian order were FL leader Joachim Lehmkuhl, Johan Mellbye from the Farmer's Party, and Hans S. Jacobsen from the *Ragnarok* journal. Cf. Langsholdt, "Å gjenerobre gammelt norsk land", 36–37.

140 Cf. "Tænker Systemet paa at sælge Grønland?", *National-Socialisten,* September 22, 1934; "Rejser Statsministeren til Amerika for at sælge Grønland?", *National-Socialisten,* May 25, 1935; "Det er hellig plikt for Norden å samarbeide", *Fritt Folk,* May 14, 1936.

141 "Et større Danmark", *National-Socialisten,* October 16, 1932.

142 "Forpurrer danskene de norsk-amerikanske flyveinteresser?", *Fritt Folk,* March 30, 1936.

143 "Stort Grønlandsmøte i Oslo onsdag", *Fritt Folk,* May 11, 1936.

144 "Det er hellig plikt for Norden å samarbeide", *Fritt Folk,* May 14, 1936.

145 "Et nordisk verdenssamband", *Fritt Folk,* June 29, 1936. On the Nordic World Federation, see Chapter 10.

sydgrense (Nordic cooperation and the Danish South border, 1938).[146] This source illustrates how Smedal linked the Norwegian-Danish Greenland quarrel to the Danish-German Schleswig issue discussed previously. Smedal sided with the German minority in North Schleswig, who had experienced a similar ‘injustice’ as the Norwegians due to an imposed foreign treaty. Concludingly, he demanded both a revision of the Treaty of Versailles and the Treaty of Kiel.[147] In a laudatory book review, Quisling repeated the narrative of the historical injustice that had to be corrected to enable future cooperation with the Danish fascists.[148]

The Danish counterpart reacted almost immediately to this Norwegian revisionist attitude, highlighting how fascist movements observed and attempted to influence each other. Within a week, the DNSAP responded in an article complaisantly that there would be enough space on the island for Danes, Icelanders, and Norwegians, repeating the argument that the mighty idea of “national socialism” could solve the issue. Notwithstanding, the DNSAP rejected that Norway had a rightful claim on the entire colony: “[n]o one is more inclined towards the Nordics and the common Nordic cooperation than precisely National Socialism”, the author Tormod Hund assured. However, if the Norwegians would continue to mock the Danish nation, “then they will hear from us”.[149] In a second response to Smedal’s book, the DNSAP journal *National-Socialisten* attacked Smedal for his anti-Danish agitation and “destructive” attitude towards Nordic cooperation.[150] Nevertheless, as in the case of North Schleswig analyzed above, the DNSAP argued that the National Socialist rebirth of the Nordic countries along racial lines was more important than the territorial question of whether Greenland belonged to Denmark or Norway. Therefore, the Danish party continued to advocate for Scandinavian fascist regionalism, as examined in Chapter 10.

To conclude, the Greenland dispute illustrates the double-edged relationship between imperial-revisionist ambitions and fascist internationalism. On the one hand, the DNSAP press used an overly benevolent tone towards Norwegian fascism and presented ‘national socialism’ as a uniting force for the Nordic peoples, potentially solving territorial quarrels. On the other hand, the Danish imperialist pride and colonial interests became a red line at which, if crossed, Nordic friendship and cooperation would end. The NS standpoint was stricter because the na-

146 E.g. “Revisjonskravet i Grønlandsspørsmålet”, *Fritt Folk,* February 25, 1937; Gustav Smedal, “Grønlandspørsmålet bør nu ordnes”, *Fritt Folk,* April 1, 1939.

147 Cf. Gustav Smedal, *Nordisk samarbeide og Danmarks sydgrense* (Oslo: Fabritius & Sønners forlag, 1938).

148 Cf. Vidkun Quisling, “Nordisk samarbeide og Danmarks sydgrense”, *Fritt Folk,* May 21, 1938.

149 Tormod Hund, “Stadig Uro om Grønland”, *National-Socialisten,* May 28, 1938.

150 “Den nordiske Tanke – og dens Fjender!”, *National-Socialisten,* October 7, 1938.

tional-revisionist ambitions linked to Norway's alleged 'historical right' to Greenland seemed to be unnegotiable, challenging the NS's relationship with the otherwise 'brotherly' DNSAP.

The NS remained skeptical of mere Scandinavian fascist cooperation until the prospect of a new world war changed their perspective in 1939, and as a result the Norwegian movement toned down its colonialist demands. Especially after the German invasion of Poland, the foreign political transformations made, according to the NS, "closer organizational cooperation between the national unification movements in the Nordic countries desirable".[151] This stresses the importance of foreign political events and the processual and adaptive character of fascist internationalism. Strikingly, the imperialist ambitions of the NS never faded completely. During the Second World War, when Nazi Germany occupied Norway, the NS's government would even develop a new colonial project called *Austrveg* (the Old Norse name for the lands to the east). The planned project advocated a Norwegian form of *Lebensraum* through future Norwegian settlements in Russia after the expected victory of the Axis powers over the Soviet Union.[152]

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Revisiting the complex relationship between European imperialism and fascism has shown how fascist movements were influenced and shaped by longer expansionist, colonialist, and, in the Irish case, even anti-colonialist traditions within their countries. Fascist parties linked these traditions to beliefs in a civilizing task of European nations and white supremacism. Thus, by going beyond the 'centers' of fascism in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany and focusing on the 'periphery' of minor fascist parties from northwestern Europe, this chapter has demonstrated how fascists promoted territorial claims even in 'satisfied' nation-states and empires. In the case of Scandinavia, outlining this focal influence of imperialism and colonialism debunks contemporary fascist self-descriptions as 'anti-imperialist' movements. The findings also serve as a corrective to historiographical arguments of fascism as a political phenomenon that was strictly detached from the broader political spectrum and the history of European imperialism and racism, emphasizing instead shared colonialist roots.

Moreover, this chapter has identified various obstacles that inhibited cooperation between minor fascist parties and major regimes. There were barriers concerning territorial claims and issues of national belonging, notably in the form of

151 NS, Avtale: Nordisk Folkereisning, October 1939: [RA Oslo], PA 0760 F L0032.

152 On the Austrveg project, see Ole Kolsrud, "Kollaborasjon og imperialisme. Quislingregjeringens 'Austrveg'-drom", *Historisk Tidsskrift* 67.3 (1988): 241–270.

disputed (former) colonies, national minorities, historical memories, and revisionism. Taken together with the insights on the fascist predicament in Chapter 5, these findings play a crucial role in the overall book due to this inherent emphasis on the challenges and limits of fascist internationalism. Whether irredentist or purely colonialist, territorial ambitions often thwarted cross-border cooperation between movements with an otherwise similar outlook, as illustrated by the Irish fascists' dispute with Northern Irish and British fascist movements. Diverging territorial claims could also disturb the relationship between the role model Nazi Germany and some of its loyal acolytes, such as the British IFL and the Danish DNSAP. Such a one-sided and perhaps non-surprising focus on expansionist limits of international cooperation among ultranationalist movements and regimes seems to confirm those historians who have suggested that "international fascism is unthinkable, a contradiction in terms".[153]

In contrast, this study posits that even the ostensibly insurmountable territorial obstacles reveal the myriad forms in which European minor fascist movements navigated between nationalism and internationalism in the interwar period. Repeatedly, minor fascist movements opposed the territorial claims of other potential partners. At the same time, some parties also showed a willingness to compromise on territorial questions, such as the Norwegian NS concerning the Greenland case, which decided to foreground Nordic cooperation with Denmark in the wake of massive foreign political transformations in the late 1930s. Strikingly, smaller parties even used notions of fascist internationalism to bypass territorial disputes. Examples, such as the DNSAP's ambivalent attitude towards the North Schleswig issue and the IFL's 'generous offer' of 'tropical colonies' to the 'Third Reich', demonstrate the attempt to solve these territorial issues and cooperate with fascist 'brother' movements and regimes. Thus, minor parties used conceptualizations of fascism (or 'national socialism') as an international phenomenon linked to ideas of fascist kinship to circumvent territorial conflicts. In Scandinavia in particular, this form of fascist internationalism foreshadowed collaboration with the German occupiers in Norway and Denmark, highlighting crucial ideological continuities between the 1930s and the Second World War, as Part III of this monograph will argue.

Already in the interwar period, however, fascist movements voluntarily associated themselves with a broader European or even universal fascist party family in order to emphasize their own importance and political prestige. They wanted to be seen as part and parcel of a powerful political phenomenon on the rise in Europe and the world that would dramatically change the course of human history. The underlying worldview was that fascism represented a broader, historical force,

153 Laqueur, *Fascism*, 218.

whose future victory was more important than territorial conflicts and national boundaries because of the belief in an eternal struggle between the fascists of the world and the putative united front of liberalism and Judeo-Bolshevism. This conspiratorial *Weltanschauung* was based on specific forms of Manichaeism and temporality, which became the ideological foundation of fascist internationalism. Consequently, a more thorough examination of the functions, mechanisms, and content of narratives and myths of fascist internationalism is required to move beyond the obstacles and limitations of this multifaceted phenomenon.

Chapter 7
“The Fascist Era”: Constructions, Narratives, and Myths of Fascist Internationalism

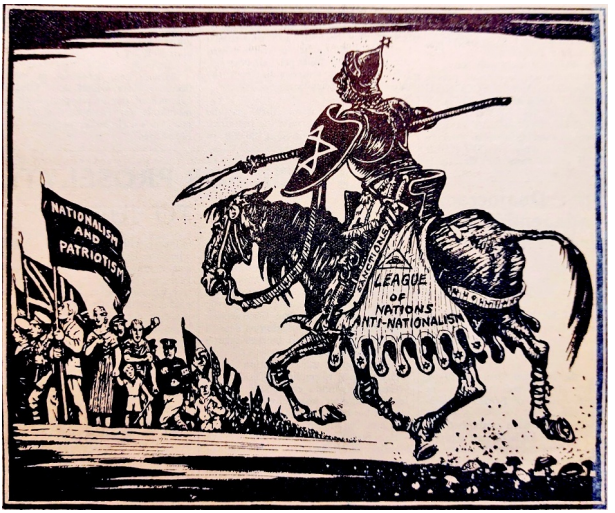


Figure 5: Drawing of a knight, *The Fascist*, June 1936, unknown illustrator.

In June 1936, the IFL journal *The Fascist* published a drawing that depicts a knight armored with a lance and a shield with a star of David, riding on a horse with the inscription “League of Nations Anti-Nationalism” (Figure 5).[1] This figure from the Middle Ages is equipped with a scabbard with the inscription “Sanctions” and is about to attack a group of modern dressed demonstrators holding various national flags, including the British Union Jack and the swastika, and a banner reading “Nationalism and patriotism”. This cartoon is emblematic of how interwar fascists conceptualized fascist internationalism as a counter-reaction to other forms of internationalism. The knight represents the old and warmongering forces of liberal and supposedly Jewish internationalism. The demonstrators, who are in the majority and include women and children, represent the allegedly peaceful and youthful forces of the modern age: nationalism and fascism. The drawing illustrates how fascist parties constructed a dualistic and temporal antagonism be-

1 “Half a League – Half a League – Half a League Onward”, *The Fascist,* June 1936.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111469799-008

tween the old forces of 'unpatriotic' internationalism and the new, internationally united forces of fascism.

The primary objective of the following chapter is to explain how and why minor fascist movements attached themselves in their speeches, writings, articles, and books to a broader era of fascism. The emphasis lies on constructions, myths, and perceptions of fascist internationalism rather than factual realities of cooperation beyond borders or questions of similarities between the various fascist movements and regimes. Instead of asking how *fascist internationalism* was practiced and organized, the chapter analyzes how notions of *fascism as an international phenomenon* were constructed and utilized for political purposes by various European fascist parties.

The main argument is that minor movements employed conceptions, narratives, and myths of fascist internationalism to stress their political significance domestically. This political strategy of attaching oneself to other political developments abroad is neither a specificity of the interwar period nor reduced to the political right. For example, European New Left Movements expressed solidarity and attached themselves to developments in the Global South in the 1960s.[2] However, notions and narratives of fascist internationalism were particularly important for marginal, politically unsuccessful fascist movements in northwestern Europe that failed to attract mass support at the national level. Especially during the 1930s, contemporary supporters and opponents alike perceived the so-called fascist era as a period of success for fascism due to the rise of Hitler in Germany, Mussolini's consolidation and imperial conquest in East Africa, and Franco's victory in Spain. In consequence, the small movements counterbalanced their marginalization in the domestic political sphere by linking themselves to these political events and developments abroad and situating themselves within the larger fascist camp.

Particularly in times of crises, manifested in lack of electoral success, limited party membership, and internal discord, the northwestern European fascist movements "created a narrative in speeches and publications which tied together their own failing efforts with those of movements abroad, to show that fascism was on the rise, and that Europe had in fact entered a new political age, to end in a colossal confrontation with the international enemy".[3] Interpreting fascism and themselves as part of an international phenomenon gave minor movements

2 See Juho Saksholm, "Defining 'the Third Way': Oppositional Internationalisms of Finnish, Swedish and West German Student and New Left Movements in the 1960s", in *Nationalism and Internationalism Intertwined. A European History of Concepts,* edited by Pasi Ihalainen and Antero Holmila (New York: Berghahn Books, 2022), 270–284, 272.

3 Kunkeler and Hamre, "Conceptions and Practices of International Fascism in Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands, 1930–40", 61–62.

meaning in a broader, European, and sometimes even global historical understanding, providing them with a purpose, a coherent narrative, and destiny, which overshadowed the often precarious political reality. Ultimately, these interpretations also legitimized more concrete political visions and practices of fascist internationalism as discussed throughout this monograph.

The following analysis demonstrates, first, how fascist movements constructed a form of *fascist kinship* by generating countless press articles about supposedly related or affiliated parties and regimes from abroad, including Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and various other smaller fascist movements. Sympathetic coverage of fascists abroad was a simple and limited, but nonetheless ubiquitous, tool for constructing a myth of fascist internationalism. The second part explores the content of these myths and narratives of fascist internationalism more closely, highlighting elements of inclusion and exclusion to explore how the fascist 'party family' was constructed. Myths and narratives of fascist kinship were based on notions of a political, historical, and spiritual bond between the various fascist movements and regimes, despite national particularities and stark differences in ideology, style, language, and geographical location. However, such a fascist kinship was not given a priori but had to be identified, constructed, and sustained over the years. This corresponds with the overall theory of this study of fascism as a contemporarily contested concept, which was open for interpretation and in flux.

The third part focuses on *Manichaean* worldviews and the importance of fascist *temporality* as crucial elements of narratives and myths of fascist internationalism. Fascists evoked a Manichaean worldview, meaning a dualistic understanding of the world constructed around a struggle between a good, spiritual world of light and an evil, material world of darkness. This study uses 'Manichaean' as an analytical concept borrowed from social science, initially deriving from Manichaeism, a major religion of late antiquity that was strongly influenced by Gnosticism.[4] The fascist form of Manichaeism conceptualizes two broader political fronts around binary codes – us and them – by juxtaposing the 'good' forces of fascism with 'bad' forces such as communism, liberalism, Judaism, capitalism, and materialism, often deeply rooted in the Jewish-Bolshevist myth and subsumed under the term internationalism. According to Robert O. Paxton, the "passionate nationalism" of fascism was, in a Darwinian narrative, allied to "a conspiratorial and Manichaean view of history as a battle between the good and evil camps, between the pure and the corrupt, in which one's own community or na-

4 On Manichaean worldviews in fascist ideology, see Fredrik Wilhelmsen, "From New Order to the Millennium of White Power: Norwegian Fascism Between Party Politics and Lone-Actor Terrorism", *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 22.1 (2021): 17–39, 24.

tion has been the victim".[5] Thus, fascist worldviews often interconnected Manichean and temporal elements.

Notions of temporality were crucial for evoking a wider fascist 'era', 'epoch', 'decade', or even 'century', to which the smaller fascist movements attached themselves. Fascist movements juxtaposed an older, decaying, and allegedly dying era with a new fascist *Zeitgeist*, as was epitomized in the IFL cartoon (Figure 5) of the old-fashioned knight fighting against the new and modern fascist masses. Temporalities or so-called *regimes of historicity* are therefore important theoretical tools for grasping the myths of fascist internationalism. The concept of 'regimes of historicity' has been developed by François Hartog to analyze how individuals and groups not only situated themselves in time but also how categories of the past, present, and future gave order and meaning in specific contexts and how the three categories related to one another.[6] As Fredrik Wilhelmsen argues, such regimes of historicity provided for fascist groups "a meaningful framework, where the precarious nature of social reality is alchemically transformed into a more or less coherent narrative".[7] According to Fernando Esposito and Sven Reichardt, fascist temporalities combined a longing for historical rootedness and future-oriented dynamics because "Fascism presented itself simultaneously as the origin of the break with centuries of decay and decadence and as the restorer of continuity and preserver of permanence", centering around narratives of revolutionary rebirth and eternity.[8] Moreover, the idea of an "apocalyptical temporality" constituted a key notion of the fascist regime of historicity, connected to the idea of a decisive battle between fascism and its nemeses in the near future.[9]

"The World Around Us": Reports on Fascist Movements and Regimes Abroad

Myths of fascist kinship were often constructed through sympathetic reports in the party press on allegedly kindred movements and regimes abroad. As the two dominant forces of interwar fascism, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany naturally re-

5 Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*, 41.

6 See François Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity: Presentism and Experiences of Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

7 Wilhelmsen, "From New Order to the Millennium of White Power", 37.

8 Fernando Esposito and Sven Reichardt, "Revolution and Eternity: Introductory Remarks on Fascist Temporalities", *Journal of Modern European History* 13.1 (2015): 24–43, 43.

9 See Fredrik Wilhelmsen, "Reconnecting Forward: Nasjonal Samling's Apocalyptic Temporality as a Key to the Fascist Regime of Historicity", *Fascism: Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 10.1 (2021): 134–165.

ceived the most attention and coverage, but the fascist press also included other potentially related parties and governments in Europe and elsewhere. Typically, the minor movements established specific sections on foreign policy in their periodicals, in which they juxtaposed the danger of the internationalist enemies with the alleged success of international fascism. In the case of the Swiss FFS, this recurring section was tellingly called the "World March of Fascism" (*Weltmarsch des Fascismus*), employing a temporal trope of a changing world in which a future fascist victory was inevitable.[10] From the summer of 1934 on, the section was called "The Century of Fascism" (*Das Jahrhundert des Fascismus*), a reference to Mussolini's infamous statement on the twentieth century as a fascist century, and an excellent example of an evocation of a fascist era.[11] Similar themes were present in the main organ of the Norwegian NS, which called its sections on foreign policy "The world in the making" (*Verden i støpeskjeen*), and from 1934 on, "The world around us" (*Verden omkring oss*).[12] The IFL featured reports on other nationalist and antisemitic parties in Europe, the British Commonwealth, and South America in a section named "The Fascist Outlook".[13]

Particularly invested in portraying fascist movements from abroad was the Swedish SNU/SNF, which published a periodical dedicated to foreign national parties and regimes called *De nationella rörelserna i tiden* (The National Movements in Time). According to the editors, the series aimed to show how other peoples had succeeded or failed in their national endeavors, and "those who have succeeded we want to set as examples to follow".[14] Next to celebratory articles on fascism in Italy, Germany, Romania, and Britain, the periodical analyzed the Russian Revolution in-depth as a negative counter-example. The series had a worldwide perspective, including long, detailed reports on nationalist tendencies in China, Japan, India, and the United States. This global outlook was already foreshadowed in 1929, when Rütger Essén characterized "European fascism" as a "Latin phenomenon" while admitting that "fascist tendencies" could also be seen in Southern America and the US, notably the Ku Klux Klan.[15] In contrast, the DNSAP primarily devoted numerous articles and long tables to "movements of national regeneration in Europe" in its monthly journal *D.N.S.A.P.s*

10 "Weltmarsch des Fascismus", *Der Schweizer Fascist,* February 8, 1934.

11 "Das Jahrhundert des Fascismus", *Der Schweizer Fascist,* August 23, 1934.

12 "Verden i støpeskjeen", *NS – Organ for Nasjonal Samling,* August 29, 1933.

13 E.g. "The Fascist Outlook", *The Fascist,* September 1933; "Fascism in Argentina", *The Fascist,* November 1933; "South America Awakens", *The Fascist,* March 1936.

14 Sten B:son, "En allmän överblick", *Sverigas Nationella Ungdömsförbund (Studierådet), De nationella rörelserna i tiden* 1.1 (1933): 1–16, 16.

15 Rütger Essén, *Europas tillfrisknande* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 1929), 222.

Maaneds-Breve.[16] Neatly, these tables listed the names of affiliated movements abroad, the year of foundation, the history and program, the name of the main organ, the party leader, membership numbers, information on the emblem, and the uniform.

The vast majority of these articles, periodicals, and tables showed sympathy for other fascist movements abroad, expressing admiration, friendship, political closeness or even a community of destiny. But at times, harsh criticism was raised, connected to failed imitations of the role models, internal rivalry, or programmatic differences. The NS attacked the so-called Austrofascist Dollfuß regime for suppressing the Austrian Nazi movement and the Spanish dictator Miguel Primo de Rivera for copying Mussolini unsuccessfully.[17] The British IFL often formulated criticism when movements abroad were perceived as being too weak on questions of racism and antisemitism. The most severe accusation was that a foreign fascist party was infiltrated or influenced by Jews. Paradigmatically, the antisemitic Danish DNSAP portrayed the French movement Cross of Fire (*Croix-de-Feu*) as a tool of 'international Jewry' in 1935 and warned that Italian Fascism was on the brink of the same destiny, maintaining that "Jewish-controlled Fascism is a transition to communism".[18] Paradoxically, only a year later, party leader Frits Clausen hailed Italian Fascism and Mussolini for saving Italy from decay.[19] This underlines that the portrayals were often not stringent but contradictory and dependent on the newest domestic and foreign political developments and the own ideological agenda.

Geographical proximity and ideas of racial kinship were essential in portraying fascist movements abroad. For example, the northern European parties published numerous benevolent pieces on each other's development, linked to ideas of Nordic unity, a shared destiny, and the common belief in Nordic-Aryan racism.[20] Here, fascist kinship was put into concrete words when the DNSAP repeatedly described the Swedish NSAP as "our brother party" and "our comrades", mirroring communist statements of fraternization beyond borders. Furthermore, the Scandinavian fascists circulated each other's journals and cited them from time to time.[21] Similarly, the Swiss parties paid more attention to fascist groups in

16 "Oversigt over nationale Genrejsningsbevægelser i Europa: Frankrig", *D.N.S.A.P.s Maaneds-Breve,* March 1, 1936; "Oversigt over nationale Genrejsningsbevægelser i Europa", *D.N.S.A.P.s Maaneds-Breve,* April 1, 1936.

17 Cf. Grundtvig Gundersen, "Verden utenfor oss", *Nasjonal Samling,* March 15, 1934.

18 "Europæisk Storpolitik i Juni", *D.N.S.A.P.s Maaneds-Breve*, July 1, 1935.

19 Frits Clausen, "Mussolini og Fascisme", *D.N.S.A.P.s Maaneds-Breve,* July 1, 1936.

20 See also the section on Scandinavian fascist regionalism in Chapter 10.

21 E.g. "Amstraadsvalgene giver Genlyd i Sverige", *National-Socialisten,* March 23, 1935; "Ingen neutralitet over for Fascismen!", *National-Socialisten,* April 2, 1938; "Vore svenske Kameraters femte Aarsting i Stockholm", *National-Socialisten,* June 18, 1938.

neighboring countries such as France and Austria. Even the tiny Liechtenstein Homeland Service (*Liechtensteiner Heimatdienst*), with no more than 300 members, received attention from both the FFS and the NF as Liechtenstein's form of "fascism" or "movement of national regeneration" respectively.[22]

General prominence also played a vital role in portraying fascist movements abroad, and the British Union of Fascists (BUF) under Oswald Mosley constituted the most popular and well-known party among the fascist movements in northwestern Europe outside Germany. The BUF signaled hope to the marginalized other parties, which reasoned that if fascism could conquer Britain, the motherland of parliamentary democracy and liberalism, then it could succeed everywhere, including Scandinavia. This hope featured for example in an article in the Swedish SNF press on the potential breakthrough of the BUF, which hoped for an imminent revolution in England.[23] Furthermore, the other parties perceived BUF leader Sir Oswald Mosley as a rising star on the fascist horizon, promising spectacle and publicity with his speeches and mass rallies. A DNSAP article on "Mosley's battle" recounted an incident in Liverpool in 1937 when Mosley was knocked unconscious by stones thrown by an anti-fascist crowd after he had given a fascist salute to 8,000 people.[24] Most importantly, the gradual transformation of the BUF in the course of the 1930s into a more radical antisemitic and pro-Nazi German party was closely observed and praised by others who either developed in a similar direction (as the Norwegian NS and the Swedish SNF) or emphasized antisemitism from the outset (as the Swiss NF and the Danish DNSAP).[25] As the latter commented ironically about Mosley's 'late' incorporation of antisemitism into his program in 1934: "Sir Oswald Mosley is presently climbing the narrow ladder of knowledge".[26]

But European fascism was far from speaking with a single, uniform voice. The Irish Blueshirts ignored the BUF in the party press because geographical proximity was overtrumped by the traditional Irish-British enmity rooted in Ireland's history as the first colony of the British Empire. Another exception was the IFL, which perceived the BUF as its most severe rival in Britain. The IFL attacked the "British *Jew*nion of Fascists" repeatedly and presented the BUF as "Jewish"

22 "Der Facismus in Liechtenstein", *Der Schweizer Fascist,* November 9, 1933; "Nationale Erneuerung in Liechtenstein", *Die Front,* February 9, 1934.

23 See "Revolutionen över England: Elliot eller Mosley i teten?", *Nationell Tidning,* February 2, 1935.

24 "Mosleys kamp", *National-Socialisten,* December 4, 1937.

25 Cf. Baldoli, "Anglo-Italian Fascist Solidarity?"; Garau, "The Internationalisation of Italian Fascism in the Face of German National Socialism".

26 'Wait and see!', *National-Socialisten,* July 28, 1934.

and "Kosher fascism".[27] IFL leader Leese even maintained that Mosley's children were "of Jewish blood" and exposed that Mosley's lieutenant, John Fuller was involved with "Aleister Crowley's (Beast 666) Occult Group" (which was actually true).[28] In 1937, the IFL acknowledged that the BUF had become an antisemitic party and took this fact as an opportunity to praise itself because "It was the Imperial Fascist League which, without funds, forced Mosley to adopt an anti-Jewish attitude".[29] Likewise, the Swiss NF used the BUF for its own ends when it proudly commented on an article written by the prominent BUF member Edward Frederik, which portrayed the development of the NF, to showcase the fame of the Swiss party abroad.[30] This illustrates how reporting on other fascist movements served as a propagandistic tool to boost the political significance of the parties domestically.

Not all minor fascist parties were equally invested in this method of portraying other fascist movements. Especially in their formative years, some movements were too occupied with domestic political issues or simply lacked knowledge about other parties abroad. The Swiss NF emphasized Swiss particularism shaped by multilingualism and the absence of territorial claims, in contrast to German and Italian expansionism, and distanced itself at first from expressing fascist kinship.[31] Likewise, the Irish Blueshirts neglected foreign political developments in its press until the organization split in late 1934. This changed when the Montreux Congress introduced Eoin O'Duffy to an array of foreign fascist movements. From then on, *The Blueshirt* reported occasionally on other parties abroad, and gradually, references to the broader European scene of fascism became an integral part of the self-description of the Blueshirts and its successor, the NCP.[32]

Sympathetic reports on other movements and regimes were not restricted to a propagandistic function. The peculiar case of the Swedish SNU/SNF shows how observations of the wider fascist era could also directly impact the internal political course, leading to a self-reinterpretation and new identity as fascist party. In the early 1930s, the SNU was the youth organization of the Swedish Conservative Party. The SNU press still commented benevolently on foreign political developments connected to the rise of ultranationalist and anticommunist forces, praising Vidkun Quisling's hard hand on Marxism as Norway's Minister of Defense, for ex-

27 "The British Jewnion of Fascists", *The Fascist,* November 1933.

28 "Amazing Exposers of Mosley's Lieutenant", *The Fascist,* May 1935. Cf. Macklin, *Failed Führers*, 31.

29 "Fascists in Election", *The Fascist,* April 1937.

30 "Eine englische Stimme über die NF", *Die Front,* July 16, 1936.

31 "Wir und das Ausland", *Die Front,* August 7, 1934.

32 E.g. "Europe's Corporative Movements", *The Blueshirt,* February 2, 1935.

ample.[33] However, regarding concrete questions of political kinship and cooperation, the SNU emphasized primarily connections to other (specifically Nordic) conservative youth organizations at this stage. This narrow outlook changed gradually when the SNU observed the rise of fascism beyond Italy. An article in the aforementioned series *De nationella rörelserna i tiden* praised "the popular uprising in Germany" as the most significant event of the 1930s so far and reported enthusiastically on "similar party formations" such as the BUF, the Irish Blueshirts, the NS, the DNSAP, and fascist tendencies in France, the Netherlands, Spain, and Finland.[34] In view of these historical upheavals, the Swedish party now clearly situated itself in this fascist camp. The Swedish party even admitted in 1935 that the developments abroad had led to their final break with the conservative mother party. As party leader Elmo Lindholm wrote in the series on "the impact of the national movements on Sweden":

> When it became increasingly clear to our organization that our lines of thought were in full harmony with an increasingly powerful general movement of the times, which everywhere sought to advance in the sign of national unity across the old party boundaries, a break with the Högerparti [Conservative Party] occurred as a natural consequence and as a completely independent organization, the S.N.U. changed its name to the Sveriges Nationella Förbund [National League of Sweden], S.N.F.[35]

The idea of belonging to the broader, international fascist party family thus transformed the ideological core of the SNU's self-description from conservative to radical and fascist. Here, we see how powerful the myth of fascist internationalism could be for the self-interpretation of the minor parties in the domestic political sphere. To better understand this complex phenomenon, the analytical focus shifts in the subsequent section from the usage and function to the content of the narratives and myths of fascist internationalism.

"Racial and Kosher Fascism": Interpretations of a Fascist Party Family

When fascist movements commented on their supposed partners abroad, they implicitly drew on notions of some form of political, historical, and spiritual connec-

33 "Klasskampslärans ryska hejdukar i Norge avslöjade", *Nationell Tidning,* July 9, 1932.

34 E. G. Westmann, "Nationalsocialismen inför verkligheten", *Sverigas Nationella Ungdömsförbund (Studierådet), De nationella rörelserna i tiden* 2.13 (1934): 1–20, 19–20.

35 Elmo Lindholm, "De nationella tidsrörelsernas återverkningar i Sverige", *Sverigas Nationella Ungdömsförbund (Studierådet), De nationella rörelserna i tiden* 3.21 (1935): 1–12, 11.

tion and kinship between themselves and foreign movements and regimes, but these notions were highly fluid and far from uniform. Therefore, it is important to examine on what grounds fascists conceptualized other movements as part of the same ideological party family and whom they rejected due to geographical, racist, or ideological reasons. Within this context, political terminology was important to highlight potential kinship between movements across countries. However, the smaller movements used different labels as the common denominator that linked their own movement to parties abroad. Some used the generic term 'fascism', but others preferred to write of 'movements of national regeneration', 'corporatism', 'national socialism', or simply 'new nationalism', and the meanings of these terms could vary from country to country. Non-surprisingly, those movements who referred to themselves as 'fascists', such as the Swiss FFS and the British IFL, also agreed upon the label as a generic term. Parties with idiosyncratic self-descriptions occasionally used fascism to describe a broader phenomenon due to "the absence of any better common denominator", as the Norwegian NS complained in 1934.[36] Other movements leaning toward Nazi Germany as the primary role model, like the Swiss NF and the Danish DNSAP, preferred 'national socialism' or 'movements of national regeneration' as a common denominator.[37] The Irish Blueshirts used 'corporatism' when they referred to their ideology and the broader party family in Europe. Finally, the SNF preferred "new nationalism" as the common term related to its ideology of New-Swedishness.[38]

In lack of a common terminology, the parties often stressed shared notions and commonalities to emphasize affiliation with foreign movements and regimes, notably the importance of mutual enemies (as will be outlined later); the emphasis of nationalism and a national people's community; and a common belief in a revolutionary rebirth of the own nation as a solution to the present crisis and decay of the world that would enable a worldwide fascist victory. This suggests that Roger Griffin's theory of palingenetic ultranationalism as an ideological core of 'generic' fascism was already contemporarily seen as an important commonality among the minor movements.[39]

This comes to the fore by comparing the Danish DNSAP and the Swiss NF, two movements influenced by the role model Nazi Germany but with substantial historical, linguistic, and political differences, which, to my knowledge, did not stand in direct contact with each other. In one article, the DNSAP presented the

36 "Fascisme over Europa", *Nasjonal Samling,* May 24, 1934.

37 Cf. "Der Nationale Aufbruch", *Die Front,* March 2, 1934.

38 Per Engdahl, "Nynationalismen vill en svenks insats i arbetet på det nya Europa!", *Nationell Tidning,* April 17, 1937.

39 See Griffin, *Fascism.*

political battle for "national regeneration" as the most important shared feature between the fascist movements in Europe, allegedly all united in their fight against "degenerating" and "internationalist" forces.[40] In another publication, the DNSAP argued that all "movements of national regeneration" were based on the belief that the individual should serve the community of the nation, people (*Folk*), and race, meaning the "people's community" (*Folkefælleskab*), instead of the community serving the individual as allegedly the case in liberal democracy and "Marxism".[41] An article in the Swiss NF press was almost identical in content and wording, insisting that all fascist movements had in common the idea of putting the interest of the nation above self-interest.[42] As their Danish comrades, the Swiss NF also frequently outlined the importance of the concept of *Volksgemeinschaft*, highlighting how both movements had internalized concepts from German Nazism. Accordingly, an enthusiastic article about the French Cross of Fire celebrated that "in all other countries of Europe", political movements were at work to replace "the corrupted party state, irresponsible cliques and secret connections", with a true *Volksgemeinschaft* based on social justice.[43]

Narratives of fascist internationalism were shaped by mechanics of inclusion and exclusion, related to the question of who would be worthy of belonging politically, geographically, and, from a racist point of view, to the imagined fascist party family. Some parties reserved ideas of fascist kinship only for movements in Europe or the West, whereas others had a universal understanding in mind, though still profoundly rooted in hierarchized, racist, and white supremacist ideas of world order. Most fascist parties from northern Europe implicitly conceptualized a racist hierarchy with 'Nordic-Germanic' nations at the top, followed by European nations in the middle, and non-Europeans at the bottom in their reporting on kindred movements from abroad. Paradigmatically, the Norwegian NS argued in one article from 1934 that "Fascism is feasible in any nation without regard to race and racial characteristics", but "National Socialism", regarded as superior and defined as "the re-awakening of the Germanic race to new life", would only be feasible in Germanic countries.[44] Confusingly, such descriptions did not preclude narratives of fascist kinship beyond the North or even Europe. Only three years later, the NS organ *Fritt Folk* proclaimed "a new age of national-

40 "Europas Ungdom skaber det nye Europa", *Jul i Norden* 4.1 (1937): 45–47.

41 "Fascisme - Nazisme – Danisme", *National-Socialisten,* October 15, 1933.

42 Cf. "Der Nationale Aufbruch", *Die Front,* March 2, 1934.

43 "Croix-de-feu", *Die Front,* January 9, 1935.

44 Niels Dahl Lie, "Nasjonalsosialisme contra Fascisme", *Nasjonal Samling,* April 12, 1934.

ism", fantasizing that "movements of national regeneration" existed all over the planet and represented the same forces that were "destined to victory".[45]

Hence, despite an undisputed focus on Europe, the smaller parties often conceptualized international fascism as a worldwide phenomenon. Especially the Swiss FFS presented "universal fascism" (inspired by CINEF's and CAUR's ideology) as "a historically necessary phenomenon of all countries".[46] It also claimed (falsely) to be in contact with "fascist movements of all countries to promote the preservation of peace".[47] The FFS party press frequently reported on movements from Latin America, Northern Africa, and Asia. One article on "Egyptian Fascism" praised in great detail the so-called Green Shirts, the Young Egypt Party (*Masr El-Fatah*), despite their Muslim religion.[48] Surprisingly, the FFS even praised a Zionist movement in Palestine led by the Russian Jew Ze'ev Jabotinsky as "Jewish fascism", arguing that a "national Judea" would solve the 'Jewish question'.[49] Here, the difference to more antisemitic movements such as the British IFL and the Danish DNSAP could not be more profound, which repeatedly expressed abhorrence for "Jewish fascism", for instance when referring to the Austrian Fatherland Front (*Vaterländische Front*) formed by Engelbert Dollfuß.[50]

Descriptions of non-European 'fascists' were equally contradictory, sometimes even within the same movement. One FFS article in early 1935 reported on the "fascist spirit in the Far East", praising Japan's modernization policy and adaptation to the "occidental rhythm".[51] But only weeks later, the same FFS warned about Japan's interference in the Italo-Ethiopian conflict, interpreted as a "first prelude in the giant struggle between Japan and the Western world".[52] Similarly, the IFL openly admired Japanese patriotism, admitting that it was "almost born in Fascism". But because Japan was racially "utterly alien" to the Aryans, the IFL insisted that nothing good would come out of a "Japanese domination over any race except the yellow".[53] Hence, various fascist movements constructed the "yel-

45 "Den nye tids nasjonalisme", *Fritt Folk,* March 4, 1937.

46 "Der Fascismus ist eine geschichtliche notwendige Zeiterscheinung aller Länder!", *Der Schweizer Fascist,* January 18, 1934.

47 "Programm des Schweizerischen Fascismus", *Der Schweizer Fascist,* October 12, 1933.

48 Cf. "Aegyptischer Fascismus", *Der Schweizer Fascist,* July 26, 1934. On the Green Shirts, see James Jankowski, "The Egyptian Blue Shirts and the Egyptian Wafd, 1935–1938", *Middle Eastern Studies* 6.1 (1970): 77–95.

49 "Weltfascismus", *Der Schweizer Fascist,* May 17, 1934.

50 "Jødisk Fascisme", *National-Socialisten,* February 11, 1934.

51 "Der fascistische Geist im fernen Osten", *Der Schweizer Fascist,* January 17, 1935.

52 "Asiatischer Sturm im Anzuge", *Der Schweizer Fascist,* February 21, 1935.

53 Arnold Spencer Leese, "Nippon: Materialism is Eastern, Not Western", *The Fascist,* November 1935.

low" race in juxtaposition to the white race, the latter presented as the only race being suitable for world domination. The FFS also depicted Mussolini as the savior of the white race against the threatening "colored peoples", as in an article on declining birth rates in Europe.[54] By implication, "Black", colonized, or indigenous peoples were largely ignored as potential allies of "universal fascism". Thus, racism, white supremacism, and ideas of hierarchy played a crucial role when fascist movements constructed notions of kinship.

The British IFL illustrates the modus operandi of inclusion and exclusion concerning narratives of a broader fascist party family, which were characterized by the gradual dominance of white supremacism and the transformability of the meaning of the term fascism itself. In the late 1920s, the IFL conceptualized fascism as a "universal force" that could potentially be implemented everywhere, aiming for a corporative and potentially universal "Fascist Constitution, which is applicable to almost any race of people including the British".[55] Thus, the IFL argued that "Fascist ideas continue to spread throughout the world", and "even the Palestine Arabs are on the track of Fascism".[56] However, fascism was not a static concept for the IFL. Deeply impressed by the sudden electoral success of German Nazism, the IFL started in 1930 to differentiate between an "Alpine-Mediterranean" and a "Nordic-Alpine" version of fascism. "As fascism comes north, it becomes more openly hostile to the Jew".[57] Henceforth, the IFL described itself as a "pioneer of Nordic fascism", which would enter a "Duel with the Devil", the Jew.[58]

Shaped by its Nordic-Aryan racism, the IFL regarded fascism gradually no longer as a universal force applicable to all races and peoples but restricted the term to a "worthy Aryan civilization".[59] The idea of Aryanism was not simply imported from Nazi Germany, but rooted in racial conceptions embedded into British imperialism and colonial rule in South Asia.[60] This preference for white 'Nordic' and 'Aryan' races (the two terms were used synonymously by the IFL) resulted in an understanding of fascism linked to global white supremacism.[61] Thus, fascist kinship was also 'identified' in nationalist movements in the British

54 "Mussolini und die weisse Rasse", *Der Schweizer Fascist,* September 13, 1934.
55 "Answers to Criticism", *The Fascist,* May 1930.
56 "The Fascist Outlook", *The Fascist,* September 1933.
57 "The German Fascists and Ourselves", *The Fascist,* October 1930.
58 "An Appeal", *The Fascist,* October 1932.
59 "The Fascist Congress at Rome: Jewish Penetration", *The Fascist,* February 1933.
60 See Tony Ballantyne, *Orientalism and Race*: *Aryanism in the British Empire* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2002).
61 E.g. Imperial Fascist League, *Race and Politics*.

Commonwealth, such as in Canada, New Zealand, and Australia.[62] Moreover, the IFL demanded "white solidarity" in an upcoming war between democratic and fascist forces because "The White Man's World Must Hold Together".[63] Only fascist movements that accepted this white supremacist prerequisite were, according to the IFL, genuine and trustworthy political allies. Therefore, the IFL attacked a Canadian fascist organization for admitting members "regardless of racial origin" and hoped the movement would "die young".[64]

The IFL inextricably linked its Nordic-Aryan racism to antisemitism, which also determined who would belong to the same fascist party family. This differentiation process culminated in the opposing concepts of "racial fascism" and "kosher fascism", which the IFL used to express contempt for the previous role model. Fascist Italy had allegedly betrayed its principles due to its friendliness towards Jews. In an attack against the Italian Fascist party, the IFL claimed that "the only true Fascism [..] is and must be Racial".[65] The 'honorable' and 'true' movements of 'racial fascism' included the role model NSDAP, the Swedish NSAP, the Canadian National Unity Party, and the French Action (*Action Française*).[66] 'Kosher fascism' referred to movements allegedly infiltrated or run by Jews, notably the British rival BUF, the Italian PNF, the Dutch NSB, and the Czechoslovakian NOF.[67] Clearly, fascist movements abroad could rise and fall in prestige, in this case linked to their programmatic outlook towards Jews. This differentiation process reminds us of how the German WD assessed its potential allies with regard to their stance on antisemitism, as outlined in Chapter 4.

"A Gigantic Battle of Two Worlds": Manichaean and Temporal Myths of Fascist Internationalism

In September 1936, the Danish DNSAP anticipated poor results in the upcoming *Landsting* elections (the upper house of the Danish parliament), after having only received 1% of the votes in the last countrywide elections in October 1935. There-

62 On the IFL connections to Canada, New Zealand and Australia, see May, "Breaking Boundaries", 151–155.

63 Gyron, "On the Economics of Race: This Talk of Civil War", *The Fascist,* June 1938.

64 "The Fascist Outlook", *The Fascist,* September 1933.

65 "Fascism in Italy and Germany", *The Fascist,* July 1936.

66 "The Fascist Outlook", *The Fascist,* December 1934; "Racial Fascism in Canada", *The Fascist,* April 1938; "Racial Fascist Honours", *The Fascist,* July 1939.

67 "Fascism in Italy and Germany", *The Fascist,* July 1936; "European Kosher Fascist News", *The Fascist,* January 1936.

fore, it argued reassuringly in a leaflet that "the battle is for something far more important than a few meaningless mandates in an insignificant parliamentary *Landsting*".[68] Instead, the DNSAP linked its own destiny to the rise of a broader phenomenon: "[a] national rising against Marxism and Capitalism saved Germany, it is fighting in France, Spain, and many other countries, and only a Nordic rising, National Socialism, can save Denmark in the mighty Ragnarok which is passing over the world and which will hit us".[69] The reference to *Ragnarok*, the saga of the history and downfall of the gods and the end of the world in Norse mythology, was typical for Nordic fascist movements in the interwar period. Thus, the dramatic battle cry to rally the forces through references to the rise of fascist internationalism intended to motivate potential voters despite the prospect of another electoral failure. The campaign did not prevent a catastrophic election result of only 0.35%, exacerbated by the landslide victory of the archenemy, the governing Social Democratic Party, which won almost 40% of the electorate.[70]

Nevertheless, the failed DNSAP campaign shows that myths of fascist internationalism were often used in times of crisis, when parties were facing electoral losses, dwindling membership, internal disputes, and splits. Manichaean and temporal narratives aimed at giving meaning and creating support in times of need, ultimately gathering the forces for a final battle (and victory) while counterbalancing the own political insignificance. Typically, fascist movements used the 'historical' success of fascist regimes and movements abroad as an indicator of their own imminent success. One of the Swiss NF's forerunner organizations proclaimed under the impression of Hitler's appointment as German chancellor in January 1933 that "the national and social rebirth of the European states" could not be stopped, attaching its destiny to the developments abroad. "Yesterday, we saw the victory of Fascism. Today, we are witnessing the victory of National Socialism. Tomorrow, the "National Front" will be victorious".[71] Many articles by the leading NF theorist Hans Oehler repeated this narrative of Europe being at a crossroads between a "dying order of yesterday and a coming order of tomorrow".[72]

68 DNSAP, Hvad Kampen gælder, pamphlet, 1936: [KB], 45349, accessed March 27, 2025, http://www5.kb.dk/pamphlets/dasmaa/2008/feb/partiprogrammer/object45349/da/.

69 DNSAP, Hvad Kampen gælder, 1936.

70 On election results of the DNSAP, see Djursaa and Poulsen, "Social Bases of Nazism in Denmark".

71 "Zu Hitlers Reichskanzlerschaft", *Der Eiserne Besen*, February 3, 1933.

72 Hans Oehler, "Zwischen Gestern und Morgen!", *Nationale Hefte. Schweizer Monatsschrift* 3 (1936): 1–4, 1.

Crucially, parties such as the Swiss NF interpreted not only themselves but also the rise of other fascist movements in a temporal pattern. In one article on the French Cross of Fire, the NF even presented fascism as a manly gendered temporal force, seeing "the strong, austere, and masculine spirit of renewal at work, casting away the shadows of the past and daring to step into the future".[73] Likewise, the Norwegian *Nasjonal Samling* wrote in 1934: "[t]hroughout Europe, fascism is marching forward. And through sacrifice and struggle, the movements will eventually be victorious, because they represent the new age, they represent youth, idealism, and the will to win".[74] This fascist temporality was archetypical, linking the future success of the own domestic movement to myths of fascist internationalism.

This temporal understanding of a soon-to-come victory was often interlinked with a conspiratorial Manichaean worldview of two eternally struggling forces, the one representing the past, the other the future. The Swiss FFS juxtaposed the "universality of Geneva" (meaning the League of Nations), vilified as a unified "egoistic liberal-Freemasonic-communist retirement shelter," with the "young forces of the universality of fascism".[75] Similarly, the Swiss NF repeatedly divided the world into an internationalist camp and a nationalist camp. This worldview challenged the traditional Swiss self-identification with foreign political neutrality, a core principle of modern Swiss foreign policy.[76] In particular, the NF ideologue Hans Oehler maintained that the Swiss people "is faced with the question: International Soviet Republic of Switzerland or independent Switzerland".[77] Party leader Rolf Henne also warned about a "gigantic battle of two worlds with each other that will only end with the victory of one and the downfall of the other". Henne fantasized about a "final victory" (*Endsieg*) while marching from the past into the future as part of "the broadest front" with the "best forces" in the other countries of Europe.[78] This gave listeners and readers the impression of the NF as a historical force within the fascist era on an almost equal footing with the successful neighbors in Germany and Italy, despite its marginal role within the Swiss political system.

73 "Croix-de-feu", *Die Front,* January 9, 1935.

74 "Fascisme over Europa", *Nasjonal Samling,* May 24, 1934.

75 "Universalität und Universalität", *Der Schweizer Fascist,* April 4, 1935.

76 See Marco Jorio, *Die Schweiz und ihre Neutralität*: *Eine 400-jährige Geschichte* (Zurich: Hier und Jetzt, 2023).

77 Hans Oehler, "Die Schweiz im europäischen Weltanschauungskampf", *Die Front,* June 23, 1936.

78 Rolf Henne, "Vormarsch in breitester Front!", *Die Front,* June 27, 1936.

A fascist Manichaean-temporal worldview also shaped the Norwegian NS. According to Fredrik Wilhelmsen, the NS "evoked an image of being in a historical-transitional-period, where an era marked by materialism would be replaced by a new spiritual and idealist era, headed by NS itself", but as part of a broader fascist era.[79] In a speech in the summer of 1936, Vidkun Quisling fantasized about "two hostile camps in Europe and in the world": the Marxist, liberalist, and internationalist camp "backed by Jewish nationalism and imperialism", representing the old dying world, and the world of "national movements of renaissance and unification heralding the new age, bringing in a new State and a new world order".[80] His view was based on *völkisch*, racist, and antisemitic understandings of a "historical and divine mission" of Nordic peoples. For Quisling, "a duel between Judaism and the Nordic spirits is inevitable", illustrating an apocalyptical dimension of myths of fascist internationalism.[81]

A final example illustrates the importance of fascist temporality and Manichaeism when minor fascist parties attached themselves to the broader fascist *Zeitgeist* and linked their own fate to developments abroad. In 1935, the year of SNU's transformation to SNF, the leading intellectual of the party, Rütger Essén, published a book on the history of Sweden named *Sverige upplever Världen* (Sweden experiencing the world, Figure 6).[82] Innovatively employing something which historians today would call a transnational methodological approach, Essén argued that Sweden's history could not be understood in isolation by pointing out the Western world's influence on his country. He explicitly placed his party's departure from conservatism and re-foundation as the SNF in the international context of the creation of the 'Third Reich'. At this particular moment in history, he insisted, Scandinavia appeared as "an island of Marxism". However, the general European tendency would point to the overcoming of communism due to a "different, essentially separate spirit".[83] In the conclusion named "towards a new age", Essén proclaimed the "world-historical burden" of a new European generation, which was seeking to overcome the "Russian-Bolshevist proletarian religion", the bourgeois "après-nous-le-déluge" sentiment, and parliamentary democracy. Instead, the salvation of Europe would be achieved by discipline, self-sacrifice, and social responsibility based

79 Wilhelmsen, "From New Order to the Millennium of White Power", 22. See also Wilhelmsen, "Reconnecting Forward".

80 "Et nordisk verdenssamband", *Fritt Folk,* June 29, 1936.

81 "Et nordisk verdenssamband", *Fritt Folk*, June 29, 1936.

82 Rütger Essén, *Sverige upplever världen*: *Vår politiska historia från sekelskiftet till nu* (Stockholm: Lindfors Bokförlag, 1935).

83 Essén, *Sverige upplever världen*, 516–517.

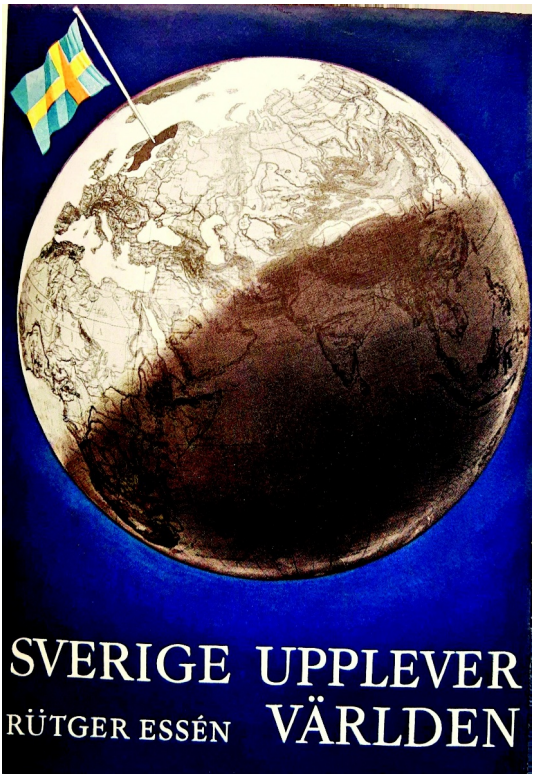


Figure 6: Book cover, Rütger Essén, *Sverige upplever Världen. Vår politiska historia från sekelskiftet till nu* (Stockholm: Lindfors Bokförlag, 1935), unknown illustrator.

on solidarity. Hence, despite still emphasizing Swedish "idiosyncrasy", Essén concluded that "the fate of Sweden cannot be separated from that of Europe".[84]

The underlying dualistic Manichaeism was illustrated on Essén's book cover (see Figure 6), depicting a world separated into a bright European, Western part of the globe, including Sweden's flag, and a darker, Eastern part. Intriguingly, the antagonized Soviet Union ended up on the brighter, 'good' side. One could speculate that this hints at Essén's understanding of Bolshevism as the main enemy of fascism. Essén believed that the Russian nation, once freed from communism, could become a mediator between the West and Asia.[85] When the SNF merged with Per Engdahl's New-Swedishness movement in 1937, the idea of two historically opposing camps, be-

84 Essén, *Sverige upplever välden*, 521.
85 See Rütger Essén, *Die russische Gleichung* (Leipzig: List, 1943).

came an indispensable part of the party's ideology. Engdahl anchored "New-Swedishness" in a European framework, arguing that this "new" ideology was related to other European nationalist movements and thus was part of a "new European cultural epoch" that would help to overcome the decaying European order.[86]

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The two previous chapters have emphasized the limits and challenges of fascist internationalism through the prism of the fascist predicament and expansionism. In stark contrast, this chapter has foregrounded the opportunities and hopes connected to notions of international fascism, linked to myths of a temporal battle between the 'good' nationalist forces of fascism and the 'evil' internationalist forces of communism, liberalism, and Judaism. A key finding is that minor fascist movements conceptualized fascist internationalism not only vis-à-vis the major fascist regimes but also on their own terms and in relation to each other. The main argument has been that the conceptions of fascism as an international force on the rise gave minor movements meaning and political purpose despite challenging political conditions domestically. This link between crisis and a propagandistic myth of fascist internationalism was a recurring theme. The preoccupation with the outside world could have a fundamental impact on the ideological course of some of the parties, as seen in the radicalization of the Swedish SNU/SNF. Eventually, notions of fascist kinship fueled the belief in a central facet of "fascism's transnational history", which was, in the words of Aristotle Kallis, "the shared belief in a 'history-making' project of bringing about a new 'European' and global order".[87]

Significantly, these Manichaean-temporal notions shaped more concrete suggestions for organizing fascist internationalism in the future. Gardar Sahlberg, a young SNF party member who would become a known literary scholar, screenwriter, and short film director after the Second World War, dedicated numerous articles to the importance of "nationalist internationalism". He argued that the Swedish youth had a "world historic mission" to fulfill as part of "natural internationalism". He characterized the Marxist-liberal front, in contrast, as "artificial (*unaturlig*) internationalism", allegedly destroying national boundaries with its emphasis on class struggle. Therefore, "nationalism must become international".[88] Sahlberg even suggested forming a new organization called "Nationalist International" (not to be confused with Hans Keller's IAdN), in which each nation had to

86 Cf. "Vi tro på Sverige och svenska uppgifter i ny europeisk kulturepok: Per Engdahl om den nysvenska rörelsen", *Nationell Tidning*, November 21, 1936.

87 Kallis, "Transnational Fascism", 41.

88 Gardar Sahrberg, "Den nationella international världen saknar", *Nationell Tidning*, December 5, 1936.

be allowed to develop its idiosyncrasy and choose its own state form.[89] Although this organization never materialized, the example shows, first, how the myths of fascist internationalism shaped more concrete visions of international cooperation and, second, that smaller fascist parties developed their own, independent plans for a new European or global fascist order, as explored in more detail in Chapter 10.

Ultimately, however, the fascists of Europe were not content with merely developing theories about fascist kinship; they also wanted to enter into closer relations with each other in political practice, although linguistic, ideological and monetary barriers had to be overcome. A basic prerequisite for reporting on foreign parties was, after all, to generate and circulate knowledge about each other in the first place.

89 Gardar Sahrberg, "Svensk ungdom vill ha en världshistorisk mission", *Nationell Tidning*, November 28, 1936.

Chapter 8
"A Strong Medium of Propaganda": Cooperation and Circulation of Knowledge on Fascist Internationalism

In June 1937, the DNSAP organized an exhibition called The Coming Europe (*Det kommende Europa*), which was displayed at the party convention in Grenaa on the east coast of the Jutlandic peninsula in Denmark. This exhibition allowed average party members to visualize and educate themselves about fascist internationalism through various booths depicting European fascist movements and regimes. The exposition itself was a product of practical cooperation among these parties. The young DNSAP member Erling Hallas had approached approximately twenty movements and organizations across Europe in the previous months. Many agreed to help their Danish comrades with propaganda material, showcasing fascist solidarity and shared ideas of masculinity, leadership, and community visually. This episode illustrates the rise of multiple direct bilateral and multilateral contacts between different fascist movements, propaganda organizations, political think tanks, magazines, and publishing houses in the 1930s. These were formed in the service of knowledge exchange that enabled and fueled myths and visions of fascist internationalism.

The activities and practices of fascist internationalism emanating from the small parties of northwestern Europe and the conditions, functions, and limits of international cooperation among these movements are the focus of this chapter. Historians such as Arnd Bauerkämper highlight that transnational fascism was characterized by "collaborative activities, transfers, appropriations and implementations of ideas, practices, styles, and institutions by fascists and non-fascists for specific ends".[1] Building on this framework, the chapter scrutinizes letter correspondences, exchange of propaganda material, mutual visits, book projects, and exhibitions. To explore these forms of practical cooperation, the concept of *circulation* is used to analyze how knowledge about fascism as an international

1 Arnd Bauerkämper, "Afterword: Between Cooperation and Conflict: Perspectives of Historical Research on Transnational Fascism", edited by Arnd Bauerkämper and Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, in *Fascism without Borders. Transnational Connections and Cooperation between Movements and Regimes in Europe from 1918 to 1945* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2017), 355–364, 362.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111469799-009

phenomenon was produced, used, circulated, and transformed, and which *knowledge actors* contributed to the production and circulation of this knowledge.[2]

The incentive for the practical contacts was to circulate and receive knowledge about affiliated fascist movements abroad, which the domestic 'mainstream' press ignored. This exchange of propaganda material aimed to provide the domestic readers of the party journals with a better understanding of fascism as a broader international phenomenon. Thus, to a certain degree, the practical cooperation studied in this chapter facilitated and fueled the narratives, conceptions, and visions of fascist internationalism as scrutinized previously. At the same time, these activities were themselves the product of notions of fascist kinship across borders, highlighting the interplay between theory and practice.

By using a cultural approach, the chapter shows that practical cooperation not only resulted in the circulation of written material such as party programs, leaflets, newspapers, books, or even songbooks but also in the exchange of visual objects such as posters and photos. Images and material objects capture and produce knowledge, and because of their iconic difference, visual sources are sometimes even more memorable and emotive than written records. This visual aspect was present in various book projects and exhibitions on fascist internationalism, including numerous pictures of party leaders, party symbols, insignias, paramilitary parades, and mass rallies.

In *Visualizing Fascism* (2020), Julia Thomas proposes to approach fascism as a global, aesthetic phenomenon in relation to the mass politics of the twentieth century, arguing that there was a "shared aesthetic repertoire of fascist, communist, and liberal democratic states".[3] However, due to the "ideological vagueness" of fascism, Thomas states that "visual presentations of fascist ideology were crucial precisely because the 'message' of the graphic arts, images, collages, movies, monuments, and pageantry was elusive and emotive".[4] Similarly, I reason that *seeing* fascist movements and regimes in action abroad through images, films, and exhibitions contributed to the myth of fascist internationalism. The advantage of visualizing instead of theorizing fascism was that neither a common definition of fascist ideology, nor a common terminology, was needed to recognize the movement abroad due to the shared visual emotive elements.

2 This draws on insights from historians of knowledge like Johan Östling and David Larrson Heidenblad, who warn against simplifying models of diffusion and dissemination, arguing that knowledge is dynamic and not fixed. See Östling and Heidenblad, *The History of Knowledge*, 16–30.

3 Julia Adeney Thomas, "Introduction: A Portable Concept of Fascism", in *Visualizing Fascism. The Twentieth-Century Rise of the Global Right* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020), 1–43, 5.

4 Thomas, "Introduction", 8–9.

Visual elements of fascist internationalism included typical aspects of fascist spectacle such as mass rallies, paramilitary units, flags, and symbols.[5] Propagandistic images of mass events and party leaders often emphasized specific gender dynamics due to the foregrounding of masculine aesthetics.[6] These visuals transported the importance of the messianic leader cult in interwar fascism, in which the "charismatic leader" of each fascist movement was assigned the role of bringing "salvation" to the national community.[7] Such images of fascist leaders were also used to 'recognize' and acknowledge kindred movements abroad as part of the same fascist party family.[8] Hence, the transnational exchange of various materials transported and reasserted shared fascist ideals of unity, masculinity, and a leadership cult, and thus a visualized image of fascist internationalism beyond a mere programmatic outlook.

Conditions, Obstacles, and Functions of Cooperation Across Borders

There were many challenges and limits to transnational practical cooperation among smaller fascist parties. As "amateur fascists" excluded from domestic political power, small movements often had limited financial resources and lacked international visibility.[9] Against this backdrop, it was laborious and demanding to gain knowledge about their fascist counterparts and to engage in cooperation abroad. Especially in the first years after the party foundation, contact with foreign movements tended to be sparse. Another problem arose from the difficulty in defining which foreign parties belonged to the same ideological party family because, as outlined earlier, it was far from uniform what labels such as 'fascism', 'national socialism', and more idiosyncratic terms meant for the different parties.

The existence of too many competing and hostile parties and splinter groups in one country also aggravated cooperation among fascist movements. This issue

5 On fascism as a phenomenon based on 'spectacle', see Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi, *Fascist Spectacle*: *The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini's Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

6 On fascism and the propagandistic usage of images, see Katharina Schembs, *Der Arbeiter als Zukunftsträger der Nation*: *Bildpropaganda im faschistischen Italien und im peronistischen Argentinien in transnationaler Perspektive (1922–1955)* (Cologne: Böhlau-Verlag, 2017).

7 Iordachi, "From 'Generic' to 'Real-Existing' Fascism", 293.

8 For an exemplary analysis of photography concerning a fascist leader, see Lutz Koepenick, "Face Time with Hitler", in *Visualizing Fascism*: *The Twentieth-Century Rise of the Global Right* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020), 111–134.

9 Cf. Clark and Grady, "European Fascist Movements: An Introduction", 17.

was severe in Scandinavia due to the highly "fragmented character of Nordic fascism".[10] Many competing fascist parties existed especially in Denmark and Sweden, ironically summarized by Lena Berggren as "a mishmash of ridiculous NSDAP-lookalikes and Hitler-wannabes constantly fighting each other".[11] This made it difficult to distinguish between various movements with almost identical abbreviations and to predict which of those had the best prospect of uniting the nationalist forces. The Norwegian NS was from 1934 to 1935 in contact with three different rivaling movements in Denmark, including Frits Clausen's DNSAP. At the same time, the NS corresponded with at least three potential partners in Sweden with confusingly similar names: the Swedish National Socialist Party (*Svenska Nationalsocialistiska Partiet*, SNSP) headed by Birger Furugård, the NSAP, a direct spin-off led by Sven Olov Lindholm, which changed its name later to Swedish Socialist Gathering (*Svensk Socialistisk Samling*, SSS), and the SNU/SNF, confusingly also headed by an unrelated Lindholm (Elmo). These parties were not only competing for political superiority in Sweden but also for the moral high ground to represent the country abroad among kindred fascist movements. These rivalries occasionally resulted in concrete interference with other movements' contacts abroad. Rütger Essén invited NS leader Vidkun Quisling to hold a non-public lecture for an inner SNU circle in Stockholm in early 1935. The purpose was to prevent Quisling from participating in another meeting in Gothenburg organized by SNU's competitor, the Swedish NSAP.[12]

Transnational connections were also complicated by missing or inaccurate knowledge about the partners abroad. Before approaching each other, the movements had first to figure out the correct addresses of party headquarters. This was challenging because parties often moved headquarters, changed names (such as the Swedish parties), ceased to exist without informing the partners abroad (such as the Swiss FFS and the Irish NCP), or split into competing factions (such as the Swiss NF). These difficulties were illustrated in an awkward and asymmetrical information triangle between the Norwegian NS, the Dutch NSB, and the Swedish NSAP. In 1935, the Dutch fascists contacted the Norwegians via the Italian CAUR network and used their new partners to approach like-minded movements in Sweden. However, the NS provided the Dutch NSB with false information on

10 Karcher, "National Socialisms in Clinch", 64.

11 Cf. Berggren, "Swedish Fascism – Why Bother?", 395.

12 See Letter from Rütger Essén to Vidkun Quisling, January 10, 1935: [RA Oslo], PA-0750 Gj L0001.

which Swedish party was of more political relevance, suggesting to contact the SNSP, which was dissolved a year later, instead of the far more successful NSAP.[13]

Further obstacles were translation and linguistic barriers. For example, the correspondence of the DNSAP and NS with movements abroad entailed multiple languages, including Norwegian, Danish, Swedish, German, French, English, and Spanish. The Belgian LNB approached the DNSAP in French, but the Danes replied in their mother tongue, evoking a complaint by the Belgians. In their response, the Belgian fascists suggested not to respond in Danish but instead in German because they had difficulties understanding the Nordic languages.[14] Likewise, the Falange sent letters in Spanish to the Norwegian NS, which neither the party leader Quisling nor the general secretary Rolf Jørgen Fuglsang could comprehend. Therefore, the correspondence was put on hold until a party member named Bjarne Vold, who could communicate in Spanish, was found.[15]

Despite these difficulties, the parties found ways and means to build a transnational network with fascist movements abroad. Some appointed specific members responsible for communication with foreign fascists, thus becoming knowledge actors and brokers. Gordon Woods acted as IFL's "Foreign Propaganda officer", who corresponded, among others, with the Dutch NSB and the Norwegian NS.[16] Erling Hallas, an editor of the party journal *National-Socialisten,* handled most of the DNSAP communication with movements abroad, and organized the international fascist exhibition mentioned above.

The contacts between the minor fascist movements also led to mutual visits of delegations or individual party members, who were often invited as lecturers or guests of honor at party events and conventions. The IFL deputy leader Henry Hamilton Beamish visited the Canadian Nationalist Party in 1936 in Winnipeg, intending to reinvigorate the allied movement after some political setbacks.[17] The Scandinavian fascist parties, in particular, initiated mutual visits from 1935 onward. The NS general secretary Fuglsang spent a week in May 1935 as a guest of the SNSP in Stockholm and wished the party "a victory in Sweden".[18] But these visits were not restricted to northern Europe. The NS founding member Frederik

13 As discussed in more detail in Kunkeler and Hamre, "Conceptions and Practices of International Fascism in Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands, 1930–40", 57–59.

14 Letter from LNB to DNSAP, September 18, 1937: [RA Copenhagen], DNSAP arkiv, Rigspolitichefen, Politiets Efterretningstjeneste: Sager (1945–1950) 55 – 59 (R4): 3b Hovedkontoret Korrespondance, Vol. 26.

15 See NS, Bjarne Vold's spanske korrespondanse, folder, undated: [RA Oslo], PA-0760 G L0007.

16 Cf. T. M. Shelford (MI5), The Imperial Fascist League, March 8, 1942: [TNA], KV 2/1365, 94a, 10, 3.

17 Cf. May, "Breaking Boundaries", 151–153.

18 Rolf Jørgen Fuglsang to Birger Furugård, May 20, 1935: [RA Oslo], PA-0758 F Fb L0025.

Prytz met with a BUF representative when he visited London in 1935.[19] The French fascist leader Marcel Bucard, who became acquainted with Frits Clausen in late 1934 at the Montreux Congress, was at least twice invited to DNSAP party conventions in Denmark. In 1938, he traveled with a small French delegation to a rally in Slagelse, a historical town on the largest Danish island, Zealand. *National-Socialisten* used the occasion to argue that "the ideas of the new age cannot be defeated; they prevail everywhere – and in spite of everything!"[20] These occasional visits were used propagandistically in the fascist press to narrate typical myths of an imminent and inevitable victory of fascism, besides expressing mutual cross-border fascist solidarity.

The long-lasting French-Danish connection between Marcel Bucard and Frits Clausen illustrates that agencies of fascist internationalism, such as CAUR and WD, played an important role in creating low-level contacts between minor fascist movements. In their bulletins, they informed about all these scattered organizations across Europe. At times, they also connected their correspondents and subscribers directly with each other. For example, CAUR put Rütger Essén from the Swedish SNF in contact with the CAUR representative in Vienna, Leo Negrelli, and his fascist-friendly Austrian press office.[21] Furthermore, as demonstrated in Part I of this book, these agencies enabled personal face-to-face meetings at their international conferences between different fascist leaders, often becoming the starting point for further bilateral connections.

The Danish DNSAP's extensive archival party collection enables a deeper analysis of the direct exchange between the minor parties and the circulation of knowledge about fascist internationalism. The DNSAP's relations with organizations abroad gradually increased and diversified in scope during the 1930s. Initially, the Danish fascist party exchanged letters mostly with its Nordic partners, such as the Norwegian NS, the NSAP and the SNSP in Sweden, the Icelandic Nationalist Party (*Flokkur Þjóðernissinna*), and the Finnish IKL, which was the largest fascist party in northern Europe. The IKL also stood in contact with the Italian CAUR, and on one occasion, it even donated a real bear to Benito Mussolini's family (the animal was the symbol of the party).[22] From 1936 on, the DNSAP also reached out to or was contacted by various movements beyond northern Europe, notably, the IFL and BUF in Britain, the French MF, the Belgian LNB, the Dutch

19 Letter from NS to J. H. Aitken (BUF), November 12, 1935: [RA Oslo], PA 0760 F FB L0025. See also the letter exchange between NS and BUF: [RA Oslo], PA 0760 FD L0038.

20 "Marcel Bucard vil overvære DNSAPs Landstævne i Kolding", *National-Socialisten,* May 27, 1939.

21 Cf. Letter from Mario Sani to Rütger Essén, November 8, 1935: [RA Marieberg], REA, Vol. 154.

22 Cf. Ferrarini, "Mediterraneo Baltico", 10.

NSB, the Spanish Falange, and, geographically the furthest, the Greek National Socialist Party led by George S. Mercouris, whom DNSAP leader Frits Clausen had met in Montreux.[23]

The Norwegian NS, which corresponded with most of the same fascist parties abroad, collected such letters in a folder named "correspondence with sister organizations", indicating that this communication was seen as an act of fascist kinship.[24] Geographically, there was a clear bias in the Norwegian and Danish cases toward cooperation with northern and western European movements. Both parties neglected eastern European countries, even though some of the most successful fascist movements in the interwar period arose in the East, such as the Romanian Iron Guard, the Ustaša – Croatian Revolutionary Movement (*Ustaša – Hrvatski revolucionarni pokret*), and the Hungarian Arrow Cross Party (Nyilaskeresztes Párt). The exception was a contact between the NS and the Russian Fascist Union (RFU), an émigré movement based in Manchukuo.[25] Apart from this occasion, non-European parties were completely absent from the lists of foreign correspondents, even though various fascist movements emerged outside Europe in the 1930s.[26] Some of these non-European fascist movements made contact with either Fascist Italy or Nazi Germany. But there appears to have been little or no communication with the smaller European fascist movements in northern Europe. This underlines the narrow Eurocentric outlook of both the NS and the DNSAP, based on their Nordic-Aryan racism and emphasis on regional Scandinavianism.

One counter-example to this Eurocentric outlook was the British IFL, which became "a hub for transnational activity" shaped by the global spanning of the British Empire.[27] In its attempt to fight 'Judaism' internationally, the IFL established not only contact with European parties but also with various antisemitic and white supremacist movements outside of Europe.[28] Among others, the IFL corresponded with the Canadian Nationalist Party and with Adrien Arcand, a

23 Cf. DNSAP, international correspondence: [RA Copenhagen], DNSAP arkiv, Rigspolitichefen, Politiets Efterretningstjeneste: Sager (1945–1950) 55 – 59 (R4), Hovedkontoret Korrespondance, Vol. 22–30.

24 Cf. NS, international correspondence: [RA Oslo], PA 0760 F Fb – L0024, F/Fb – L0025, G L0007, Fd – L0038; PA 0750 F L0005, F L0006, Gj L0001.

25 Letter from RFU to Vidkun Quisling, June 22, 1938: [RA Oslo], PA 0760 G L0007. On the RFU, sometimes also referred to as the All-Russian Fascist Union, see Susanne Hohler, *Fascism in Manchuria*: *The Soviet-China Encounter in the 1930s* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 44–64.

26 E.g. Larsen ed., *Fascism outside Europe.*

27 May, "Breaking Boundaries", 153.

28 See T. M. Shelford (MI5), The Imperial Fascist League, March 8, 1942: [TNA], KV 2/1365, 94a, 10, 3–4.

self-proclaimed 'Canadian Führer' and founder of the Christian National Socialist Party.[29] It also stood in contact with the Greyshirt movement in South Africa and advertised publications by the antisemite Arthur Nelson Field, a pivotal figure in the far-right scene of New Zealand, who cited texts by IFL leader Leese in his work.[30] Movements in Asia and Africa, which represented 'non-white' peoples, remained excluded from the IFL network due to its 'racial fascism' and white supremacism. This underlines how parties abroad were excluded or included from activities of fascist internationalism on the basis of practical restraints, geographical reach, Eurocentrism, racism, white supremacism, and the legacies of an imperial past in the case of the British Empire.

"The Internationale": Circulating Propaganda, Images, and Songbooks

Cooperation among smaller fascist parties in Europe provided the necessary propagandistic raw material to construct myths of fascist internationalism. Most connections were formed in the service of information-gathering and propaganda through the circulation of written texts such as leaflets, journals, booklets, and manifestos. A typical outcome of this cooperation was the subscription to the leading party newspaper of the 'sister' or 'brother' movement abroad. Paradigmatically, the NS asked the BUF in March 1937 to exchange their Norwegian journal *Fritt Folk* with the British counterpart *Action* for free.[31] Such deals enabled cheap possibilities to distribute propaganda abroad and gather new information for readers at home. This resulted in descriptions of fascist kinship based on ideological and programmatic aspects, as described in the previous chapter.

Beyond the textual level, the parties exchanged material objects, notably images, movies, songbooks, symbols, and even party flags, sometimes for specific propagandistic occasions. The NS sent three large party flags to the Danish DNSAP, requesting an immediate return after the joint Nordic appeal conference in November 1939.[32] For some parties, such as the DNSAP and the IFL, the swastika became the emblematic visualization of fascist internationalism. In 1933, the

29 On the IFL contacts to Canada, see May, "Breaking Boundaries", 151–153.

30 On Arthur Nelson Field, see Marinus F. La Rooij, "From Colonial Conservative to International Antisemite: The Life and Work of Arthur Nelson Field", *Journal of Contemporary History* 37.2 (2002): 223–239.

31 Letter from NS to BUF, March 18, 1937: [RA Oslo], PA 0760 FD L0038.

32 Letter from Rolf Jørgen Fuglsang toK. Hofmansen, November 8, 1939: [RA Oslo], PA 0760 F L0032. On the Nordic appeal, see Chapter 10.

Danes celebrated that their British comrades, next to parties in the Netherlands and Switzerland, had taken up the "Nordic people's old sun symbol", signifying the hope of a common Germanic and antisemitic front.[33] In turn, when the Swedish NSAP decided to get rid of the swastika as their party symbol in 1938 due to its connection to the 'Third Reich', the DNSAP accused their "Swedish comrades" of betraying the "mighty idea of National Socialism".[34]

The images exchanged by the minor parties often highlighted masculinity by showing pictures of party conventions and parades of entirely male paramilitary units. The figure of male, heroic, fascist soldiers was also present in propagandistic movies such as the Spanish pro-Francoist film *Arriba España*, which the DNSAP and NS exchanged in 1939. The Danish party repeatedly organized screenings of German movies such as the famous *Triumph des Willens* by Leni Riefenstahl but also of films about the BUF in England and even the minuscule Icelandic Nationalist Party to foster ideas of fascist kinship based on paramilitary masculinity.[35] Furthermore, the parties requested portraits of male fascist leaders from their partners. The Falange member and CAUR representative Pedro del Real Arribas asked for a signed picture of Vidkun Quisling for a Falange lecture series in Spain on "brother movements" abroad.[36] Occasionally, such photo exchanges of party leaders also consolidated private, personal bonds between the leaders of the various movements. As a sign of affection, Frits Clausen placed a portrait of Falange leader José Antonio Primo de Rivera on his office desk in Bovrup.[37] Hence, the common masculine aesthetics and the leader cult helped fascist movements to recognize and reassert fascist kinship beyond ideological commonalities.

However, this recognition also failed in some cases due to ideological or programmatic differences between the parties. For example, CAUR president Eugenio Coselschi asked Rütger Essén after the Montreux Congress to send him a portrait of the fascist leader of his party, the SNF. At the time, the SNF was headed by the internationally unknown Elmo Lindholm, who was 'only' an elected chairman and not a typical charismatic fascist *Führer* equipped with the leadership principle. Essén was therefore reluctant to confirm Coselschi's wish because the Swed-

33 "Europa vagner", *National-Socialisten,* June 11, 1933.

34 "Lindholm forlader Hagekorset! Og opgiver demed den nordiske Livsindstilling", *National-Socialisten,* November 18, 1938.

35 Cf. Lauridsen, "*Føreren har ordet!*", 526–527.

36 Letter from Pedro del Real Arribas to Vidkun Quisling, June 25, 1935: [RA Oslo], PA 0760 F Fd L0038. On the relations between the Spanish Falange and the Norwegian NS, see also Chapter 9.

37 Cf. Lauridsen, "*Føreren har ordet!*", 464.

ish party was far from engaging in a leader cult similar to the Italian PNF regarding Benito Mussolini.[38]

The transnational circulation included also songs, lyrics, and entire songbooks to inspire and motivate each other in the fascist fight against mutual 'international' enemies. Thus, even audibility could strengthen myths of fascist internationalism. Interdisciplinary research combining history and musicology has demonstrated the importance of folk songs, music, and battle hymns for fascist propaganda and mobilization, linking culture and politics.[39] As their antagonists from the political left, fascist movements used songs and battle hymns to appeal to the emotions of their followers and for "collective bonding" to create a feeling of community.[40] Thus, fascist regimes and movements intentionally used music to communicate specific fascist ideals, values, and attitudes through discourses that "promoted unity, conformity, might of nation and people, and a machine-like purpose".[41] One of the most famous pieces of propagandistic fascist music was the *Horst-Wessel-Lied*. The NSDAP song became *de facto* the German national anthem in the Hitler regime, dedicated to a leading 'martyr' of Nazism, the SA member Horst Wessel who was shot by communists in 1930. The song was strictly anticommunist, even though it copied elements from socialist propaganda music. As a Nazi German musicologist argued in 1934, "There was the melody that could juxtapose the jaunty swing of the *Internationale* with primordial German".[42]

The Danish DNSAP adopted the *Horst-Wessel-Lied* and used a Danish translation as its own battle hymn.[43] In 1936, the party prepared a new songbook and asked its Scandinavian partners, the Norwegian NS and the Swedish NSAP, to share their audible material because "by studying it, we may be guided in the preparation of our new one".[44] Within weeks, the NS agreed to send its own songbook, containing hymns such as the *NS battle song*. Speculatively, a hymn called

38 Letter from Eugenio Coselschi to Rütger Essén, December 29, 1934: [RA Marieberg], REA, Vol. 70; Letter from Eugenio Coselschi to Rütger Essén, January 11, 1935: [RA Marieberg], REA, Vol. 10.

39 Cf. Robert Illiano and Massimiliano Sala, "The Politics of Spectacle: Italian Music and Fascist Propaganda", *Muzikologija* 13.1 (2012): 9–26.

40 Cf. Clark and Grady, "European Fascist Movements", 17.

41 David Machin and John E. Richardson, "Discourses of Unity and Purpose in the Sounds of Fascist Music: A Multimodal Approach", *Critical Discourse Studies* 9.4 (2012): 329–345, 343.

42 Joseph Müller-Blattau, "Das Horst-Wessel-Lied", *Die Musik 26* (1934): 327.

43 Cf. Djursaa, *DNSAP*, 38–44.

44 Letter from DNSAP to NS and NSAP, October 13, 1936: [RA Copenhagen], DNSAP arkiv, Rigspolitichefen, Politiets Efterretningstjeneste: Sager (1945–1950) 55 – 59 (R4): 3b Hovedkontoret Korrespondance, Vol. 25.

Internasjonalen was among the materials the NS exchanged with the DNSAP.[45] The song was a new interpretation by NS supporter Dagfin Gjessing of *The Internationale*. Initially written by the French anarchist Eugène Pottier in 1871, the song became the official anthem of the Second International and later the Soviet Union and the most widespread battle song among socialist and communist workers' movements. Gessing's rhyming version in Norwegian was based on the same melody and the content of *The International*, which he inverted into the opposite meaning with an ultranationalist, palingenetic, and anti-Marxist message:

> Arise seduced fellow countrymen to the fight against the red flag. Our Norway's future is at stake, come every Norwegian join and strike a blow. Enter our brown ranks with the Saint Olaf's Cross on your chest. We will awaken our whole Norwegian people, there will be light after the darkness. Forward to the fight for our leader, forward to order, justice, peace. We shall open closed doors, we shall smash Marxism.[46]

The Norwegian *Internasjonalen* is a very illustrative example of the mimetic character of fascism that adopted communist methods in the form of melodies and lyrics to promote the opposite ultranationalist message. The British IFL also circulated propagandistic songs internationally, in this case adopted from the Protestant Salvation Army. In 1939, the IFL translated an antisemitic song called *Jewish International Anthem* into Norwegian and distributed it in both Norway and Denmark.[47] The song was based on the melody of the protestant hymn *Onward, Christian Soldiers* from the nineteenth century, used by the Salvation Army. This exchange of fascist songbooks and music pieces illustrates that fascist movements inspired and helped each other internationally because the ultranationalist and antisemitic lyrics were deemed helpful for their own nationalist agenda.

"Europa Wants to Live": Book Projects on Fascist Internationalism

European publishing houses and their publications were crucial in circulating knowledge about minor fascist movements, contributing to an understanding of fascism as a broader phenomenon beyond Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. One such book project was *Europa will leben. Die Nationalen Erneuerungsbewegungen*

45 The text was part of a collection of songs in an NS propaganda file from 1936. See Dagfin Gjessing, Internasjonalen, 1936: [RA Oslo], PA-0760 F Fb L0031.

46 Dagfin Gjessing, Internasjonalen, 1936: [RA Oslo], PA-0760 F Fb L0031.

47 Cf. T. M. Shelford (MI5), The Imperial Fascist League, March 8, 1942: [TNA], KV 2/1365, 94a, 10, 3–4.

in Wort und Bild (Europe wants to live. The Movements of National Renewal in Words and Pictures, 1936, Figure 7), written by the German author Werner Haas.[48] The book was distributed by the Batschari publishing house based in Berlin. The publisher, Erich Batschari, pursued more than monetary interest when disseminating an understanding of fascism as an international phenomenon. He supported Hans Keller's attempt to create a Nationalist International, sponsored the Berlin Congress in 1934 (which he attended), and published several of the booklets in the IAdN series *International Voices of Nationalists*.[49]

The idea of *Europa will leben* was to present fascism as a European phenomenon and equal counterweight to the Communist International and its international activities. The author Haas provided the reader with an overview of 96 putative fascist movements in 22 European countries, starting with the two dominant fascist regimes in Germany and Italy, and then continuing alphabetically from Belgium to Hungary. Haas foregrounded Nazi Germany's superiority compared to Fascist Italy.[50] *Europa will leben* nevertheless included various movements explicitly focusing on Italian Fascism as their role model, such as Arthur Fonjallaz's FFS, thus emphasizing a broad fascist party family. The book included short historical overviews of each movement, their party manifestos, and programs, printed in the original language and in German. "National movements of regeneration" was chosen as the common denominator instead of fascism or national socialism, underlining the common palingenetic mission of all movements.

In a brief preface, the Nazi author Edmund Marhefka argued through a temporal lens that Europe had been in a state of decay after the First World War, which he blamed on Marxism's class struggle and atheism. But in almost all European countries, small and smallest "reconstructive forces" were entering a new "arena of European politics," different in their political and geographical shape, "but related or similar in the goal of national renewal and in the struggle against Marxism".[51] Marhefka legitimized the sometimes minuscule size of the movements portrayed because most of them were only at the beginning of their historical mission. Thus, the author employed typical narratives of fascist internationalism: a necessary palingenesis of the European continent, an imaginary of fascist kinship despite national and political differences, communism as the common enemy, and the temporal idea of a fascist historical mission and undisputed victory in the future.

48 Werner Haas, *Europa will leben*: *Die nationalen Erneuerungsbewegungen in Wort und Bild* (Berlin: Batschari-Verlag, 1936).

49 Cf. IAdN, *20 Nationen in Berlin*, 12.

50 Cf. Haas, *Europa will leben*, 8–9.

51 Haas, *Europa will leben*, 7.

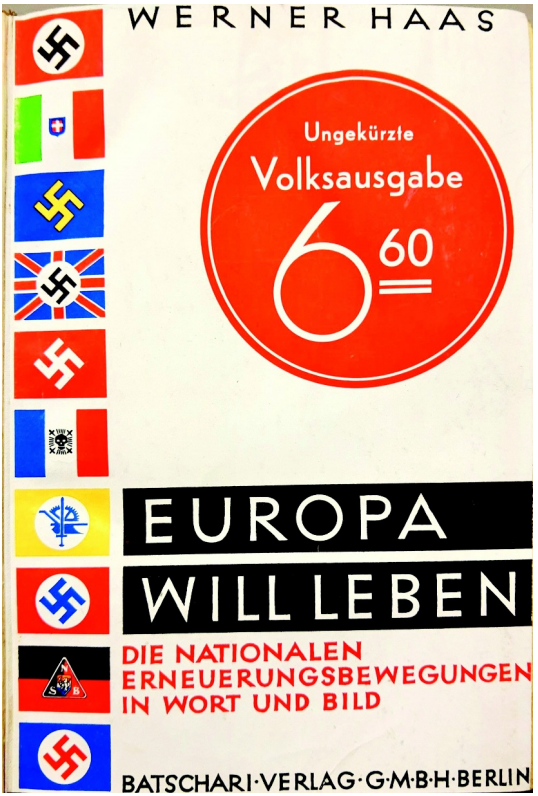


Figure 7: Book cover, *Europa will leben*: *Die nationalen Erneuerungsbewegungen in Wort und Bild* (Berlin: Batschari-Verlag, 1936), unknown illustrator.

Europa will leben contained numerous illustrations, such as pictures from rallies, leaders, and party symbols, illustrating how fascist internationalism was visualized beyond the programmatic level. For instance, the book included an image of a parade of a local ‘Harst’, the SA-styled paramilitary wing of the Swiss NF. Almost apologetically, the sub-description explained why, unlike the usual pictures of German or Italian mass rallies, these men were not wearing uniforms due to the Swiss ban on paramilitary clothing. The book gave the same explanation concerning a picture of a parade of the paramilitary unit of the Danish DNSAP, whose members wore regular white shirts instead of uniforms when greeting their leader, Frits Clausen, with a fascist salute.[52] The cover (see Figure 7) depicted ten

52 Cf. Haas, *Europa will leben*, 95; 315.

party symbols including six swastikas. This underlined how the swastika had become an international symbol of fascism.

Although written in German, *Europa will leben* was intended for an international audience. The publishing house sent prospectuses to minor fascist parties abroad, praising the book as an indispensable guide and reference work. The Norwegian NS bought the book and its main organ published a positive review, claiming that one should hail all the movements of national regeneration as part of the "the hard-fighting, but after all, awakening Europe".[53] Hans Oehler, whose Swiss NF featured prominently in *Europa will leben*, also wrote a review in his *Nationale Hefte*. Oehler used the book's central argument to underline his temporal-Manichaean understanding of Europe as being divided into two opposing camps, not along the lines of nations, but within the nations. For Oehler, one camp was still mentally stuck in the past of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and did not realize (as the other fascist camp did) that Europe was currently in the state of a "spiritual-social revolution".[54] Pathetically, Oehler concluded that Europe not only "wants to live" (as argued in the book title) but "will live" when the national forces of its peoples are victorious.[55] In this case, the book functioned as a platform for the discussion of general ideas about a fascist rebirth of Europe, constituting an exemplary case of the circulation of knowledge beyond mere dissemination from a center to a periphery.

Europa will leben was both a product and starting point for further transnational exchanges and circulation of fascist propaganda material. The Amsterdam-based cigarette shop De Driehoek, which sold fascist and national socialist readings and newspapers, contacted the Danish DNSAP headquarters in March 1936, explaining that it had discovered the party address via *Europa will leben*. Because of the domestic growth of the Dutch fascist NSB, there would now be more interest in the Netherlands in other fascist movements abroad, and the shop offered a deal to sell DNSAP books and newspapers in the Netherlands. Typically, the shop was particularly interested in a portrait of party leader Clausen.[56] This specific case demonstrates the entanglement of monetary and ideological interest in the circulation of knowledge about fascist internationalism.

Europa will leben set an example to be followed by others internationally. In France, Jacques Ploncard d'Assac, a writer, antisemite, and member of the fascist

53 "Det våknede Europa", *Fritt Folk*, May 30, 1936.

54 Hans Oehler, "Europa will leben!", *Nationale Hefte. Schweizer Monatsschrift* 3 (1936): 57–62, 58.

55 Oehler, "Europa will leben!", 62.

56 Letter from De Driehoek to DNSAP, March 30, 1936: [RA Copenhagen], DNSAP arkiv, Rigspolitichefen, Politiets Efterretningstjeneste: Sager (1945–1950) 55 – 59 (R4): 3b Hovedkontoret Korrespondance, A - JF, juni 1935 22 - Hovedkontoret Korrespondance, A - JF, juni 1936 22 mm, Vol. 25.

French Popular Party (*Parti populaire français*), approached some of the minor fascist parties such as the NS and the DNSAP. Ploncard d'Assac explained that he was preparing a book on international national socialism and fascism, "because I believe that the popular nationalist leaders of the world would benefit greatly from knowing each other better".[57] Thus, he asked for party programs, newspapers, photos, and information.[58] In Manchuria, the émigré Russian Fascist Union created a similar project. In a letter sent to the leaders of supposedly all "Fascist, National-Socialist, Anti-Semitic and Anti-Communist organizations of the world", the RFU asked to provide articles, declarations, photos, and other propaganda material concerning their movements for a special issue published in four languages.[59] The occasion of the planned publication was November 7, 1938, the 21st anniversary of the communist revolution in Russia. The project aimed to counter this communist celebration by providing with this "widely distributed" and "unique publication" a "strong medium of propaganda". The call for papers ended with a typical slogan underlining the mimetic character of the project: "Anticommunists of all lands – unite".[60] In this way, communist internationalism legitimized the newspaper project as a fascist counteraction.

In 1939, two of the agencies of fascist internationalism discussed in Part I of this book also developed similar publication projects. The Nationalist International published an extensive and exaggerated work report in which many nationalist leaders and representatives of fascist movements had their say.[61] CAUR considered a similar book project that would "present the world panorama of the development of ideas and parties of the national socialist or nationalist fascist type in the different countries".[62] To gather information for the book, CAUR sent specific questionnaires to its international network, including former members of the Montreux Front like Rütger Essén and Vidkun Quisling. The NS responded dutifully, but the project never materialized.[63] Whether completed or not, all these publication projects attempted to contribute to the production and circulation of myths of fascist internationalism.

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57 Two Letters from Jacques Ploncard D'Assac to DNSAP, April 3, 1936: [RA Copenhagen], DNSAP arkiv, Rigspolitichefen, Politiets Efterretningstjeneste: Sager (1945–1950) 55 – 59 (R4): 3b Hovedkontoret Korrespondance, A - JF, juni 1935 22 - Hovedkontoret Korrespondance, A - JF, juni 1936 22 mm, Vol. 25.

58 Letter from NS to Jacques Ploncard D'Assac, January 25, 1936: [RA Oslo], PA 0760 F FB L0029.

59 Letter from RFU to Vidkun Quisling, June 22, 1938: [RA Oslo], PA 0760 G L0007.

60 Letter from RFU to Vidkin Quisling, June 22, 1938.

61 Keller, ed., *Der Kampf um die Völkerordnung*.

62 Letter from CAUR to Rütger Essén, January 1939: [RA Marieberg], REA, Vol. 154.

63 Letter from NS to Eugenio Coselschi, April 3, 1939: [RA Oslo], PA-0758 F Fb L0001.

"The Coming Europe": Exhibitions on Fascist Internationalism

In a few cases, fascist internationalism was also constructed and visualized in the form of exhibitions. A first prominent example was a display called *New Universal Order* (*L'Ordre Nouveau Universel*), which opened at the Maison Nationale in Brussels on June 29, 1935. The exhibition was organized under the auspices of CAUR, but the official host was Paul Hoornaert and his Belgian LNB.[64] According to CAUR sources, the exhibition aimed to attract national and international guests to showcase the emergence and development of "universal fascism" in various countries.[65] To organize the exhibition, CAUR secretary Guido Baroni reached out to various international partners, such as Rütger Essén, asking them to send propaganda material to the headquarters of the LNB in Belgium. Some movements eagerly supported the undertaking. The Spanish Falange even sent its propaganda secretary Alfonso Ponce de León in an airplane to Brussels to hand over the material in person for the Spanish stand of the exposition.[66] In the following years, the Belgian party continued to host such displays to gather money for the Falange and the Francoist nationalists during the Spanish Civil War.[67] The exhibition in Brussels is another example of how CAUR facilitated transnational contacts between the minor fascist movements, which were further developed without Italian involvement.

The participating parties exploited the international exhibition organized by the Belgian LNB for domestic purposes to gain legitimacy and recognition, while foregrounding international fascist solidarity and unity. "All nationalists are our friends! All internationalists are our enemies", the Swiss FFS reported, declaring that the entire Montreux Front participated in the exhibition in Brussels (a claim the scarce source material on the exhibition cannot confirm). *Der Schweizer Fascist* also used the event to proudly proclaim that "our leader Fonjallaz is a recognized personality in all foreign countries," suggesting that every Swiss person living in Belgium should visit the exhibition and join the ranks of the FFS afterwards.[68]

The Danish DNSAP organized a similar exhibition on fascist internationalism in Grenaa on June 19 and 20, 1937 that was purposely called *The Coming Europe*, reflecting the Eurocentric outlook of the party, the common fascist vision of a New Europe, and the absence of non-European fascist movements. Two months

64 Cf. Rees, *Biographical Dictionary of the Extreme Right since 1890*, 190.

65 Letter from Guido Baroni to Rütger Essén, May 1, 1935: [RA Marieberg], REA, Vol. 154.

66 Cf. Balace, 'La droite belge et l'aide à Franco', 603.

67 See Chapter 9.

68 "Unser Bundesführer eine im gesamten Ausland anerkannte Persönlichkeit", *Der Schweizer Fascist,* June 27, 1935.

earlier, Erling Hallas had approached various parties and organizations from approximately twenty European countries to send propaganda material such as posters, pictures, photographs, statistics of election results, stickers, satirical prints, pamphlets, campaign papers, flyers, and newspapers.[69] One particular aim of the exhibition was to counter anti-German sentiments in Denmark by displaying the progress of the 'Third Reich' (that would also indicate the DNSAP's victory in Denmark). Accordingly, the Danes approached many German organizations such as the NSDAP, Hans Keller's IAdN, the Anti-Komintern, and the German Fichte Federation (*Deutscher Fichte-Bund*), which was a propaganda agency based in Hamburg that was particularly active in Scandinavia. Hallas asked the latter to send material about a new cruise ship built by the NS leisure organization Strength through Joy (*Kraft durch Freude*, KdF). He argued that the story of the modern and comfortable tourist ship built entirely for German workers would be a valuable tool for agitation, deemed "far more useful than various tables and statistics".[70] The visual appeal to workers was particularly important to the DNSAP, which identified itself as a worker's party.

The organization of the Danish exhibition reveals several elements of practical cooperation between the smaller fascist movements. First, it is striking how many of the invited movements were involved in the CAUR network, with few exceptions, such as the British IFL. CAUR president Eugenio Coselschi was even invited to the DNSAP convention to see the exhibition in person, but he was not able to attend the event.[71] Second, the exhibition also points to the difficulties of organizing and sustaining transnational cooperation among smaller fascist movements, as discussed above. In particular, the lack of accurate information about partners abroad was evident. Without his knowledge, Erling Hallas approached

69 According to a letter sent to the German NSDAP, Hallas approached the following organizations: the Norwegian NS, the Swedish NSAP, the Patriotic People's Movement in Finland, the National Party in Lithuania, the National Syndicalists in Portugal, the Iron Guard in Romania, "Socialnationalism" in Greece (most likely meaning the Mercouris movement), the Irish Blueshirts, the Belgian LNB, the Cross of Fire and the MF in France, the BUF (as well as the IFL, which was forgotten in this list) in Britain, the NSB and the Black Front in the Netherlands, the Spanish Falange, the Swiss FFS, and the Italian CAUR. Letter from DNSAP to NSDAP, Braunes Haus Munich, April 17, 1937: [RA Copenhagen], DNSAP arkiv, Rigspolitichefen, Politiets Efterretningstjeneste: Sager (1945–1950) 60–63 (R5): 3b Hovedkontoret Korrespondance, Vol. 29.

70 Letter from DNSAP to German Fichte-Federation, May 9, 1937: [RA Copenhagen], DNSAP arkiv, Rigspolitichefen, Politiets Efterretningstjeneste: Sager (1945–1950) 60–63 (R5): 3b Hovedkontoret Korrespondance, Vol. 29.

71 See Letter from Eugenio Coselschi to Frits Clausen, June 12, 1937: [RA Copenhagen], DNSAP arkiv, Rigspolitichefen, Politiets Efterretningstjeneste: Sager (1945–1950) 60–63 (R5): 3b Hovedkontoret Korrespondance, Vol. 29.

three parties, which had already been dissolved at least half a year before the exhibition (the Irish Blueshirts, the Greek National Socialist Party, and the Swiss FFS). Third, the sources indicate that the contacts were not always reciprocal. Not everyone was willing to contribute. Only material from Norway, Sweden, Germany, France, and Spain had arrived two weeks before the opening of the exhibition. Even CAUR had not sent the promised material yet, and Erling Hallas turned instead to the Italian Legation in Copenhagen for last-minute support.[72] Whether this low turnout was due to ideological differences or practical difficulties, such as long transportation routes, is impossible to reconstruct.

Two images (albeit of poor quality) printed in the DNSAP journal *National-Socialisten* illustrate the visuality of the exhibition, including the glorification of fascist leaders, the depiction of masculine heroic fascist fighters, and the swastika as a visual sign of fascist internationalism.[73] The first image depicts a component of the DNSAP stand, showcasing a portrait of party leader Frits Clausen, two flags of the swastika, and the Snoldelev stone (serving as 'proof' that the swastika was as Danish as it was German or Indian). The second picture shows the booth by the Spanish Falange, including a poster with a soldier holding a flag, captioned with the famous fascist slogan *Arriba España*. The FE used this phrase in the ongoing Spanish Civil War, which featured prominently in the exhibition as an exemplary struggle between European fascism and international communism.

According to organizer Erling Hallas, the purpose of the Grenaa exhibition was to give the ordinary party members an optimistic "clear indication of the direction in which the political events in the countries of Europe will develop in the future". The objective was to show that the kindred movements abroad, such as the comrades in Spain, were fighting against the same "forces of social disruption and destruction" such as capitalism, liberalism, and Marxism, and Halles had specifically asked his international partners to send "anti-Bolshevist material".[74] Evidently, the Danish organizers used the event to impress and rally the DNSAP supporters domestically by visibly and ideologically interweaving the fate of the Danish fascist party with the auspicious, historical, international fascist era.

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72 This paragraph is built on the archival material found in [RA Copenhagen] DNSAP arkiv, Rigspolitichefen, Politiets Efterretningstjeneste: Sager (1945–1950) 60–63 (R5): 3b Hovedkontoret Korrespondance, Vol. 29.

73 Printed in "D.N.S.A.P.s Landstævne i Greena blev det største i Djursland Historie", *National-Socialisten*, June 26, 1937.

74 Erling Hallas, "Udstillingen 'Det kommende Europa'", *National-Socialisten,* June 5, 1937; letter from DNSAP to Anti-Komintern, June 28, 1937: [RA Copenhagen], DNSAP arkiv, Rigspolitichefen, Politiets Efterretningstjeneste: Sager (1945–1950) 60–63 (R5): 3b Hovedkontoret Korrespondance, Vol. 29.

Other parties also used the Grenaa exhibition for propaganda purposes. The French MF dedicated a long article to the event, including a large picture of Frits Clausen, again underlining the visual leadership cult as a fascist commonality. The MF concluded solemnly: "[w]e address to our Danish fascist comrades our thanks and friendship as French fascists, and we fraternally greet all those in the world who struggle for the liberation of peoples, for the triumph of spirituality, for the nobility of work, for universal prosperity, in peace".[75]

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Various knowledge actors, organizations, movements, and regimes became involved in collaborative activities of fascist internationalism in the 1930s. The agencies of fascist internationalism studied in the first part of this monograph contributed to this low-level cooperation. CAUR, in particular, helped in multiple cases as an intermediary agency to nurture the relationship between other movements. Nonetheless, this chapter has shown that Italian fascist internationalism often only functioned as a starting point for further contacts between the various 'peripheral' parties, who hosted their own exhibitions, as in Belgium and Denmark. These findings counter older historiographical narratives of an asymmetrical one-way transfer from the centers of fascism (in Italy and Germany) to smaller parties in the fascist periphery in northwestern Europe. Despite their limited financial resources as political amateurs, and various other obstacles ranging from language barriers to lack of information, the smaller movements exploited the myth of fascist internationalism for their own purposes.

Events such as the Grenaa exhibition in 1937 exemplify two essential features of practical cooperation among European fascist movements in the 1930s, one on the national level and one on the international level. First, the transnational circulation of knowledge about fascist internationalism served a domestic informative-propagandistic purpose. Unlike the party leaders of the various fascist parties, most ordinary party members did not have the means or opportunity to travel to fancy conferences in Montreux or elsewhere and meet with fellow fascist friends from abroad. Thus, the knowledge circulated via book projects, such as *Europa will leben,* or exhibitions, like *New Universal Order* in Brussels, constituted an effective tool for learning about fascism as a broader, international phenomenon. This reinforced visual imaginaries of the historical and political significance of the participating fascist movements as part of a wider trend despite constant failures in domestic politics.

75 "Le National-Socialisme danois", *Le Franciste,* May 30, 1937.

Second, such practical cooperation in the form of letter exchanges, propaganda circulation, and reciprocal visits fostered international political alliances. The act of exchanging propaganda material, including visual images, symbols, and songbooks, facilitated an understanding of movements abroad as allies in a broader struggle. The circulation of knowledge about fascist internationalism thus contributed to the construction of fascist kinship through a shared belief in the leadership cult and a common aesthetic of masculinity beyond mere programmatic commonalities. This transnational cooperation was accompanied by innumerable expressions of mutual fascist friendship and fraternity across borders. This implies that transnational solidarity constituted a pivotal undercurrent of fascist internationalism, linked to specific moments and occurrences during the 1930s. It was no coincidence that the 1937 DNSAP exhibition portrayed the Spanish Civil War as a European conflict between two eternally opposed antagonists, fascism and communism, compelling the fascists of all European countries to express solidarity with their Spanish fascist comrades.

Chapter 9
"A Clash between Good and Evil": Fascist Solidarity during the Spanish Civil War, 1936–1939

Since the nineteenth century to the present day, multiple forms of internationalism from the political left to the far right have been based on notions and practices of cross-border solidarity.[1] One outstanding example is the idea of European solidarity, which was of fundamental importance in validating the process of European integration and a policy of redistribution at the supranational level, culminating in the foundation of the European Union (EU).[2] However, the term solidarity itself, both as an actor's category and as an analytical concept, is traditionally mainly reserved for the political left.[3] Conceptually originating in ancient Roman law, solidarity emerged in the nineteenth century primarily as a concept of European labor movements, and even nowadays, it is mainly linked to a normative, moralizing understanding of solidarity based on issues of class, race, injustice, and oppression.[4] Solidarity is thus often conceptualized in direct opposition to fascism, notably in the form of communist, socialist, feminist, anticolonial, 'Third World', Black, or explicitly 'anti-fascist' solidarity.[5] Against this backdrop and specific conceptual history, *fascist solidarity* seems to be a counter-intuitive concept.

1 See David Featherstone, *Solidarity*: *Hidden Histories and Geographies of Internationalism* (London: Zed Books, 2012); Tamara Lea Spira, "Intimate Internationalisms: 1970s 'Third World' Queer Feminist Solidarity with Chile", *Feminist Theory* 15.2 (2014): 119–140; Kim Christiaens, "Europe at the Crossroads of Three Worlds: Alternative Histories and Connections of European Solidarity with the Third World, 1950s–80s", *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire* 24.6 (2017): 932–954.

2 See Florian Greiner, "Introduction: Writing the Contemporary History of European Solidarity", *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire* 24.6 (2017): 837–853.

3 On the conceptual history of solidarity, see Steinar Stjernø, *Solidarity in Europe*: *The History of an Idea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

4 On moral conceptualizations of solidarity, see Sally J. Scholz, *Political Solidarity* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008); Avery Kolers, *A Moral Theory of Solidarity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

5 See, for example, the chapter on "International Solidarity against War and Fascism, 1927–1933" in Kasper Braskén, *The International Workers' Relief, Communism, and Transnational Solidarity*: *Willi Münzenberg in Weimar Germany* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 206–232.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111469799-010

In contrast, this book argues that the a priori exclusion of solidarity as a concept linked to fascist ideas and practices would lead to a conceptual trap similar to the denial of the phenomenon of fascist internationalism because of fascism's ultranationalism. This chapter foregrounds that solidarity, as conceptualized and practiced by minor fascist movements from northwestern Europe in the 1930s, was an inherent aspect of fascist internationalism. This argument aligns with the broader purpose of showing how international cooperation among fascists was shaped by the same 'internationalist' conditions and terms as competing internationalisms in the interwar period.

Scholars define solidarity as "an expression of unity among a group of people sharing joint goals and interests", and thus an individual or collective act of support and political action for others, grounded in a sense of connectedness.[6] In distinction from compassion, solidarity is often linked to a perceived form of equality and reciprocity based on the potential to operate across differences (socially, politically, culturally, and historically).[7] But in differentiation from general altruism or humanitarianism, solidarity is a particular norm referring to a specific group of people or peoples. As Dietmar Süß and Cornelius Torp reason, "the inclusive effect associated with solidarity corresponds to an exclusive side. Those who are not counted as part of the community do not benefit from solidarity".[8] Fascist and *völkisch* ideology mainly linked this logic of inclusion and exclusion to the idea of an organic people's community, which excluded those who were not considered and constructed as part of the 'healthy' national community (such as Jews, homosexuals, communists, people with disabilities, and others). Thus, and in stark contrast to leftist forms of solidarity, fascist solidarity is often interpreted first and foremost as *national* solidarity – a sense of community that forges citizens together in opposition to other nations, peoples, 'races', and minorities deemed as foreign and deviating from the norm.[9]

However, in the wake of the transnational turn within fascism studies, several authors have scrutinized cross-border forms of fascist solidarity.[10] Aron Brouwer, for instance, has demonstrated that the writers of the French journal *Je*

6 Greiner, "Introduction", 837. Cf. Dietmar Süß and Cornelius Torp, *Solidarität: Vom 19. Jahrhundert bis zur Corona-Krise* (Bonn: Dietz, 2021), 10.

7 For a similar understanding of solidarity, see Samira Marty, "Transnational Solidarities: Political Activism for a 'Nicaragua Libre' in Berlin after April 2018" (PhD diss., University of Oslo, 2023).

8 Süß and Torp, *Solidarität*, 11.

9 Cf. Stjernø, *Solidarity in Europe*, 279.

10 E.g. Baldoli, "Anglo-Italian Fascist Solidarity?"; Fernando Camacho Padilla, "The Swedish-Chilean Society: Fascist Solidarity with Pinochet's Chile in Sweden", edited by Jan Hansen, Christian Helm, and Frank Reichherzer, in *Making Sense of the Americas. How Protest related to Amer-*

suis partous, who cooperated with fascists abroad in the 1930s, engaged in "pan-fascist solidarity".[11] The following chapter contributes to this newer research by arguing that visions and activities of fascist solidarity often centered on Manichaean and temporal narratives of fascist internationalism based on the logic of inclusion and exclusion.

Fascist solidarity is empirically traced through fascist reactions to and interpretations of foreign political events, with a focus on the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939). The interpretation of events abroad stimulated expressions and actions of solidarity towards foreign movements, regimes, or peoples, including explicit affirmative uses of terms such as 'fascist' or 'white' solidarity. These were based on a sense of connectedness regarding shared political beliefs and constructed white supremacist or European understandings of kinship (inclusion), as well as on the notion of common Judeo-Bolshevist enemies (exclusion). This solidarity could lead to the exchange of propaganda that served both a domestic and an international purpose, similar to the circulation of knowledge discussed in the previous chapter.

This form of fascist solidarity was transnational because it involved bilateral and multilateral cross-border perceptions, contacts, and cooperation.[12] The solidarity was also international, because the fascists interpreted major foreign political events abroad as phenomena of wider geographical significance than just the Spanish, Italian, German, or French contexts. Fascist parties conceptualized events like the Spanish Civil War as European or even global occurrences, understanding their 'greater cause' as part of an eternal battle between fascism and the Judeo-Bolshevist enemy. In this sense, foreign political events triggered narratives of historical urgency based on notions of an imminent victory or defeat of fascism. These 'internationalist' narratives were often applied to mobilize followers domestically, linking pragmatic and ideological interests. Therefore, analyses of various forms of fascist solidarity enable another perspective on the broader research question regarding the complex relationship between fascist nationalism and internationalism.

The chapter demonstrates in three subsequent parts, from the perspective of minor fascist movements, that the Spanish Civil War was a unique event that became pivotal for both notions and activities of fascist internationalism in the 1930s. First, the conflict boosted almost uniform Manichaean and temporal narra-

ica in the 1980s and Beyond (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2015); Allen, "An Anarchical Society (of Fascist States)".

11 Cf. Brouwer, "The Pan-Fascist Paradox".

12 On the distinction between transnationalism and internationalism, see the introduction of this book.

tives of a duel between fascism and communism. Second, the war sparked a growing transnational propagandistic supportive network for Francisco Franco's rebellion. Third, the conflict led to military support in the form of voluntary fighters, as will be demonstrated by Eoin O'Duffy's Irish Brigade. This extreme example helps to fathom why ultranationalists even fought for other ultranationalists in another country for the sake of fascist internationalism.

"Fascism versus Bolshevism": The Spanish Civil War as a European Conflict

Some foreign political events in the 1930s provoked strong positive or negative reactions among European fascist movements. For example, many fascists hailed the *Anschluss* of Austria to Nazi Germany in 1938 as a step toward fascist victory and European peace. A prominent example of negative coverage was the formation of the French left-wing Popular Front government in the spring of 1936. Fascist parties almost unanimously interpreted the "communist downfall" of France as a "catastrophe" for the West in general.[13] However, apart from public support or outcry, these events seldom enabled sustained and direct political actions of fascist solidarity. Moreover, not all major foreign political events created unanimous answers among the various fascist movements.

The interpretations could differ enormously, as in the case of the Italo-Ethiopian War (1935–1936), whose influence on Italian fascist internationalism was discussed in Chapter 2. To briefly recap, some parties fully supported Fascist Italy's imperialist war, such as the Irish Blueshirts, who even offered military support. The Swiss FFS explicitly called for "fascist solidarity" with the Italian undertaking, defining solidarity as the European "sacred duty of preserving the supremacy of the white race at all costs [. . .] regardless of cultural, linguistic, and confessional differences".[14] Other movements, like the Danish DNSAP and the British IFL, denounced the Italian attack against Ethiopia, the latter interpreting it as a sign that Mussolini had abandoned Italian Fascism for "Jewish Gangsterism".[15] The IFL even turned the FFS argument of white fascist solidarity upside down by arguing that the Italian war against Abyssinia would be driven by Jewish hopes "that the Negro in Africa

13 E.g. "Frankrike mot katastrofen", *Fritt Folk,* March 4, 1937; "The Framework of the League: Peace-Arch or Guillotine", *The Fascist,* June 1936.

14 "Fascistische Solidarität", *Der Schweizer Fascist,* September 19, 1935.

15 "What counts in Italy: Mussolini Abandons Italian Fascism for Jewish Gangsterism", *The Fascist,* September 1935.

will be stirred up to rebellion against the Whites".[16] These diametrically opposed interpretations of the same event illustrate that European interwar fascism was far from being a unified and uniform phenomenon speaking with one voice.

The Spanish Civil War was an exceptional counter-example that elicited surprisingly uniform interpretations from the minor fascist parties. The war broke out on July 17, 1936, as a result of a military uprising against the democratically elected Popular Front government of the Second Spanish Republic. General Francisco Franco soon headed the rebellion of the self-proclaimed 'Nationalists' against the 'Republicans'. Despite this specific national context, the Spanish Civil War was soon interpreted as the pivotal event in the formation of what Eric Hobsbawm calls the "international ideological civil war" between the opposing forces of "progress" and "reaction".[17] In fact, "efforts to transnationalise or internationalise the Spanish Civil War are as old as the conflict itself".[18] Soon after the outbreak, the conflict developed factually into a European war involving international voluntary forces on both sides, such as the International Brigades fighting for the Republicans, as well as the Irish Brigade fighting on Franco's side, as we shall see later. Foreign governments contributed to the war efforts on competing sides. Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany backed the rebels through military support, cultural diplomacy, and propaganda.[19] The Soviet Union intervened on behalf of the Spanish Republicans, whose anti-fascist and anti-authoritarian war against Franco's Nationalists was even supported by Indian anti-colonialists, turning the conflict into a "global anti-imperialist struggle".[20]

Because of these foreign interventions, some historians interpret the Spanish Civil War as a "European conflict", a prelude to the Second World War, and as an integral part of an ongoing "European civil war" that lasted from 1914 to 1945.[21] Such historiographical interpretations build on perspectives by contemporaries, who saw the war as a larger European or potentially global confrontation between two fiercely antagonistic ideologies. The event evoked "uniquely charged global re-

16 "What counts in Italy", September 1935.

17 Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Das Zeitalter der Extreme*: *Weltgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: dtv, 2012), 186.

18 Giuliana Chamedes, "Transnationalising the Spanish Civil War", *Contemporary European History* 29.3 (2020): 261–263, 261.

19 Cf. Peñalba-Sotorrío, "Cultural Intervention in the Spanish Civil War".

20 Michael Ortiz, "Spain! Why? Jawaharlal Nehru, Non-Intervention, and the Spanish Civil War", *European History Quarterly* 49.3 (2019): 445–466, 446.

21 Carlos Collado Seidel, *Der Spanische Bürgerkrieg*: *Geschichte eines europäischen Konflikts* (Munich: Beck, 2010); Williard C. Frank, "The Spanish Civil War and the Coming of the Second World War", *The International History Review* 9.3 (1987): 368–409; Enzo Traverso, *Fire and Blood: The European Civil War, 1914–1945* (London: Verso, 2016.)

sponses", as Samuël Kruizinga and Miriam van der Veen state.[22] Accordingly, contemporaries placed the civil war "in a 'glocal' explanatory framework incorporating both the war, wider European and international events, and the political, social and cultural environments".[23] In this process, both sides tried to transform mere sympathy and expressions of solidarity abroad for one of the opposing camps into political, financial, material, and military support.

Immediately after the outbreak of the war, minor fascist movements devoted numerous articles on the conflict, including weekly updates on the military front line. Initially, the event was still open for interpretation, but within the first months of warfare, the conflict was increasingly interpreted as a European war between fascism and communism. This is demonstrated by a brief analysis of the main organ of the British IFL, *The Fascist*, which described the conflict at first in a conspiratorial narrative as a "Jewish-Masonic avenge" against Modern Spain. Allegedly, 'international Jewry' punished Spain for the anti-Jewish Spanish Inquisition established in the fifteenth century, and the IFL claimed that the Jewish terror would continue regardless of which side would win the war.[24] But only a month later, the IFL withdrew its 'premature' judgment in an article called "The New Era" and employed a new temporal and Manichaean narrative of a "Clash between Good and Evil". Under the impression of the intervention by Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, the IFL leader Arnold Leese assumed that "something more vital than Nationality itself is moving men to action".[25]

> The real battle has begun; it is that between Gentile Fascism and Jewish Bolshevism. This battle, just as it has destroyed Spain as an entity for the time being, will also, for the time being, beat down frontiers. The English, the French, the Germans, the Italians will ally themselves with Fascist men of other nationalities against Communist men of their own respective nationalities. It is still to be hoped that the alliance will remain a spiritual one, rather than an actual one, but the change has come.[26]

Many other fascist parties expressed similar statements, even though placing themselves openly in the camp of fascist internationalism challenged the nationalism of each movement and the neutrality of their countries. Together with sev-

22 Samuël Kruizinga and Miriam van der Veen, "Sketches of Spain: The Role of the Left-Wing Press in Britain, the Netherlands, and amongst Exiled Germans in Recruiting Volunteers for Republican Spain during the Spanish Civil War, 1936–1939", *Contemporary European History* 33.2 (2024): 428–444, 428.

23 Kruizinga and van der Veen, "Sketches of Spain", 3.

24 H. H. L., "Spain faces the Terror: Jewry avenged through Freemasonry", *The Fascist,* August 1936.

25 Arnold Spencer Leese, "The New Era", *The Fascist,* September 1936.

26 Leese, "The New Era", September 1936.

eral other Swiss frontist movements, the NF had sent a petition to the Swiss Federal Council, the executive body of the government, demanding "strict neutrality" in the Italo-Ethiopian War.[27] Such neutrality was suddenly no longer an option. For Hans Oehler, a leading NF propagandist, Spain constituted a "European question" because "the Spanish war threatens to turn into a war between fascism and Bolshevism".[28] Likewise, the Swedish SNF campaigned against the "stupidity and ignorance" of the Swedish government with its failed policy of neutrality. Instead, Rütger Essén, the party's leading expert on foreign policy, interpreted the war as a "final battle between Bolshevism" and what he called "national unity will". For Essén, the internationalization of the Marxist doctrine of the class struggle lay at the core of the conflict, ultimately endangering peace not only in Spain but everywhere in Europe.[29]

Especially with regard to the religious aspects of the war, such uniform interpretations were surprising in the case of the Scandinavian fascists, who were geographically far removed from the events in Spain. The Danish-Norwegian professor Knud Asbjørn Wieth-Knudsen insisted in the DNSAP main organ that the battleground had turned from spiritual and cultural differences to a real battle between two new "world religions", headed by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union respectively.[30] This was a striking interpretation of a rebellion that other fascist contemporaries, such as the Irish NCP, interpreted as a Catholic Crusade against the Popular Front in Spain. Moreover, the Danish DNSAP operated in a predominantly evangelical Lutheran country with only very few Catholics. Despite the protestant background of many party members, the DNSAP emphasized the all-uniting Christianity with the Catholic Nationalists in Spain. Hence, they "openly declared our 'moral solidarity' with General Franco's struggle against international Bolshevism," as DNSAP member Frederik Marcus Knuth wrote in a letter to the Norwegian fascist leader Vidkun Quisling.[31] This stresses how notions of fascist solidarity were able to bend denominational differences under the banner of (white European) Christianity.

27 "Strikte Neutralität!", *Die Front,* October 16, 1935.

28 Hans Oehler, "Spanien als europäische Frage", *Nationale Hefte. Schweizer Monatsschrift* 3 (1936): 466–467.

29 Cf. Rütger Essén, "Slutkampen mellan bolsjevism och nationell enhetsvilja", *Nationell Tidning,* August 29, 1936.

30 Knud Asbjørn Wieth-Knudsen, "Kampen mellem Nationl-socialisme og kommunisme", *National-Socialisten,* October 3, 1936.

31 Letter from Frederik Marcus Knuth to Vidkun Quisling, March 17, 1937: [RA Oslo], PA 0750 F L0010.

Why were the fascist movements from northwestern Europe united in public support for the Nationalists in Spain? In contrast to Italy's imperialist war in Abyssinia, they all referred to the dangerous effects that a communist victory would have on the rest of Europe. They hailed the nationalist uprising against communism because Spain, as the NS press cited Francisco Franco, was perceived as "the first state to rise in defense of the threatened Western European civilization".[32] The smaller parties repeatedly hailed the Spanish general as a savior of Western freedom and Christianity and a protector against Bolshevism. Thus, fascist solidarity was often more a question of supporting Franco, his troops, and the Nationalist rebels in their fight against Bolshevism in general rather than the fascist Spanish Falange party in particular.

Fascist parties across Europe harshly condemned interventions by their own governments or left-wing organizations on behalf of the Spanish Republicans, underscoring the dynamic interplay between political left and right in actions of solidarity. The IFL, for instance, criticized the British government's policy of "non-intervention" as a farce and pro-communist stance.[33] The DNSAP denounced the usage of Danish machine guns by the communist International Brigades.[34] The SNF complained about the financial support of 50,000 Swedish Crowns by the Swedish Trade Union Confederation for workers in Spain, interpreting the support as an attempt to create a "Soviet Spain".[35] Similarly, the NS campaigned against the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions and the Labor Party, which raised almost two million Norwegian Crowns during the war for humanitarian help in Spain.[36] These articles denounced their countries 'hypocritical' neutrality and urged them instead to take sides with fascism in a broader battle against communism.

Shaped by conspiratorial myths of Judeo-Bolshevism, minor fascist movements blamed 'international Jewry' and Freemasonry for the atrocities of the war. They often subsumed these under the (Soviet) Communist International as the main antagonist. The British IFL 'revealed' the work of "Jewish Soviet Agents in Red Spain".[37] Similarly, the Swiss NF journal *Die Front* proclaimed that Freema-

32 The quotation was taken from an interview by the news agency Reuters with Franco. "Hele Andelusia erobret av de NASJONALE", *Fritt Folk,* August 1, 1936.

33 "The British Press and Spain", *The Fascist,* April 1939.

34 "Danske Maskingeværer til de Røde i Madrid", *National-Socialisten,* March 24, 1937.

35 "Bolsjevikerna i Spanien får svenskt guld", *Nationell Tidning,* August 8, 1936.

36 "Gi ikke til den røde Spania-innsamlingen!", *Fritt Folk,* January 15, 1938. On the Norwegian fundraising in the war, see Jo Stein Moen and Rolf Sæther, *Tusen dager*: *Norge og den spanske borgerkrigen 1936–1939* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 2009), 218.

37 "The Principal Jewish Soviet Agents in Red Spain", *The Fascist,* October 1937.

sonry was allegedly in league with Spain's "murderous" Reds.[38] The antisemitic DNSAP referred to the "Jewish High finance" as the real initiator of the war, who would earn enormous sums by selling weapons with their "sticky bloody hands".[39] Furthermore, the Danish party presented "Soviet Spain" as a place of bloodthirsty "Jewish-Marxist" terrorism directed against the Spanish people and the Catholic Church, drawing on older tropes of an eternal battle between Judaism and Christianity.[40] Numerous portrayals of 'red terror', meaning anti-clerical war atrocities committed by the troops of Republican Spain, underpinned these articles in support of the 'righteous' cause of Nationalist Spain.[41] The fascist movements used such reports, as on the killings of several thousand Roman Catholic priests, for the claim to defend the right side of history.[42] The articles often included horrifying pictures of massacres and fostered stereotypes of an anti-religious Spanish Republic.[43] At the same time, the biased articles by the fascist movements largely ignored or publicly denied war crimes committed by Franco's troops.

Beyond newspaper articles, fascist movements also propagated solidarity and propaganda favoring Franco's side in exhibitions and movies as part of the circulation of knowledge described in the previous chapter. One example was the DNSAP exhibition *The Coming Europe* in 1937, to which the Spanish Falange contributed propaganda material depicting their struggle against the Republicans.[44] The war was also a topic in movies, which became an increasingly important propaganda tool during the conflict.[45] As outlined above, the DNSAP frequently used the screening of foreign films to display solidarity with fascist movements abroad. In the summer of 1939, when Franco's side had already won the war, the pro-

38 "Die Freimaurerei im Bunde mit Rotmord", *Die Front,* August 18, 1936.

39 "Danske Maskingeværer til de Røde i Madrid", *National-Socialisten,* March 24, 1937.

40 E.g. "Massmyrderier af Præster i Sovjet Spanien", *National-Socialisten,* September 4, 1937.

41 See Julius Ruiz, *The "Red Terror" and the Spanish Civil War*: *Revolutionary Violence in Madrid* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

42 E.g. "Spanska tragediens mörka förhistoria", *Nationell Tidning,* January 16, 1937; "En topmaalt Skandale", *National-Socialisten,* November 7, 1936; "Ummeneskelig grusomhet av marxistene", *Fritt Folk,* October 1, 1936; "Die rote Internationale des Mordes in Spanien und in Frankreich", *Die Front,* August 24, 1936.

43 See Stephan Scholz, "»Schändung alles Heiligen«?: (Anti-)Religiöse Stereotypen in der publizistischen Auseinandersetzung um den Spanischen Bürgerkrieg (1936–1939)", *Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte* 32.1 (2019): 31–55.

44 Letter from DNSAP to Delogacion del estado para prensa y propaganda, May 25, 1937: [RA Copenhagen], DNSAP arkiv, Rigspolitichefen, Politiets Efterretningstjeneste: Sager (1945–1950) 60 – 63 (R5): 3b Hovedkontoret Korrespondance med udlandet 1938 27 mm, Vol. 29.

45 See Wolfgang Martin Hamdorf, *Zwischen "No pasarán!" und "Arriba España!"*: *Film und Propaganda im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg* (Münster: MAkS, 1991).

fascist Spanish documentary movie *Arriba España* was screened twice at the DNSAP party convention in Kolding.[46] The Danes used the film to stress that the defense of Europe against communism was an urgent matter for all European fascist movements. A quote from the convention program shows how the expression of solidarity with the Spanish comrades was intertwined with the motive of convincing Danes to join the DNSAP:

> This gripping and exciting film, showing the events of the Spanish tragedy in a series of often very realistic pictures, must be seen by everyone who wishes to help secure the future of his people and his country. The Comintern, the most terrible instrument of international Marxism and Judaism, undermined Spain and brought about the bloody revolution. If you want to help prevent the same horrors in Denmark, you should see the film –– and then join the ranks of the DNSAP in the struggle for national socialism.[47]

The DNSAP even sent their copy of *Arriba España* to the fascist comrades in Norway for their own party convention in Hamar, and the NS expected the movie to become a "great attraction".[48] Hence, both movements used the Spanish Civil War to underline an overall Judeo-Bolshevist threat in Europe, which was also directed against Denmark (and Norway, respectively), functioning as a rallying cry for their own party members.

"A Moral Duty of Fascist Solidarity": Transnational Cooperation during the War

Cooperation and the circulation of propaganda material between various European movements and organizations, as discussed in Chapter 8, was crucial in providing information on the Spanish Civil War and its alleged causes. Such transnational contacts enabled, on the one hand, a new argumentative tool for the minor fascist parties, who actively linked their own destiny to the Spanish Falange and Francoist Spain, as will be illustrated by the Norwegian NS. On the other hand, the Danish DNSAP and the Belgian LNB show that cross-border cooperation also enabled direct financial and supportive actions of fascist solidarity in favor of the Spanish Nationalists and the fascist Falange.

46 Cf. "Den spanske Storfilm 'Arriba España' fremvises i Kolding", *National-Socialisten,* May 20, 1939.

47 DNSAP, *6. Landsstævne i Kolding*: *Den 17. og 18. Juni 1939* (Bovrup: D.N.S.A.P. forlag, 1939), 95.

48 See the letter exchange between DNSAP and NS, August 1939: [RA Oslo], PA-0760, F/Fb L0032.

In November 1936, the NS party ideologue Herman Harris Aall represented Norway at a congress in Feldafing in Bavaria hosted by Joseph Goebbels.[49] The event was organized by the German propaganda organization Anti-Komintern, whose aim was to spread anti-Bolshevist propaganda both in Germany and internationally.[50] The organization was a key agency concerning news coverage of the events in Spain and distributed its bimonthly bulletin, *Anti-Komintern Nachrichtendienst*, internationally among numerous fascist parties. The Anti-Komintern was even "more interested in placing the Spanish Civil War at the centre of their anti-Bolshevik campaign abroad than spreading the ideals of National-Socialism as such".[51] The main objective was to convince the world propagandistically that the Soviet Union secretly had triggered the conflict. The Nazi organization disseminated 100,000 copies of the highly biased *Das Rotbuch über Spanien* (Red Book on Spain, 1937), a comprehensive compilation including pictures, documents, and testimonies, attempting to demonstrate how the Soviet Union had engineered the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War.[52] The NS reviewed the book in-depth and presented its content as proof of the Bolshevist attempt to create an "Iberian Soviet Republic".[53] In addition to the Anti-Komintern, the smaller parties from northwestern Europe also subscribed to and often relied on information provided by the fascist press in Germany and Italy, such as the *Völkischer Beobachter*, which prominently featured the 'red terror' theme.[54]

The NS also received propaganda material on the war from the Friends of National Spain (FONS), a "right-wing intellectual pressure group" in Britain.[55] This group of radical conservative politicians and intellectuals is a prime example of how the Spanish Civil War created synergies between European fascism and

49 See Record of the conference proceedings, undated: [TNA], GFM 34/1265; Herman Harris Aall, Internasjonal kongress i Tyskland, 1936: [RA Oslo], PA 0756 F Fb L0002.

50 On the Anti-Komintern, see Waddington, "The Anti-Komintern and Nazi Anti-Bolshevik Propaganda in the 1930s"; Jan C. Behrends, "Back from the USSR: The Anti-Comintern's Publications on Soviet Russia in Nazi Germany (1935–41)", *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 10.3 (2009): 527–556.

51 Peñalba-Sotorrío, "Cultural Intervention in the Spanish Civil War", 33.

52 Alfred Gielen, *Das Rotbuch über Spanien*: *Bilder, Dokumente, Zeugenaussagen* (Berlin: Nibelungen-Verlag, 1937).

53 "Das Rotbuch über Spanien", *Fritt Folk,* October 23, 1937.

54 Cf. Scholz, "»Schändung alles Heiligen«?".

55 Bernhard Dietz, *Neo-Tories*: *Britische Konservative im Aufstand gegen Demokratie und politische Moderne (1929–1939)* (Oldenburg: De Gruyter, 2012), 243.

conservatism in support of Nationalist Spain.[56] FONS was founded by 'Neo-Tories' like Charles Petrie (who was also involved in CINEF and CAUR) in March 1937.[57] Its aim was, according to a foundational letter, "to combating the flood of propaganda emanating from Valencia and Moscow, and to placing [. . .] the real facts about the present disastrous conflict in Spain".[58] For this sake, FONS engaged in transnational activities beyond the British public by establishing branches as far as Canada and cooperating with European fascist agents such as IAdN founder Hans Keller.[59] In 1937, FONS also contacted the NS in Norway and initiated an exchange of propaganda material. The group invited Vidkun Quisling to a FONS meeting in the Queen's Hall in London in March 1939. Quisling sent the party member Cecilie Seaton Dahl, who lived in Kent near London, as his representative.[60] In the following, Dahl passed on articles to FONS – written by Quisling and translated by her into English – that the FONS board read "with great interest".[61] Dahl's role underscores that women, who were mostly invisible in the male-dominated networks of fascist internationalism, sometimes still played relevant roles as intermediaries.

The NS's most important foreign contact concerning the coverage of the Spanish Civil War was the Spanish Falange. Relations between both parties had existed since the FE representative Ernesto Giménez Caballero met Quisling at the Montreux Congress in 1934. From 1935 on, the Spanish fascists and Quisling's associate Bjarne Vold regularly circulated propaganda material, facilitated by Vold's fluency in Spanish.[62] Vold also requested propaganda material from the Spanish Legation in Oslo. The local Spanish contact person in Oslo was the Legation secretary Felipe Campuzano, who was married to a Norwegian woman. When Campuzano returned

56 See Jonas Bressler, "Crusade against Bolshevism. Cooperation between Fascists and Conservatives during the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939)", *Fascism: Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 13.1 (2024): 75–97.

57 On FONS, see Bernhard Dietz, "The Neo-Tories and Europe: A Transnational History of British Radical Conservatism in the 1930s", *Journal of Modern European History* 15.1 (2017): 85–108; Bàrbara Molas, "Transnational Francoism: The British and the Canadian Friends of National Spain (1930s–1950s)", *Contemporary British History* 32.2 (2021): 165–186.

58 Foundational letter from FONS to Vidkun Quisling, December 1937: [RA Oslo], PA 0760 Fd L0038.

59 Cf. Keller, ed., *Der Kampf um die Völkerordnung*, 196.

60 See the letter exchange between FONS and Vidkun Quisling: [RA Oslo], PA-0760, F Fb L0032.

61 See the letter exchange between FONS and Cecilie Seaton Dahl: [RA Oslo], PA-0758, F Fb L0002.

62 See NS, Bjarne Vold's spanske korrespondanse, folder, undated: [RA Oslo], PA-0760 G L0007. On Bjarne Vold, a member of the NS paramilitary unit "Hirden", see also Borgersrud, *Vi er jo et militært parti!*, 245–249.

to Spain in May 1939, the NS thanked him publicly for his "important work" in Norway.[63] Through these contacts, the Norwegian fascists received in the spring of 1937 the party program of the Spanish Falange of the Councils of the National Syndicalist Offensive (*Falange Española de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista*, FE de las JONS). Francisco Franco created this new party in April 1937 as a merger of the fascist FE with the monarchist, neo-absolutist, ultra-catholic, and traditionalist Carlist movement. This Spanish-Norwegian exchange had immediate effects: only weeks later, the NS journal *Fritt Folk* published the new FE de las JONS manifesto, arguing supportively that the program would create "a new Spain".[64]

Strikingly, the NS weaponized this propaganda material for their own sake after learning about the presumably gigantic role that the Falange party played in the war effort. In fact, being "a minority force in the times of the Second Republic", the Falange "grew exponentially after the outbreak of the war, attracting many among the youth and rural workers and providing the rebel army with a sizeable militia".[65] In a front-page article published in April 1937, Vidkun Quisling compared the Spanish comrades to his own NS party. He described the Falange prior to the war as a minuscule party, which had been constantly overlooked and only achieved marginal election results in Spain, precisely as the NS in Norway.[66] But in the course of the war, the formerly predominant left-wing parties had allegedly been swallowed by Moscow, and the irresponsible Spanish conservative parties had disappeared into "darkness" and insignificance. The war constituted a "memento mori for conservative party politics".[67] Quisling argued that the only remaining fighting political force in Spain, the FE de las JONS, had risen to become the main Spanish political party with over 1,000,000 members, thus constituting a shining example for other fascist movements. This narrative was repeated in several other articles in the following years.[68]

The implication for the Norwegian readers was that the NS, which in the same period was challenged by crumbling membership numbers from roughly 8,500 in 1934 to merely 1,000 in 1937, could still play a similar 'historical' role in

63 Cf. "Det nasjonale Spania's representant i Norge", *Fritt Folk,* May 6, 1939.

64 "Den oprinnelige program for Den spanske falanx", *Fritt Folk,* April 29, 1937.

65 Mercedes Peñalba-Sotorrío, "From the Fringes to the State: The Transformation of the Falange into a State Party", in *Beyond the Fascist Century*: *Essays in Honour of Roger Griffin,* edited by Constantin Iordachi and Aristotle Kallis (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 213–234, 215.

66 Vidkun Quisling, "Et memento mori til borgerlig partipolitikk: Den spanske falanx – Nasjonal Samling", *Fritt Folk,* April 29, 1937.

67 Quisling, "Et memento mori", April 29, 1937.

68 E.g. Vidkun Quisling, "Nedgangstiderne tommer! Folkefronten fallitt i Spania, i Frankrike, i Norge", *Fritt Folk,* August 27, 1938.

the imminent future.[69] In sum, the NS case illustrates thus how transnational cooperation with various organizations, such as the German Anti-Komintern, the British FONS, and the Spanish Falange, contributed to a certain knowledge of the war that, in a second step, facilitated the articulation of fascist solidarity with its Spanish 'comrades' while emphasizing its own potential historical role in the near future.

One level was to publicly condemn 'Soviet Spain' in numerous articles and speeches but taking actual action was an entirely different dimension. Minor parties organized some form of financial support via the communication channels established by CAUR and the exhibitions analyzed in the previous chapter. In Belgium, the LNB headed by Paul Hoornaert "threw itself wholeheartedly into this aid to 'white' Spain".[70] The help included a domestic campaign in favor of Franco and cooperation with numerous movements abroad. For example, in December 1936, the LNB sent signed etchings to the Danish DNSAP, which had been reproduced to be sold for the benefit of "our Spanish friends" in Denmark and probably also elsewhere.[71] In the reply, the Danish fascists asserted they were "following with the greatest interest the heroic fight of our Spanish comrades".[72] However, because of difficulties concerning the export of cash in Denmark, the DNSAP doubted whether it could send any money to Belgium. Years later, the DNSAP complained that the Danish social democrats had been allowed to send 100,000 Danish Crowns to the "Reds" in Spain, even though Danish authorities had denied an export permit for their own fundraising money in favor of Franco.[73] Whether these were cheap excuses or not, the examples illustrate the limits of material support for Nationalist Spain by minor fascist movements with constrained financial means.

The Belgian LNB also organized an exhibition in Belgium in December 1936 in favor of Nationalist Spain, including an auction sale. Hoornaert's party asked fascist movements abroad to send badges, books, photos, and pennants of their party to be sold to the highest bidder in favor of the Spanish FE. The DNSAP sent

69 Cf. Brevig, "NS - fra parti til sekt 1933–1937".

70 Balace, "La droite belge et l'aide à Franco", 605. On the activities of the Belgian LNB in the interwar period, see Lionel Baland, *La légion nationale belge*: *De l'Ordre nouveau à la Résistance* (Nantes: Ars Magna, 2022).

71 Letter from LNB to DNSAP, December 4, 1936: [RA Copenhagen], DNSAP arkiv, Rigspolitichefen, Politiets Efterretningstjeneste: Sager (1945–1950) 55 – 59 (R4): 3b Hovedkontoret Korrespondance, Vol. 25.

72 Letter from DNSAP to Pierre Herrman, December 11, 1936: [RA Copenhagen], DNSAP arkiv, Rigspolitichefen, Politiets Efterretningstjeneste: Sager (1945–1950) 55 – 59 (R4): 3b Hovedkontoret Korrespondance, Vol. 25.

73 "DNSAP repræsenteret paa den belgiske Franco-Udstilling", *National-Socialisten,* February 26, 1938.

"agitation" material such as pamphlets, a swastika banner, and a "large framed picture", wishing their Belgian colleagues a "victorious success".[74] Apparently, the auction included the sale of 1,000 copies of photos of foreign fascist leaders, foregrounding the visuality and shared leadership cult of fascist internationalism.[75] The LNB continued to organize such exhibitions in Belgium in 1937 and 1938 to collect money for the army of the Spanish Nationalists.[76] In an article from February 1938, the Danish party organ proudly presented a picture of the DNSAP stand at one of the exhibitions in Brussels, showcasing multiple images from party conventions, emblems, swastikas, and leaflets. This Belgian-Danish cooperation in favor of Francoist Spain and the fascist Falange illustrates a unique triangle of solidarity between the three countries. The Belgian LNB used the visual display of fascist kinship in the form of Danish material at the exhibition to generate financial support for a third fascist movement in Spain. This demonstrates, albeit in a limited way, how fascist movements practiced solidarity beyond purely domestic interests during the Spanish Civil War.

The DNSAP organized another action of fascist solidarity through radio broadcasting, a frequently used propaganda tool during the Spanish Civil War.[77] Approximately 550 Danish volunteers fought for the Republican side in Spain, which was a thorn in the side of the Danish fascist party. In March 1937, the DNSAP worked out a direct countermeasure with the help of Franco's confidante in Copenhagen, Arturo Paladin. Frits Clausen and Frederik Marcus Knuth recorded a speech on a gramophone to address Danish and other Scandinavian anti-fascist soldiers who were part of the International Brigades, urging them to stop fighting by promising fair treatment if they gave up. Knuth attached the manuscript for the speech to a letter to Vidkun Quisling, revealing that the recordings had been broadcast over the national radio and loudspeakers on the battlefield in Spain.[78] Knuth suggested that the Norwegian fascists should engage in the same radio propaganda. The NS declined, underscoring that the Norwegian

74 Letter from DNSAP to Pierre Herrman, December 16, 1936: [RA Copenhagen], DNSAP arkiv, Rigspolitichefen, Politiets Efterretningstjeneste: Sager (1945–1950) 55 – 59 (R4): 3b Hovedkontoret Korrespondance, Vol. 25.

75 Letter from LNB to DNSAP, December 4, 1936: [RA Copenhagen], DNSAP arkiv, Rigspolitichefen, Politiets Efterretningstjeneste: Sager (1945–1950) 55 – 59 (R4): 3b Hovedkontoret Korrespondance, Vol. 25.

76 Cf. Balace, "La droite belge et l'aide à Franco", 606–607.

77 Both Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany provided the Nationalist rebels with material and technical support for radio broadcasting. Cf. Peñalba-Sotorrío, "Cultural Intervention in the Spanish Civil War", 36–37.

78 Letter from Frederik Marcus Knuth to Vidkun Quisling, March 17, 1937: [RA Oslo], PA 0750 F L0010.

party was generally less engaged in helping their Spanish partners than the DNSAP.[79] Nonetheless, this episode provides another example of cross-border fascist support derived from a "moral duty of fascist solidarity", as Knuth concluded his letter to Quisling.[80]

"The Crusade against Communism": The Irish Brigade

The Spanish Civil War became an arena for foreign volunteers who joined as soldiers on both sides. Approximately 35,000–40,000 volunteers from at least twenty countries fought on the Republican side in the International Brigades, set up by the Communist International to defend Spain against Franco's insurrection.[81] In turn, Hitler, Mussolini, and the Portuguese Dictator António de Oliveira Salazar sent soldiers to fight against communism: the German Condor Legion (approximately 20,000), the Italian regular troops (80,000), and several thousand Portuguese soldiers.[82] These official troops overshadowed between 1,000 and 1,500 international foreign fighters who joined the Nationalist side voluntarily. In contrast to regular soldiers, foreign war volunteers often took part "in a conflict abroad on the basis of a personal decision, without being sent by their government and not primarily for material gain".[83] Hence, personal and emotional motives were (and still are) crucial to the decision by foreign war volunteers to fight for another country, linked to adventurism and ideas of taking risks and sacrifices for a worthy, greater cause.[84]

Among the foreign volunteers fighting for Nationalist Spain were contingents from the French Action, exiled 'white' Russian nationalists, and leading members of the Romanian Iron Guard. A notable foreign fighter was the latter's deputy leader,

79 Cf. Letter from Halldis Neegård Østbye to DNSAP, March 10, 1937: [RA Copenhagen], DNSAP arkiv, Rigspolitichefen, Politiets Efterretningstjeneste: Sager (1945–1950) 55 – 59 (R4): 3b Hovedkontoret Korrespondance, Vol. 26.

80 Letter from Frederik Marcus Knuth to Vidkun Quisling, March 17, 1937: [RA Oslo], PA 0750 F L0010.

81 See Giles Tremlett, *The International Brigades*: *Fascism, Freedom and the Spanish Civil War* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021).

82 The numbers are based on Judith Keene, *Fighting for Franco*: *International Volunteers in Nationalist Spain during the Spanish Civil War, 1936-39* (London: Leicester University Press, 2001), 6–9. On Fascist Italy's involvement, see Javier Rodrigo, *Fascist Italy in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021).

83 Nir Arielli, *From Byron to bin Laden*: *A History of Foreign War Volunteers* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018), 4.

84 Cf. Kruizinga and van der Veen, "Sketches of Spain", 2.

Ion Moța, a Montreux delegate and WD correspondent who died on the battlefield in 1937. At least a dozen women were among the volunteers fighting on Franco's side.[85] Eoin O'Duffy, who met his former Montreux colleague Moța in Spain, headed the Irish Brigade, constituting the main subject of the following analysis.[86] The Brigade, which consisted of 700 Irish volunteers in Spain between 1936 and 1937, was the largest unit of foreign volunteer fighters in the camp of the Nationalists.

These volunteers are an extreme example of fascist solidarity, which raises the central question of the relationship between fascist nationalism and internationalism. Previous research on foreign fighters in modern history has emphasized that conflicts abroad were often "a substitute for political activism at home".[87] Judith Keene shows in her work *Fighting for Franco* (2001) that the personal and political agendas of the foreign volunteers were rarely tied to the specifics of Spanish politics, of which they often knew very little.[88] Nevertheless, "despite an intense individual nationalism", these groups "were internationalists in Spain seeing themselves as part of a White International in which a blow struck against their enemies on the Iberian Peninsula would rebound against them somewhere else".[89] Regarding the Irish Brigade, Fearghal McGarry elaborates that the motives of the volunteers ranged from ideological compatibility (between Spanish and Irish fascists) to self-interest directed against a domestic (Irish) audience.[90] Building on these findings, this section uses the examples of the volunteers from the Irish Brigade to ask which motives legitimized their war commitment and whether notions of fascist internationalism were part of these motives. Thus, the analysis focuses on ideological aspects outlined in propagandistic publications by leading public figures of the Irish Brigade, instead of the process of fighting and violence in everyday practice.

Eoin O'Duffy's NCP played a major role in creating the Irish Brigade. Already before the war, the NCP newspaper *The Nation* claimed that "Soviet Russia" by terrorism "secured control in Spain – one of the greatest Catholic countries in the world".[91] After the outbreak of the rebellion in the summer of 1936, the NCP complained about the arrest of the FE leader Primo de Rivera and the burning of

85 Keene, *Fighting for Franco*, 245–290.

86 Cf. Cârstocea, "Native Fascists, Transnational Anti-Semites", 231.

87 Kacper Rehawek and Celestine S. Kunkeler, "What Characterizes Far-Right 'Foreign Fighters'?", *RightNow! C-Rex* (2022), accessed March 27, 2025, https://www.sv.uio.no/c-rex/english/groups/compendium/far-right-foreign-fighters.html.

88 Cf. Keene, *Fighting for Franco*, 12.

89 Keene, *Fighting for Franco*, 291.

90 Cf. McGarry, *Eoin O'Duffy*, 287.

91 "The Party System of Government", *The Nation,* March 1936.

Catholic churches, convents, and schools.[92] At that time, the NCP was on the verge of disappearing into absolute political insignificance. The Spanish war created an unexpected opportunity to generate domestic support for the Irish fascists, as the conflict led to an outpouring of support for the Spanish Nationalists from the vast majority of the Irish public and most political parties. Due to press reports on the 'red terror', the deeply Catholic Ireland was shocked by the anti-clerical atrocities in the Spanish Republic and regarded the Nationalist insurrection positively as a religious crusade against anti-Christian communism. The center-right de Valera government voiced sympathy for Franco, although it officially adopted a neutral diplomatic stance.[93]

Within this tense political atmosphere and only three weeks after the outbreak of the war, the NCP leader O'Duffy publicized the idea of creating an Irish Brigade in support of the Nationalists in Spain. His idea to aid a foreign movement affiliated with fascism was not entirely new. As outlined earlier, O'Duffy had already offered military support for Mussolini's war in Ethiopia in the autumn of 1935.[94] According to his biographer Fearghal McGarry, "Spain offered O'Duffy, who had been much ridiculed since the split [of the Blueshirts], not merely political rehabilitation but an opportunity to fulfill his heroic destiny".[95] Several thousand young Irish men volunteered, and in the fall of 1936, General Franco accepted the Irish offer of military aid and paid for the transport of the volunteers from the Irish coast via ship to Spain. Around 700 Irish volunteers went to the Iberian Peninsula and formed a military unit (*bandera*) of the Spanish Foreign Legion in late 1936.[96] Initially, O'Duffy planned that several hundred more volunteers would follow, but the Irish government's implementation of the international Non-Intervention Agreement in February 1937 prohibited further Irish participation in the war.

Most Irish volunteers had been members of the fascist Irish Greenshirts (the nickname of the NCP) or the Irish Blueshirts (from which O'Duffy's fraction had split in late 1934).[97] The brigade even wore the NCP's green uniforms provided by O'Duffy. Officially, however, he suspended the political activities of the NCP and declared in the *Irish Independent* in March 1937 that the Brigades were a party-

92 "Spain", *The Nation,* July 1936.

93 See Fearghal McGarry, *Irish Politics and the Spanish Civil War* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1999).

94 See Chapter 2.

95 McGarry, *Eoin O'Duffy*, 286.

96 Cf. Keene, *Fighting for Franco*, 115–129.

97 Cf. Letter from Mariano Amoedo to Eoin O'Duffy, December 4, 1936: [NLI], Eoin O'Duffy Papers, MS 48,292 /5.

independent organization beyond party politics.[98] In a memorandum of defense, O'Duffy claimed: "[t]here is no politics in this Brigade – all are now united under one banner – the banner of Christ the King against Communism".[99] O'Duffy's argument that his movement was beyond party politics and represented the 'real' people while preferring (military) action and violence above parliamentary debates was an archetypical fascist narrative. This impressed other fascist leaders as well: Frits Clausen, O'Duffy's Danish acquaintance from the Montreux Front, sent him a Christmas card to the front expressing solidarity and admiration because O'Duffy had joined the anticommunist "battle we all must fight". Clausen wished his Irish colleague "a victory for our common faith and hope that it soon will be won without too great loss of blood for the European Youth".[100]

Which ideological motives beyond adventurism motivated Irish ultranationalists to risk their lives fighting in Spain? In a radio message that Eoin O'Duffy gave in the autumn of 1936 after Franco had accepted the help of the Irish volunteers, O'Duffy declared the following: "[a]s a Catholic and an Irishman", he saw "the spirit of a great and historic nation standing like tested steel to preserve again, as Spain so often preserved in the past, the glory of Christian civilisation against the onslaughts of a heathen foe".[101] The message encapsulated three interrelated facets of fascist solidarity that were central concerning the Irish intervention in the war: first, the historical bond between Spain and Ireland; second, the common anticommunist struggle, and third, the defense of (Catholic) Christianity.

Eoin O'Duffy canonized these three motives in his war memories published in 1938 with the title *Crusade in Spain*. Apart from a few positive reviews in the Irish and international Catholic press, most contemporaries, including George Orwell, dismissed the book as pro-Franco propaganda.[102] Indeed, the book was a highly propagandistic and biased piece that attempted to rehabilitate O'Duffy as a political figure and to alter the public perception of the Irish Brigade as a failure. Therefore, the content of *Crusade in Spain* must be treated with caution as a historical source. O'Duffy repeatedly gave himself airs by pointing out his direct connections to Franco and massively exaggerated the impact of the Irish Brigade on

98 Cf. White, "The Greenshirts", 114–117.

99 Eoin O'Duffy, *Crusade in Spain* (Dublin: Browne & Nolan, 1938), 117.

100 Letter from Frits Clausen to Eoin O'Duffy, December 21, 1936: [RA Copenhagen], DNSAP arkiv, Rigspolitichefen, Politiets Efterretningstjeneste: Sager (1945–1950) 55 – 59 (R4): 3b Hovedkontoret Korrespondance, A – JF, juni 1935 22 – Hovedkontoret Korrespondance, A – JF, juni 1936 22 mm, Vol. 25.

101 O'Duffy, *Crusade in Spain*, 24.

102 On the memoir and its reception, see also McGarry, *Eoin O'Duffy*, 319–320.

the development of the war.[103] Nonetheless, O'Duffy's memoir offers unique insights into the self-legitimization of the Irish war effort.

The first motive were historical relations between Spain and Ireland. According to Eoin O'Duffy, the two countries had been "united through the centuries by the closest bonds of friendship, of faith and of blood".[104] He presented the common Catholic faith as more important than "ties of race and blood" between the two nations, which were bound to each other through a long interwoven history with Britain as a mutual enemy.[105] Among others, O'Duffy referred to Spanish aid for Ireland during the Middle Ages, the role of Irish students in Spain, and the military support by the Spanish King Phillip II for Ireland in its struggle against the British invaders in 1601. With this temporal narrative, O'Duffy linked the past to the present of the Spanish Civil War, insisting that the Irish Brigade "went to repay in some slight measure the vast debt that their forefathers owed to their fellow Christians of Spain".[106] In this vein, the Irish Brigade functioned as a continuation of Irish regiments fighting abroad in the nineteenth century, as illustrated in an article in the *Irish Independent* that compared the uniforms and slogans of the *bandera* with historical predecessors.[107]

The second (and more important) motive was anticommunism, directed against the left-wing popular front in Spain, including communists and anarchists, but also 'international' agents from the Soviet Union and the Comintern. Both the Irish Blueshirts and the NCP had been extremely anticommunist movements. In this tradition, O'Duffy portrayed the Irish Brigade as an "Irish Crusade against Communism", and the 'red terror' topic was crucial to mobilizing the volunteers.[108] Furthermore, the war effort of the International Brigades steered by the Comintern legitimized getting involved on the opposing side. As formulated in a leaflet demanding funds for the Irish Brigade: "[t]he Communists of every country in Europe rallied to the support of the Red Government of Spain", justifying that "anticommunists of all countries", including Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany "rallied to the support of General Franco".[109] This narrative of a battle of "Chris-

103 O'Duffy, *Crusade in Spain*, 160; 240.
104 O'Duffy, *Crusade in Spain*, 1.
105 O'Duffy, *Crusade in Spain*, 128.
106 O'Duffy, *Crusade in Spain,* 10.
107 "Irish Brigade and predecessors in history", *Irish Independent,* December 23, 1936.
108 E.g. Organizational chart titled "Irish Crusade against Communism", November 1936: [NLI], Eoin O'Duffy Papers, MS 48,292 /1.
109 Eoin O'Duffy, National Appeal for Funds, September 4, 1937: [NLI], Eoin O'Duffy Papers, MS 48,294 /3.

tian civilization against Moscow Communism" exemplifies how fascist internationalism developed in relation to communist internationalism.

The Irish Brigade blamed the Spanish Civil War itself on an international communist conspiracy against Christianity. Eoin O'Duffy maintained that it had been Russia's and the Comintern's sinister and conspiratorial plan since 1932 to implement communism in Spain, a narrative emanating from the propaganda of Anti-Komintern. O'Duffy also claimed that the Spanish elections in 1936 were fraudulent and described the Republican government as illegitimate instead of representing the Spanish people. For O'Duffy, the "Red government" meant chaos, disorder, and disease, and "everything Christian was to be destroyed in the flames of the Red revolution".[110] In a typical Manichaean narrative, O'Duffy depicted international communism as the materialist, godless, ultimate foe of nationalism. He also criticized liberal internationalism in the form of the League of Nations and the Non-Intervention Committee for having its "wheels in the Communist ditch".[111] Ultimately, communist internationalism legitimized counter-nationalist internationalism, an argument we have seen in various forms throughout this study.

This anticommunism functioned as a gateway to Judeo-Bolshevist conspiracies, an aspect that had so far only featured subliminally in the rhetoric and ideology of the Blueshirts/NCP. At the Montreux Congress in 1934, O'Duffy had even argued against an anti-Jewish resolution. Four years later, O'Duffy interpreted the Spanish trade unions "as powerful political Jewish-Masonic organisations, directed and financed by the Communist International", 'revealing' that the leader of the XI International Brigade, General Kleber, was a Russian Jew "whose real name is Lazar Feket". Disclosing the 'original' Jewish names of Russian communists was a typical way to express Judeo-Bolshevist myths, but O'Duffy even got it wrong.[112] General Kleber's real name was Manfred (Moses) Stern. This narrative was part of a broader ideological shift within O'Duffy's political thought towards increasing antisemitism and Nazi Germany. O'Duffy warned about a "queer coalition of International Jewry, the International Secret Societies, International Finance and the Comintern" in a celebratory article about Nazi Germany's seizure of the Sudetenland in 1938.[113] The increasing role of the Judeo-Bolshevist myth in O'Duffy's political thinking exemplifies the growing radicalization of various fascist figures and movements during the 1930s, culminating in antisemitic conspiracism.

The third motive for the Irish involvement in the war was the defense of Catholicism and Christian civilization. This emphasis on Catholicism had practical

110 O'Duffy, *Crusade in Spain*, 50.
111 O'Duffy, *Crusade in Spain*, 84.
112 Cf. Hanebrink, *A Specter Haunting Europe*, 14–21.
113 Cited in McGarry, *Eoin O'Duffy*, 320.

military consequences, as shown in an agreement between Franco and O'Duffy from November 1936 relating to the transport and finance of the Irish Brigade. The agreement stated that "it would be preferable not to oppose the Irish to the Basque Nationalists, who are Catholics" because Irish Catholics did not want to fight against other Catholics.[114] O'Duffy argued in his war memoirs that Irish volunteers helped to defend Christian civilization in Spain by supporting the almost heavenly hero General Franco, the "central figure in a struggle not only for Spain, but for world Christianity".[115] Narratives of a religious Crusade and the "holiest war" in the name of Christ and God were omnipresent during the Spanish Civil War.[116] The Irish Brigade had this in common with other fascist voluntary fighters, such as from the Romanian Iron Guard. These saw themselves too as part of a "historic mission in defence of the Cross, of culture and Christian civilization", as Iron Guard leader Corneliu Codreanu proclaimed.[117] But in the Irish case, the Catholic Faith was pivotal in contrast to the Iron Guard's Romanian Orthodox Christian Creed.

A quotation in the *Crusade in Spain* illustrates how national and international motives intertwined. O'Duffy quoted the Irish Dominican father in Lisbon, Reverend Paul O'Sullivan, who endorsed the Irish Brigade as follows: "[w]hy will not thousands of men from every nation flock to this holy, sacred fight for God, religion and civilisation? Is it not better to fight these monsters abroad, and with a people and for a country dear to us for many reasons, than to wait for them to come and perpetrate the same appalling crimes and atrocities in our land that they have perpetrated elsewhere?"[118] O'Sullivan made the argument that fighting for Christ against 'godless communism' abroad as part of an army involving all nations would help to prevent the 'godless foe' from succeeding at home.

Publicly, O'Duffy denied that the Irish Brigade's investment in the conflict had something to do with fighting for fascist internationalism. Other fascist movements like the IFL, the NF, and the DNSAP openly interpreted the war as a conflict between fascism and communism, as seen above. In stark contrast, the theme of (international) fascism was missing when closely scrutinizing the terms and concepts that O'Duffy and his fellow volunteers used when writing about their involvement in the Spanish conflict. The words 'fascist' or 'fascism' appear only

114 Agreement between H.E. General Franco and General Ean [sic] O'Duffy, November 28, 1936: [NLI], Eoin O'Duffy Papers, MS 48,292 /4.

115 O'Duffy, *Crusade in Spain*, 70.

116 O'Duffy, *Crusade in Spain*, 32–42.

117 Cited in Keene, *Fighting for Franco*, 215. On the involvement of the Iron Guard in the Spanish Civil War, see also Cârstocea, "Native Fascists, Transnational Anti-Semites", 231–233.

118 O'Duffy, *Crusade in Spain*, 41.

eleven times on 254 pages in O'Duffy's *Crusade in Spain*.[119] This denial was a strategic decision and not an ideological retraction from the broader fascist party family.

The Irish Blueshirts and the successor, the NCP, had from the outset denied fascism as a generic term despite showing interest, sympathy, and solidarity with fascist movements abroad. Moreover, during the conflict in Spain, Spanish Republicans and the International Brigades used fascism as the negatively connoted common denominator for the rebels to discredit Franco's insurrection as an illegitimate foreign intervention. O'Duffy dismissed this narrative of a fight between "democracy and fascism" as a propagandistic tool by the leftist international press.[120] In an attempt to legitimize the rebellion, he argued that the revolt was a morally lawful "armed plebiscite of the Spanish people" directed against an illegitimate communist government and certainly not a "Fascist rising". For O'Duffy, his hero Franco was certainly "not a Fascist", nor was the Spanish General interested in a "military dictatorship".[121] This illustrates how the label fascism functioned contemporarily as a contested concept, which fascists used or rejected in interplay with the usage by anti-fascist enemies.

Even though O'Duffy avoided the label fascism because it constituted an invective used by the opposing side, he placed the Irish Brigade firmly within the ideological camp of fascist regimes and movements, including the Spanish Falange. According to his memoirs, O'Duffy had even established ties to FL leader José Antonio Primo de Rivera and spent "a short holiday with him in 1934, and found he had a particular regard for Ireland".[122] O'Duffy praised the sacrifice of the Falange in the war and its antiliberal, antiparliamentary, and anticapitalistic program "based on sound Catholic and national principles".[123] The Irish Brigade leader also lauded both Hitler and Mussolini for their involvement in the war and for avoiding the "blood bath", which Spain was enduring, in Germany and Italy.[124] The Irish Brigade's temporal and Manichaean narratives, their emphasis on common 'internationalist' enemies, and the expressions of fraternity, solidarity, and admiration for Franco, the Spanish Falange, and the fascist regimes in Italy and Germany: all these elements point to a commitment to fascist internationalism in the broadest sense.

119 O'Duffy, *Crusade in Spain,* 41.
120 Cf. O'Duffy, *Crusade in Spain*, 226.
121 O'Duffy, *Crusade in Spain*, 36; 227.
122 O'Duffy, *Crusade in Spain*, 225.
123 O'Duffy, *Crusade in Spain*, 226.
124 O'Duffy, *Crusade in Spain*, 80.

The brief history of the Irish Brigade shows how European fascist leaders navigated strategically between the international and the domestic level, in this case without political success. As outlined previously, O'Duffy milked his international involvement in the Montreux Front to gain a reputation in the domestic sphere. When fighting for Franco in Spain, he similarly hoped to exploit the war effort to mobilize support and to rehabilitate himself as a relevant political figure in Ireland. Opposite to these hopes, the military involvement constituted a fiasco, preventing O'Duffy "from capitalizing on the Spanish adventure at home or abroad".[125] The Irish Brigade's military impact was minimal. A dozen volunteers were killed, some even by friendly fire. Moreover, many Spanish soldiers complained about the unprofessional behavior of the Irish troops, including public drunkenness and the lack of military discipline, leading to a "badly tarnished reputation".[126] It also made a bad public impression that O'Duffy refrained from getting involved in the battlefront. He spent his time in Spain on sightseeing trips, lazy days in bed, and long nights with drinks and socializing.[127] After roughly six months, O'Duffy offered to withdraw his unit, and Franco agreed. The Irish volunteers returned to Dublin on June 21, 1937. Instead of being welcomed by 10,000 supporters, as O'Duffy falsely claimed in his memoirs, only a few hundred greeted the returnees at the quay, including the Mayor of Dublin.

Irish public opinion had become more critical of Franco's insurrection by then. O'Duffy attempted to create a narrative of martyrdom around the few Irish soldiers who died, similar to the myths surrounding the Romanian Iron Guard 'martyrs' Vasile Marin and Ion Moţa.[128] O'Duffy established the Irish Brigade Association to perpetuate the Irish Brigade's name, repatriate the fallen volunteers, and appeal for funds.[129] Despite these efforts, the Irish Brigade "was to be remembered by later generations more for its role in supporting fascism than in fighting for the Catholic faith".[130] Dejected because of these experiences, O'Duffy personally withdrew from the political sphere in Ireland in the late 1930s.

Likewise, the Nationalist camp in Spain denied the role of foreign volunteers fighting for Franco's rebellion due to its own ultranationalism. General Franco

125 McGarry, *Eoin O'Duffy*, 317.

126 McGarry, *Eoin O'Duffy*, 315.

127 See Eoin O'Duffy, Red Exercise Book "Diary. Irish Brigade in Spain", November 13, 1936– June 21, 1937: [NLI], Eoin O'Duffy Papers, MS 48,292 /2.

128 On Ion Moţa and Vasile Marin as martyrs, see Valentin Săndulescu, "Sacralised Politics in Action: The February 1937 Burial of the Romanian Legionary Leaders Ion Moţa and Vasile Marin", *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 8.2 (2007): 259–269.

129 See also Eoin O'Duffy, National Appeal for Funds, September 4, 1937: [NLI], Eoin O'Duffy Papers, MS 48,294 /3.

130 White, 'The Greenshirts', 117.

claimed in a broadcast in October 1937, which marked his anniversary of becoming head of the Spanish state, that Spanish (and not foreign) Nationalists were "fighting against international units: not against sons of Spain but against the sons of Russia and the offscourings of Europe in a magnificent undertaking for the re-conquest and the fight against Red Europe and Moscow".[131] In the aftermath of the war, the official Franco discourse proclaimed that foreigners had only fought for the internationalist 'Reds', whereas patriotic Spaniards had been fighting for Franco, illustrating the contradictory nature of fascist internationalism in a nutshell.[132]

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Major discrepancies concerning hegemony had marked the troublesome relationship of minor fascist movements vis-à-vis the Italian and German versions of fascist internationalism. These issues of national sovereignty remained absent in the Spanish conflict, as neither Franco nor the Spanish Falange showed any interest in dominating foreign parties. Fascist competition and rivalry seemed obliterated in the sight of the omnipresent communist 'antichrist' that was allegedly conquering Europe. The Spanish Civil War therefore serves as yet another example of how fascist internationalism evolved as a counter-action to communist internationalism in the 1930s. This was most evident in the Irish Brigade, which perceived itself as a direct counter-unit to 'communists of all the world' fighting on the Republican side in the International Brigades steered by the Comintern.

In conclusion, the Spanish Civil War sparked narratives and actions of fascist solidarity among fascist movements from northwestern Europe, who interpreted the war almost unanimously as a broader European war between fascism and communism. The chapter has demonstrated the importance of cross-border *fascist solidarity* as an analytical concept, contrasting former research that reduced international solidarity to the political left grounded in a moral sense of inequality and social injustice. As contemporary leftist internationalists, fascist nationalists reached out helping hands to what they perceived as their 'brother organizations' abroad, grounded in a plethora of reasons ranging from an ideological sense of connectedness to pragmatic self-interests. This form of international fascist solidarity was shaped by intertwining motives concerning the *international* dimensions of unity, support, and kinship across borders and the *national* dimension when movements capitalized on foreign political events and developments for domestic purposes, centering around the warning: *what is happening there could also happen here*.

131 Cited in Keene, *Fighting for Franco*, 3.
132 Cf. Keene, *Fighting for Franco*, 294.

This is a crucial finding concerning the interpretation of the Spanish Civil War and its relation to fascist internationalism. Under the impression of the mighty Judeo-Bolshevist enemy, European fascists constructed an understanding of the world in which certain political transformations and events could not be reduced to processes within autarkic and sovereign individual nations. Instead, they recognized the world's interconnectedness and that some political causalities were international. In a speech held in 1936, Vidkun Quisling defined these conditions of globalization as "the characteristic feature of our time", illustrated by "the fact that the world is becoming one great economic unit and that no country can no longer be sufficient unto itself, it is dependent on others".[133] The purpose of his speech was to propose a new *Nordic World Federation*, illustrating that smaller fascist movements were developing their own, distinct visions of international organizations that went far beyond a mere policy of 'anti-internationalism'.

133 Quisling, "A Nordic World Federation", 99–100.

Chapter 10
"The United Fascist States of Europe": Visions of International, European, and Regional Cooperation

Donald Trump's infamous campaign slogan 'America First' is commonly known for representing a policy of nationalism, non-interventionism, isolationism, and withdrawal from international treaties, organizations, and the so-called rules-based international order. Historically, the white supremacist Ku Klux Klan and the America First Committee used the exact phrase, employing antisemitic and fascist rhetoric to prevent the United States from joining the Second World War.[1] Many fascist parties from northwestern Europe applied similar slogans such as '"Nationalism Comes First" regarding their plans for the international arena of politics, as outlined in an IFL pamphlet from 1935.[2] When dealing with issues of world order, fascist movements sought to capitalize primarily on negative fears of allegedly omnipresent communism and the failures of the League of Nations. They also warned of the dangerous consequences of worldwide 'Jewish capitalism' for their nations and portrayed themselves as anti-globalization movements. Thus, former research seemingly had good reasons for conceptualizing fascist rhetoric as anti-internationalist and fascism interlinked with a program of national rebirth as the "antithesis of internationalism".[3]

Beyond this obvious anti-internationalist discourse, however, we have seen in the previous chapters how fascist movements themselves became involved in international organizations, and how they portrayed themselves as part of an emerging broader fascist era while repeatedly referring to ideas of a common European destiny and future. Building on these findings, this chapter examines a plethora of 'internationalist' thoughts and multifaceted counterproposals of international order emanating from fascist parties in northwestern Europe, although these mostly remained mere edifices of ideas due to the limited political influence of these parties.

1 Cf. Bryan Bennet, "'America First,' a phrase with a loaded anti-Semitic and isolationist history", *Los Angeles Times*, January 20, 2017.

2 Imperial Fascist League, *Mightier Yet! Back to Reality*: *The Policy of the Imperial Fascist League outlined* (London: I.F.L. Printing & Publishing Co, 1935), 19.

3 Borejsza, "Die Rivalität zwischen Faschismus und Nationalsozialismus in Ostmitteleuropa", 607.

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The analysis of these internationalist dimensions of European fascism aligns with a burgeoning body of research in the past decade, which has uncovered the formerly "neglected story" of anti-liberal, anti-democratic, and fascist Europeanization in the twentieth century.[4] Focusing primarily on Nazi Germany or Fascist Italy, this literature foregrounds the Second World War as a particularly important period in which European anti-liberal and anti-communist ideas flourished as the Axis powers occupied large parts of the continent. Numerous international partners contributed to the Nazi attempt to create a political, cultural, and economic *New European Order* in the 1940s.[5] Moreover, historians of fascism such as Arnd Bauerkämper underline "Pan-Europeanism" as a common fascist outlook, arguing that "Fascists in Europe vacillated between pan-Europeanism on the one hand and hyper-nationalism on the other".[6] Similarly, Roger Griffin proposes that "certain strands of interwar fascism [. . .] thought of rebirth in pan-European or even Western terms", seeing "their movement specifically as part of the creation of a new Europe".[7] According to research by Benjamin G. Martin and others, fascist Europeanism was fostered by fears that Europe was diminished and caught between the two new superpowers of the United States and the Soviet Union.[8] According to Johannes Dafinger, a common reaction was "protectionist Europeanism", meaning that intra-European relations in the fascist era were "conceived and instrumentalized as a means to supersede multilateral relations across the borders of Europe", a process resulting in "Europeanization as detachment from the global".[9]

This chapter contributes to the ongoing historiographical debate on whether fascist internationalism can be equated with fascist Europeanism by arguing, on the one hand, that the smaller movements from northwestern Europe envisioned fascist Europeanism already in the 1930s as an important counterweight to the processes of globalization and multilateralism outside Europe. In this sense, the following analysis explores ideas of European cooperation, mainly (but not exclu-

4 Gosewinkel, *Anti-liberal Europe*. See also the discussion of fascist Europeanism in the introduction of this book.

5 See, among others, Neulen, *Europa und das 3. Reich*; Mazower, *Hitler's Empire*; Jürgen Evert, "The New European Order of National Socialism. Some Remarks on its Sources, Genesis and Nature", in *Anti-liberal Europe. A Neglected Story of Europeanization,* edited by Dieter Gosewinkel (New York: Berghahn, 2014), 105–127; Martin, *The Nazi-Fascist New Order for European Culture*; Bauer, *The Construction of a National Socialist Europe during the Second World War.*

6 Bauerkämper, "Ambiguities of Transnationalism", 63.

7 Griffin, "Europe for the Europeans", 149; 135.

8 Martin, *The Nazi-Fascist New Order for European Culture.*

9 Dafinger, "Europeanization as Detachment from the Global", 95.

sively) emanating from Swiss parties, who perceived Switzerland as a mediator in Europe due to its multilingual 'cultural' and 'racial' mixture.

On the other hand, the analysis complicates a one-sided emphasis on Europe as the main point of reference for fascist visions of international cooperation. This builds on Aron Brouwer, who criticizes the "narrow pan-European paradigm" and emphasizes that fascist "pan-European language was often employed to convey disparate meanings".[10] Europe was a highly contested concept used normatively by fascists with very different geographical and racial ideas of Europe in mind.[11] They articulated varying, partly competing visions based on heterogeneous understandings of a 'New Europe' (if they referred to this concept at all). Furthermore, visions of European cooperation were by no means exclusive but existed next to imperialist and white supremacist visions of a new world order beyond Europe, sometimes interlinked and sometimes opposed to Europeanism.

This coexistence of European and more global white supremacist 'internationalist' thinking, contradictorily linked to an anti-internationalist rhetoric and program of 'Nationalism First', is analyzed in the first part of the following chapter. It explores the theme of anti-internationalism through a brief analysis of fascist campaigns against multilateralism and international organizations such as the League of Nations, with a particular emphasis on the Irish Blueshirts and the British IFL. The second sections discusses concrete counterproposals of specifically European international organizations, notably the FFS's vision of a United Fascist States of Europe, and the NF's ideas of a 'Europe of nationalisms'. Building on a recent regional turn in transnational history, the final part of the chapter uses the example of Scandinavia to uncover fascist visions of regional cooperation (meaning broader geographical regions encompassing multiple countries).[12] Arguably, visions of *fascist regionalism* were often perceived as politically more realistic than projects of Europeanism or worldwide universalism. The Scandinavian fascist parties perfectly illustrate this intersection of potentially global and European visions of international cooperation, intertwined with a specific regional outlook based on Nordic racial, linguistic, and historical unity. However,

10 Brouwer, "The Pan-Fascist Paradox", 7–10.

11 On Europe as a contested concept, see Johannes Dafinger and Dieter Pohl, "Introduction", in *A New Nationalist Europe under Hitler. Concepts of Europe and Transnational Networks in the National Socialist Sphere of Influence, 1933-1945*, edited by Johannes Dafinger and Dieter Pohl (London: Routledge, 2019), 1–24, 6–8.

12 Thomas Davies, Daniel Laqua, Maria Framke et al., "Rethinking Transnational Activism through Regional Perspectives: Reflections, Literatures and Cases", *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* (2024): 1–27.

such visions of fascist regionalism were not confined to northern Europe. Fascist intellectuals from Spain, France, and Italy, for example, developed ideas of 'pan-Latinism', stressing the need for greater cooperation between these countries because of their common Latin heritage.[13]

"Nationalism Comes First": Campaigns against Multilateralism and International Organizations

Nazi Germany left the League of Nations in 1933 and Fascist Italy in 1937. Many other European fascists wished to follow their role models because 'Geneva' represented the old and increasingly crumbling liberal international order, which had to be overthrown or transformed into a new fascist world order. Hence, their main foreign political aim became to withdraw their countries too from the League of Nations and other multilateral organizations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), and they repeatedly attacked other organizations such as the Labour and Socialist International (LSI), and the so-called Amsterdam International, the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU) for undermining their county's national interests. However, the League received most of the attention in the fascist theme of anti-internationalism. Especially the League's decision to accept Soviet membership (in 1934) and the sanctions imposed on Fascist Italy (1935) due to the aggression against League member Abyssinia enraged the minor fascist movements. Vidkun Quisling's NS attacked the Norwegian government under Johan Mowinckel for voting for a Soviet membership, supposedly exposing the North to the "Marxist East".[14] The Swedish SNU even characterized the entry of the USSR into the League in September 1934 as an "alliance with the antichrist".[15] According to these conspiratorial Judeo-Bolshevist myths, the League of Nations supposedly served 'international Jewry' and Freemasonry and countered the national interests of fascists across Europe.

Intriguingly, fascist movements from both politically major and minor nations raised critique against the League of Nations, albeit with different arguments. The British IFL repeatedly articulated its desire to withdraw Britain from the League and other "international pacts" because these allegedly endangered the interests of the British Empire.[16] The Norwegian NS, in stark contrast, continuously described the League as an instrument of the great imperialist powers

13 See Muraca "The 'New Catholicity' of Fascism".

14 E.g. Vidkun Quisling, "Norge og Folkeforbundet", *Nasjonal Samling,* September 20, 1934.

15 "Förbunded med Antikrist", *Nationell Tidning,* September 29, 1934.

16 Imperial Fascist League, *Mightier Yet! Back to Reality*.

such as Britain, directed against smaller nations such as Norway. Herman Harris Aall, the NS philosopher of law, claimed from a juridical point of view that smaller states were forced by the League to give up their neutrality and to fight in an upcoming war for British and Soviet imperialism against either Fascist Italy or Nazi Germany.[17] The Swedish SNU/SNF also campaigned ardently against the League of Nations because it threatened the neutrality of Sweden, and from 1936 on, it advocated openly for a Swedish withdrawal from the League via a motion by its representatives in the Swedish parliament.[18]

The fascist movements used the opposition to multilateral organizations as well as internationally operating fraternal organizations such as Freemasons as a populist method to generate publicity and mobilize new followers. The SNF's anti-League campaign culminated in 1938 in a petition designed for the broader public, demanding the Swedish withdrawal from Geneva. The petition was signed by 60,000 people (according to the SNF press) and put the comparatively small party for months into the spotlight of Swedish politics.[19] Similarly, the so-called Helvetic Action (an alliance between the FFS and the paramilitary organization Home Guard) passed a resolution demanding Switzerland's immediate withdrawal from the League of Nations in December 1935.[20] The declaration was built on a petition for a referendum against Freemasonry, which the FFS leader Arthur Fonjallaz initiated in April 1934.[21] This so-called Fonjallaz initiative portrayed Freemasons as the main enemy of the Swiss population due to its alleged diabolic "cosmopolitan internationalism".[22] The initiative collected 56,238 signatories, which far exceeded the FFS membership numbers. Therefore, a referendum was held in 1937 –even though the FFS had been dissolved a year earlier. This did not stop Fonjallaz from writing spiteful anti-masonic articles in preparation for the referendum.[23] Other right-wing Swiss groups supported his campaign, including the NF, which also de-

17 E.g. Herman Harris Aall, "Folkeforbundets sanksjoner og Norges grunnlov", *Nasjonal Samling,* November 7, 1935; Herman Harris Aall, "Folkeforbundets formål", *Nasjonal Samling,* December 5, 1935.

18 Cf. "Sanktionspolitiken på dödslageret", *Nationell Tidning,* March 14, 1936; "Marxistregeringens utrikespolitik är farlig för vårt land", *Nationell Tidning,* April 25, 1936; "Vi Vilja skapa ett nordiskt fredsblock ty vi lita ej på Nationernas Förbund!", *Nationell Tidning,* May 2, 1936.

19 "60.000 kräva utträde ur NF", *Nationell Tidning,* May 28, 1938.

20 "Die Helvetische Aktion für den Austritt aus dem Völkerbund", *Der Schweizer Fascist,* December 12, 1935. On the Helvetic Action, see also Schumacher, *Nazi! Fascistes! Fascisti!*, 105.

21 Cf. Schneider, "Die Fonjallaz-Initiative".

22 Arthur Fonjallaz, Fritz Uhlmann, and René Sonderegger, *Freimaurerei ja oder nein? Eine Stellungnahme zur Fonjallaz-Initiative* (Zurich: Reso-Verlag, 1936).

23 Arthur Fonjallaz, "Die Armee und die Freimaurerei", *Helvetischen Hefte* 4 (1937): 1–32.

manded a Swiss withdrawal from the League of Nations from the mid-1930s on.[24] These examples illustrate the discontent of the minor fascist movements with the post-1919 international order of Versailles. Furthermore, they show how the parties attempted to capitalize on the supposed failures of the international system through political mobilization in concrete political campaigns, resolutions, and motions. The hope was to attract supporters beyond party lines and outline the opposition towards the "treasonous" domestic governments, who allegedly sold the interest of their nations by serving sinister foreign and secret powers steered by Judaism and Freemasonry.

Due to this anti-internationalism combined with an emphasis on domestic policies and dreams of a national palingenesis, some minor fascist movements refrained from developing concrete visions of a new international fascist order and cooperation. Throughout the 1930s, the Irish Blueshirts and later NCP prioritized nationalism above engaging in international institutions. Eoin O'Duffy explained this policy in a speech on "Ireland's attitude towards international affairs" in early 1939 (when his movement had already collapsed). O'Duffy argued that the "first problem in establishing European or World peace is for each nation to set its own house in order, for as long as nations are in a state of internal rottenness, their politicians will always attempt to precipitate a crisis and endeavour to maintain their authority by turning discontent towards foreign affairs".[25] New research questions whether the speech was actually held by O'Duffy himself or, instead, by his associate Liam Welsh, but either way, the speech's content exemplifies the emphasis of the former Blueshirts on a program of 'nationalism first'.[26]

Similarly, the British IFL summarized the main principle of its policy on international relations as "Nationalism Comes First".[27] The movement dismissed attempts to impose an "artificial 'brotherhood of nations' on an unready world" and invoked instead an "international ideal of a world friendship" based on mutual respect. Only nations in which fascism succeeded would enable this kind of international respect and friendship. Therefore, the IFL outlined vaguely that "Fascism, by restoring the character of the nation from within, and by raising its prestige without, becomes the greatest potential basis for a world comradeship that the powers have yet seen".[28] This resembled CINEF's take on fascist interna-

24 "Schluss mit dem Völkerbund!", *Die Front,* June 29, 1936.

25 Eoin O'Duffy, Ireland's Attitude Towards International Affairs, undated: [NLI], Eoin O'Duffy Papers, MS 48,290 /9, 9.

26 Cf. Traynor, *General Eoin O'Duffy*, 186–187.

27 Imperial Fascist League, *Mightier Yet! Back to Reality*, 19.

28 Imperial Fascist League, *Mightier Yet! Back to Reality,* 19.

tionalism as discussed in Chapter 1. Other movements, like the Danish DNSAP, also articulated this key argument: a refusal to engage in any alternative international order as long as fascism had not succeeded domestically.

However, even in these 'anti-internationalist' cases, the principle of 'nationalism first' did not preclude internationalist thought combined with visions of Europeanism. The Irish Blueshirt movement and later NCP repeatedly connected Ireland's rebirth to other Catholic nations such as Italy and Spain and, with a specifically anti-British outlook, also to continental Europe. Eoin O'Duffy expressed the hope that "we would take an important part in the great corporative movement of to-day for the political redemption of Europe".[29] The Irish Blueshirts also argued that "a universal adoption of the Corporative ideal" would enable a "long-lasting peace in Europe".[30] Strikingly, Blueshirt references to the non-European world remained scarce. The movement did not express solidarity and seek international cooperation with other former or still existing British colonies or League mandates such as Canada, India, or Palestine. Instead, the Irish fascists attempted to underline their cultural and racial equality with nations in continental Europe based on a shared European history and future, as argued in Chapter 6. Therefore, Eoin O'Duffy insisted in 1935 that "it is very necessary for a historic nation like ours to play its full part in the life of Europe, and I feel that Ireland's influence for world peace can be a very great one".[31]

How a European and global vision of a new fascist international order could intertwine is illustrated by the British IFL, which, as outlined previously, was shaped by obsessive antisemitism and racism. According to the Leese movement, the starting point of "world peace" would be an understanding between Britain, Germany, and the Scandinavian countries based upon racial unity, and the IFL openly declared its "bias in favour of the Aryan nations".[32] The most important international task for "racial fascism" was to fight Jews not only in Europe but all around the globe.[33] One pamphlet from 1938 argued that Aryan Britons belonged to the "White Races of Europe" as "natural" leaders of the world, constituting in a hierarchical order of the "Nordic-Aryan", the "Mediterranean", and the "Alpine race".[34] The IFL even contradicted its previous 'nationalism comes first' mantra by prioritizing racial community instead of nationalism and outlining the defense

29 Eoin O'Duffy, "Blueshirt Agricultural Policy: The Corporative System", *The Blueshirt,* January 12, 1935.

30 "Europe's Corporative Movements", *The Blueshirt,* February 2, 1935.

31 Eoin O'Duffy, "The Years Progress", *The Nation,* June 22, 1935.

32 Imperial Fascist League, *Mightier Yet! Back to Reality*, 19.

33 Cf. "Racial Fascism in the Sudan", *The Fascist,* February 1933.

34 Imperial Fascist League, *Race and Politics*.

of these white races in Europe against "racial mixture" as the main task of a new international order. "Nationality itself is of secondary importance in politics to Race" and "the true Internationalism [. . .] is the instinctive respect of one Aryan Nation for another".[35] This international agenda was thus not restricted to Europe but included a "worldwide movement" of 'Aryans' (of European descent) "fighting for their race against the hated Jews who were hellbent on destroying it".[36] However, the IFL remained vague how such a 'true internationalism' would be organized politically and economically in practice. The Swiss FFS also illustrates this combination of Europeanism and white supremacism, but with a clear emphasis on the European continent.

"A Europe of Nationalisms": Fascist Visions of Europeanism

In April 1935, the Swiss FFS predicted that the youthful force of universal fascism would unite the European peoples "in peace in independent, national people's communities in the sign of the fascist bundle to the United Fascist States of Europe".[37] This vision was based on a community of destiny between Switzerland and Europe and profoundly influenced by CAUR's notion of universal fascism. The FFS maintained that universal fascism would build "a new world of national honor and social justice" while preserving national diversity in Europe and beyond.[38] In contrast to its "internationalist enemies", the FFS promised that universal fascism would allow for a "natural unification" of the European states "without interfering with the national autonomy of the individual peoples".[39] Strikingly, the FFS refrained from spelling out how a European federation would be organized politically, economically, or culturally. However, the hierarchy was evident: Rome, which once also had brought Roman Law and Catholicism to the European continent, would lead these United Fascist States of Europe.[40] This vision of a new fascist international order was shaped by white supremacism in the sense that Mussolini would offer the "white race" a "minimum of unity" and

35 Imperial Fascist League, *Race and Politics*, 7–8.
36 Cf. May, 'Breaking Boundaries', 151.
37 "Universalität und Universalität", *Der Schweizer Fascist,* April 4, 1935.
38 "Universalität und Universalität", April 4, 1935.
39 "Marxistische Internationale oder Universalität des Faschismus?", *Der Schweizer Fascist,* November 22, 1934.
40 "Marxistische Internationale oder Universalität des Faschismus?", November 22, 1934.

facilitate that Europe would retain "the steering wheel of civilization in the world".[41]

Fascist visions of Europeanism were often based on the conviction that national autarky and independence were impossible in a world increasingly characterized by globalization and the world economy. The FFS, for instance, believed that European economy and policy determined the destiny of Switzerland, building on ideas developed by the influential authoritarian far-right intellectual Gonzague de Reynold.[42] In his book *Die Schweiz im Kampf um ihre Existenz* (*Switzerland in the Struggle for its Existence*, 1934), Reynold argued that the ongoing European crisis determined the destiny Switzerland.[43] Accordingly, Swiss economic and political independence would become impossible in an increasingly globalized world. Building on Reynold, the FFS claimed that Italian Fascism would soon dominate Europe, and because Europe determined Switzerland, the Swiss people would have to adapt to a new fascist order.[44]

There were striking similarities and differences between the visions of world order of the Italophile FFS and the Germanophile NF, the other prominent fascist Swiss movement. The latter also linked the fate of Switzerland to Europe but believed that the Italian project of fascist universalism would oppose any natural and free development of the European peoples.[45] Party leader Rolf Henne outlined the foreign political visions of the NF in a speech on "Switzerland's role in the coming Europe", held at the Oslo Congress of the IAdN in July 1936. Henne stressed that Europeanism was focal for the NF due to Switzerland's geopolitical and territorial position. As a "Guardian of the middle" (*Hüter der Mitte*), a concept coined by the NF intellectual Hans Oehler, Switzerland's geographical position predestined its role as a mediator between different European peoples and nationalist movements.[46] The NF perceived the Swiss nation as an ideal European intermediary because it combined three European 'cultural peoples': the Germans, the French, and the Italians. Rolf Henne claimed that the very existence of Switzerland, with its mixture of three peoples, proved that a "European supra-popular peace order is not a mirage, but lies within the realm of political possibil-

41 "Marxistische Internationale oder Universalität des Faschismus?", November 22, 1934.

42 On Gonzague de Reynold's intellectual influence on Swiss fascism, see Aram Mattioli, *Zwischen Demokratie und totalitärer Diktatur*: *Gonzague de Reynold und die Tradition der autoritären Rechten in der Schweiz* (Zurich: Orell Füssli, 1994).

43 Gonzague de Reynold, *Die Schweiz im Kampf um ihre Existenz* (Luzern: Vita Nova, 1934).

44 "Die Schweiz aber wird bestimmt durch Europa", *Der Schweizer Fascist*, December 6, 1934.

45 Henne, *Die Rolle der Schweiz im kommenden Europa*, 10.

46 Cf. Hans Oehler, "Hüter der Mitte", *Nationale Hefte. Schweizer Monatsschrift* 4 (1938): 417–432.

ity".[47] This is an intriguing example of a fascist vision promoting the diversity of peoples as a benevolent feature rooted in the peculiarity of Swiss political and cultural history. Another, entirely different example of a fascist movement celebrating the cultural and 'racial' diversity of its own nation was Plínio Salgado's Brazilian Integralist Action (*Ação Integralista Brasileira*, AIB). Brazilian integralism celebrated racial mixture combining indigenous peoples, descendants of Portuguese colonizers, and African slaves, due to the colonial history of Brazil.[48]

The foreign political agenda of the NF was mainly driven by the fear that Europe's position would be provincialized in a globalized world. Therefore, the party evoked an awareness of an "all-European community of destiny" and demanded closer European integration.[49] Hans Oehler, the leading NF ideologue, even envisioned in his influential magazine *Nationale Hefte* a "Europe of nationalisms" vis-à-vis the non-European world. Oehler insisted that Europe would only prevail in the long run and retain its dominant position in the world if various "nationalisms" would not direct their forces against each other and thus destroy the continent as during the First World War. Instead, they should devote themselves to a "supranational destiny" within the framework of a "European community of nations", requiring goodwill, mutual knowledge, and mutual understanding.[50] Like many other European fascist movements, the NF repeatedly described the emancipation of the non-European world as a threat to Europe, resulting in protectionist Europeanism. At the Oslo Congress of the Nationalist International, Rolf Henne made an almost anxious plea for the preservation of "Europe's cultural heritage against the onslaught of non-European powers," firmly believing in a European "common destiny":

> The more the non-European continents emancipate themselves from Europe and dispute its position in the world, the more the realization grows that Europe, despite its diverse ethnic composition, which constantly harbors the danger of clashes between individual nationalities, forms a unity vis-à-vis the other continents which [. . .] must be given a certain organizational form.[51]

According to Henne, the organizing principle for the "coming European empire" had to be the equal right of all peoples to form themselves sovereignly according to their "traditional nationality". Therefore, the NF demanded a peaceful "coexis-

47 Henne, *Die Rolle der Schweiz im kommenden Europa*, 7.

48 Cf. Griffin, *Fascism*, 76–77.

49 Cf. Rolf Henne, "Internationale Zusammenarbeit", *Die Front,* July 20, 1935.

50 Hans Oehler, "Zwiesprache: Es gibt kein Europa, es sei denn das der Nationalismen", *Nationale Hefte. Schweizer Monatsschrift* 1 (1934): 542–545.

51 Henne, *Die Rolle der Schweiz im kommenden Europa*, 2.

tence of the European community of peoples".[52] This vision was fundamentally hierarchical because certain 'culture peoples' (*Kulturvölker*), such as the German *Volk*, would 'naturally' take up a leading position in this new, 'supranational' order. Unmistakably, the NF positioned itself in the pro-Nazi German (rather than Italian) camp with its proposals for building a New Europe, foreshadowing the Nazi 'New European Order' during the Second World War.[53]

Similar arguments for European cooperation and integration, grounded in fears that Europe would be diminished due to the emancipation of the outside world, were also expressed by numerous other fascist parties (and the broader political right) outside Switzerland, including the Swedish SNF. Rütger Essén was the leading 'Europeanist' within the SNF, a multilingual former diplomat and journalist who wrote regularly on foreign policy and questions of world order.[54] Essén flirted throughout the interwar period with different fascist, liberal, conservative, and colonialist ideas of European cooperation and stood in contact with competing international organizations such as CAUR, IAdN, and the Pan-European Movement, illustrating fluid political boundaries regarding questions of internationalism.[55] Among others, Essén shared with these diverse groups a concern about the rise of Imperial Japan, commenting in late 1938 that Europe would lose its "world position" due to Japan's potential victory in the ongoing Sino-Japanese War. His answer to the "Asian threat" was increased European cooperation, exemplified by the Munich Agreement.[56]

Like many other European fascist parties, the SNF warned about a confrontation between a "white" European and a "yellow" Japanese hegemony over the world, rooted in European white supremacism.[57] Rütger Essén also merged ideas of Europeanism and colonialism by suggesting that African colonies should become a common task and responsibility of all European countries because it would otherwise become impossible to maintain Europe's control over Africa.[58] Essén was inspired by the concept of Eurafrica developed by the Pan-European

52 Henne, *Die Rolle der Schweiz im kommanden Europa*, 10.

53 Cf. Hans Oehler, "Die Schweiz im neuen Europa", *Nationale Hefte. Schweizer Monatsschrift* 5 (1938): 1–8.

54 See RA Marieberg, REA, Vol. 45–51.

55 Essén stood also in contact with the Swedish Association for European Cooperation (*Svenska föreningen för europeiskt samarbete*), the International Federation of Committees for European Cooperation (in support of the League of Nations), and the Nazi German Nordic Society (*Nordische Gesellschaft*). See [RA Marieberg], REA, Vol. 8–154.

56 Cf. Rütger Essén, "Europa förlorar sin världsställning", *Nationell Tidning,* October 29, 1938

57 "Gul hegemoni eller vit i Fjärran Östen", *Nationell Tidning,* January 22, 1938. For a similar argument by the Swiss NF, see "Gefahren in Fern-Ost. Japan nützt die Schwäche Europas aus", *Die Front,* November 13, 1935.

58 Cf. Rütger Essén, *Stormakternas kamp om Afrika* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 1936).

Movement. As the pan-Europeanist Richard Nikolaus Coudenhove-Kalergi, Essén envisioned the "incorporation of African territory as an integral part of a continental-scale 'European' political project".[59]

Rütger Essén interweaved the themes of European protectionism, anti-universalism, and Nordic regionalism in a "memorandum concerning a regional agreement between the states of the North and the relation of this group of states to a European organization", written in January 1935.[60] Due to the failures of the League of Nations' universal approach to creating a functioning world order, Essén argued that continental Europe (in distinction from the British Empire) should concentrate on the development of an association of European states. But, because such an undertaking was utopian in the foreseeable future, the European integration process had to be nurtured at first via regional cooperation. This proposal illustrates that fascist agents envisioned intertwined projects of nationalism, regionalism, Europeanism, and colonialist internationalism. Despite repeatedly advocating for Europeanism, the SNF eventually concentrated on Nordic cooperation as the most realistic option.

"The Nordic World Federation": Scandinavian Fascist Regionalism

The three Scandinavian fascist parties, the Swedish SNF, the Norwegian NS, and the Danish DNSAP, provide excellent examples of interweaving visions of international and European order with a specific regional outlook. Their visions and politics of Nordic cooperation emerged as a counter-reaction to social democratic, liberal, and conservative forms of Scandinavianism that aimed at closer cultural and political integration between Denmark, Sweden, and Norway.[61] For political movements from the left to the right, the 1930s represented "a pivotal period for reinventing, redefining and consolidating" concepts of the North "into a distinct political and cultural transnational region, characterized by increasing inter-

59 Benjamin J. Thorpe, "Eurafrica: A Pan-European Vehicle for Central European Colonialism (1923–1939)", *European Review* 26.3 (2018): 503–513, 504.

60 Rütger Essén, Memorandum angående ett regionalavtal mellan Nordens stater samt denna statsgrupps förhållende till en europeisk organisation, January 3, 1935: [RA Marieberg], REA, Vol. 81, 1–6.

61 See Ruth Hemstad and Peter Stadius, eds., *Nordic Experiences in Pan-Nationalisms*: *A Reappraisal and Comparison, 1840-1940* (London, New York: Routledge, 2023). On fascist ideas of Scandinavianism, see also Rebecca Weinberg, "Ideological Incorrectness beyond 'Political Religion': Discourse on Nazi Ideology among Scandinavian National Socialist Intellectuals 1933-1945" (PhD diss., Royal Holloway University of London, 2015), 166–168.

Nordic cooperation and coordination".[62] This broader process also impacted Scandinavian fascist movements, who based their ideas of Nordic cooperation on a racially and historically-grounded Nordic unity.

Still, the three parties had different objectives and foci when foregrounding Nordic cooperation. The SNF mainly advocated a military "Nordic Peace Block" and "defense community".[63] In the afore-mentioned memorandum, Rütger Essén suggested the creation of a regional "Nordic federation of states", centering on the three core Scandinavian nations Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, even though other Nordic states such as Finland, Estonia, and Latvia were also allowed to join. The third Baltic state, Lithuania, was excluded by "nature" because it was historically closer to central Europe, which should form its own regional association.[64] This Nordic federation would contain a mutual security guarantee supplemented by a convention on means of defense and mutual foreign economic relations.[65] During the 1930s, the SNF repeatedly argued that Nordic military cooperation would enable "strict neutrality" of northern Europe while protecting Swedish and Scandinavian interests against the imperialist interests of the great powers such as the British Empire, Nazi Germany, and Soviet Russia.[66] The party envisioned the Nordic Peace Block as a direct alternative to League internationalism, arguing that a Swedish withdrawal from Geneva would not thwart but facilitate Nordic cooperation.[67]

Next to a military alliance, the SNF advocated more practical Nordic cooperation through study and business trips, a Nordic journal in the cultural field, increased exchange of commodities, and abolishing customs borders between Nordic states.[68] The SNF also discussed its plans for a Nordic Peace Block with potential northern European partners, notably the radicalized youth branches of

62 Ruth Hemstad, "Promoting Norden and Nordic Cooperation in the 1930s: Social Democratic Visions and Transmedial Manifestations", edited by Fredrik Norén, Emil Stjernholm, and C. Claire Thomson, in *Nordic Media Histories of Propaganda and Persuasion* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2023), 31–54, 32.

63 "Vi tro på Sverige och svenska uppgifter i ny europeisk kulturepok: Per Engdahl om den nysvenska rörelsen", *Nationell Tidning,* November 21, 1936.

64 Rütger Essén, Memorandum angående ett regionalavtal mellan Nordens stater samt denna statsgrupps förhållende till en europeisk organisation, January 3, 1935: [RA Marieberg], REA, Vol. 81, 1–6, 3–6.

65 Essén, Memorandum angående, January 3 1935, 5.

66 Cf. "Skandinavismen på villovägar", *Nationell Tidning,* July 30, 1938.

67 "Vårt utträda ur NF hindrar ej nordiskt samarbete", *Nationell Tidning,* March 12, 1938.

68 "Nu måste vi börja realisera det praktiska nordiska samarbetet!", *Nationell Tidning,* November 6, 1937; "Bort med tullgränserna mellan Nordens stater", *Nationell Tidning,* November 20, 1937.

the conservative parties in Denmark and Norway.[69] The SNF also attempted several times to integrate Vidkun Quisling from the Norwegian NS into its own "Nordic front".[70] However, Quisling refused to cooperate with the SNF, perhaps because he based Nordic cooperation primarily on Nordic racism instead of more pragmatic military reasons. Moreover, Quisling was skeptical of narrow Scandinavianism because Norway had historically been ruled by Denmark and later Sweden from the Middle Ages until 1905.[71]

Vidkun Quisling's outlined his own theory of Nordic cooperation in the book *Russland og vi* (Russia and ourselves, 1930), which he published three years before the foundation of the NS in 1933. In the book, Quisling cherished the Nordic race as "the most important bearer of world civilization".[72] His solution to the Bolshevist danger was closer cultural, economic, and political cooperation between Nordic peoples. Accordingly, Quisling suggested the creation of a Nordic Federation (*Nordisk Forbund*). Its core was a Nordic Entente between Scandinavia and Britain, which Quisling interpreted as Norway's closest partner in 1930. But Nordic cooperation should also include Finland, the Netherlands, Germany, the British dominions, and the United States prospectively. Consequently, when Quisling founded the NS in May 1933, he outlined the Nordic Federation as a cornerstone of the new party's foreign policy.[73] In the official party manifesto, published a year later, the explicit reference to the Nordic Federation was missing. However, the program still suggested closer cooperation with "racially and culturally related peoples all over the world".[74]

Vidkun Quisling was obsessed with dividing the world into different regional power blocks and spheres of influence according to his Nordic racism. In *Russland og vi*, Quisling divided the 'civilizational' world into four parts: two Nordic parts in Northern Europe and Northern America, and two Roman respectively Latin parts in Southern Europe and Latin America. Quisling juxtaposed this civilizational world with the "Asian-Orient" in the East, mainly ignoring Africa. At the same time, he recognized the "pan-European" and the "pan-American idea" as another potential world division, uniting the interests of the Nordic and the Latin nations.[75] This legitimized his participation in the Italian CAUR project. As part of

69 See Lindström, *Fascism in Scandinavia, 1920–1940*, 29–31.

70 See Letter from Göran Wahlström to Vidkun Quisling, May 14, 1931: [RA Oslo], PA-0750 Gj L0001.

71 On Quisling's anti-Danish attitude, see also Chapter 6.

72 Lindström, *Fascism in Scandinavia*, 195.

73 Cf. Vidkun Quisling, "Oppfordring til Nasjonal Samling", *Tidens Tegn,* May 16, 1933.

74 See "Program for Nasjonal Samling", *Nasjonal Samling,* March 15, 1934.

75 Cf. Quisling, *Russland og vi*, 166.

the Montreux Front and its executive committee, Quisling accepted that CAUR would lead a Latin American and Roman group of nations.

However, from 1936 onward, Quisling insisted that Oslo should become the center of a new "Nordic World Movement", which would unite the Nordic civilization in a "Great Peace Union".[76] These ideas culminated in Quisling's so-called Nordic World Federation (*Nordisk Verdenssamband*), a plan he presented at an NS party convention in Oslo on June 27, 1936.[77] His speech offered a typical justification of fascist internationalism as counter-internationalism: "[a]s the forces working for our national destructions are internationally organized, we are obliged to meet them with an organization which aims beyond national interests".[78] Copying the Communist Manifesto, Quisling ended the speech with the slogan "Nordic in all countries, unite".[79]

Despite constantly presenting the NS as an eminently nationalist movement, Quisling acknowledged Norway's role within an interconnected, globalized world where national autarky and isolation no longer constituted an option. As a result, Quisling argued that the Nordic World Federation would enable a common Nordic currency, fiscal collaboration, and a customs union.[80] The federation also served a military purpose to secure "Norway's position in the world and against Bolshevism".[81] Unlike the SNF Nordic Peace Block discussed above, the Nordic World Federation deliberately went beyond the core Scandinavian and northern European nations. Quisling envisioned a broader "Pan-Nordic cooperation" (*stornordisk samarbeid*) including "all peoples of Nordic race and outlook in every country", namely Norwegians, Swedes, Danes, Icelanders, Faroe Islanders, Britons, Germans, Dutch, Flemish people, and "all the others of Nordic blood and spirit".[82] Similar to the worldwide 'Aryan' outlook of the British IFL, Quisling based his worldview on antisemitism, Nordic racism, and what he called the "Nordic principle", which he conceptualized as a national yet transcendental, spiritual force rooted in Nordic traditions, blood, race, and the so-called Nordic idea, providing the "seed and soil for pan-Nordic collaboration".[83] He contrasted the "constructive" Nordic principle and the Nordic community of destiny with

76 Vidkun Quisling, Verdensorganisasjonen Stornordisk Fredssamband, handwritten note, undated: [SNO], 100647.

77 "Et nordisk verdenssamband", *Fritt Folk,* June 29, 1936.

78 Vidkun Quisling, "A Nordic World Federation", *British Union Quarterly* 1.1 (1937): 87–101, 100.

79 "Et nordisk verdenssamband", *Fritt Folk,* June 29, 1936.

80 Quisling, "A Nordic World Federation", 99.

81 "Et nordisk verdenssamband", *Fritt Folk,* June 29, 1936.

82 "Et nordisk verdenssamband", *Fritt Folk*, June 29, 1936.

83 Quisling, "A Nordic World Federation", 98. On the Nordic idea, developed by racial researchers and so-called Nordicists in Germany and Scandinavia, see also Chapter 6.

"destructive" and "diabolical" Jewish liberalism and Marxism, underlining a typical Manichean worldview of fascist internationalism.

The Nordic World Federation illustrates how Quisling adapted visions of Italian fascist internationalism (as discussed in Chapter 2) to propagate his own form of Nordic cooperation. In his speech, Quisling referred to the first Montreux Congress as an important moment "to create a new fellowship of the nations with a European and worldwide character," and he referred to CAUR's resolutions from the second meeting in Montreux in his speech.[84] But in line with an increasing radicalization and embracement of racism and antisemitism under the influence of Nazi Germany, the Norwegian NS substituted the idea of commonality between fascist movements all over the world with explicitly 'Pan-Nordic cooperation'. Quisling excluded Italians and other peoples perceived as 'Southern', such as from Spain, France, or Romania, from his federation. However, other elements from CAUR's agenda, namely common internationalist enemies, a duel between the old and the new world, and materialism vs. spiritualism, remained essentially the same. Hence, Quisling merged the notions discussed by the Montreux Front into his Nordic-racist worldview, underlining the adaptability of fascist internationalism.

In January 1937, the NS founded a Pan-Nordic Association (*Stornordisk Samband*) in Oslo, which disseminated Quisling's Pan-Nordic ideas.[85] Henceforth, potential Nordic partners noticed and acknowledged Quisling's vision of a Nordic World Federation, although with varied reactions. A specifically positive response came from Oswald Mosley's BUF, whose magazine, *The British Union Quarterly*, made the content available to a broader English-speaking audience by translating and republishing the speech.[86] Frederik Marcus Knuth, a leading member of the Danish DNSAP, reacted more ambivalently. He welcomed Quisling's idea with "much interest" and agreed in principle, as he declared in a letter sent to Quisling. But Knuth questioned the 'Pan-Nordic' emphasis, arguing in contrast that the Scandinavian countries had much more in common than the other "countries of predominantly Nordic race".[87] Knuth's letter shows that the DNSAP promoted a more narrow version of fascist Scandinavianism as its primary internationalist vision.

84 Quisling, "A Nordic World Federation", 98.

85 See Vidkun Quisling, "Stornordisk fredssamband", *Fritt Folk,* March 11, 1937; "Det nye tidsskrift: Stornordisk samband", *Fritt Folk,* August 6, 1938.

86 Quisling, "A Nordic World Federation".

87 Letter from Frederik Marcus Knuth to Vidkun Quisling, March 17, 1937: [RA Oslo], PA 0750 F L0010.

The Scandinavianism and Europeanism of the DNSAP intersected throughout the 1930s. The party repeatedly used narratives of European fascist solidarity and kinship, arguing that the European youth was "building the new Europe" based on national rebirth in a common battle against "international forces".[88] Nevertheless, the DNSAP became the main driving force of Scandinavian fascist regionalism in the 1930s, based on the belief in a common Nordic-Germanic race, heritage, and destiny. Accordingly, one manifesto aimed "to establish under the banner of the swastika a friendly cooperation with the other Nordic-Germanic peoples, to whom we feel bound by the ties of blood".[89] According to contemporary theories of race relations, the 'blood relationship' among the Scandinavian nations was the closest, which directly favored cooperation across borders compared to more distantly related nations. For party leader Frits Clausen, true Scandinavianism (in contrast to the efforts by other political parties) was rooted in "kinship" based on culture and blood: "[it] is this consanguinity, this commonality of race, which alone can be the basis of a unifying, common Nordic thought that can be the source of strength from which a new, strong and true North can arise".[90] Therefore, the DNSAP declared "national socialism" and the Nordic idea (*Nordische Gedanke*) developed by the German Nordicists Hans F. K. Günther and Alfred Rosenberg, in combination with older common Scandinavian traditions, as the only "healthy common denominator of Scandinavianism".[91]

Such visions of Scandinavian fascist regionalism increased in importance from 1936 on due to foreign political transformations. In response to the rapprochement between Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, the Danish DNSAP warned that "the North will be the battlefield in the coming war" due to the new spheres of influence in Europe since the creation of the Axis.[92] Hence, the party foresaw a potential Soviet attack against Scandinavia. Most importantly, the DNSAP used Scandinavian cooperation in the late 1930s as a geostrategic demarcation from Nazi Germany in the south, countering the criticism of merely doing Hitler's bidding.[93] This was particularly apparent in the DNSAP reaction to German aggression against Czechoslovakia and the German-Danish Schleswig border issue. In response, Frits Clausen stressed "kinship with the North" as an answer to German expansionism.[94] As Clausen explained apologetically in his memoirs, he wanted

88 "Europas Ungdom skaber det nye Europa", *Jul i Norden* 4.1 (1937): 45–47.
89 Cited in Djursaa, *DNSAP*, 28.
90 Frits Clausen, "Nordisk Samarbejde", *Nationalsocialisten,* November 28, 1936.
91 "Selvmodsigelser i det unge Grænseværn", *Nationalsocialisten,* September 29, 1934.
92 Erling Hallas, "Kan Danmark bevare sin nøitralitet?", *Fritt Folk,* October 1, 1938.
93 See Chapter 5.
94 Lauridsen, *"Føreren har ordet!"*, 544.

to foster "Scandinavian unity in response to the aggressiveness" displayed by the national socialist German minority in Denmark.[95]

Unlike most of the other visions of international cooperation discussed in this chapter, the far-reaching fascist plans for Nordic cooperation had practical consequences, albeit in limited form. Moreover, Italian fascist internationalism unintentionally fueled and facilitated Nordic fascist regionalism in practice. The Dane Clausen, the Norwegian Quisling, and the Swede Essén met personally for the first time at the CAUR Montreux Congress in 1934, and discussed some form of closer cooperation in reaction to the Nordic-Latin schism at the conference.[96] The incentive for a first trilateral Scandinavian fascist meeting planned in Sweden was to provide a common basis for the Paris meeting of the CAUR executive committee (into which both Clausen and Quisling had been elected).[97] Years later, the Danish DNSAP and Norwegian NS also agreed on a "joint Nordic action" concerning UMON, the international youth organization steered by CAUR.[98] Therefore, regional Scandinavian cooperation emerged in relation and partly even in competition with Fascist Italy's CAUR project.

Even though the first trilateral Scandinavian meeting planned in Gothenburg never materialized, the DNSAP intensified in the second half of the 1930s their cooperation with the Norwegian NS and the Swedish NSAP, which changed its name in 1938 to Swedish Socialist Gathering (*Svensk Socialistisk Samling*, SSS) to distance itself from the German NSDAP.[99] The outbreak of the Second World War led to an acceleration of this form of Danish-Norwegian-Swedish cooperation. In October 1939, the NS sent a draft of a new organization called "Nordic people's rising" (*Nordisk Folkereisning*) to its partners SSS and DNSAP. The name and program deliberately mirrored the association, which Quisling had founded in 1931 as a forerunner organization of the NS.[100] The draft suggested forming a "Federal Council" to coordinate the activities of the three movements (plus a potential Ice-

95 Lauridsen "*Føreren har ordet!*", 231. On the rivalry between Danish and German Nazi parties in the Schleswig border region, see Chapter 6.

96 See Chapter 2.

97 See letter exchange between Ejnar Jörgensen and Vidkun Quisling, December 1934: [RA Oslo], PA-0750 F L0005.

98 Letter from Finn Thrana to DNSAP, October 31, 1937: [RA Copenhagen], DNSAP arkiv, Rigspolitichefen, Politiets Efterretningstjeneste: Sager (1945–1950) 55 – 59 (R4): 3b Hovedkontoret Korrespondance, Vol. 26.

99 On cooperation between DNSAP and SSS, see Kunkeler and Hamre, "Conceptions and Practices of International Fascism in Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands, 1930–40".

100 See Vidkun Quisling, Framgangsvegar for den Nordiske Folkereising i Noreg, March 17, 1931: [RA Oslo], PA-0760 F Fb L0020.

landic partner), a common budget, and a yearly convention to promote Nordic solidarity while acknowledging each party's sovereignty.[101]

Scandinavian fascist regionalism culminated in the so-called Nordic Appeal (*Nordisk Appell*) on November 13, 1939, a joint event by the three parties DNSAP, NS, and SSS that took place in the concert palace in Copenhagen in the presence of 1,500 guests.[102] The event became "a spectacle of international fascist solidarity in Scandinavia, underpinning a myth of a revived Nordic Great Power in Europe".[103] In their speeches, the party leaders Vidkun Quisling, Sven Olov Lindholm, and Frits Clausen, stressed the common Nordic heritage based on a community of destiny between the Nordic races and outlined the peaceful character of Nordic cooperation as a counterweight to the allegedly warmongering imperialist great powers.

Scandinavianism was again interwoven with European solidarity. Frits Clausen stressed the commonality with the "national liberation movements" (a new common denominator for the European fascist movements) in other countries such as Germany, the Netherlands, and England. The new term signified national liberation from alleged 'internationalist' Judeo-Bolshevist forces. Clausen insisted that the national movements among the different Nordic peoples shared "the same idea" of national regeneration, but they certainly constituted "no International" that would challenge the sovereignty of the participating movements.[104] Accordingly, the fascist parties had, first and foremost, to "liberate" their own people "from party politics and Marxism and bring order to our own house in the Nordic spirit". Only on this basis would "real cooperation between the peoples and states of the North emerge".[105]

Ultimately, this meant that the victory of the nationalist (fascist) movement within each country was an inevitable precondition for forming a new, utopian international fascist order. This was basically a return to the slogan 'nationalism first', mirroring the conceptualization of fascist internationalism by others, such as the Swiss think tank CINEF, the British IFL, and the Irish Blueshirts. In Copenhagen, the three parties agreed on a mutual resolution, presenting typical elements of fascist internationalism, namely the emphasis on the common enemies of liberalism and "Marxist state capitalism" and demands for a "national new order of

101 NS, Avtale: Nordisk Folkereisning, October 1939: [RA Oslo], PA 0760 F L0032.

102 "Nordisk appell", *Den Svenske Folksocialisten,* November 29, 1939.

103 Kunkeler and Hamre, "Conceptions and Practices of International Fascism in Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands, 1930–40", 57.

104 "Nordisk kampappell i Köpenhamn", *Den Svenske Folksocialisten,* November 18, 1939.

105 "Nordisk appell", *Den Svenske Folksocialisten,* November 29, 1939.

society".[106] However, the Nordic Appeal remained the only event of this kind during the war due to the German occupation of Norway and Denmark in April 1940.

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The speekers at the 1939 Nordic Appeal in Copenhagen, which was hosted five years after the attempt to form a Fascist International in Montreux in 1934, stressed that fascist regionalism in Scandinavia would never challenge the national independence and sovereignty of the participating movements. The Nordic cooperation among the 'equal' partners DNSAP, NS, and SSS stood therefore in stark contrast to the asymmetrical hegemonic forms of Italian and German fascist internationalism towards other European fascist movements. Moreover, most of the smaller fascist parties considered a successful fascist rebirth in their countries as an inevitable precondition to establishing 'true internationalism' in juxtaposition to other competing forms of interwar internationalism. At the same time, even the most ardent ultranationalists realized that they could exploit the mechanics of internationalism in a globalized world to pursue their policies of a national and, subsequently, an international fascist rebirth.

Thus, the chapter has demonstrated that fascist movements engaged, to various degrees, in internationalist thoughts and programs. They articulated different visions for multilateral federations, common currencies, custom policies, and defense pacts, depending on their own national localization and ideology. Furthermore, fascist parties interweaved the themes of anti-internationalism and anti-universalism with white supremacism, European protectionism, and forms of regionalism. Most concrete plans, however, ranging from the FFS's United Fascist States of Europe to the SNF Nordic peace block, remained pipe dreams that never materialized in political practice in the 1930s. Nevertheless, this does not make their study irrelevant; quite the contrary.

Zooming out of the 1930s helps to fathom the broader relevance of this history. Multiple ideological elements of these visions legitimized collaboration between minor fascist groups and the Axis powers during the Second World War. Notable examples are the belief in liberal multilateralism as a common enemy, the idea of European unity and protectionism in contrast to the outside world, and the 'liberation' of the Nordic-Aryan, Germanic races from Jewish 'internationalists'. Various notions, such as the replacement of narrow nationalism with Europeanism linked to fears of a decay of the 'old' continent, also foreshadowed concepts of neofascism and the European New Right in the postwar period. One concrete example is Oehler's concept of "Europe of nationalisms", which shares

106 Cf. "Nordisk appell," *Den Svenske Folksocialisten*, November 29, 1939.

striking similarities with the worldview of the influential magazine *Nation Europe* and the New Right concept of ethnopluralism. This highlights crucial ideological continuities between the interwar and postwar periods, as discussed in Part III of this book. Before we turn to the long-term effects, however, it is appropriate to summarize the most important findings about the emergence, development, and characteristics of fascist internationalism in the 1930s.

Conclusion: The Malleability and Polyvocality of Fascist Internationalism in the 1930s

Throughout the 1930s, numerous European fascists conceptualized notions of a new fascist international order and established de facto links and collaborative activities with other fascists across European borders in support of their ultranationalist, revolutionary, antidemocratic, anticommunist, antiliberal, and antisemitic agendas. These actors included individual agents, think tanks, semi-private associations, political parties, and government ministries from different countries, ranging from rather insignificant local cigarette shops in the Netherlands to major players such as the German Reich Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda. The interests of these heterogenous actors were manifold, sometimes diametrically opposed, and changed over time, as illustrated by the competitive yet almost symbiotic relationship between the Italian Fascist International and the German Nationalist International. The diverse national backgrounds, political ideologies, and strategic motivations of individual theorists and transnational brokers such as Eugenio Coselschi and Hans Keller, as well as leading figures of fascist parties such as Arthur Fonjallaz and Frits Clausen, illustrate therefore both the *malleability* and *polyvocality* of fascist internationalism. Moving beyond the paradigm of fascist ultranationalism and internationalism as mutually exclusive phenomena, this conclusion will foreground five main findings and observations about the first heyday of international cooperation among European fascists in the 1930s, before a new, expansionist phase of Axis internationalism ushered in the Second World War.

First, the study has foregrounded tensions, contestations, contradictions, and limitations as key features of fascist internationalism. The countless examples of challenges range from rivalries between Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, and between competing minor movements in the same country, to the difficulties in defining which parties abroad belonged to the same ideological party family. In practical terms, basic material questions of financing could determine the success or failure of attempts to build fascist international cooperation. And once fascists met internationally at pompous congresses as in Montreux in 1934, many further problems occurred. In fact, as historians of global history have illustrated, communications beyond borders were not "harmonious forms of mutual understand-

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111469799-012

ing" but shaped by many misunderstandings and hierarchies.[1] In the case of European fascism, untranslatable national traditions and *völkisch* terminology hindered precise debates among delegates from various countries. For instance, Germans at congresses of the Nationalist International complained about "translation difficulties" concerning *völkisch* concepts such as the "Commonality of Blood" (*Gemeinsamkeit des Blutes*).[2] And even when the delegates agreed upon ostentatious resolutions, there was a profound discrepancy between megalomaniac pipe dreams for the future (such as the New Order allegedly emanating from Montreux) and the often small-scaled, rudimentary, or even absent realization of such plans in practice.

In terms of ideology, there were numerous tensions among the different fascist regimes and movements, such as the Italo-German competition for ideological superiority based on a constructed opposition between Italian universal fascism and German biological racism. Particularly contradictory was the German attempt to promote the Nazi notion of *Volk,* including its racist, antisemitic, hegemonic, and ultimately expansionist implications as a tool of international peace. Some smaller parties, in turn, repudiated foreign leadership and dominance by either Fascist Italy or Nazi Germany, while disagreeing on the role of antisemitism in fascist ideology. These examples of disconnection and contestation contribute to newer studies of transnational and global history, which point to frictions instead of over-emphasizing historical processes of mutual inspiration, connections, transfers, circulation of ideas, and entanglement.[3]

A particular set of tensions emerged regarding territorial claims rooted in expansionism and colonialism, ranging from the Greenland dispute between Danish and Norwegian allies to the historical enmity between Irish anticolonialist irredentism and British imperialist fascism. Cooperation across borders was also challenged by the fascist predicament between patriotic sentiments and international connections, leading to domestic resistance from within and outside the fascist parties against foreign allegiances. In fact, this book's emphasis on a self-proclaimed fascist elite bears the risk of leading to a distorted picture of the importance of fascist internationalism because it largely ignores the voices of aver-

1 Margrit Pernau and Dominic Sachsenmaier, "History of Concepts and Global History", in *Global Conceptual History: A Reader*, edited by Margrit Pernau and Dominic Sachsenmaier (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 1–28, 3.

2 IAdN, *Volksgemeinschaft und Völkerfriede*, 32.

3 On frictions in global history, see Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Sarah Bellows-Blakely, "Empowering African Girls?: Capitalism, Poverty, and Silencing in the Writing of History", *The American Historical Review* 128.3 (2023): 1182–1210.

age party members, for whom the international realm of politics only played a subordinate role compared to national, regional, and local matters. The appearance of some party leaders and intellectuals at international conferences and the public support for a foreign fascist regime even led, in some cases, to dissatisfaction and party resignations among ordinary members. In the most extreme case, they regarded their leaders international thoughts and actions as a betrayal of the party's nationalism. Therefore, future research could move away from the history of fascist leaders and intellectuals to scrutinize (with different sources) how (and if at all) average party members, including women and youth sections, envisioned and practiced fascist internationalism.[4]

Second, despite these myriad flaws and contradictions, this monograph has illustrated how international cooperation among fascist movements and regimes emerged in counterreaction to competing forms of liberal, communist, and allegedly Jewish internationalism in the interwar period. Fascist internationalism was based on visions for a new European and world order that would overturn the post-1919 liberal order and defeat the Communist International. Underlying was a specific form of mimicry of the 'internationalist' antagonists. As their socialist or liberal opponents, fascist agents, movements, and regimes used international structures and developed solidarity actions beyond borders, while copying their opponents. A pivotal example was the Irish Brigade headed by Eoin O'Duffy in the Spanish Civil War, which emerged as a much smaller imitation of the International Brigades organized by the Communist International.

European fascists constantly referred to the international activities of political opponents to legitimize cross-border cooperation among ultranationalists ideologically. In particular, fascist regimes and movements developed conspiratorial, dualistic understandings of a united front of democratic, liberal, socialist, and communist adversaries, allegedly steered by 'international Jewry'. Internal fascist competitions and differences were often obliterated in the sight of this putative omnipresent Judeo-Bolshevist enemy, as illustrated in the Manichaean interpretations of the Spanish Civil War as a clash between 'good' fascism and 'evil' Bolshevism. Allegedly, the Jewish enemy operated on a global scale and therefore had to be fought on a global scale, legitimizing fascist internationalism as a counterreaction across borders. In turn, the international rise of fascism also sparked global anti-fascist responses, as illustrated by Kasper Braskén's research, among

4 See, for instance, Citrigno, "The Duce's Cheerleaders and the Führer's Spies".

others.[5] Future research could provide even further insight into this intricate interplay between fascist and anti-fascist internationalism.[6]

As a third finding, the monograph has demonstrated that fascist internationalism was a processual and transformative phenomenon, which included major alterations to its outlook and key notions due to international political currents, new domestic strategies, and opportunism. The first ideas about international cooperation among nascent fascist movements and organizations were linked to the concept of universal fascism as a 'third way' beyond liberalism and communism. Accordingly, Fascist Italy was celebrated as the prime role model for Europe and the world, as illustrated by the Swiss think tank CINEF. However, this image was challenged due to the rise of German Nazism in the early 1930s, when the two internationally operating organizations CAUR and IAdN, with very similar designs, competed for ideological supremacy within the European fascist party family. Multiple other events, such as the Italo-Ethiopian War, the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, the Spanish Civil War, and the rapprochement between Mussolini and Hitler from 1936 onward, also influenced how fascist agents conceptualized and practiced fascist internationalism over the years.

Fascist leaders, ideologues, and agents linked various, partly contradicting notions from their ideological repertoire to fascist internationalism while negotiating who was integrated and excluded from the same constructed fascist party family. Over the course of the decade, these notions included antiliberalism, anticommunism, antisemitism, anti-Masonry, corporatism, Christianity, utopian dreams of 'world peace', and 'anti-imperialism', but paradoxically also expansionism, *Volk* nationalism, and the belief in the superiority of the white, European or specifically Nordic-Aryan race (Pan-Aryanism). Thus, no single, fixed ideological principle united the fascist movements and regimes of the 1930s, which repeatedly disagreed on various ideological issues. Nevertheless, by the end of the decade, a trend toward an increasingly obsessive, all-encompassing antisemitism and biological racism in the style of German Nazism was becoming more evident among the various parties of northwestern Europe.

The 1930s also experienced a significant shift in the nature of the activities and styles of fascist internationalism. At first, cross-border contacts between na-

5 Kasper Braskén, Nigel Copsey, David J Featherstone, *Anti-Fascism in a Global Perspective. Transnational Networks, Exile Communities, and Radical Internationalism* (London: Routledge, 2021).

6 For a promising example, see Kasper Braskén's research project at the University of Helsinki: "Locating Global Protest against the Extreme Right: Anti-Fascism, Anti-Racism and Internationalism in Multiethnic Metropoles".

scent fascist movements were rare, and the Antisemitic International of the 1920s had still met in secret. But from 1934 onwards, fascists gathered more publicly in European cities such as Berlin, Montreux, Amsterdam, London, Oslo, Erfurt, and Copenhagen to hold pompous congresses and celebrate the new fascist era. Next to congresses, fascists propagated international fascist kinship and solidarity via multilingual journals, book publications, and even exhibitions. Such transnational activities, which included solidary actions and financial support, blossomed first within Fascist Italy and then in Nazi Germany. By comparison, the scope and radius of political action of smaller fascist movements operating in liberal democracies was more limited, but they nevertheless contributed significantly to the international circulation of the myth of fascism as a new and yet historical force that would change the fate of Europe and the world forever.

This leads to the fourth major finding of this book, which is a reassessment of the asymmetrical center-periphery relationship between the two major fascist regimes in Italy and Germany, on the one hand, and minor fascist movements from northern and western Europe, on the other. Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany were decisive for the emergence and endurance of fascist internationalism, not only as role models but as active nodes facilitating cooperation among smaller movements in other countries with restricted financial means. However, the study has demonstrated that 'peripheral' parties still had a fundamental and, so far, overlooked impact on the agenda of German or Italian agencies at the 'center' of European fascism.

By turning to internationalism and Manichaean-temporal narratives of an ascendant fascist era, smaller parties gave themselves meaning and political purpose despite the often-frustrating domestic political failures and repeated defeats at the polls. Fascist internationalism could thus play an even more important argumentative role for smaller movements than for major regimes, foreshadowing neo-fascist forms of internationalization in the post-war period, when the fascist *Zeitgeist* was diminished by the defeat of the Axis powers in the Second World War. Future research could extend these findings by investigating the role of other fascist and right-wing movements from the margins, particularly in eastern parts of Europe, Asia, Northern America, and Latin America.

Fifth, future research could also revisit this monograph's findings concerning the ambiguous relationship between fascist Europeanism and internationalism, two terms which could be equated in many cases. Fascist internationalism emanating from northwestern Europe was inherently Eurocentric, fused with racist ideas of 'natural' hierarchies between peoples, a Western 'civilizational mission', and white supremacism. Explicit notions of a European rebirth were crucial to the 'internationalist' ideology of various agents, organizations, and movements addressed in this book, ranging from Hans Keller's concept of a Third Europe to

the Swiss FFS's objective to establish the United Fascist States of Europe. These visions were based on shared fears of European decline and interwoven with a protectionist form of Europeanism in opposition to the rise of the non-European world and 'yellow' or 'black' races. Furthermore, factual connections outside Europe barely existed in the case of many smaller movements from northwestern Europe. Likewise, when organizations such as CAUR and IAdN tried to unite the 'fascists of the world', this world consisted largely of other European movements and individuals.

On the other hand, the imagined world of these agencies was 'universal' and included, at least in theory, non-European partners and countries. This was exemplified by the programmatic name and agenda of the *World*-Service, WD, which attempted to use its Erfurt congresses as a platform for a worldwide front of antisemites. In fact, in the course of the decade, there was a trend from mere European to more global forms of cooperation among agencies of fascist internationalism backed by Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. Despite their Eurocentrism and white racism, these institutions gradually included non-European, non-Christian, and 'non-white' partners from the mid-1930s onward, related to the emergence of the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis. Among the minor movements, the British IFL envisioned a worldwide antisemitic Nordic-Aryan front beyond Europe, reaching out to partners in Canada and South Africa. Vidkun Quisling, too, dreamt of a Nordic World Federation on a global scale, including North America. These examples foreshadowed visions and practices of worldwide cooperation among white supremacists and 'universal' Neo-Nazis in the postwar period.

To conclude this point about Europe, the book has shown that conflicting ideas of regional, European, and global cooperation coexisted within fascist internationalism. Moreover, its agents and preachers did not perceive Europe as a monolithic bloc, as illustrated by the Nordic-Latin divide and the ideological Brenner pass at the Montreux Congress in 1934. In the Scandinavian cases, Nordic regionalism seemed more feasible and desirable because of similar languages, cultures, histories, and shared beliefs in Nordic racism. Thus, this history of fascist internationalism does not arbitrarily prioritize the European level but highlights the numerous interdependencies and interactions between the local, national, regional, European, and global levels.

Where does this malleability and polyvocality of fascist internationalism leave us regarding the core question of the correlation between fascist ultranationalism and internationalism? The 'internationalist' histories of European fascists in the 1930s have demonstrated that ultranationalism did not preclude but, in many cases, even sparked multiple forms of cooperation beyond borders. Fascist regimes and movements navigated between national and international inter-

ests, with both dimensions contributing to and challenging each other. The relationship between nationalism and internationalism was thus Janus-faced.

The inward, *national dimension* points to the fact that fascist regimes and movements utilized cross-border connections and myths of international fascism for domestic, self-centered purposes. Major regimes exploited their partners abroad as 'fifth columnists" in foreign countries to create political disorder and beneficial propaganda. In an exemplary case, the Italian CAUR took advantage of fascists in Ireland, Switzerland, and Norway to legitimize its colonial atrocities in Ethiopia. The German Nationalist International used its congresses and partners to portray the 'Third Reich' as a peaceful and reliable regime and Hitler as a 'peace-bringer'. Minor fascist movements, in turn, repeatedly employed myths of fascist internationalism for domestic propaganda, attempting to capitalize on foreign political events and the rise of Hitler, Mussolini, and Franco abroad to rally supporters at home.

The outward, *international dimension* included supportive activities beyond borders, primarily the circulation of propaganda, but also financial or even military support, as well as reciprocal notions of fascist unity, solidarity, and kinship within the broader, constructed fascist party family. Mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion shaped this international dimension, which was inextricably juxtaposed with the *Other*, the internationalist enemies. Moreover, interwar fascism emerged and operated within a world shaped by complex global economic and political interdependence as well as intergovernmental relations linked to increased processes of globalization. In a speech held in Oslo in 1936, the Norwegian fascist leader Vidkun Quisling portrayed this worldwide interdependency as the "characteristic feature of our time" and thus pleaded for 'international' solutions beyond nation-states.[7] This exemplifies that even some of the most ardent ultranationalists of the interwar period wished to unite 'fascist of all countries' to combat 'internationalist' nemeses and pursue their inegalitarian, racist, and destructive politics not only on a national, but also on European and global scale.

Eventually, many contemporary agents of interwar fascism did not perceive fascist internationalism necessarily as contradictory, despite all its tensions and limitations. Instead, they argued that if fascism (or whichever common denominator they preferred) based on a program of revolutionary ultranationalism succeeded in every country worldwide, fascism would enable a new, long-lasting international peace order. In this fascist utopia, the world would be freed from the remnants of the French Revolution and the aberrations of modernity, 'materialist' liberalism, egalitarianism, communism, and the scapegoat Judaism. At the same

7 Quisling, "A Nordic World Federation", 99–100.

time, these 'internationalist' fascist thinkers often marginalized or ignored ideological differences and divergent territorial claims when discussing this utopia with representatives from other countries. Their propagandistic wishful thinking was disillusioned by reality when the Axis powers unleashed a devastating new world war, thoroughly debunking the argument that fascist internationalism would enable some utopian world peace.

Part III: **Reverberations of Fascist Internationalism from the Second World War to the Present Day**

Epilogue: The Past and Present of Fascist Internationalism

In February 2025, the Patriots for Europe (PfE), the third-largest group in the European Parliament (EP) after the 2024 elections, held a summit in Madrid. The event gathered high-ranking politicians such as the Prime Minister of Hungary, Viktor Orbán, the Deputy Prime Minister of Italy, Matteo Salvini, and the leader of the largest party in the Dutch parliament, Geert Wilders. In the presence of 2,000 guests, these self-proclaimed patriots launched a *Reconquista* of the EU against Islam, mass immigration, and 'wokism' under the banner "Make Europe Great Again", thus illustrating the paradoxical internationalization of Donald Trump's "Make America Great Again" (MAGA) movement.[1] The summit exemplifies what newspapers, political observers, and opponents have warned about for years. In the words of *El País*, "The far right is moving closer to the old dream of a nationalist international".[2] After Giorgia Meloni, the leader of the Brothers of Italy (*Fratelli d'Italia,* FdI), was elected as new Prime Minister of Italy in October 2022, an opinion piece in the *New York Times* cautioned against "The Rise of the International Nationalists". The article denounced how "the Western world's most notorious nationalists" like Meloni, Marine Le Pen, Viktor Orbán, and Steve Bannon were "ganging together at jamborees" to defend their antiliberal and Christian values across borders, stressing "a striking feature of contemporary nationalism: its international character".[3]

These claims regarding the contemporary global far right resemble the core theme of this monograph: the 'internationalist' facets of European fascism in the 1930s. Moreover, despite all contextual differences between the interwar period of the twentieth century and the present day, there is a political lineage between historical fascism and the current far right, which includes a wide range of populist, radical, and extreme right-wing actors, movements, and organizations. This is illustrated by Meloni's FdI, a self-proclaimed post-fascist party, which, as recent

1 David Latona, "Orban, Le Pen hail Trump at far-right 'Patriots' summit in Madrid", *Reuters*, February 8, 2025, accessed February 14, 2025, https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/orban-le-pen-hail-trump-far-right-patriots-summit-madrid-2025-02-08/.

2 Ángel Munárriz, "The far right is moving closer to the old dream of a 'nationalist international'", *El País*, December 22, 2024. For a similar warning, see "Die nationale Internationale", *Jacobin Magazin*, no. 12 (2023): 1–120.

3 David Szalay, "The Rise of the International Nationalists", *The New York Times*, December 5, 2022.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111469799-013

research suggests, is "entrenched in fascist mythology".[4] Even though the FdI emphasizes its affiliation with European conservatism and is not part of the far-right Patriot EP group, Meloni's party explicitly adheres to the legacy of its predecessor, the Italian Social Movement (*Movimento Sociale Italiano*, MSI). This neofascist party was founded in 1946 as a direct successor of Mussolini's fascist party, PNF. Thus, the meteoric rise of the FdI from 4% in 2018 to 26% in 2022 in general elections in Italy might, in fact, be interpreted as a worrying reverberation of interwar fascism.

A form of motivational presentism, meaning the interpretation of the past through the prism of the increasingly worrying present, inevitably shaped this monograph, given the various current implications of the subject.[5] When I first conceived this research project in 2016, my historical interest was sparked by the contemporary rapid growth of the Alternative for Germany (*Alternative für Deutschland*, AfD) and other European populist far-right parties in the wake of the so-called migrant and refuge crisis, Brexit, and the election of Donald Trump as 45th president of the United States of America. Since then, the world has been shattered by numerous crises, shocks, and events, which either benefitted the rise of the heterogenous far right or can be seen as its symptoms and consequences. As Adam Tooze states, multiple challenges affect the world simultaneously, conceptualized as a new state of "polycrisis".[6] Examples range from the worldwide proliferation of antisemitic conspiracy theories in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the attempted *coup d'état* of Trump supporters in Washington in 2021 as well as his reelection and inauguration as US president in 2024/2025, the imperialist Russian war against Ukraine in violation of international law since 2022, the election victory of a 'postfascist' party in Italy in 2022, and the AfD's historic result of 20.8% in the German federal elections in February 2025, making it the second strongest political force in Germany.

This epilogue does not intervene in the complex debates whether historical fascism and the contemporary far right are essentially the same phenomena according to strict typologies or definitions of fascism.[7] Nor does it claim that politi-

4 David Broder, *Mussolini's Grandchildren*: *Fascism in Contemporary Italy* (London: Pluto Press, 2023), 2.

5 On research on fascist internationalism and motivational presentism, see also Allen, "Why is There No History of Fascist International Thought?", 25–26.

6 E.g. Adam Tooze, "Welcome to the world of the polycrisis", *Financial Times*, October 28, 2022.

7 On Trump and historical fascism, see, among many others, Paul Jackson, "Debate: Donald Trump and Fascism Studies", *Fascism: Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 10.1 (2021): 1–15. On Putin and fascism, see Dieter Pohl and Thomas Sandkühler, "Der Krieg und die Geschichte: Russland, die Ukraine und das Problem des historischen Vergleichs", edited by Jürgen Zimmerer, in

cal leaders such as Donald Trump or Vladimir Putin are present-day revenants or even reincarnations of Mussolini and Hitler, although a new Washington-Moscow Axis seems to be on the horizon, fundamentally challenging the so-called rules-based international order established since the end of the Second World War, similar to how the Rome-Berlin Axis threatened and destroyed the order of Versailles. Instead, by foregrounding similarities, continuities, legacies, and correspondences across time and space, the epilogue links the main findings concerning the fascist era of the 1930s to reverberations of fascist internationalism in the Second World War, the postwar period, and the present day (which Enzo Traverso and others term the era of *post*-fascism).[8]

This final chapter chronologically explores three such reverberations within the broader history of nationalist internationalism in the twentieth and early twentieth first centuries. The first part examines the trajectories of the principal agents and movements discussed in this book after 1939, emphasizing their destinies and (in some cases) influential role during the Second World War. The main objective is to stress the 1930s as a critical period and precondition of the various forms of collaboration of European fascist movements with Hitler's regime in the Second World War, both in terms of ideology and practical cooperation. The second section deals with some long-term recalibrations of international cooperation among neofascist groups and movements in the postwar period, foregrounding crucial continuities beyond 1945 regarding the formation of the so-called European New Right. The final part returns to the present, addressing how analyses of fascist internationalism in the 1930s, including theoretical concepts and analytical tools used in this book, might contribute to our understanding of the contemporary far-right internationalism.

The Quislings: Mobilizing Fascist Internationalism during the Second World War

One and a half years into the Second World War, from March 26 to 28, 1941, the leading Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg hosted an international conference in the Römer, the medieval city hall in Frankfurt am Main. The occasion was to celebrate the foundation of the so-called Institute for the Study of the Jewish Question (*Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage*).[9] Accordingly, the objective of the confer-

Erinnerungskämpfe: *Neues deutsches Geschichtsbewusstsein* (Ditzingen: Reclam, 2023), 201–219, 212–218.

8 Enzo Traverso, *The New Faces of Fascism: Populism and the Far Right* (New York: Verso, 2019).

9 Cf. Piper, *Alfred Rosenberg*, 477–483.

ence was to discuss the 'international solution' to the 'Jewish question' within the Nazi New European Order, which had emerged during the war from the ashes of the old liberal order established at Versailles.[10] Rosenberg orchestrated the event with the help of the Nazi organization WD, which Ulrich Fleischhauer had founded eight years earlier to unite fascists and antisemites around the world. On Rosenberg's behalf, WD prepared a guest list, which featured many fascist figures that had propagated international cooperation during the previous decade, notably Herman de Vries de Heekelingen (CINEF), Eugenio Coselschi (CAUR), Rolf Henne (NF), Frits Clausen (DNSAP), Herman Harris Aall (NS), Anton Mussert (NSB), and Sven Olov Lindholm (SSS).[11]

The foreign speakers at the conference from Norway, the Netherlands, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Belgium, and Denmark supported Rosenberg's radical antisemitism and welcomed the New European Order established by the Axis powers.[12] The Danish fascist Erling Hallas (the organizer of the 1937 Grenaa exhibition) enthusiastically declared that the 'Jewish question' would constitute "one of the first positives in a Greater Germanic cooperation," enabling a unity front of "Germanic peoples" in a "new epoch" directed against the common enemies of capitalism, Freemasonry, and Jewry.[13] The most prominent speaker from abroad was NS leader Vidkun Quisling, an infamous collaborator since the German occupation of Norway a year earlier. Quisling proposed establishing a joint European law to solve the 'Jewish question', which he saw as a necessary precondition for the success of a New European Order.[14] Alfred Rosenberg gave the main speech, arguing that the 2000-year-old 'Jewish question' "will now find its solution for Germany and all Europe through the National Socialist Revolution!"[15] Rosenberg

10 On the New European Order, see, among many others, Dafinger and Pohl, eds., *A New Nationalist Europe under Hitler*.

11 For the complete guest list, see WD, Gäste des Welt-Dienst. Tagung vom 27.-29. März 1941, Frankfurt am Main, 1941: [WHL], 540 Weltdienst.

12 Cf. F. Zschaeck, "Bericht über die Erföffnung und Arbeitstagung des Instituts zur Erforschung der Judenfrage in Frankfurt a. M.", *Weltkampf. Die Judenfrage in Geschichte und Gegenwart* 1.1/2 (1941): 106–112.

13 Erling Hallas, "Die politische Entwicklung der Judenfrage in Europa: Dänemark", *Weltkampf. Die Judenfrage in Geschichte und Gegenwart* 1.1/2 (1941): 98.

14 See Vidkun Quisling, "Die politische Entwicklung der Judenfrage in Europa: Norwegen", *Weltkampf. Die Judenfrage in Geschichte und Gegenwart* 1.1/2 (1941): 77–84; "Nasjonal Samlings Fører reiser kravet om en felles-europeisk jødelovgivning", *Fritt Folk*, March 29, 1941.

15 Alfred Rosenberg, *Die Judenfrage als Weltproblem*: *Vortrag am 28. März 1941 in Frankfurt a. M. anläßlich der Eröffnung des Instituts zur Erforschung der Judenfrage* (Munich: Eher, 1941), 14. Due to unforeseen events, Rosenberg held the address in Berlin and not in Frankfurt, but the speech was broadcasted to the conference via radio and later reprinted in the *Völkischer Beobachter* and *Weltkampf*. Cf. Piper, *Alfred Rosenberg*, 482.

openly declared that this was a project of "national cleanliness," which would only be completed "when the last Jew had left the European continent".[16] Hence, his speech fused the German with the European destiny in the tradition of the Antisemitic International, illustrating an essential link between the verbal radicalism of antisemitic rhetoric in the interwar period and the unprecedented acts of extermination in the later years of Nazism that culminated in the 'Final Solution' to the 'Jewish question', the Holocaust.[17]

The WD conference in Frankfurt in 1941 demonstrates a shift of the ideological core underpinning various projects of fascist internationalism. At the Montreux Congress in December 1934, the role of 'international Jewry' as the main antagonist of fascists from all over Europe had still been contentious. Roughly a decade later, the notion of Judaism as a mutual enemy had become the all-encompassing, uniting common denominator among fascist regimes and movements, legitimizing international cooperation and even German domination of Europe. The agencies and agents of fascist internationalism from Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, as examined in Part I, supported the war effort of their countries in various forms while attempting to whitewash themselves after the war through references to their 'internationalist' careers.

The World-Service represents the most important organizational continuation of agencies of fascist internationalism from the previous decade. WD continued after its *Gleichschaltung* in the late 1930s to play major in the international circulation of antisemitic propaganda during the war, as illustrated by the Frankfurt conference in 1941.[18] In particular, the agency became essential in establishing a form of supposedly 'scientific scholarship' on the 'Jewish question'. Thus, WD "rationalized National Socialist policies against the Jews, providing the agents of mass murder with an armature of legitimation".[19] Ulrich Fleischhauer, who joined the NSDAP in 1942, also continued to publish antisemitic writings in Nazi Germany after being ousted as WD leader. Herman de Vries de Heekelingen, who had founded the world's first think tank on fascist internationalism, CINEF, back in 1927, had become a partner of the antisemitic WD in the late 1930s. Albeit living in the neutral country Switzerland, he also contributed ideologically to Germany's war on Jews by producing and circulating hateful anti-Jewish propaganda, before his death in Yvorne in July 1942.[20]

16 Rosenberg, *Die Judenfrage als Weltproblem*, 17.

17 Cf. Piper, *Alfred Rosenberg*, 483.

18 On WD during the Second World War, see Rupnow, "'The Anti-Semite Internationale'".

19 Plass, "Der Welt-Dienst", 506.

20 E.g. Herrman de Vries de Heekelingen, *Le Talmud et le non-juif* (Neuchâtel: Ed. V. Attinger, 1940).

It belongs to the curiosities of this history that the beginning of the Second World War coincided with the demise of two other main players of fascist internationalism in the previous decade, the Italian CAUR and the German IAdN. Both organizations had been created as tools during the Italo-German rivalry in 1933–1936, but their themes of 'anti-imperialism', 'anti-expansionism', and 'world peace' seemed to have fallen out of time when the Axis powers launched their eliminatory war campaigns. Instead, new fascist forms of international cooperation blossomed within the New European Order of the Axis powers in the military, cultural, and technical fields.[21]

Dino Alfieri, Italy's Minister of People's Culture, dissolved CAUR just a couple of weeks after the outbreak of the war on September 20, 1939. The former CAUR president Eugenio Coselschi celebrated Italy's entry into the war in 1940 enthusiastically, which he now too interpreted as a struggle against 'international Jewry'. Coselschi joined the Italian army and fought in campaigns in Yugoslavia.[22] James Strachey Barnes, the Italophile former general secretary of CINEF, supported Fascist Italy's war effort as a propagandist for Mussolini's regime. When Barnes died in Rome in 1955, *The Times* remembered him in an obituary as "A Paladin of Fascism".[23]

Hans Keller attempted to use the German invasion of Poland to his advantage and for the political survival of the Nationalist International, by placing his theories and international contacts at the service of the war. Only weeks after the German assault, he formulated a memorandum on the creation of a Jewish Protectorate in Galicia as a potential solution to the 'Jewish question'.[24] The same month, Keller claimed that "the slogan of a just European order of peoples issued by the Academy [for the Rights of Peoples] is suitable [. . .] for breaking through the encirclement front of propaganda led by England". Hence, he suggested a "mobilization of the Academy", which ought to create a "neutral committee" based in Oslo, circulate pro-German propaganda to neutral countries, and distribute a new multilingual journal in a Swiss publishing house entitled *Das Reich der Völker* (The

21 On technocratic fascist internationalism and the usage of the propaganda term 'New Europe', see Sabrina Proschmann, *Creating the 'New Europe' Through Postal Services*: *Setting Postal Standards during World War II* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2022).

22 On CAUR's termination and Coselschi's trajectory during the war, see Cuzzi, *L'internazionale delle camicie nere*, 357–378.

23 See Claudia Baldoli, ed., *A British Fascist in the Second World War*: *The Italian War Diary of James Strachey Barnes, 1943-45* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014); "Major Strachey Barnes: A Paladin of Fascism", *The Times,* August 29, 1955.

24 Academy for the Right of Peoples, "Denkschrift über die Errichtung eines Jüdischen Protektorats", September 18, 1939: [BArch], R 61/614.

Empire of Peoples).[25] According to Keller, the status as a "quasi-neutral Academy" was particularly useful for the dissemination of German war aims as well as for "defense against enemy propaganda" in neutral countries and "propagandistically more effective" than official agencies of the German state.[26]

However, the practical output of these plans was minimal. Keller only succeeded in organizing a new lecture series on nationalism in diverse countries in Berlin in the spring of 1940. Keller was still not seen as the right man to represent the New Germany abroad "due to his arrogant behavior, sometimes bordering on imposture," as the Secret Service of the SS complained to the German Foreign Office.[27] Thus, various state authorities forced Hans Keller' to terminate all his activities and organizations in August/September 1941. However, Nazi Germany was still very interested in exploiting Keller's broad international network of pro-German foreigners. The German military intelligence service (*Amt Ausland/Abwehr*), in particular, relied on Keller's contacts to gather information during the war.[28] After the termination of his Nationalist International, Keller served as an interpreter for the *Luftwaffe*, the aerial warfare branch of the German army.[29] To conclude, albeit some agencies involved in fascist internationalism ceased to exist in the early 1940s, their leading figures and international networks still contributed to the war efforts of the Axis powers, either propagandistically or on the front line.

The Second World War fundamentally changed the center-periphery relations between minor fascist movements and major fascist regimes in Europe. The latter states formed the powerful Rome-Berlin (and Tokyo) Axis and cooperated politically, culturally, and militarily to pursue their large-scale, geostrategic, and expansionist interests.[30] Minor movements, in turn, were often reduced to the asymmetrical role of fifth columnists in neutral countries or collaborationists in occupied territories instead of supposedly equal cooperation among independent movements. Yet, Axis rule in Europe also "opened a window of opportunity for the construction of several types of collaborationist regimes", in which local fascist, radical right, and authoritarian forces and elites competed for political

25 Letter from Hans Keller to Franz Springer, September 7, 1939: [BArch], R 61/614.

26 Letter from Hans Keller to Willelm Gaeb, January 31, 1940: [BArch], R 61/614.

27 Letter from SD to AA, 28 August 1941: [BArch], R 61/614.

28 Cf. Hamre, "Nationalists of All Countries, Unite!", 492–494; as well as various documents in [BArch], R 61/614.

29 File note from AA, September 5, 1941: [PAAA], RZ214 101195.

30 As demonstrated excellently in Hedinger, *Die Achse: Berlin, Rom, Tokio*.

power.[31] In many occupied countries, Nazi Germany rather cooperated with conservative elites and excluded fascist parties from power – a fate the DNSAP suffered in Denmark. Other European fascist movements, including Vidkun Quisling's NS and the Croatian Ustaša led by Ante Pavelić, succeeded in establishing their own governments when collaborating with the Axis powers.

This book builds on the French historiographical tradition of distinguishing between *collaboration*, meaning those who collaborated with Nazi Germany for various economic reasons or as a means of survival, and *collaborationism*, meaning convinced fascists such as in Vichy France, who supported Germany's war efforts and victory on ideological grounds.[32] This *wartime collaborationism* can be distinguished from *interwar cooperation* by active support for the Axis powers through "disclosing information to an opposing side, defecting and fighting for the enemy's forces, engaging in propaganda for the enemy's benefit, or providing administrative support to an occupying power" based on ideological affiliation.[33] This collaborationism does not only include actors in occupied territories: fascist movements in many neutral countries also decided to support Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.

In fact, most of the smaller fascist parties from northwestern Europe positioned themselves within the camp of the Axis powers in the Second World War. The German invasion of Poland in September 1939 led among many former members of the Montreux Front to a momentum of fascist solidarity with the 'Third Reich'. The Danish DNSAP declared that its leader, Frits Clausen, was "in line with Oswald Mosley in England, Vidkun Quisling in Norway, Sven Olov Lindholm in Sweden, Paul Hoornaert in Belgium, Arnold Meier [sic!] in Holland".[34] Accordingly, all these "movements of national regeneration" blamed the war in Europe on "international forces", meaning democrats, liberals, Marxists, and Jews. Only the "victory of national socialism" within each nation would guarantee European peace.[35] Notwithstanding, the Hitler-Stalin Pact shocked and confused many fascist parties, who had legitimized fascist internationalism because of anticommunism and the Judeo-Bolshevist myth. From 1940 on, when the German war thea-

31 António Costa Pinto, "Building the European 'New Order'", *Fascism: Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 12.1 (2023): 27–54, 30.

32 See Bertram M. Gordon, *Collaborationism in France during the Second World War* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1980). On collaborationism, see also Davide Alegre Lorenz, *Colaboracionistas. Europa Occidental y el Nuevo Orden nazi* (Barcelona: Galaxia Gutenberg, 2022).

33 Shane Darcy, "Coming to Terms with Wartime Collaboration: Post-Conflict Processes & Legal Challenges", *Brooklyn Journal of International Law* 45.2 (2019): 75–137, 75–76.

34 Arnold Meijer, the leader of the Dutch Black Front, was misspelled in the DNSAP article. "Skaansesløs Krig mod Krigens Anstiftere", *National-Socialisten,* September 23, 1939.

35 "Kaansesløs mod Krigens Anstiftere", September 23, 1939.

ters moved into the West and North of Europe, the destiny of the minor movements varied enormously: Nazi Germany occupied Norway and Denmark during the so-called *Operation Westerübung* in the spring of 1940. The United Kingdom opposed the German *Blitz* during the Battle of Britain (1940–1941), while Sweden, Ireland, and Switzerland remained neutral.

The fascist parties (if they still existed) were confronted with an adjusted war variant of the fascist predicament. On the one hand, as Richard Griffiths shows in the British case, the ultranationalist instinct was "to support their country in the struggle; on the other hand, their extreme views as to the causes of the war [. . .] led them to undertake activities that in fact had a potential to undermine the war effort" of their own countries.[36] Only very few fascist leaders formerly involved in the Montreux Front opted to support their own country and resisted Hitler's attraction force. A notable example was Paul Hoornaert, the Montreux delegate from the Belgian LNB who had condemned CAUR's opening towards German Nazism in 1935.[37] He joined the Belgian resistance against the German occupation in the Second World War, resulting in his death in a concentration camp in 1944.[38] But most other fascist leaders supported the Axis powers, becoming the so-called Quislings.

The Quisling's. Hitler's Trojan Horses was the title of an insightful book published in 1942 by a Bohemian journalist and refugee named Walter Tschuppik, who conceptualized this wartime collaborationism as "an internationalism of gangsters of all countries, an internationalism of base elements ready to betray their own country and attracted to Hitler as to a magnet".[39] The book explicitly addressed questions of continuity between the fascist internationalism of the 1930s and the war period.[40] Tschuppik described the new "German International" as a direct outcome of the propaganda of Keller's "Nationalist International" and Fleischhauer's "Pan-Aryan World Organization" in Erfurt. The international delegates at the fascist conferences in the 1930s "were nothing but blind instruments of Nazi policy, the chosen betrayers, saboteurs and gravediggers of their country" supporting Hitler's "scheme of world conquest".[41]

Tschuppik *The Quislings* also depicted a map of Europe (Figure 8) that revealed the leading figure of "Hitler's Fifth Column" in each country, including Frits Clausen in Denmark and, most importantly, the eponym Quisling in Norway.

36 Griffiths, *Patriotism Perverted*, 2.
37 See Chapter 2.
38 Cf. Rees, *Biographical Dictionary of the Extreme Right since 1890*, 190.
39 Tschuppik, *The Quislings*, 8.
40 Tschuppik, *The Quislings,* 8.
41 Tschuppik, *The Quislings,* 8.

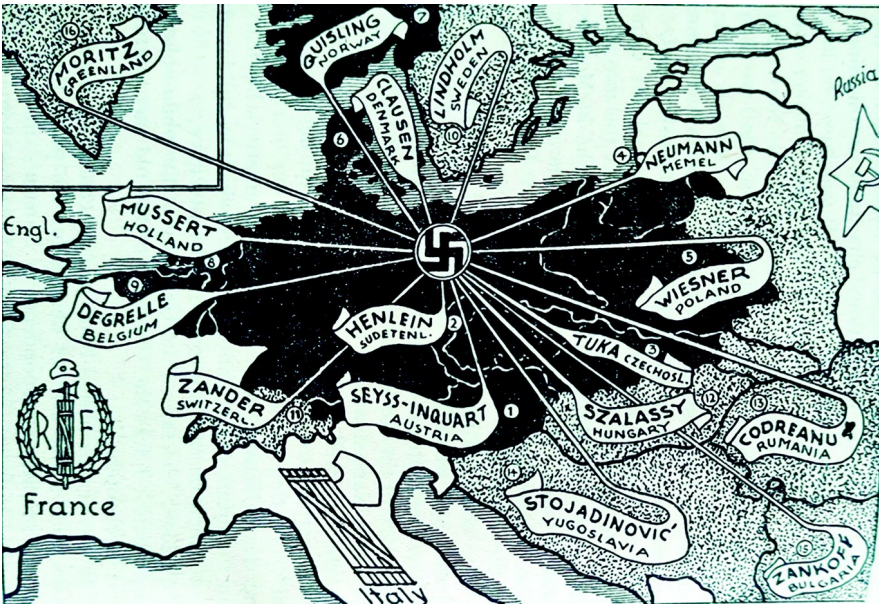


Figure 8: Map of Nazi collaborators in Europe. Walter Tschuppik, *The Quislings: Hitler's Trojan Horses* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1942), page 6, unknown illustrator.

The map turned the usual fascist conspiracy theories on their head, resembling the typical antisemitic and anticommunist depictions of an octopus spreading its tentacles across Europe or the globe (in this case originating in Berlin, usually Moscow). Important other figures that featured in the book were "Sweden's Little Hitler", Sven Olov Lindholm, the Dutch NSB leader Anton Mussert, Boris Tödtli from the Swiss NF, and Ulrich Fleischhauer from WD. *The Quislings* demonstrates how 'Quisling' became a disparaging umbrella term and a byword for fascist collaborators and traitors in multiple languages from 1940 onward.[42]

The most 'successful' example of collaborationism was indeed Quisling's Norwegian NS. At the start of the war, the party was on the verge of becoming politically entirely insignificant when the Norwegian government declared the country's neutrality. Despite the NS's marginal status, two secret meetings took place

42 For another contemporary example of Quisling as a synonym for a collaborator, see the reprint of a propagandistic pamphlet published by the British Ministry of Information. Walter Trier and Max Czollek, *Nazi-German in 22 Lessions*: *Including useful Information for Führers, Fifth Columnists, Gauleiters and Quislings. Reprint of a Pamphlet from 1942* (Berlin: Favoritenpresse, 2022).

in Berlin in December 1939 between Adolf Hitler and Vidkun Quisling through the mediation of Alfred Rosenberg.[43] Quisling warned Hitler about an alleged alliance between Norway and Britain. The conspiracy tales persuaded the Reich Chancellor, and Nazi Germany began preparations for a military conquest of Norway. The NS received financial contributions from the Hitler regime in January 1940 in return for Quisling's 'insights'.[44]

The NS played a central role as Germany's partner during the Nazi occupation of Norway from April 1940 onward. The occupiers, headed by *Reichskommisar* Josef Terboven, banned all political parties except the NS, and on February 1, 1942, Quisling was appointed the official head of state of Norway. The new role as a state party boosted the NS membership from a minuscule party with roughly 1,000 members up to 43,000 at maximum. The NS collaboration regime was characterized by a dual structure with overlapping responsibilities between German and Norwegian authorities, and the occupiers intervened whenever they saw German war interests in danger.[45] Notwithstanding, Nazi Germany "gave the NS extensive freedom to implement their ideas of a Neuordnung [*New Order*] in the state, the regional councils and municipal authorities" in Norway.[46] Within this new context, the conspiratorial antisemitism and hatred for 'internationalist' enemies of the NS had deadly consequences. Quisling, presumably well-informed about the German mass murders, collaborated willingly in the deportation of the Jewish population in Norway.[47] This makes the party, next to numerous Norwegian police units, responsible for the deportation of a total number of 772 Norwegian Jews to Auschwitz, of whom only 34 survived.

During the occupation, the NS continued to navigate between pan-Nordic fascist internationalism and ultranationalism, leading to ideological friction between

43 On the link between Rosenberg and Quisling, see Hans-Dietrich Loock, *Quisling, Rosenberg und Terboven*: *Zur Vorgeschichte und Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Revolution in Norwegen* (Stuttgart: DVA, 1970), 222–228.

44 See Lars Borgersrud, "9 April Revised: On the Norwegian History Tradition after Magne Skodvin on Quisling and the Invasion of Norway in 1940", *Scandinavian Journal of History* 39.3 (2014): 353–397.

45 Cf. Oddvar K. Høidal, "Vidkun Quisling and the Deportation of Norway's Jews", *Scandinavian Studies* 88.3 (2016): 270–294, 275.

46 Stein Ugelvik Larsen, "Corporations against Corporatism in Quisling Norway, 1940–1950s", in *Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Europe and Latin America. Crossing Borders,* edited by António Costa Pinto and Federico Finchelstein (London: Routledge, 2019), 95–109, 101.

47 Cf. Høidal, "Vidkun Quisling and the Deportation of Norway's Jews", 288.

two opposing camps within the NS.[48] Quisling's struggle for Norway's independence from Germany as leader of a collaborationist government embodied this tension. On the one hand, the NS was shaped by its ideological allegiance to Greater Germanic-Aryan racism in the style of Himmler's Waffen SS, and 5,000 Norwegians formed their own unit of the Waffen SS during the war.[49] Quisling also continued planning a Northern European or Greater Germanic Union in the style of his Nordic World Federation proposed in 1936, but now as an integral part of the Nazi New European Order. On the other hand, the NS stressed Norwegian ultranationalism, and Quisling demanded Norway's territorial sovereignty as an equal alliance partner of the Axis powers, including a peace treaty with Germany (which would end its status as an occupied country).[50]

The NS never solved this tension and was disbanded in the immediate aftermath of the war. Vidkun Quisling and several leading NS members were sentenced to death and executed for high treason in October 1945. Court proceedings for collaborationism and betrayal of the own country also awaited some of the other 'Quislings' and former colleagues from the Montreux Front. The NSB leader Anton Mussert and the French MF leader Marcel Bucard were sentenced to death due to treason and executed in 1946. Another example was Frits Clausen, who died of a heart attack in prison while waiting for his trial in 1947.

The tension between nationalism and internationalism also shaped Clausen's DNSAP during the German occupation of Denmark (1940–1945). The party received financial support from Nazi Germany, but in contrast to the Norwegian NS, Clausen remained a "leader without *Volk*", as his biographer Ole Ravn puts it.[51] Hitler decided against a Nazi puppet regime, and most Danish political institutions, including the monarchy, government, and parliament, continued to function relatively normally. This rule was characterized as a 'protectorate government' (1940–1943) before Germany placed Denmark under direct military occupation (1943–1945).[52] The DNSAP only attracted 2.1 % of the general electorate's votes in the parliamentary elections held in 1943. For the German occupiers, this proved the missing popular support for Clausen as a potential Danish prime minister.

48 See Sørensen, *Hitler eller Quisling*.

49 See Sigurd Christian Sørlie, *Solkors eller Hakekors*: *Nordmenn i Waffen-SS 1941–1945* (Oslo: Dreyers forlag, 2015).

50 On Quisling's plans for Europe during the Second World War, see also Neulen, *Europa und das 3. Reich*, 331–368.

51 Ravn, *Fører uden folk*.

52 See Joachim Lund, "Denmark and the 'European New Order", 1940–1942', *Contemporary European History* 13.3 (2004): 305–321.

Rooted in its 'international' outlook developed in the 1930s, the DNSAP still saw itself as a fundamental part of a Nazi New European Order headed by Nazi Germany and 'freed of Jews', as was illustrated by Erling Hallas' speech at the Rosenberg congress in 1941. Tellingly, the DNSAP called its new magazine *Det nye Europa* (The New Europe, published from 1940 to 1942). The party also recruited approximately 6,000 collaborationist volunteers from Denmark for Himmler's Waffen-SS in the fight against the Soviet Union, which formed a unit called Free Corps Denmark.[53] One of its members was Erling Hallas, the organizer of the exhibition on 'The Coming Europe' in 1937. He died in a prisoner-of-war camp in Kharkiv in 1947. The DNSAP was banned in May 1945 without ever coming to real political power, despite its steady willingness to collaborate with the German occupiers.

The situation was considerably different for movements that operated in countries that officially remained neutral throughout the war, such as Sweden, Switzerland, and Ireland. In these cases, collaborationism was often a matter of propagandism rather than military support for the Axis powers. One example was the SNF that functioned as a mouthpiece for pro-Nazi German propaganda in Sweden. Presumably, Nazi Germany funded the party and its pro-German daily newspaper *Dagposten*. The former Montreux delegate Rütger Essén developed into "the cultural and intellectual figurehead of Swedish Nazism" during the war, due to his anti-democratic and pro-Nazi stance.[54] However, the fascist party landscape in Sweden remained scattered, and in 1941, the other leading ideologue, Per Engdahl, left the SNF to create his own oppositional group.[55] Unlike most other fascist parties, the SNF continued to exist in the postwar period, transforming from a political party into an ideological association in the 1970s and vanishing into thin air in the 1990s.

In contrast to Sweden, Swiss and Irish state authorities monitored and banned pro-German activities of fascist politicians, groups, and parties. In Switzerland, this led to the arrest of the NF leader Robert Tobler and the self-dissolution of the party in 1940. A successor organization called Confederate Unity (*Eidgenössische Sammlung*), founded in the summer of 1940, was nevertheless committed to the German

53 On Danish volunteers for the Waffen-SS, see Claus Bundgård Christensen, Poulsen Nils Bo, and Peter Scharff Smith, 'Germanic Volunteers from Northern Europe', edited by Jochen Böhler and Robert Gerwarth, in *The Waffen-SS. A European History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 42–75.

54 Johan Östling, *Nazismens sensmoral. Svenska erfarenheter i andra världskrigets efterdyning*, (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2008), 118–119.

55 Cf. Berggren, "Swedish Fascism – Why Bother?", 407; Lööw, *Nazismen i Sverige 1924–1979*, 116.

New European Order and called for an adaptation of Swiss policy to the Axis powers. According to the young member Friedrich Dürrenmatt, who was to become a famous author in the postwar period, the organization even aimed for a Swiss *Anschluss* to Germany.[56] Here, the continuation between the former party leader Rolf Henne's demands for an *Anschluss* to Germany in 1936 is particularly obvious. The Federal Council banned the organization in 1943. Even after the war, the state targeted some so-called Frontists, including the former NF ideologue Hans Oehler. He was sentenced to two years in prison in 1947 for "endangering the country's independence".[57]

The strikingly parallel political trajectories of the former Swiss FFS leader Arthur Fonjallaz and the former Irish NCP leader Eoin O'Duffy illustrate intriguing case studies of failed 'Quislings' who attempted to combine their fascist ideology with political opportunism during the war. Like many other European fascists, both turned ideologically to German Nazism and conspiratorial antisemitism in the late 1930s when looking for scapegoats for their political failures. In 1940, the former colonel Fonjallaz passed on military information on the Allies to the German military intelligence and was arrested, indicted, and imprisoned for three years in Schaffhausen, Switzerland, due to espionage and collaboration with Germany. Fonjallaz was released in 1943 and died in January 1944.[58]

In 1940, O'Duffy and his acolyte Liam Walsh established the Irish Friends of Germany (IFG). This group attempted to serve Nazi Germany's war effort with information while disseminating pro-German and antisemitic propaganda. This elevated Eoin O'Duffy's "status from political crank to potential enemy of the state", posing "as a Quisling in waiting" in neutral Ireland.[59] Therefore, the Irish Directorate of Military Intelligence arrested some IFG members in June 1940 and thwarted further pro-German activities (although O'Duffy personally remained at liberty). When O'Duffy passed away in 1944, he was even granted a state funeral, reflecting his important role in the struggle for Irish independence in the early twentieth century before becoming a fascist internationalist in the 1930s and 1940s.

Surprisingly, IFL leader Arnold Spencer Leese, Hitler's self-proclaimed best friend in England before the war, proclaimed loyalty to Britain in the autumn of 1939, setting him apart from most other cases discussed so far. Leese was alienated from his role model Nazi Germany by the Hitler-Stalin pact and even more

56 See "Dürrenmatt, ein Frontist?", *Neue Züricher Zeitung*, July 5, 2007.

57 See Walter Wolf, "Hans Oehler", Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz (HLS) (2015), accessed March 27, 2025, https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/020368/2015-01-12/.

58 Cf. Schumacher, *Nazi! Fascistes! Fascisti! Faschismus in der Schweiz: 1918–1945*, 111.

59 McGarry, *Eoin O'Duffy*, 326; 329.

so by Hitler's invasion of "Aryan Scandinavia" in 1940, which he vehemently opposed due to his belief in white supremacist solidarity.[60] Others in the inner IFL circle, in turn, "placed hatred of the Jews and admiration for Hitler above patriotism in their response to the war".[61] This patriotic dilemma led to an ideological split in the IFL on the question of British ultranationalism vs. pro-German Nordic-Aryan racism and antisemitism, leading to the movement's decline in the first years of the war. As in the Swiss and Irish cases, counter actions from British authorities destroyed the political remnants of the IFL. A group of leading IFL members, including Leese, who went into hiding for several months, were arrested and interned under the Defence Regulation 18B law in 1940. The same destiny awaited the more prominent rival Oswald Mosley, whose BUF was banned in July 1940.[62] Eventually, various countries implemented regulations leading to the internment of potential Quislings, actual traitors, and the dissolution of fascist movements before these could damage the political system and create disorder.

The various propagandistic activities and trajectories of fascist leaders from minor parties (except for Leese and Hoornaert) show a surprisingly consistent picture regarding the core theme of this study, the tension between nationalism and internationalism. Arguably, these men and their movements were ready to collaborate with a foreign power for two reasons: ideological kinship and pragmatic opportunism. First, their collaborationism was based on an ideological ground nurtured in the 1930s, including Nordic-Aryan racism, ideas of a European rebirth, Manicheanism, and obsessive antisemitism. Before and during the war, a victory of fascist internationalism against multiple 'internationalist' enemies, allegedly spearheaded by 'international Jewry', was often deemed more important than the own countries' territorial integrity and sovereignty. Through a temporal lens, the Nazi New Order of Europe was seen as part of a racial rebirth of the entire continent, juxtaposed with the old liberal order of European decadence. In this scheme, most of the minor parties accepted the dominance of Nazi Germany in Europe as a lesser evil while still striving for some form of national autonomy.

Second, in more pragmatic terms, collaborationism also offered unique possibilities for access to political power. This was of particular importance for minuscule fascist movements and their leaders in northwestern Europe, who, in the former decade in times of peace, had utterly failed to attract broad popular support and to gain political power with democratic means. As a period of crisis, turmoil,

60 Cf. Macklin, *Failed Führers*, 51.
61 Cf. Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain*, 139.
62 Cf. Macklin, *Failed Führers*, 49–53.

and political transformation, the Second World War offered a new window of opportunity. Quisling's party only had a handful of followers before the contact with Hitler and the subsequent German occupation of Norway catapulted him into the position of factually becoming the Norwegian *Fører* and head of state. No wonder political figures like Clausen, Fonjallaz, and O'Duffy aspired to follow Quisling's lead. They were all convinced of their 'historical' role to play in a future battle between good and evil that would lead to the salvation of their own countries, and collaborating with the Axis powers offered the fastest way to achieve this historical role. This shows yet again how smaller fascist parties in northwestern Europe linked their fortune ideologically and politically to events, movements, and regimes beyond their own countries.

The Neofascist International: Continuities and Legacies of Fascist Internationalism in the Postwar Period

The Second World War culminated in a total defeat of the Axis powers and the destruction of the two major fascist regimes in Europe. Fascism failed in most European countries to return as a mass political movement after the war.[63] Instead, the postwar period was shaped by the fragmentation of the fascist scene into countless smaller groups and lone-wolf activists, which Roger Griffin characterizes as "groupuscular fascism".[64] 1945 marked a cesura but was not synonymous with the end of fascist internationalism. Instead, neofascist international cooperation reemerged in the immediate postwar period, culminating in numerous new organizations such as the so-called European Social Movement (*Europäische soziale Bewegung*, ESB) also known as Malmö Movement, named after the 1951 Malmö Congress, which brought together neo-fascists from many countries. A US intelligence report from 1956, which listed "fascist organizations and personalities" involved in these networks, including the former BUF leader Oswald Mosley, the Italian ideologue Julius Evola, the Swiss writer Hans Oehler, and two leading Swedish fascist intellectuals, Rütger Essén and Per Engdahl, thus characterized this phenomenon as a new "Fascist International".[65]

Several political scientist and historiographical studies have examined the road from fascist internationalism during the Second World War to the 'Interna-

63 See Andrea Martini, "The Re-emergence of Fascism and Its Impact on European Democracies in the Immediate Postwar Period", *Journal of Contemporary History* 58.2 (2023): 287–310.

64 Griffin, *Fascism*, 111.

65 Central Intelligence Agency, report on 'The Fascist International', January 9, 1956: [NARA] 640446_Box33_Folder10.

tional of Nationalists' in the European postwar period. An early example was *Hitler lebt! Vom internationalen Faschismus zur Internationale des Hakenkreuzes* (Hitler lives! From international fascism to the Swastika International), published in 1966 by the former NSDAP member Werner Smoydzian, who became the vice president of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (*Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz*) in 1970.[66] More recently, Griffin has explored "internationalization" as a key feature of neofascism, signified by an ideological shift from nationalism to Europeanism.[67] Andrea Mammone describes this alteration as a 'de-territorialization' of fascism because various leading neofascist actors converted narrow, chauvinist nationalism into a "pan-European imaginary".[68] The neofascist form of Europeanism invoked ideas of a European 'third way' in explicit contrast to processes of globalization and the rise of the Cold War order headed by the US and the Soviet Union.[69]

Arguably, the European turn of neofascism described above corresponded with and built on some of the internationalist visions by the minor movements in the 1930s, whose 'groupuscular' status had fueled narratives, myths, and actions of fascist internationalism already decades earlier.[70] Instead of the political pragmatism during the Second World War, when access to political power was a realistic option due to Nazi Germany's dominance in Europe, neofascists turned back to ideological debates and megalomaniac pipe dreams of fascist internationalism due to their marginality and fragmentation. Thus, a long-term perspective focusing on the continuities and legacies of the interwar period helps to evaluate earlier claims about the novelty of the European turn of neofascism, while contributing to the growing literature on antiliberal and antidemocratic Europeanism in the wake of European integration.[71]

66 Werner Smoydzin, *Hitler lebt! Vom internationalen Faschismus zur Internationale des Hakenkreuzes* (Pfaffenhofen a. d. Ilm: Ilmgau-Verlag, 1966). See also Kurt. Tauber, "German Nationalists and European Union", *Political Science Quarterly* 74.4 (1959): 564–589.

67 See Griffin, *Fascism*, 111–114.

68 Andrea Mammone, "Revitalizing and De-Territorializing Fascism in the 1950s: The Extreme Right in France and Italy, and the Pan-national ('European') Imaginary", *Patterns of Prejudice* 45.4 (2011): 295–318.

69 For similar arguments, see also Dafinger, "Europeanization as Detachment from the Global", 109–112; Giulia Chielli, "Une relation ambivalente: la Phalange espagnole et le Mouvement Social Européen (1950–1953)", *Revue d'histoire* (forthcoming).

70 For a similar argument, see Mammone, "Revitalizing and De-Territorializing Fascism in the 1950s", 301–302.

71 For an overview, see Philipp Müller and Christina von Hodenberg, "Introduction: Historical Perspectives on Criticisms of European Integration", *Journal of Modern European History* 22.3 (2024), 286–296.

The following analysis foregrounds three elements of continuity on a biographical, organizational, and ideological level, based on a diachronic comparison between postwar developments, particularly from 1945 to the early 1960s, and interwar fascist internationalism. First, it shows how German and Italian actors used their past careers as 'internationalists' to whitewash themselves from the horrific crimes of the Axis powers. Moreover, some of the same people attempted to resurrect fascist internationalism in Europe and beyond in the aftermath of the Second World War. Second, as their predecessors, these neofascists built cross-border cooperation in political practice through multilingual journals, international conferences, and European umbrella organizations. Third, continuities on the ideology level included fascist visions of Europeanism based on a rebirth of an illiberal Europe, anticommunism, and (partly hidden) white supremacism and antisemitism.

The trajectories of the former leaders of the Antisemitic International, Ulrich Fleischhauer, and the Nationalist International, Hans Keller, belong to the dark side of German postwar history. Fleischhauer, who had paved the way to the Holocaust with his antisemitic propaganda, portrayed himself in the aftermath as a 'pacifist' and as an opponent of both antisemitism and the NSDAP.[72] Fleischhauer was only interned for a year after fleeing from Erfurt to the American sector. He died in Hürben in West Germany in 1960. To protest against Fleischhauer's expropriation during his denazification process, his wife Johanna Fleischhauer even claimed that her husband had "stood up for international understanding and the prevention of a new world war".[73] Hans Keller, who became an elected member of the Munich City Council in 1952, made a similar argument when he applied for compensation and subsequent civil service (*Verbeamtung*) in 1958. Falsely, Keller maintained that Nazi authorities had forced him to resign from civil service in 1934 because he was not a member of the NSDAP and because of his Europeanist and internationalist attitude. But Keller never forgot his Nazi past. In 1965, he ran as a candidate for the National Democratic Party of Germany (*Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, NPD), the ideological successor of the NSDAP. Keller died in Munich in 1970.[74]

Keller's Italian rival, the lawyer Eugenio Coselschi, also succeeded with a second career in the postwar period. In 1957, he became secretary of the International Institute for Social Studies (*Istituto internazionale per gli Studi Sociali*) in Italy. A year later, the former president of CAUR even received the gold medal

72 Cf. Schörle, "Internationale der Antisemiten", 70–72.

73 Cited in Schörle, "Internationale der Antisemiten", 72.

74 E. H., "Alter Kämpfer: Merkwürdiges aus der Truhe eines Wahlkandidaten", *Die Zeit,* July 23, 1965.

from the Italian Ministry of Education for merits in the field of "friendship among the peoples and the dissemination of culture in the world".[75] The opportunistic Coselschi, whose political affiliation changed throughout his career from a social democrat to a nationalist, irredentist, fascist universalist, Germanophobe; subsequently pro-German antisemite, monarchist; and finally allegedly republican democrat, died in Rome in 1969.[76] Shamelessly, the same men who had intertwined fascism and internationalism in the 1930s, used their 'internationalist' past in the postwar period to distance themselves from the terrible acts of the fascist regimes, which they had legitimized and glorified as supposed 'peace projects' decades earlier.

Various other fascist agents from the 1930s dreamt of resurrecting fascist internationalism after the Second World War. One example was the former IFL leader Arnold Spencer Leese, who was released from detention in 1944 on health grounds. Henceforth, he renewed his connections with antisemites and white supremacists across Canada, the United States, South Africa, and New Zealand.[77] According to a report by British authorities in 1946, Leese cherished "the hope that these contacts will develop into a kind of National Socialist 'International'".[78] Leese, who portrayed himself as an "anti-Jewish camel-doctor" in his autobiography from 1951, remained an ardent, incorrigible antisemitic baiter until he died in 1956.[79] Another crucial biographical link between interwar and postwar fascist internationalism was Per Engdahl, the former leading member of the Swedish SNF, who set the so-called Malmö Movement in motion. As many other convinced fascists, both Leese and Engdahl were involved in rescue actions for German Nazis and Waffen-SS soldiers fleeing Europe, constituting postwar examples of cross-border fascist solidarity actions.[80]

Neofascists used the circulation of journals to revitalize international connections. One example was *Der Weg*, a monthly magazine published between 1947 and 1957 by *Alt-Nazis* who had escaped to Buenos Aires.[81] *Der Weg* propagated themes of historical revisionism, racism, antisemitism, and Holocaust denial, disseminating articles by European fascists such as Hans F. K. Günther and Per Eng-

75 See Cuzzi, *L'internazionale delle camicie nere*, 362–376.

76 Cf. Cuzzi, *L'internazionale delle camicie nere,* 376.

77 Cf. Macklin, *Failed Führers*, 60–63.

78 Summary of Case of Arnold Leese, March 18, 1946: [TNA], KV 2/1367.

79 See Leese, *Out of Step.*

80 Cf. 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* 82.1 (2021): 133–151, 138–139; Macklin, *Failed Führers*, 58–60.

81 Cf. Finkenberger, "Johann von Leers und die 'faschistische Internationale' der fünfziger und sechziger Jahre in Argentinien und Ägypten"; Åsbrink, "When Race Was Removed from Racism".

dahl. *Der Weg* also referenced various other neofascist journals from the US, France, and Britain, including the *Gothic Ripples,* founded by Arnold Leese. *Nation Europa* was another key example of a journal that functioned as a node for neofascist internationalism. The former Waffen-SS commander Arthur Ehrhard founded the magazine in Coburg in 1951. Among its contributors and editors were Engdahl, the French fascist intellectual Maurice Bardèche, the Italian 'Eurofascist' and ideological mentor of Italian neofascism Julius Evola (who had contributed to the IAdN congress in London in 1935), and the former NF ideologue Hans Oehler from Switzerland.[82]

With the help of these journals, a vast network of neofascists reemerged in Europe (with important links to South America) after the war with its heyday in the early 1950s. *Nation Europa,* in particular, operated in the context of the ESB that was the most important organizational successor of fascist internationalism in the 1930s.[83] A key driving force in this network was Per Engdahl, who repeatedly emphasized the necessity of a European rebirth in which 'racial mixture' was limited.[84] Engdahl's publications like *Västerlandets förnyelse* (Renewal of the West, 1950), which built on his ideology of "New Swedish Socialism" formulated in the 1930s, became focal for the neofascist ESB.[85] Accordingly, the main objective of the ESB was the unification of European ultranationalist and neofascist forces to build a new antiliberal, anticommunist, anti-democratic, xenophobic, and racist European federation.

The European neofascist network hosted various international conferences mirroring CAUR's and IAdN's fascist congresses in the 1930s. The first took place in Rome in October 1950, organized by a university group linked to the Italian neofascist MSI, which played a significant role in the Europeanization of the fascist idea in the postwar period. International delegates attended from various European countries like Maurice Bardèche from France, Karl-Heinz Priester from Germany (a former head of propaganda for the Hitler Youth), as well as observers from the Spanish FE de las JONS.[86] The Falange was the only still existing party which had been directly involved in CAUR's Fascist International. However, as in

82 See [AfZ], NL Hans Oehler, 10.2.7; 10.4.3. On the journal *Nation Europa*, see, among others, Thomas Pfeiffer, *Für Volk und Vaterland*: *Das Mediennetz der Rechten; Presse, Musik, Internet* (Berlin: Aufbau-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 2002), 145–176.

83 On the ESB, see, among others, Janosch Steuwer, "Die andere europäische Einigung: Entwicklungslinien der transnationalen Kooperation rechtsextremer Parteien in der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts", *Mitteilungsblatt des Instituts für Soziale Bewegungen* 46 (2011): 87–96.

84 On Per Engdahl's turn from Swedish nationalism to neofascist Europeanism, see Rahm,"Från nationell folkgemenskap till europeisk kulturgemenskap".

85 Per Engdahl, *Västerlandets förnyelse* (Malmö, 1950).

86 On the Rome conference, see Smoydzin, *Hitler lebt!*, 57–59.

the 1930s, this relationship was highly ambivalent, as the Franco regime wanted to play down its fascist legacy for tactical reasons in the context of the Cold War, but forces within the Falange wanted to continue to express their ideological kinship with the neo-fascist party family in Europe.[87] Per Engdahl orchestrated the second major congress in Malmö in 1951 with approximately 100 delegates from seven countries. The meeting resulted in the official foundation of the ESB, which was headed by a four-man committee that represented national sections in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, France, and Austria.[88]

There were many contextual and ideological differences between interwar and postwar fascist internationalism, such as the new question of decolonization and the positive reference to the shared experience of war veterans who had fought together against Bolshevism in eastern Europe.[89] Most striking was a fundamental change in the center-periphery relations of neofascism due to the now-missing predominance of either Fascist Italy or Nazi Germany, even though both fascist regimes remained models of historical inspiration combined with early forms of Holocaust denial. For instance, *Nation Europa* hailed Hitler as the savior of the 'white man' threatened by the Bolshevist onslaught, while confessing some 'failures' and 'aberrations' of Nazism.[90] However, neofascism's geographical and political center was no longer indisputably in Italy or Germany, even though the Italian MSI and German *Alt-Nazis* took an active part in the network. Instead, multiple new centers emerged, including Francoist Madrid.[91] Furthermore, Scandinavian, French, Belgian, and British movements acted as equals to their partners in Italy and Germany when outlining ideas of a new Europe, freeing them from being perceived as mere collaborators and 'fifth columnists' working for a foreign state as in the war period. As a result, neofascist internationalism was less asymmetrical in structure and financial setting than the agencies of fascist internationalism in the 1930s.

87 As argued by Chielli, "Une relation ambivalente".

88 On the Malmö Congress, see Åsbrink, "When Race Was Removed from Racism" 139–148.

89 See Alexander Hobe, "The Europeanization of Honour. Wehrmacht Veterans and European Integration in the 1950s", *Journal of Modern European History* 22.3 (2024), 318–334.

90 Cf. Smoydzin, *Hitler lebt!*, 124–126. On the theme of Holocaust denial in *Nation Europa* and the ESB network, see Marie Müller-Zetzsche, "'Das Problem der 6 Millionen'. Holocaustleugnung als Kampagnenthema der extremen Rechten nach 1945", *Zeitgeschichte-online* (2023), accessed March 27, 2025, https://zeitgeschichte-online.de/kommentar/das-problem-der-6-millionen.

91 See Pablo Del Hierro, "The Neofascist Network and Madrid, 1945–1953: From City of Refuge to Transnational Hub and Centre of Operations", *Contemporary European History* 31.2 (2022): 171–194.

Despite these fundamental differences, there were at least four ideological elements of European neofascist internationalism that corresponded with the fascist internationalism of the 1930s. First, the Malmö movement was also a direct counter-reaction to other forms of internationalism. In the first 15 years after the Second World War, "a whole labyrinth of partly overlapping, partly competing international organizations emerged, especially in Western Europe", as Kiran Klaus Patel states, and the neofascists were no exception.[92] Of particular importance was the immediate postwar European integration process. The foundation of the ESB in 1951, in particular, was prompted by the signing of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) contract the same year. In one pamphlet, the ESB described itself therefore as an "Opposition Movement of Europe's National Forces to the Strasbourg plans", where the assembly of the ECSC was based.[93]

Second, the ESB built on some of the visions of Europeanism and protectionism that the minor fascist parties had articulated in the 1930s (as outlined in Chapter 10). Repeatedly, the ESB fostered notions of closer European cooperation, mirroring concepts such as the 'Europe of nationalisms' proposed by Hans Oehler from the Swiss NF in the 1930s. Oehler was another direct biographical link between the interwar and postwar period, who participated at some congresses in the 1950s and was involved in *Nation Europa*. The title of the journal derived from the slogan "Europe, a nation". This concept was developed in 1947 by Oswald Mosley. Intriguingly, in the 1930s, the former BUF leader had still refrained from participating in the CAUR project due to its international outlook, but in in the postwar period, he rose to become one of the most active agents of neofascist internationalism. Mosley hoped for a European fascist rebirth through "a European Union by getting rid of national alignments".[94] The journal *Nation Europa* deliberately tied in with the European conceptions of the 'Third Reich' during the war, stylizing the veterans of the Waffen-SS units from various countries as role models for European unity.[95] Moreover, some ESB members dreamt of a 'Eurafrican federation'. The idea was to merge the colonies of European nations to form a new European empire, exploiting Africa regarding food and raw materials while providing *Lebensraum* and European autarchy.[96] This corresponded with the con-

92 Kiran Klaus Patel, *Projekt Europa. Eine kritische Geschichte* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2018), 23.

93 Cited in Steuwer, "Die andere europäische Einigung," 87.

94 Cited in Macklin, *Failed Führers*, 105.

95 Cf. Gideon Botsch, "Nation Europa (seit 1951)", edited by Wolfgang Benz, in *Handbuch des Antisemitismus. Publikationen. Band 6* (Berlin: De Gruyter Saur, 2013), 473–475, 473.

96 See Tamir Bar-On, "Fascism to the Nouvelle Droite: The Dream of Pan-European Empire", *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 16.3 (2008): 327–345.

cept of Eurafrica as expressed by the Pan-European Movement and the Swedish fascist Rütger Essén two decades earlier.

The Malmö Movement conceptualized Europe as a unified, non-aligned 'Third Force', juxtaposed with the new superpowers of the Cold War era, the Soviet Union and the United States. As the delegate Karl-Heinz Priester, the leading German ESB member, propagated at the Rome Conference in 1950: "[w]hile Russia is trying to bolshevize Europe, the West is colonizing us".[97] This agenda drew on the resentment concerning a diminishment of the old continent, which had also characterized many fascist thoughts on Europe in the 1930s, but in a new Cold War context. Anti-Americanism grew in importance in the postwar period, symbolizing the aberrations of liberalism, plutocracy, materialism, and the allegedly corrosive role of Jews and Black Afro-Americans. Anticommunism directed against the Soviet Union, on the other hand, remained a key concept that united neofascists across borders. Various neofascist movements also used anticommunism domestically to build bridges to more conservative forces, offering an opportunity to escape the political isolation of neofascism after the Second World War. A pivotal example was the MSI, which attempted to create a right-wing 'anticommunist front' with the Christian Democrats in Italy "to supplant the Republic's foundational antifascism".[98] This illustrates synergies and partly blurred boundaries between neofascism and the broader political right, a phenomenon that was, as in the case of Hans Keller's IAdN, also apparent in the 1930s.

Third, the neofascist network invoked ideas of a shared European cultural identity based on assumptions of racial relatedness among the European nations, illustrating the continuity of white European racism as a cornerstone of fascist internationalism. Some neofascists foregrounded race explicitly, such as the ESB rival organization founded in Zurich in 1951, the so-called New European Order. It called for a war "against Bolshevist Mongols and capitalist Negroes", seeing "the distinctive task of Europe in the support of the white man in his fight for racial survival".[99] The ESB, in contrast, deliberately downplayed racial issues and antisemitism due to the revelation of the German mass murders of Jews. But concepts of race did not vanish. As Swiss delegates insisted at the Malmö Congress in 1951: "[given] that the peoples of Europe are racially related, a European culture exists. To preserve that European culture, we intend to create unity throughout the continent".[100] Hence, the Malmö Movement signified both change and continuity. It introduced a rhetorical shift from using race to culture while repeating

97 Cited in Tauber, "German Nationalists and European Union".
98 Broder, *Mussolini's Grandchildren*, 49.
99 Cited in Tauber, "German Nationalists and European Union", 573.
100 Cited in Åsbrink, "When Race Was Removed from Racism", 144.

the white supremacist argument for the defense of European culture, manifested in its alleged race(s). This mirrors statements by Hans Keller, Frits Clausen, and others in the 1930s, who argued that 'race consciousness' could bring racially related people in Europe closer, in explicit distinction from 'non-white' races.[101]

Fourth, as in the 1930s, most members of the Malmö Movement did not perceive their ultranationalism as an obstacle to neofascist internationalism, although they attempted to move beyond the chauvinist-expansionist nationalism that had led to another devastating world war. Instead, they wanted to create "a bridge between the idea of nation and the idea of Europe".[102] Accordingly, Maurice Bardèche, the leading figure of French neofascism and Holocaust denial, claimed in the *Nation Europa*: "[only] the national forces are capable of going beyond nationalism. [. . .] Only they have the power in them to give Europe a new belief and a vital mysticism, without which no state can survive".[103] As Alexander Hobe argues convincingly, the support *Nation Europa* and the ESB expressed for "supranational politics complicates present-day attributions, as when the 'common denominator' of left-wing and right-wing Euroscepticism is seen in 'nationalism'".[104] The Malmö Movement, as its ideological predecessors in the 1930s, was not Eurosceptic in the sense of fighting against European integration. Instead, the ESB turned explicitly to European cooperation to fight against democracy and liberalism while hoping to resurrect the continent on racial lines based on mythical ideas of a fascist rebirth.

Another remarkable similarity between the Malmö Movement and its predecessors was the failure to sustain a unified organizational form of fascist internationalism. Within its first years, the movement split into various competing subgroups, initiated by an uprising of the French delegates against their leader, Maurice Bardèche. They organized a "conference of the Nationalist Forces in Europe" in Paris in 1953 without Bardèche and the other ESB leaders.[105] Further meetings and multiple competing successor organizations followed the event in the 1950s.[106] The last major attempt to unite the European Right in the two decades after the Second World War was the foundation of a National Party of Europe

101 Cf. Chapter 3.

102 Cited in Chielli, "Une relation ambivalente".

103 Cited in Alexander Hobe, "Nation Europa. A German Far-Right Journal and the History of Europeanism", (De) Constructing Europe (2022), accessed March 27, 2025, https://europeresist.hypotheses.org/550. On Maurice Bardèche and Europeanism, see Ian R. Barnes, "Antisemitic Europe and the 'Third Way': The Ideas of Maurice Bardèche", *Patterns of Prejudice* 34.2 (2000): 57–73.

104 Alexander Hobe, "Nation Europa" (2022).

105 See the conference material in [AfZ], NL Hans Oehler, 10.2.8.

106 For a concise overview and a table of the competing organizations, see Steuwer, "Die andere europäische Einigung", 91.

by Oswald Mosley in 1962, which briefly galvanized the neofascist international network. But the postwar "field of 'nationalist internationalism' soon lay strewn with shattered hopes, futile efforts and broken organizations".[107]

As in the case of the 1930s, there were multiple reasons for this failure, like personal rivalries, interference by state authorities (such as when Swedish and German authorities prevented a German delegation from traveling to the Malmö conference in 1951 by revoking their passports), programmatic differences (as the question of whether to downplay antisemitism and radical racism or not), and divergent national-territorial interests (for instance about South Tyrol and European colonies).[108] From the mid-1960s onward, most neofascist parties and organizations in Europe, like the MSI (which succeeded with its gradual insertion into the Italian democratic party system), lost interest in explicit political European cooperation and a program oriented toward European unification and rebirth. This was linked to the rise of new ultranationalist (rather than Europeanist) parties such as the NPD in Germany and the Front National in France, since 2018 named the Rassemblement National (*Rassemblement National*, RN).[109]

Despite particular forms of Europeanism, one must stress that postwar neofascist internationalism with organizational ties to the predecessors in the 1930s was neither geographically nor ideologically confined to Europe but partly embraced the wider world. Anticommunism, for instance, enabled broader alliances with non-European regimes and movements in the Cold War context, particularly in Latin America. The ideological twin brother antisemitism also remained a key theme. For instance, in the late 1950s, the Egyptian antisemite Mahmoud Saleh wished to recreate the antisemitic WD, including the journal *Welt-Dienst* in Cairo. The objective was to disseminate anti-Zionist propaganda. Saleh repeatedly described himself as a direct successor of Ulrich Fleischhauer, legitimized by working as a correspondent for WD in the 1930s. The former editor of *Der Weg* in Argentina, Johann von Leers, joined Saleh's project and the Egyptian government funded them. This attempt to rebuild a new worldwide "Antisemitic International" on the remnants of WD, as some contemporary German newspapers warned, petered out in the 1960s.[110]

There were also multiple attempts to organize some form of worldwide cooperation among white supremacists and 'neo-Nazis', to be distinguished from 'neofascists' due to their explicit objective to carry on Nazi German ideology based on

107 Tauber, "German Nationalists and European Union", 581.

108 Smoydzin, *Hitler lebt!*, 60–61.

109 See also Steuwer, "Die andere europäische Einigung," 93–96.

110 See, in more detail, Finkenberger, "Johann von Leers und die 'faschistische Internationale' der fünfziger und sechziger Jahre in Argentinien und Ägypten", 538–542.

Nordic-Aryan racism and antisemitism. Roger Griffin terms this a move from primarily German to "Universal Nazism".[111] Here, the notions of a global (rather than European) white racial community of destiny were vital, as opposed to other constructed 'yellow' or 'black' races. One example of internationalist white supremacism was the long-lasting legacy of IFL leader Arnold Leese. According to Graham Macklin, his "greatest contribution [. . .] was his dogged insistence that 'race' was the 'basis of all politics', which exerted a powerful influence upon a new, younger generation of extreme right-wing activists".[112] Some of these formed the World Union of National Socialists (WUNS) in 1962, which still exists on paper.[113] WUNS had its heyday in the 1960s when it linked neo-Nazi groups in the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Europe. A partner of WUNS with ties to the 1930s was the minuscule Danish National Socialist Workers Party, which Sven Salicath founded in 1951 on the remains of Frits Clausen's DNSAP. The main incentive of WUNS was to combat Jewish-communist internationalism and Zionism. In a striking resemblance to the interwar fascists from Scandinavia, WUNS combined nationalism with international solidarity "based on racial superiority and overt identification with National Socialist racial principles".[114]

The so-called European New Right continued to emphasize the European framework since the late 1960s, in contrast to these 'global' approaches to unite 'neofascists of all the world'. The European New Right was a loose and diverse network of antiliberal and antiegalitarian intellectuals, originating in France as the *Nouvelle Droite*.[115] These intellectuals, such as Alain de Benoist, focused on Gramscian 'cultural hegemony' and 'metapolitics' instead of political hegemony and party-political organization. They "decided to abandon overt racist, 'Aryan' fascism", as Griffin argues, "to be able to enter the citadel of humanist democracy with the Trojan Horse of a generous addition to Universal Human Rights: the 'right to identity'".[116] Strikingly, as in the case of the Malmö Movement, the New Right construction of cultural identity implicitly acquired the connotations of a

111 Cf. Griffin, *Fascism*, 114–115.

112 Macklin, *Failed Führers*, 68.

113 On WUNS, see Paul Jackson, "Dreaming of a National Socialist World: The World Union of National Socialists (WUNS) and the Recurring Vision of Transnational Neo-Nazism", *Fascism: Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 8.2 (2019): 275–306.

114 Jackson, "Dreaming of a National Socialist World" (2019), 282

115 On the diversity of the New Right, see Jean-Yves Camus and Nicolas Lebourg, *Far-Right Politics in Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 120–151.

116 Roger Griffin, "Ghostbusting Fascism? The Spectral Aspects of the Era of Fascism and Its Shape-Shifting Relationship to the Radical Right", *Fascism: Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 11.1 (2022): 59–86, 81.

pure, homogeneous race, even though the New Right articulated racism and white supremacism more subliminally.[117]

Yet, some of the core notions of the European New Right still resembled the fascist internationalism of the 1930s, questioning the 'newness' of the New Right.[118] A notable example is *ethnopluralism*, a concept coined by Henning Eichberg in the 1970s in opposition to Western multiculturalism and increased labor migration.[119] Until today, proponents of ethnopluralism aim at preserving separate and bordered 'ethno-cultural' nations grounded in differentialist racism while discursively emphasizing 'mutual respect' for other nations. Because of the long timespan, it is difficult to draw a direct lineage from the fascist international agencies in the 1930s to the European New Right. But it remains striking how IAdN and some of its foreign partners, such as the Swiss NF, anticipated this contemporary rightist discourse in the 1930s. They, too, had demanded "the development of a genuine and organic nationalism" in separate, racially related countries in Europe, allegedly "based on the acceptance of the natural and cultural diversity of nations".[120]

To conclude, many people who had become convinced fascists, stark anticommunists, and dangerous antisemites in the first half of the twentieth century continued to collaborate internationally to pursue their dreams of a European or global rebirth of fascism which would overthrow the liberal international order. Further research is warranted on the long-term reverberations of these ideas, organizations, and personnel in the second half of the twentieth century. Moreover, despite the minuscule size and limited political influence of some of the fascist visionaries in the 1930s, their dangerous impact is, in some concrete cases, still noticeable today. Arnold Leese's theories of obsessive antisemitism and white supremacism still circulate among anglophone neo-Nazis around the globe, fueled

117 On the French New Right and its concept of culture and race, see also Christian Jacobs, "Feminist, Far-Right, and Postmigrant Culture: A Conceptual History in France, late 1960s–early 1980s" (PhD diss., Freie Universität Berlin, 2024).

118 On the debate of the 'Newness' of the New Right and continuities with the interwar period, see Volker Weiß, *Die autoritäre Revolte*: *Die Neue Rechte und der Untergang des Abendlandes* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2017), 27–63.

119 See Alberto Spektorowski, "The New Right: Ethno-regionalism, Ethno-pluralism and the Emergence of a Neo-fascist 'Third Way'", *Journal of Political Ideologies* 8.1 (2003): 111–130; Daniel Rueda, "Alain de Benoist, Ethnopluralism and the Cultural Turn in Racism", *Patterns of Prejudice* 55.3 (2021): 213–235.

120 IAdN, ed., *Volk und Staat im Grenzland*, 29.

by online radicalization on various internet platforms.[121] Likewise, Rütger Essén's oeuvre was recently rediscovered by the German New Right journal, *Sezession,* which used Essén's thoughts on Russia to legitimize Vladimir Putin's anti-Western attitude.[122] This leads us to the final question of this monograph: What are the implications of the interwar history of fascist internationalism for understanding the contemporary far right?

Fascist Internationalism and the Contemporary Far Right

The equivocal gesture of Elon Musk (at that point the world's richest man) at a rally to mark the inauguration of Donald Trump (the world's most powerful man) as 47th President of the United States of America in January 2025 has fueled public debates about a return of historical fascism to the political mainstream of the present.[123] Despite later denials, Musk's action clearly resembled the Roman salute used by numerous fascist regimes and movements in the first half of the twentieth century, which to this day remains a universal Nazi symbol on par with the swastika. As Matthew Kriner states, "sending these sorts of fascist and white supremacist messages allow Trump and his supporters to court right-wing extremist supporters while claiming innocence in the face of public outrage".[124] Moreover, the fact that an unusual amount of far-right politicians, including heads of state such Italy's Giorgia Meloni and Argentina's Javier Milei, as well as representatives of European parties such as Germany's AfD, flocked to the historic event, has been interpreted by political observes as a reinvigoration of the "Nationalist International".[125]

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121 Cf. Paul Jackson, "From Slime Mould to Rhizome Revisited: The Anglophone Neo-Nazi Cultic Milieu, Past and Present", in *Beyond the Fascist Century*: *Essays in Honour of Roger Griffin,* edited by Constantin Iordachi and Aristotle Kallis (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 257–282, 265.

122 See Martin Lichtmesz, "Notizen zu Rütger Esséns 'Die russische Gleichung'", *Sezession* (2022), accessed March 27, 2025, https://sezession.de/66584/notizen-zu-ruetger-essens-die-russische-gleichung-1-3?hilite=R%C3%BCtger+Ess%C3%A9n.

123 See, for instance, Ashifa Kassam, "Did Elon Musk give a Nazi or Roman salute, and what's the difference?", *The Guardian*, January 21, 2025.

124 Matthew Kriner, "Musk's inauguration salute is not the only apparent fascist signal from Trump's administration", *The Conversation*, February 3, 2025, accessed March 7, 2025, https://theconversation.com/musks-inauguration-salute-is-not-the-only-apparent-fascist-signal-from-trumps-administration-248517.

125 European Policy Centre, "Mapping Trump's far-right inauguration guest list", January 20, 2025, accessed February 20, 2025, https://www.epc.eu/en/Publications/Mapping-Trumps-far-right-inauguration-guest-list~60bda0.

Donald Trump's inauguration in 2025 represents, in a nutshell, the global mainstreaming of the far right in the twenty-first century and the "shameless normalization" of its discourses, based on old and new notions from the far-right repertoire such as nationalism, illiberalism, xenophobia, islamophobia, racism, antisemitism, antifeminism, sexism, transphobia as well as hatred for 'Cultural Marxism', 'wokism' and so-called identity politics.[126] In this context, the umbrella term far right emphasizes the "growing links between illiberal-democratic ('radical right') and anti-democratic ('extreme right') collective actors", including a wide range of elected governments, political parties, social movements, institutions, think tanks, and media outlets that appear to be on an inexorable rise some 100 years after the genesis of the world's first fascist dictatorship in Italy.[127]

The aim of these final paragraphs is not to claim that the European fascist internationalism of the 1930s has simply returned. The substantial political, economic, and cultural differences between the twentieth and twentieth-first centuries, such as the digital revolution, have irrevocably changed the nature of politics in an era of social media. The objective is rather to reflect on the many parallels between past and present, thus contributing with a historical perspective to the recent "international turn in far-right studies".[128] Arguably, some of the theoretical concepts, analytical tools, and empirical findings of this book can help to rethink fragments of contemporary politics as part of a broader phenomenon summarized under the rubric of *far-right internationalism*.

This study's conceptualization of fascist internationalism as a processual phenomenon, encompassing a variety of actors, movements, and regimes with partly divergent agendas, helps to move beyond primarily academic debates about the definitional essence of 'generic' fascism and the far right. The approach of this monograph foregrounds instead the adaptability and malleability of fascism in the wake of larger historical, political, economic, and cultural changes and crises. This was demonstrated by the turbulent 1930s and its key events such as the Nazi take over in Germany in 1933, the Italo-Ethiopian War in 1935, and the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. These developments offered new political opportunities for fascist actors and movements who adapted their ideologies and strategies accordingly when navigating between national and international inter-

126 Ruth Wodak, *The Politics of Fear: The Shameless Normalization of Far-Right Discourse* (London: SAGE, 2021).

127 Andrea L. Pirro, "Far Right: The Significance of an Umbrella Concept", *Nations and Nationalism* 29.1 (2023): 101–112, 101. See also Cas Mudde, *The Far Right Today* (Cambridge: John Wiley & Sons, 2019).

128 Rodrigo Duque Estrada Campos, "The International Turn in Far-Right Studies: A Critical Assessment", *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 51.3 (2023), 892–919.

ests and allegiances. Recognizing this adaptability is key to analyzing the rapidly changing tactics and international alliances of the heterogenous far right in Europe and beyond.

This book has demonstrated how 'internationalist' fascists in the interwar period created umbrella organizations, networks, and think tanks that hosted large-scale conferences to unite ultranationalists across borders. Despite a fundamentally different context, the contemporary far right uses strikingly similar means to propagate nationalism internationally. One example is the National Conservatism (NatCon) movement, run by the Washington, D.C.-based Edmund Burke Foundation, which has been organizing international gatherings of radical conservative, ultranationalist, and fundamentalist Christian politicians and thinkers since 2019. For instance, the NatCon conference in Brussels in April 2024, which made headlines because the Belgian police briefly shut down the event, was attended by Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, the British Brexit-promoter Nigel Farage, and the French conspiracy theorist Éric Zemmour.[129] NatCon promotes globally an anti-universalist ideology of nationalism, which, according to its own statement of principles, emphasizes "the idea of the nation because we see a world of independent nations—each pursuing its own national interests and upholding national traditions that are its own—as the only genuine alternative to universalist ideologies now seeking to impose a homogenizing, locality-destroying imperium over the entire globe".[130]

The Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) is another key example of an institutional platform, which has grown from a US-based annual event in the 1970s "to a proliferating number of international conferences, which are a driving force in consolidating an increasingly tightly woven network of reactionary movements, political parties, think tanks, and publications allied with the American Right-wing".[131] Nowadays, CPAC organizes conferences around the world, attracting "the international of nationalists like honey attracts wasps", as the *Tagesspiegel* states about a meeting in Budapest in May 2023 that was hosted by Viktor Orbán.[132] A CPAC convention in Buenos Aires in December 2024 cele-

129 Lisa O'Carroll and Ben Quinn, "NatCon conference resumes after Brussels court overturns closure order", *The Guardian*, April 17, 2024.

130 National Conservatism, "National Conservatism: A Statement of Principles", accessed February 20, 2025, https://nationalconservatism.org/national-conservatism-a-statement-of-principles/.

131 Grant Silverman, "Building the International Right: The American Conservative Union and CPAC", *IERES Occasional Papers*, no. 29 (2025), accessed March 5, 2025, https://www.illiberalism.org/building-the-international-right-the-american-conservative-union-and-cpac/.

132 Malte Lehming, "CPAC-Treffen in Budapest: Rechts und rechts gesellt sich gern", *Tagesspiegel*, May 3, 2023.

brated the President of Argentina, Javier Milei, as a role model for the global far-right, who urged his foreign partners to "coordinate internationally to prevent leftists from gaining ground anywhere".[133] Thus, CPAC unites "right-wing populists of all countries", as the *Tagesschau* comments about another meeting in Maryland in February 2025, held in the aftermath of Trump's inauguration. The conference was among others attended by representatives from the Patriots of Europe EP group, the German AfD, and Javier Milei, who gifted Elon Musk a chainsaw live on stage.[134] The US American political activist, media strategist, and former Trump advisor Steve Bannon even greeted the CPAC audience with a Nazi salute and the call to "fight, fight, fight".[135]

Steve Bannon is an intriguing example of a present-day fascist broker and networker, who has attempted for years to unite the transnational far right under the contradictory slogan 'nationalism first'.[136] In the years 2017–2019, Bannon tried to create a "type of Neo-nationalist International" of populist far-right movements in Europe based in Brussels named The Movement, with the goal of undermining liberalism and the EU.[137] Despite organizing some meetings and attracting influential figures such as Matteo Salvini and Nigel Farage, the group failed to grow into an established institution because numerous potential partners shaped by traditional anti-Americanism, including the German AfD, refrained at that point from joining the venture due to its US background. This reminds us of the Italian failures to persuade fascist movements from Britain or Spain to join the Fascist International in the 1930s, due to the obvious hegemonial stance of the undertaking. In the past years, however, Steve Bannon found new international forums such as the CPAC conferences to propagate the global spread of the MAGA movement, while dreaming of a far-right "conquest of Europe" with

133 Cited in Ángel Munárriz, "The far right is moving closer to the old dream of a 'nationalist international'", *El País*, December 22, 2024.

134 Anna Schneider, "CPAC-Konferenz in den USA Rechtspopulisten aller Länder vereinigt euch?", *Tagessschau*, February 21, 2025.

135 Mary Papenfuss, "Did Steve Bannon flash a Nazi salute at CPAC?" *The Independent*, February 21, 2025.

136 Another, less visible contemporary example of a fascist broker is the Italian neofascist Gabriele Adinolfi. See David Holcombe, "Gabriele Adinolfi: Architect of a European Neofascist Network", *IERES Occasional Papers*, no. 26 (2024), accessed March 5, 2025, https://www.illiberalism.org/gabriele-adinolfi-architect-of-a-european-neofascist-network/.

137 See Kemal Dervis and Caroline Conroy, 'Nationalists of the World, Unite?', *brookings.edu* (2018), accessed March 27, 2025, https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/nationalists-of-the-world-unite.

the help of the AfD, despite former differences. Bannon's trajectory points to the adaptability of tactics of the far right in the wake of historical transformations.[138]

However, Steve Bannon's actions, and in particular his admiration for historical fascism, still alienates some potential far-right partners: Jordan Bardella, the president of the French RN, decided to cancel his speech at the CPAC meeting in February 2025 in reaction to Bannon's gesture "alluding to Nazi ideology".[139] This incident illustrates that the legacy of historical fascism and its key symbols still haunts and challenges collaboration among today's ultranationalists. To give another example: in May 2024, the German AfD was expelled from the far-right EP group Identity and Democracy, thus becoming a "pariah" after its leading candidate in the upcoming EP elections trivialized the German Waffen SS in an Italian newspaper.[140] This underlines a discrepancy between the actual fragmentation and disagreements of the far right, on the one hand, and constant portrayals of a seemingly united far-right front around the world, on the other.

In fact, a closer look at the narratives propagated at the Montreux Congresses of our time illustrates that far-right actors engage in similar myths of international belonging as their historical predecessors, based on notions of solidarity, ideological kinship among a constructed far-right party family, and dualistic imaginaries of a new 'nationalist' era in opposition to the old era of liberal democracies. The 2025 Madrid summit of the European Patriots group, for instance, hailed the reelection of Donald Trump as US President "as a harbinger of future victories for their camp", as *Le Monde* comments. The host Santiago Abascal, leader of the Spanish Vox party, declared that Trump was a "comrade-in-arms in the battle for good, for truth, common sense and freedom".[141] As Marine Le Pen, the leading figure of the French RN claimed: "[a]t some point, you have to look at what's happening in the world today: Milei, Trump, Orbán, Meloni, our Austrian allied party is in the lead, we're in the lead, our Flemish friends are in the lead. [. . .] I think we're witnessing a kind of renaissance".[142] These references to the continuous ascendancy of far-right forces, combined with the idea of belonging to

138 Sonja Thomaser, "Rechte Welle: Ex-Trump-Berater Bannon spricht von 'Eroberung Europas' und hofft auf AfD", *Frankfurter Rundschau*, February 21, 2025.

139 Piotr Smolar, "After canceling his Washington speech, Jordan Bardella is called a 'pussy' by Steve Bannon", *Le Monde*, February 22, 2025.

140 Pauline von Petzold et.al., "Far-right ID group expels Alternative for Germany", *Politico*, May 23, 2024, accessed March 27, 2025, https://www.politico.eu/article/far-right-identity-and-democracy-group-expels-alternative-for-germany/.

141 Sandrine Morel and Allan Kaval, "In Madrid, Europe's far right looks to Trump as a role model", *Le Monde*, February 9, 2025.

142 Morel and Kaval, "In Madrid, Europe's far right looks to Trump as a role model", February 9, 2025.

the same international camp of nationalists, are used to increase one's own political importance. Such narratives of a far-right *Zeitgeist* are firmly anchored in new forms of fascist temporality and Manicheanism, serving an analogous purpose as the myths of fascist internationalism employed by fascist movements in the interwar period.

However, scholars, journalists, and political opponents would be ill-advised to simply buy into these mythical narratives of the far right as a united global front. Such narratives deliberately gloss over differences among the fragmented far right camp, which remains divided concerning important matters such as the Gaza-Israel conflict and Gaza war since 2023. The contemporary far right is far from speaking with one voice, and ideological disagreements, disputes, and rivalries still characterize its fragile attempts to unite across borders. One example of this division of a supposedly united camp of European far-right parties are the manifold reactions to the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, culminating in public support for either Vladimir Putin or Volodymyr Zelenskyy, and voluntary far-right fighters on both sides of the war.[143] Even within countries such as Italy, the far-right scene was split between a "pro-Western and Atlanticist extreme right" and a "nostalgic and pro-Putin" form of neofascism.[144] The fragmentation is also particularly evident regarding the outcome of the EP elections in 2024, when three competing far-right parliamentary groups were formed due to strong political disagreements on various matters: the aforementioned Patriots for Europe, the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR), and Europe of Sovereign Nations (ESN).[145]

Similar tensions between far-right internationalism and imperialist expansionism are also resurfacing in the twenty-first century, curiously even over the same territory that interwar fascists from Denmark and Norway squabbled over: Greenland. Trump, who already had expressed a desire to buy the semi-autonomous, former colony Greenland from Denmark during his first presidency, pronounced in January 2025 that the US should take control of the vast island, even by force if necessary. In response to these renewed imperialist ambitions,

143 See Adam Holesch and Piotr Zagórski, "Toxic Friend?: The Impact of the Russian Invasion on Democratic Backsliding and PRR Cooperation in Europe", *West European Politics* 46.6 (2023): 1178–1204.

144 Nicola Guerra, "The Russia-Ukraine War has shattered the Italian Far Right", *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* (2023): 1–21.

145 Max Becker and Nicolai von Ondarza, "Divided But Dangerous: The Fragmented Far-right's Push for Power in the EU after the 2024 Elections", *SWP Comment no. 44*, October 2024, accessed March 27, 2025, https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/comments/2024C44_Far-right_EP_Web.pdf.

Anders Vistisen of the far-right Danish People's Party (*Dansk Folkeparti*) gave a blustering speech in the EU parliament. "It is not for sale. Let me put it into words you might understand, Mr. Trump: fuck off".[146] Oddly enough, Vistisen serves as chief whip of the Patriots for Europe, the same EP group that hails Trump as the harbinger of a glorious new era of nationalism. This bone of contention between Danish and US-American nationalists rooted in geostrategic and colonial interests also loomed over the 2025 CPAC meeting in Maryland, demonstrating the fragility of global patriotic unity.[147]

The Danish participation at CPAC points to the new center-periphery relations within far-right internationalism. Since Trump's reelection in 2025, at the latest, the US seems to have become the center of the global far-right (perhaps next to Milei's Argentina in South America and Orbán's Hungary in Europe), in stark contrast to the Eurocentric character of fascist internationalism headed by Italy and Germany in the 1930s. Nonetheless, notions of Europe still serve as a significant "ideological resource" for far-right parties on the European continent such as Marine Le Pen's FN.[148] Their foreign policy programs often propagate a 'fortress Europe' based on implicit notions of a homogeneous European cultural (and racial) identity, as well as conspiracy theories about a 'great replacement' of the (white and Christian) European population by Muslim immigrants.[149]

Paradoxically, European far-right parties and their leading figures still might be interpreted as the 'Quislings' and 'fifth columnists' of our time in relation to authoritarian role models such as Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin outside Europe. This ambivalence was illustrated in the context of Russia's war against Ukraine since 2022. Numerous far-right parties such as the French RN and the German AfD denounced the EU sanctions against Russia as well as their country's arms deliveries to Ukraine and presented themselves as the real propagators of 'world peace' while being inspired, supported, and sometimes even secretly funded by Russia.[150] This resembles the smaller movements' propaganda for Nazi

146 Lee Moran, "European Lawmaker Explains Exactly Why He Told Donald Trump To 'F**k Off'", *Huffpost*, January 24, 2025, accessed March 27, 2025, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/anders-vistisen-explains-donald-trump-curse-words_n_679355c6e4b0e5e46c4369db.

147 Anna Schneider, "CPAC-Konferenz in den USA Rechtspopulisten aller Länder vereinigt euch?", *Tagessschau*, February 21, 2025.

148 Marta Lorimer, *Europe as Ideological Resource: European Integration and Far Right Legitimation in France and Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024).

149 See Marc-Olivier Bherer, "Le « grand remplacement », généalogie d'un complotisme caméléon", *Le Monde*, January 28, 2022.

150 On the ambiguous links between the European far right and Russia, see among others, Anton Shekhovtsov, *Russia and the Western Far Right*: *Tango Noir* (Milton: Taylor and Francis, 2017).

German expansionism, Italy's invasion of Ethiopia, and their rallying against the League of Nations sanctions in the 1930s.

However, the current relations between major regimes and minor parties is analogously ambivalent: Like Hitler and Mussolini during the fascist era, Putin has become a "toxic friend" for his supporters in Europe. A massive scandal concerning allegations of espionage for and collusion with Russia (and China) overshadowed the campaign of the AfD before the EP elections in 2024. German media and political opponents from left to center-right used the affair to criticize the AfD, with its self-avowed patriotism. *Der Spiegel* ridiculed the party as the "Alternative against Germany", and other politicians attacked its members as "traitors to the fatherland".[151] Such allegations (true or not) of corruption, espionage, and collaboration with foreign regimes hit far-right parties with a xenophobic, racist, and ultranationalist agenda at the core of their self-representation as 'true patriots'. This renewed form of the fascist predicament is clearly a shared feature of historical fascism and the contemporary far right.

Despite these challenges, ambiguities, contradictions, and limitations, we would be well advised not to ridicule or downplay as mere paradoxes the efforts of individuals, movements, and governments to combine exclusionary ultranationalism with internationalism. Instead, we should take very seriously the attempts of the far right to 'Europeanize', 'internationalize', or 'globalize' their attacks against parliamentary democracy, constitutional rights, humanitarian egalitarianism, and minority groups. Both in the past and the present, ultranationalists turn to the mechanics of internationalism to legitimize dangerous ideologies, even when they put forward utopian projects of 'world peace' and 'true internationalism'. The historical precedent of European fascism in the first half of the twentieth century has demonstrated that such forms of 'just' and 'peaceful' nationalist internationalism, based on racism, white supremacism, xenophobia, and antisemitism, can, in fact, pave the way for expansionism, war, and genocide.

151 Maik Baumgärtner et. al., "China, Russland und die AfD. Alternative gegen Deutschland", *Der Spiegel*, April 26, 2024; Hamre, "Traitors to the Fatherland".

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[RA Marieberg] Riksarkivet Stockholm
  [REA] Rütger Essén Arkiv
[RA Oslo] Riksarkivet Oslo
[RAC] Rockefeller Archive Center, Pocantico Hills
[SNO] Stiftelsen Norsk Okkupasjonshistorie, online
[TNA] The National Archives, Kew
[WHL] Wiener Holocaust Library, London
[ZfA] Archiv des Zentrums für Antisemitismusforschung, Berlin

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