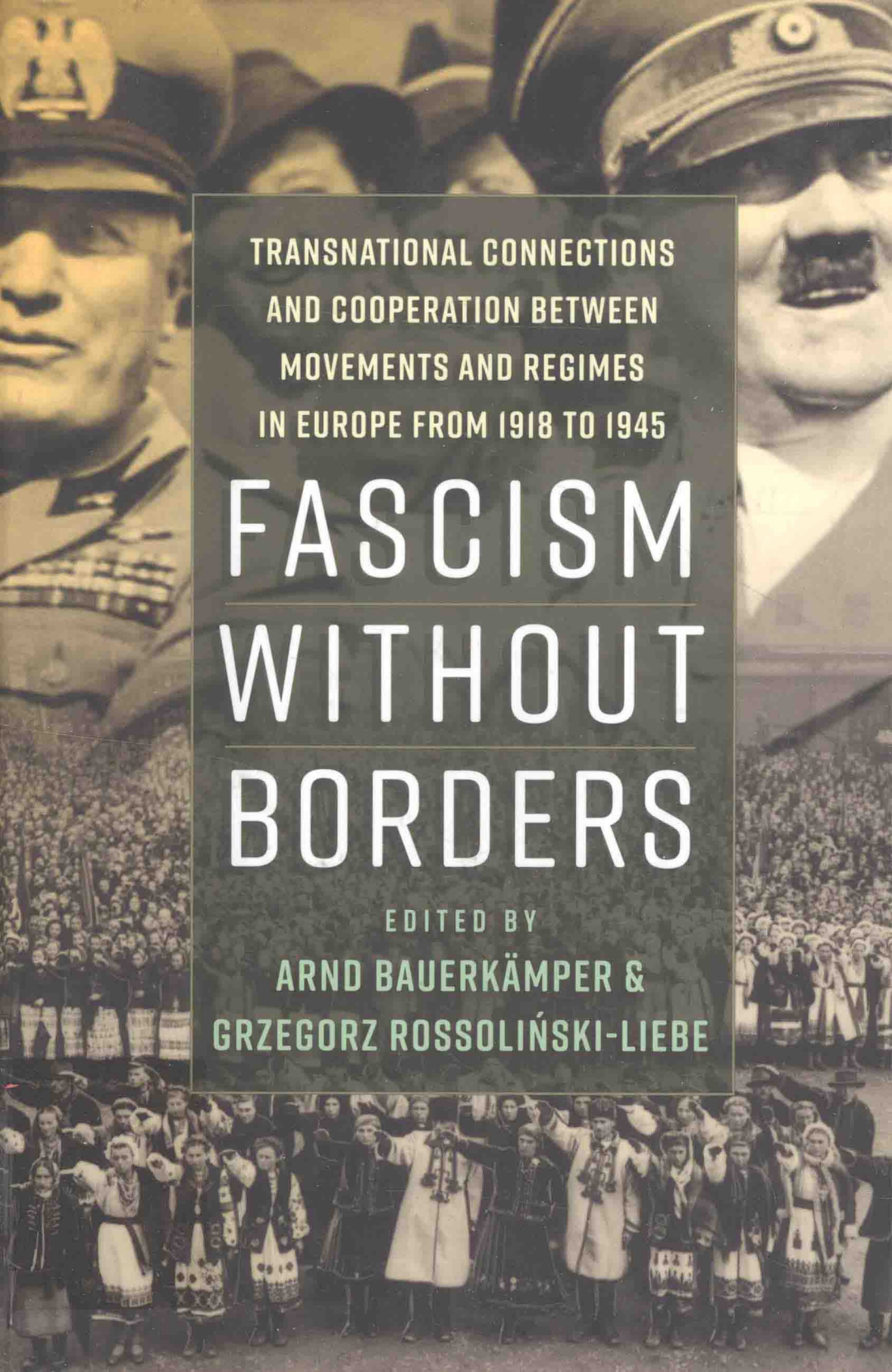

TRANSNATIONAL CONNECTIONS AND COOPERATION BETWEEN MOVEMENTS AND REGIMES IN EUROPE FROM 1918 TO 1945

FASCISM WITHOUT BORDERS

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FASCISM WITHOUT BORDERS

Abbreviations

AA	Auswärtiges Amt (German Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
AEV	Acção Escolar Vanguarda (School Action Vanguard)
AIZ	*Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung* (The Workers Pictorial Newspaper)
AO	Auslandsorganisation der NSDAP (Foreign Relations Organization of the NSDAP)
AR	Acţiunea Românească (Romanian Action)
BF	British Fascists
BUF	British Union of Fascists
CAUR	Comitati d'Azione per l'Universalità di Roma (Action Committees for the Universality of Rome)
CLNRV	Resistance Central Committee in Veneto (Comitato di liberazione nazionale regione veneto)
Comintern	Communist International
CP	Communist Party
CS or CSP	Christlichsoziale Partei (Christian Socialist Party)
DAAD	Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (German Academic Exchange Service)
DAF	Deutsche Arbeitsfront (German Work Service)
DAP	Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (German Workers' Party)
DNSA	Deutsche Nationalsozialistische Arbeiterpartei (Austrian German Nationalist Workers' Party)
DPG	Deutsch–Portugiesische Gesellschaft (German–Portuguese Society)
EKNL	Egyesült Kereszteny Nemzeti Liga (United Christian National League)
ESV	Europäische Schriftsteller-Vereinigung (European Writers' Union)
FNAT	Fundação Nacional para a Alegria no Trabalho (National Foundation for Joy at Work)
FRN	Frontul Renașterii Naționale (Front of National Rebirth)
GIL	Gioventù Italiana del Littorio (National Youth Organization in Fascist Italy since 1937)
GL	Giustizia e Libertà (Justice and Freedom)
GUF	Gruppi Universitari Fascisti (Fascist University Groups)

HDN	Nezavisna Država Hrvatska (Independent State of Croatia)
HJ	Hitlerjugend (Hitler Youth)
HM	Hlinkova mládež (Hlinka Youth)
HSLS	Hlinkova slovenská l'udová strana (Hlinka's Slovak People's Party)
HSP	Hrvatska stranka prava (Croatian Party of Rights)
HSS	Hrvatska Seljačka Stranka (Croatian Peasant Party)
IAC	Instituto para a Alta Cultura (Institute for High Culture)
IAH	Internationale Arbeiterhilfe (International Workers' Relief)
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISK	Internationaler Sozialistischer Kampfbund (International Socialist Association)
JEN	Junta de Educação Nacional (National Education Board)
KdF	Kraft durch Freude (Strength through Joy)
KPD	Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (German Communist Party)
LAF	Lietuvos aktyvistų frontas (Lithuanian Activist Front)
LANC	Liga Apărării Naţional-Creştine (League of National-Christian Defense)
LP	Legião Portuguesa (Portuguese Legion)
LSI	Labour and Socialist International
MNE	Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros (Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
MOPR	Meschdunarodnaja organisazija pomoschtschi borzam rewoljuzii (International Red Aid)
MP	Mocidade Portuguesa (Portuguese Youth Organization)
NDH	Nezavisna Država Hrvatska (Independent State of Croatia)
NEO	New European Order
NSB	Nationaal Socialistische Beweging (National Socialist Movement)
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (National Socialist German Workers' Party)
NSV	Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt (National Socialist People's Welfare Organization)
ONB	Opera Nazionale Balilla (National Youth Organization in Fascist Italy)

ONC	Organización Nacional Corporativa (National Corporatist Organization)
OND	Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro (National After-Work Institution in Fascist Italy)
OUN	Orhanizatsia Ukraïns'kykh Natsionalistiv (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists)
OVRA	Organizzazione di Vigilanza e Repressione dell'Antifascismo (Organization for Vigilance and the Repression of Anti-Fascism)
PAAA	Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (Archives of the German Foreign Office)
PCF	Parti Communiste Français (French Communist Party)
PCI	Partito comunista italiano (Italian Communist Party)
PN	Partidul Națiunii (Party of the Nation)
PNF	Partito Nazionale Fascista (Italian National Fascist Party)
PSI	Partito socialista italiano (Italian Socialist Party)
PVDE	Polícia de Vigilância e de Defesa do Estado (State Defence and Surveillance Police)
RAD	Reichsarbeitsdienst (State Labor Service)
RCP(B)	Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks)
RGASPI	Russian State Archives of Social and Political History (Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History)
RSHA	Reichssicherheitshauptamt (Reich Security Main Office)
RSI	Repubblica Sociale Italiana (Italian Social Republic)
SAPMO	Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR (Foundation Archives of Parties and Mass Organisations of the GDR in the Federal Archives)
SD	Sicherheitsdienst (Security Service)
SOE	Special Operations Executive
Sopade	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party of Germany in exile)
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (German Social Democratic Party)
SPN	Secretariado de Propaganda Nacional (National Propaganda Secretariat)
SR	Slovenská republika (Slovak Republic)
UM	Ustaška mladež (Ustaša Youth)
UN	Uniao Nacional (National Union)
UNK	Ukraïns'kyi Natsional'nyi Komitet (Ukrainian National Committee)

UPA	Ukraïns'ka Povstans'ka Armiia (Ukrainian Insurgent Army)
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UTsK	Ukraïns'kyi Tsentral'nyi Komitet (Ukrainian Central Committee)
UVO	Ukraïns'ka Viis'kova Orhanizatsiia (Ukrainian Military Organization)
VNV	Vlaams Nationaal Verbond (Flemish National Union)

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Introduction

Fascism without Borders

Transnational Connections and Cooperation between Movements and Regimes in Europe, 1918–1945

Arnd Bauerkämper and Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe

Fascist movements and regimes have usually been conceived as and presented themselves as national political forces. In fact, contemporaries as well as scholars have highlighted hyper-nationalism as one of the most important features of fascism which separated fascist movements and regimes from each other. Not accidentally, all attempts to forge a "Fascist International" foundered between the two world wars. Many historians have therefore dismissed or failed to recognize cross-border cooperations between fascists. In fact, the hyper-nationalism of fascist movements and their social Darwinist doctrines, as well as the expansionist and racist policies of the Third Reich and Fascist Italy, have led most experts to argue that fascist internationalism or international fascism was merely a camouflage and a sham.[1] The interpretation that "international fascism is unthinkable, a contradiction in terms" has received broad support from most historians.[2] As a corollary, fascism has largely been investigated in the framework of national history.[3] Beyond volumes that have collected national case studies, few systematic comparative studies have been published.[4] In particular, cross-border interactions between fascist movements and regimes have largely been dismissed in historical scholarship.[5]

The considerable obstacles and barriers to transnational cooperation between fascists must not be ignored. Yet despite the failure of attempts to establish institutional cooperation, especially through the Comitati d'Azione per l'Universalità di Roma (CAUR) in the mid-1930s, the transnational communications, exchanges, interactions, and transfers between fascists merit serious analysis.[6] They offer new perspectives on the subject, as this volume demonstrates. Its chapters show that European fascism between 1918 and 1945 was a complex

and heterogeneous phenomenon. Research has largely disregarded studies of various aspects of fascism such as small movements, youth organizations, thinkers, writers, and poets in eastern, southeastern, southern, and northern Europe. These publications have evidenced that fascism was both a national and transnational phenomenon, as it transcended national borders but was rooted in national communities. Although its centers were in Rome and Berlin, fascism in interwar Europe was clearly transnational. Its reduction to Italy and Germany simplifies or even distorts the history of fascism. Taking recent historiographical debates on comparison, transfers, and entanglements in modern history as a starting point, we will therefore trace and explain communications and interactions between European fascists. They occurred at specific points in the trajectory of fascist movements and regime. Studies of transnational perceptions and interactions therefore shed light on the dynamics of fascism that was a contingent and contested phenomenon. Moreover, they highlight selective borrowings, misunderstandings and wishful thinking as crucial dimensions of mutual perceptions, exchange and transfers.[7]

In conceptual terms, at least three dimensions of "transnational fascism" are to be distinguished. First, fascism was a transnational movement. It spread across borders, but specific national manifestations are conspicuous. Second, fascism was perceived as a transnational phenomenon, both by its adherents and its foes. Third, fascism can be analyzed from a transnational perspective. It includes comparative studies as well as investigations of transfers, exchanges, and even entanglements. Leaders as well as minor functionaries and members from different European states or movements met on innumerable occasions and different levels, not only to exchange views on ideological questions and policies, but also to communicate on political styles and representations. Not least, fascists of different nation-states repeatedly agreed on common initiatives. Thus, despite its undisputedly strong and inherent ultranationalism, fascism needs to be understood as a transnational political and social practice, inspired by a set of similar national convictions. Ideas were therefore interlinked with, rather than subordinated to, performative practices.[8]

Clearly, fascists entertained mutual relations and accentuated their bonds. After the "March on Rome" in late October 1922, by which Mussolini came to power, the Italian capital galvanized fascists throughout Europe. "Fascism" became both the name of the Italian Fascists and a political value or ideal to which many other similar movements felt closely related, even if they did not use the word "fascist" in their names (e.g., the German National Socialists, the

Croatian Ustaša, and the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists). Italian Fascism seemed to demonstrate that the detested parliamentary rule and social conflict that were held responsible for all the problems in postwar Europe could be overcome. Although its influence declined in the late 1930s, Mussolini's Fascist regime continued to attract Europeans well into World War II. Even though he shared his generals' disappointment about the military failures of his Italian alliance partners who had suffered humiliating defeats in Greece and Africa as early as 1940–41, Adolf Hitler cherished Benito Mussolini as an ally and a friend as late as April 1945, when Nazi Germany lay in ruins.[9]

Transfers between fascists, their movements and regimes cannot be reduced to mere mimesis. Instead of a one-way emulation or opportunistic takeover, fascists selectively appropriated foreign elements, molding them into their particular (national) contexts. Rejecting democracy, liberalism, communism, and socialism as well as the politics of compromise and negotiation, fascist parties and groups undoubtedly shared a common point of departure. Interchange and communication between fascists in Europe not only related to overtly political issues such as propaganda, labor relations, violence, and mutual assistance in war, but also to the seemingly non-political fields of cultural and aesthetic representations. Many fascists were aware of their affinity, as reflected in fascist political staging, especially its symbolism and rituals. For instance, they not only wore uniforms in order to impress and intimidate their opponents in domestic politics but also to demonstrate their claim to represent a transnational movement of warriors united by the hostility to common enemies, including the communists, democrats, conservatives, and liberals. The Soviet Union, in particular, was as strongly repulsed and despised as the Jews. Several fascist movements equated the latter with communists, as the belief in a "Judeo-Bolshevik" conspiracy demonstrates. Moreover, fascists shared a commitment to action (instead of discussion).[10]

Interwar Europe was home not only to fascist movements and regimes but also to various authoritarian dictatorships. The latter were transnational, too, and they sometimes borrowed from fascism or fascistized themselves when it promised political gains. In the long term, however, dictatorships such as Francisco Franco's Spain and Antonio de Oliveira Salazar's Portugal were not fascist, but authoritarian in the first instance. They lacked the idea of a permanent and national revolution, which propelled fascist movements and regimes, and they clung to the past or the present. Horthy's regime in Hungary, Antanas Smetona's rule in Lithuania, and Józef Piłsudski's regime in Poland, were also primarily authoritarian. Some of them even fought fascists in

their states. Unlike fascist movements and regimes, not all authoritarian dictatorships placed racism and ultranationalism center stage in their programs. Piłsudski was even an adherent of socialism. The Communist International (Comintern) labelled him "fascist," because he betrayed communism in their eyes.[11]

Mutual perceptions, relations, and exchange among fascist movements and regimes were unequal. In the 1920s, Mussolini's regime galvanized Europeans across national and political boundaries. In fact, the Fascist dictatorship continued to attract attention in the early 1930s, as demonstrated by the visits of European fascists who came to Italy in order to see the Exposition of the Fascist Revolution opened, exactly ten years after the "March on Rome". For instance, twelve young French fascists bicycled from Paris to Rome in order to inspect what was claimed to be the radiating center of European fascism. As Hitler's National Socialists rose in the early 1930s, Italy's Fascists were increasingly confronted with a mighty and increasingly superior rival. They responded to the new threat by temporarily vying for French support, not least by highlighting the common heritage of Latin culture (*latinité*). The Fascist leaders also supported the Austrian sovereignty that was threatened by the German and Austrian National Socialists. Yet Italy's attack of Abyssinia deprived Mussolini (*Il Duce*, the leader) of this option to counter Hitler's growing influence after his seizure of power. In World War II, the Duce had to adjust to an inferior position, although the remaining Italian Fascists emphasized Italy's leading role as a cultural power. In 1944–45, Mussolini finally became Hitler's lackey. Smaller fascist movements that never managed to seize power, or at least to exert sizable political influence in their countries, remained subordinate to or even dependent on the two major fascist regimes throughout the years from 1922 to 1945. Not least, even the relationship between minor fascist parties like Jacques Doriot's Parti populaire français and Léon Degrelle's Belgian Rexists was frequently asymmetrical.[12]

Moreover, the trajectories of fascist parties and groups differed according to specific political and cultural contexts, and also due to the nature of transnational influences. Thus, understandings and features of fascism changed in the process of transfers. Ideas, institutions, political styles and policies were continuously de-contextualized and re-contextualized. Fascist movements and regimes represented hybrids of indigenous traditions and external influences, not only in border regions such as Alsace or Ukraine.[13] More generally, fascism underwent multiple permutations and cannot be grasped according to a typological taxonomy. Instead of clinging to static concepts like

"pre-fascism" or "para-fascism," scholars should investigate processes of "fascistization." It primarily affected authoritarian elites who were prone to selectively adopt fascist "innovations." They seemed to comply with their overriding aim to secure stability, the status quo, and their power in interwar Europe. However, the rise of fascism also impressed outright political opponents, who closely studied the "fascist" recipe. All in all, fascism assumed specific meanings to different groups, both fascists and non-fascists. Moreover, views and interpretations of individual fascist movements and regimes changed over time. As fascism was a moving target rather than a static entity, it was adapted or rejected according to a wide scope of reasons and for a large variety of (sometimes even contradictory) purposes. They need to be distinguished as much as "positive" interaction (especially processes of exchange, transfer, appropriation and even learning) and "negative" interaction (rejection and blockage).[14]

By no means accidentally, the adversaries of fascist movements and regimes emphasized the cross-border interchange between and the universal claims of fascist leaders, members, and supporters in the 1920s and 1930s. As George Orwell stated in 1937: "Fascism is now an international movement, which means not only that the Fascist nations can combine for purposes of loot, but that they are groping, perhaps only half-consciously as yet, towards a world system."[15] In the same year, political scientist and jurist Karl Loewenstein, who had been forced to emigrate from Germany to the United States in 1933, observed the "missionary efforts of the fascist International in carrying political propaganda into other nations."[16]

Theoretical and Methodological Paths toward a Transnational History of Fascism

The dominance of the "national paradigm" has been a persistent feature in the writing of history in the modern period. In political history as well as in social historical writing, the nation-state has been routinely employed as the prevalent analytical framework. Yet more recent approaches to comparative history have superseded the national paradigm. Although Belgian historian Henry Pirenne, as well as scholars of the French "Annales" school like Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre, had called for the application of comparative approaches to European history as early as the late 1920s, it was mostly after 1945 that the predominant focus on national history was gradually complemented by regional or continental comparative perspectives. In fascist studies,

connections between Mussolini's and Hitler's dictatorships were explored as early as the 1940s, and systematic comparisons of regimes as well as movements started in the 1960s.[17]

The more recent debate on investigations of cross-border transfers, exchanges, and entanglements has promoted transnational history since the 1990s, not least due to the impact of globalization.[18] Historians have proposed studies of transfers and entanglements that are explicitly devoted to the interrelations and mutual influences. The concept of "entanglements" highlights "a relational perspective which foregrounds processes of interaction and intermixture in the entangled histories of uneven modernities."[19] This research perspective underscores the fact that, since in historical reality most units of historical comparison cannot be neatly separated, the world should be better viewed as a web of interactions, encounters, and exchanges.[20]

We assert that comparative history and transfer studies are complementary rather than incompatible approaches in fascist studies. On the one hand, far from being obsolete, historical comparisons remain an indispensable method in the historian's toolkit. Efforts to identify and explain similarities and differences among units of research cannot be fully supplanted by the studies of transfers and entanglements between those units. In general, however, historical comparisons need to be combined with investigations of transfers in order to grasp interrelations among intertwined historical phenomena.[21]

Yet transnational studies of fascism are a new and unexplored field. Historians have investigated cross-border connections, interactions, and exchange between fascist movements and regimes only in the last few years. Most commonly, scholars are increasingly devoting attention to mutual perceptions and discourses, even in bilateral or multilateral relations between fascist states or between them and other countries.[22] Some publications have concentrated on specific fascist movements, especially the Italian Fascists and German National Socialists,[23] or on certain regions.[24] Fascists promoted or espoused particular concepts of European unification that served to justify their "crusade" against the Soviet Union and bolshevism in the units of the Waffen-SS during World War II. These pan-European concepts were directed against liberal visions of a united Europe as well as against Communist internationalism. Foreign supporters like poet Ezra Pound, British fascist James Strachey Barnes, and Irish writer James Vincent Murphy also endorsed and propagated the cross-border claims of Italian Fascism and German National Socialism.[25]

Beyond the national historical straightjacket, fascism has primarily been investigated in comparative studies. By contrast, studies of mutual

perceptions, relations, transfers, and entanglements between fascists have received less attention. Few scholars have analyzed contacts and collaboration between European fascists and similar-minded followers and adherents in the non-European world. The cross-border attraction of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, and the relations between the leaders and supporters of the two regimes, are an exception to the rule. Some overviews of the history of fascism have highlighted specific networks, too.[26] Historical studies have also reconstructed the intrusion of fascists into the League of Nations, especially its International Labour Organization, and the International Criminal Police Commission that was founded in 1923. Moreover, the cross-border activities of organizations such as the Deutsche Kongreß-Zentrale (set up in the Third Reich) are notable.[27] Fellow-travelers of German Nazism and Italian Fascism in the Near East and in India have received particular attention. Yet the responses of Arabs and Muslims to Hitler's and Mussolini's dictatorships cannot be reduced to collaboration. In fact, most of them rejected both these regimes, and colonial rule by the Western powers. Some Arabs and Muslims even saved Jews from persecution.[28] By contrast, scholarship has neglected the interrelationship between fascism and non-communist antifascism, although contemporaries observed mutual perceptions, partial exchange, and selective transfers between the two camps, notwithstanding their political antagonism. More generally, most publications on fascism still mention transfers and entanglements between the movements and regimes only passingly.[29]

Mutual Perceptions, Exchanges, Transfers, and Adaptions: Transnational Relations between Fascists in Europe

After Mussolini had been sworn in as prime minister of Italy in Rome on 31 October 1922 and successfully set up a full-fledged dictatorship in 1925, the Duce found an increasing number of admirers in European states as different as Britain, France, Germany, Croatia, and Ukraine. Thus, Rotha Lintorn Orman established the British Fascisti in 1923, and Pierre Taittinger set up his Jeunesses Patriotes in France two years later. In the early 1920s, the spiritual leader of Ukrainian ultranationalist youth, Dmytro Dontsov, was both mesmerized and shocked by the intrinsic similarities between the Italian Fascists and the Ukrainian nationalists.[30] Most importantly, Hitler admired Mussolini as a strong leader. By the mid-1920s, the Duce had become "the very model of a modern tyrant."[31]

These individuals, groups, and their leaders were attracted by Mussolini's promise to overcome the perennial party strife by strong