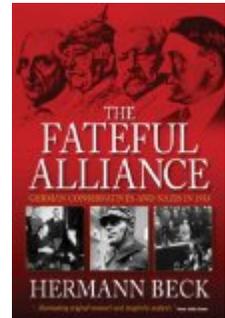
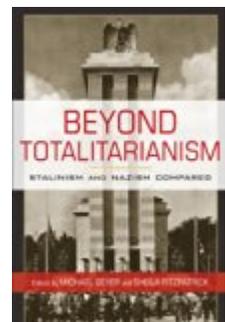


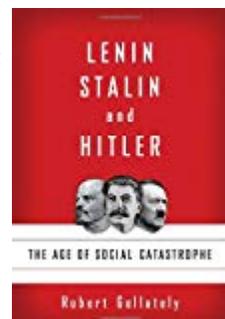
Hermann Beck. *The Fateful Alliance: German Conservatives and Nazis in 1933: the Machtergreifung in a New Light.* New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2008. 352 pp. \$90.00, cloth, ISBN 978-1-84545-496-8.



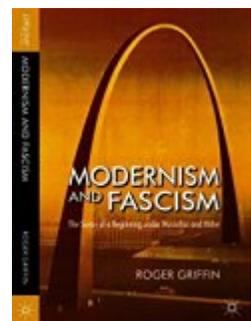
Sheila Fitzpatrick, Michael Geyer, eds.. *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. 548 pp. \$27.99, paper, ISBN 978-0-521-72397-8.



Robert Gellately. *Lenin, Stalin, and Hitler: The Age of Social Catastrophe.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007. xv + 696 pp. Illustrations \$35.00, cloth, ISBN 978-1-4000-4005-6.



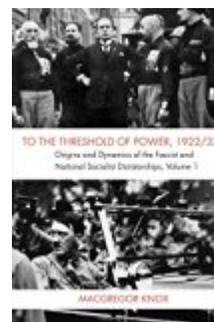
Roger Griffin. *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler.* Houndmills/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. 354 pp. \$35.78, paper, ISBN 978-1-4039-8784-6.



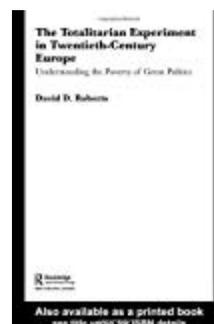
Aristotle A. Kallis. *Genocide and Fascism: The Eliminationist Drive in Fascist Europe.* Routledge Studies in Modern History. New York: Routledge, 2009. 414 pp. \$150.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-415-33960-5.



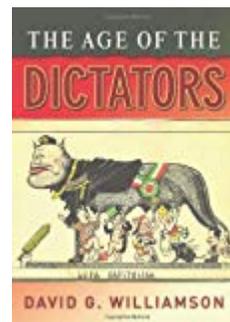
MacGregor Knox. *To the Threshold of Power, 1922/33: Origins and Dynamics of the Fascist and Nationalist Socialist Dictatorships. Volume 1.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. 448 pp. \$24.99, paper, ISBN 978-0-521-70329-1.



David D. Roberts. *The Totalitarian Experiment in Twentieth-Century Europe: Understanding the Poverty of Great Politics.* New York and London: Routledge, 2006. xii + 579 pp. \$31.95, paper, ISBN 978-0-415-19279-8.



D. G. Williamson. *The Age of the Dictators: A Study of the European Dictatorships, 1918-53.* London: Pearson Longman, 2007. xxviii + 524 pp. \$33.33, paper, ISBN 978-0-582-50580-3.



Reviewed by Shelley O. Baranowski

Published on H-German (November, 2009)

Commissioned by Susan R. Boettcher

The eight books reviewed in this essay testify to the historiographical shift that has occurred during the last three decades, one that has accel-

erated since the collapse of the Soviet bloc. During the 1960s and 70s, Marxian-inspired theories of fascism challenged concepts of "totalitarianism,"

the most dominant paradigm of the early Cold War, which emphasized structural similarities between fascism and communism, and especially Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. According to fascism theory, communism and fascism were bitter antagonists that defied efforts to find similarities between them. While communism promised the revolutionary transformation of societies and economies, fascism served as the ultranationalist, counterrevolutionary agent of petit bourgeois and elite reaction against the threat that the organized working classes posed to capitalist property relations. Most of the books reviewed here, whether they focus specifically on fascism or group one or more fascist dictatorships with Soviet communism, agree that fascism was revolutionary, if in different ways than Leninism and Stalinism. Still partly at issue is the validity of the term "totalitarianism." Although it enjoyed renewed respect after the dissolution of the Soviet empire, its capacity to persuade was and is limited. To be sure, two books reviewed here, those by David Roberts and David Williamson, continue to support the concept's heuristic value. Yet others, notably those of Robert Gellately and Michael Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick, dispense with "totalitarianism" (if not, in Gellately's case, with the liberal revulsion against both regimes that once informed it) even as they make a case for comparing them. It is becoming increasingly clear that the grand theoretical paradigms of the past and the conflict between them has given way to the search for new ways to understand the horrific violence of the twentieth century.

Hermann Beck's *The Fateful Alliance: German Conservatives and Nazis in 1933*, which examines the relationship between the German conservative Right and National Socialism in the months immediately before and after Hitler was named chancellor, has broader implications than the narrow title of this study might suggest. Beck gives due recognition to the Nazi assault against the German Left, noting that the violent suppression of the socialists and communists was more

destructive than its attacks on the Right. Nevertheless, the author argues that the description of Nazism as anti-Marxist and anti-liberal, even if true, is too limited a description of its deep-seated hostility to "reactionaries." The Hitler movement was profoundly anti-bourgeois and anti-conservative. It loathed Wilhelmine Germany's social hierarchies, which survived the November Revolution. Far from adhering exclusively to "legal" routes to the consolidation of its power, the Nazi Party sanctioned violence from below as the expression of popular resentment at bourgeois "corruption." In addition to assaulting socialists and communists, liberals, and especially Jews, party radicals also beset the conservative pillars of the German National People's Party (DNVP). The Nazis subverted time-honored social and bureaucratic hierarchies, displaying contempt for the normative processes of government that defined the culture of the German *Bildungsbürgertum*. Challenging historians such as Fritz Fischer and Hans Mommsen, Beck argues that the conservative-Nazi relationship was neither a "pact" nor the expression of "congruent" interests. Rather, political expediency based on little more than a common hostility to the Left and to the Weimar "system" joined the two sides during the Weimar Republic's death throes. Conservative wishful thinking minimized the revolutionary character of Nazism; conservatives took comfort in the Nazi party's adoption of conservative symbols, albeit for its own purposes. To be sure, Beck accepts implicitly that "revolution" entails a fundamental social transformation. Yet, this book suggests that National Socialism met that standard. It radically undermined traditional German patterns of sociability through terror and denunciation, and it fostered the wide-ranging populist attack on class hierarchies and bourgeois entitlements.

This well-researched study offers fascinating detail on the conflict between the Nazis and the German Nationals. It is especially effective in describing aspects of the culture of bourgeois notables that came under assault, including their ven-

eration of the *Rechtstaat*, which came through in the party's violence against Jews. Regional and national notables of the DNVP grew squeamish at the abrogation of decency and order as the regime set upon even national-minded German Jews, temporary expressions of class solidarity that otherwise did little to erode their congenial antisemitism. In addition to illuminating the extent of the Nazi attack on "reactionaries," Beck's focus on violence from below complements recent work by Michael Wildt, Dirk Walter, Peter Longerich, and others on the corrosive impact of the popular antisemitism that the regime sanctioned, which did not subside after the failure of the 1933 boycott. Yet if *Fateful Alliance* effectively captures Nazism's self-identified "revolutionary" character, in which race rather than class, region, or religion defined membership in the *Volksgemeinschaft*, important questions remain. Beck argues that the conservative-Nazi alliance was based "solely on expediency" (Beck, p. 302), but what alliance is not, at least to some degree? Anti-Marxism and opposition to the Weimar system were major points of agreement that became indispensable to undermining the Weimar Republic and enabling an Adolf Hitler chancellorship in the first place. Isn't it fair to say that those points of convergence, however unstable, enabled the terror unleashed during the first months of the Third Reich, even if it redounded to the disadvantage of conservatives themselves? If, as Beck concludes, the "traditional bourgeois universe" (Beck, p. 303) ended in the first half of 1933, rather than in 1945, as conservatives perceived it at the time, why did conservatives misread their position? Could it have been that the *Bildungsbürgertum* served the Third Reich to the bitter end, so much so that the author's early termination of his story necessarily omits an explanation as to why conservatives stuck it out? Whatever Nazism's determination to act on its loathing for bourgeois values, it could neither have come to power nor retained it without the compliance of German conservatives, however much the Nazi pursuit of racially trans-

formed notions of upward mobility challenged their traditional dominance.

Robert Gellately's massive work, *Lenin, Stalin, and Hitler: The Age of Social Catastrophe*, offers a comparative analysis of the Nazi and Soviet leaders and the systems they created. In contrast to similar works by Alan Bullock and Richard Overy, Gellately includes Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, determined to discredit once and for all what he sees as the attempt of much recent scholarship to separate Leninism from its "corruption" by Joseph Stalin. Lenin, Gellately insists, advocated a one-party state, readily resorted to concentration camps and terror, held the hopes and aspirations of the common people in contempt, and set a durable standard of intolerance. No major theoretical or political differences can be found between Lenin and Stalin. As products of the structural changes wrought by the Great War, the collapse of the international system and the dislocation of economies, the militarization of societies, the growth and intervention of bureaucracies, the huge loss of life, and the viciousness of warfare, Lenin, Stalin, and Hitler "are forever linked to the tragic course of European history in the first half of the twentieth century" (Gellately, p. 3). The Soviet Union and Nazi Germany sought nothing less than to revolutionize international relations, not only by destroying the old balance of power but also by seeking world domination.

Gellately's analysis, which alternates chapters on the most important developments of Nazism and Soviet communism within a chronological frame, proceeds without reference to theories of totalitarianism. The Soviet and National Socialist regimes simply differed in too many ways. The Third Reich amounted to a "consensus dictatorship" in which Hitler's charismatic authority bonded the German people to him. Until military defeat became inevitable, the Nazi regime's deployment of terror against its own population (what happened outside the boundaries of the "Old Reich" was another matter) was confined to

well-defined "enemies." The Soviet dictatorship generally ignored public opinion, while its use of terror became increasingly arbitrary and boundless, impacting millions without rhyme or reason. Yet even the gulags could not match the Nazi death camps, for the Holocaust was without precedent. Soviet ideology championed the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, which promised hope to the oppressed while Nazism fused racial nationalism, anti-Bolshevism, and antisemitism in its vision of an enlarged and purified *Lebensraum*. Nevertheless, the "bitter rivalry" between them, which propelled the twentieth century's "social catastrophe," is in Gellately's treatment less an illustration of the conflict between revolution and counterrevolution than evidence of their convergence in a combined revolutionary assault on the international order. For Hitler, concluding the Nazi-Soviet Pact in August 1939 enabled a war for *Lebensraum* in the east without the fear of a two-front war. For his part, Stalin saw the pact as a way to break free of capitalist encirclement, expand the Soviet Union, and spread communism. In the final analysis, according to Gellately, Soviet communism and Nazism belong together despite their differences. The clash between communism and Nazism, he avers, led to "the great social and political catastrophe of the century" (Gellately, p. 14). Despite the defeat of Germany in 1945, thanks to the intervention of the United States, the social catastrophe spread beyond the communist regimes that the Soviet Union imposed on eastern Europe to the communist movements that wreaked havoc in the "Third World," especially in Asia.

Lenin, Stalin, and Hitler is the culmination of years of detailed and productive scholarship, not only in Gellately's primary research field of Germany, but also his comparative studies of dictatorships and genocides. Yet, the rivalry that Gellately sees between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union for world domination does not differentiate between the purposes, resources, and even the appeal of such apparently similar agendas. Certainly

after November 1917, the Bolsheviks sought to sponsor revolution abroad, if only because doing so was considered central to the survival of the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, a world of difference remained between the abilities of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany to pursue their aims—at least until the Nazi empire passed its apogee in 1942. Lenin's belief that he could use the Russo-Polish war in 1919-20 to spread communism westward was only occasioned by Josef Pilsudski's attempt to incorporate Russian borderlands in an east European federation under Polish domination. The Polish armies repulsed the Soviet attempt to take Warsaw. Appeasement, premised in part on western calculations as to Germany's usefulness in containing communism, greatly facilitated German rearmament and expansionism and did little to discourage Stalin from believing in the reality of "capitalist encirclement" and jumping into the Nazi-Soviet Pact with Hitler, which encouraged the Soviet Union to see war as the route to creating communist buffer states. If the Soviet Union before and after the Second World War sought to spearhead the triumph of communist movements elsewhere, most obviously in eastern Europe, the Soviets modified that support to broader strategic aims, as testified by their refusal to back the communists in the Greek Civil War. Moreover, the attractiveness of the Soviet model in the so-called Third World as a route to independence and modernization proved more durable than that of fascism. Ultimately, the very nature of the Nazi empire, which privileged ethnic cleansing, genocide, and the ruthless exploitation of resources and labor over collaboration with subject populations, undercut fascism's appeal and contributed to its defeat. One can certainly examine the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany together, as Gellately does, on the grounds that the interaction and competition between the two carried revolutionary, and deadly, consequences. And I make no attempt here to ignore the misery that arose from the seventy-five-year Bolshevik experiment. Yet, the global position of the Soviet Union after World

War II, which was based largely on its contribution to the defeat of Germany, operated in a different context--the Cold War competition with the United States whose own influence in the Third World was scarcely benign. Although Gellately concludes with a reference to the global communist shock waves that spun out from the "age of social catastrophe" (Gellately, p. 594), it is not clear what specifically the Soviet Union contributed to them. For understandable reasons, the focus of the book concentrates on the period between 1914 and 1945. Yet, given Gellately's suggestion as to the long-term implications of the "social catastrophe," some further detail would have made his point more convincing.

Roger Griffin's *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler*, makes--according to the author--a "sustained attempt to explore the profound kinship that exists between modernism and fascism" (Griffin, p. 1). Griffin intends to refute what he sees as the still prevalent view of fascism as anti-modern or backward-looking. Devoting nearly one-third of his book to a discussion of theory, beginning with sociology and anthropology of religion, the author draws upon the insights of Peter Berger, Victor Turner, Clifford Geertz, and others to analyze fascism as a revitalization movement, a revolutionary and radical attack on democracy and socialism, the political forms of "actually existing modernity." Distinguishing between the realities of modernity and its possibilities, Griffin suggests that fascism's seemingly reactionary character belied its fundamentally modernist, futurist, and revolutionary core. It mobilized modern science, consumerist spectacle, and a highly developed state to attempt something radically new, the modernist state combined with the organic conception of the nation, a new *communitas*. Arising in the aftermath of World War I, fascism sought a rebirth, an apocalyptic breakthrough that would overcome the decadence, rootlessness, and chaos; that is, the loss of a "sacred canopy" of meaning that democracy and socialism fostered. Focusing

principally on Italian fascism and German National Socialism and taking his cue from Zygmunt Bauman, Griffin argues that fascism achieved its apogee in the "biopolitical modernism" of the Third Reich. The death camps, he argues, were not sites where racial hatreds played out, but places of technocratic experimentation where the Nazi regime could bring about the "purification of Europe, both literal and metaphorical" (Griffin, p. 333). More than punishing Jews and other "enemies" of the Reich, Auschwitz was "a vast biopolitical sewage works, a technocratic installation where human waste products were disposed of once anything of value, their work capacity, their possessions, their hair, had been extracted for recycling to help the Nazi war effort. Genocide had become a matter of racial ecology" (Griffin, p. 333).

As an intellectual historian, Griffin derives his evidence entirely from the written, oral, or artistic record of fascist political elites, leading fascist intellectuals, and cultural figures for whom fascism embodied the wave of the future that they would create. Determined to resist what he sees as an exaggerated reflexivity of academia, with its intense suspicion of metanarratives, the author insists on the value of a comprehensive, synoptic discussion of fascism that probes its essence. Yet if focusing on elites to explain fascism's appeal is essential, Griffin's narrow source base weakens his effort at a holistic explanation by not making clear how the "loss of transcendence" associated with "actually existing modernity" attracted fascism's populist supporters. Moreover, Griffin's target, the view of fascism as anti-modern, is a straw man, as scholars have been wrestling with the extent of fascism's "modernity" for at least the past twenty years. More problematic still, if our understanding of the first half of the twentieth century has benefited from a much-enlarged conception of modernity against the teleology of modernization theory, Griffin's application of "modernity" to fascism at times extracts the latter from the context in which it developed. Certainly, National So-

cialism was about purification and social engineering, but the political, racial, and especially antisemitic hatreds that fueled the Nazi campaign for *Lebensraum* were hardly secondary to the technocratic "radical ecology" practiced at Auschwitz and other camps, as Griffin implies. Those hatreds, which expressed decades of German nationalist obsessions with Germany's vulnerability to foreign "enemies" (which "the Jew" ultimately personified), used technocratic means to the desired end, the empire that would preserve Germanism for centuries.

MacGregor Knox's meaty book, *To the Threshold of Power, 1922/33: Origins and Dynamics of the Fascist and National Socialist Dictatorships*, is the first of a projected two-volume comparative study of Italian fascism and National Socialism, anticipated by his briefer earlier work *Common Destiny* (2000). Like Griffin, Knox is committed to generalization as "an inescapable duty," impatient with the postmodern attack on metanarratives (Knox, p. 10). "Fragments," he avers, "are not historical knowledge," and erudition "without synthesis illuminates only minute disconnected portions of the past and contributes nothing to understanding the present" (Knox, p. 10). Yet unlike Griffin, whom he criticizes for limiting his approach to the history of ideas, Knox's investigation is more comprehensive. He compares and contrasts German and Italian societies in detail, focusing on leading German and Italian institutions, particularly the military, and the national myths of each. Borrowing from Samuel Huntington's anti-materialist definition of revolution as a radical change in the dominant values and myths of a society, as well as in its social structure, political leadership, and leadership, Knox argues that despite significant differences in the contexts in which they arose, Italian fascism and National Socialism were indeed revolutionary. Rather than being "social imperialist" (Knox, p. 139)—that is, using war to preserve the social order at home—Mussolini and Hitler turned to war and expan-

sionism to subordinate or destroy the dominant institutions and the elites who led them.

Unapologetically adhering to an argument that at least in the German case has gone out of fashion, Knox insists that Italy and Germany followed different trajectories from the West during the "long nineteenth century." Both were "belated nations" (Knox, p. 19) and both remained internally fragmented after unification, unable to integrate important subcultures, especially Catholics and socialists, within the dominant political cultures, liberalism in the case of Italy and North German Protestantism in the case of Germany. Although the dominant political cultures survived into the post-1918 period, neither could successfully create mass parties to equal their power in the state, leaving them unable to respond creatively to postwar mass politics. Fascist movements, with their glorification of violence, aspirations to empire, mobilization behind a single leader, and populist mass support, achieved power in Germany and Italy because they could do what existing political elites could not: seize control of the state and integrate or dissolve the subcultures. Yet the author offers another layer of analysis that adds complexity to this deeply researched study: if together Germany and Italy diverged from the West, they also differed significantly from each other. Although both were internally divided and remained so, Italy's fracture between the north and south was geographical, while the deep religious divisions stemming from the Reformation added to Germany's rupture between east and west. While in Italy, urban patricians checked the power of Italy's largely rural landed aristocracy and status lines were less rigidly drawn, Germany's aristocracies retained both social status and considerable political power. In the German states, the anti-French Enlightenment created stronger bureaucracies and militaries. Most important, despite their differences, the Germans came together around a national myth, transmitted to the population at large via reforming bureaucracies and school teachers committed to

mass literacy, a myth that imagined an organically unified *Volk* and a strong leader who embodied its desires. In addition to facilitating industrialization, Germany's stronger institutions and unifying myth laid the foundation for "potentially explosive" claims to a "universal German empire" (Knox, p. 30). World War I and its aftermath, which fatally weakened the liberal state in Italy and the elites in Germany who spoke for the dominant Prussian Protestant culture, played to the strengths of radical imperialist nationalism.

Although Isabel Hull's recent study of German military practices has once again raised the question of German deviation from the West, if less explicitly than Knox, many will find Knox's unabashed adoption of the *Sonderweg* argument disconcerting. Not even David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley's pioneering text, *The Peculiarities of German History* (1984), is cited or confronted. Nevertheless, one can argue that the notion of "belated nation" is still useful, particularly as an explanation for Italy's and Germany's desire to compete with older European imperialist powers. Moreover, Knox's work is punctuated with interesting and arresting insights, such as his discussion of the *Führerprinzip*. He sees its paradoxical emphasis on the leader's simultaneous expectation of obedience and initiative from below as having arisen from the Prusso-German military practice of decentralized decision making. His comparisons between Italy and Germany are reflective, well informed, and original, and together they provide something we have lacked until now, a detailed comparative study of the two fascist movements. A fuller discussion of the roles of war and empire in fascist and National Socialist ideology and practice awaits the second volume. In the meantime, however, it is worth posing a question that arose long ago in response to Ralf Dahrendorf and David Schoenbaum. Because both regimes could not do without the institutions and at least to some extent the personnel that they attacked in order to wage war and acquire empire, was it fascist infiltration and transformation, or

rather catastrophic military defeat itself, that left the more lasting social and political legacies?

Griffin includes a brief discussion of the "technocratic modernism" of Lenin and Stalin as an example of the post-World War I yearning for regeneration. Knox leaves the Soviet Union aside, because in his view the Bolsheviks triumphed in a society that sharply differed from Germany and Italy. David Roberts and David Williamson, however, try to revivify "totalitarianism" as an effective means of explaining the reaction against liberalism after the Great War. Roberts' *The Totalitarian Experiment in Twentieth-Century Europe: Understanding the Poverty of Great Politics* combines Soviet communism, Italian fascism, and German National Socialism in an effort to see the "interplay" between them. Unlike earlier versions of "totalitarianism," which emphasized the structural similarities among Stalinism, Nazism, and Italian fascism, Roberts seeks to embed it in its historical context. Rather than seeing totalitarianism "as a form of rule or set of extreme outcomes," he re-positions it "as a historically specific dynamic, which grew from aspirations that became possible only at a particular moment from within the ongoing modern political experiment, and through which certain extreme and unforeseen outcomes came to be" (Roberts, p. 17). Having emerged from the mass mobilizations, state interventionism, and cataclysmic battles of World War I, which impacted Germany, Italy, and Russia especially profoundly, totalitarian movements sought to provide new, post-liberal modes of collective action and popular participation to create "great politics," an "alternative modernity" (Roberts, p. 33) that stressed action above conventional bourgeois morality. For Roberts, Italy, Germany, and the Soviet Union embarked upon a *Sonderweg* writ large in their rejection of the "western liberal mainstream" after the Great War (Roberts, p. 2). Roberts does not deny the deep antagonism between Left and Right during the inter-war period, but sees it as less significant than the interaction and competition between them as

they struggled to dominate the same post-liberal political terrain. Italian fascism, German National Socialism and Stalinism, all of them led by self-appointed elites on a utopian mission, emphasized action over talk and state-directed social engineering over individualism in the effort to forge unified and homogenized masses capable of collective action.

As an effort to introduce a bold new argument after wrestling with the prevailing scholarship, this book makes a creative attempt to restore the heuristic credibility of "totalitarianism" by situating it in its historical context. If its findings are not exactly new, the book is effective in underscoring the moral dimension, however hideous it was, of the utopian schemes of the twentieth century that degenerated into violent destruction of "enemies" and the determined attempt to collectivize and regiment the lives of ordinary people. Yet, the thread of Roberts's argument often gets lost in his intricate debates with other scholars, when such points could effectively be placed in the footnotes, and like Griffin, his lengthy discussions of methodology could have been pared with no damage to the overall argument. More importantly, if it is useful up to a point to see communism and fascism as attacks on political and economic liberalism and as attempts to create new collectives, the manner in which "totalitarianism" privileges broad similarities results in a failure to give differences the weight that they deserve. Thus, in response to Steven Kotkin, who describes the emerging Soviet welfare state in the name of justice and progress as the antithesis of fascist reaction, Roberts argues that the fascist regimes themselves were keen to develop their own version of the welfare state based on what they considered to be "a more sophisticated understanding of history, society, and the possibility of modernity. In grasping the array from eugenics to the new social scientific insights of Pareto and Sorel, they were leaving nineteenth-century Marxism behind" (Roberts, p. 417). But to use the admittedly extreme example of Nazism, was a

"welfare state" predicated on racial purification and culling the "unfit" really indicative of an "epochal commonality" (Roberts, p. 412) among the regimes?

Although it focuses especially on the Soviet Union, Italy, and Germany, David Williamson's *The Age of Dictators: A Study of the European Dictatorships, 1918-53*, offers the reader a comprehensive survey that incorporates authoritarian regimes across Europe from World War I to the end of World War II. Aimed primarily at undergraduates, the book includes helpful definitions in the margins and timelines, generous illustrations and maps, a selection of documents attached to each chapter, and suggestions for further reading in English. Williamson introduces students to the most important debates surrounding each dictatorship in clear and simplified form, effectively integrating them within his narrative. Beyond his attention to historical debates and to the unremarkable claim that World War I was decisive in producing a climate conducive to the emergence of authoritarian and especially revolutionary regimes, this not a thesis-driven book. Nevertheless, Williamson is less reticent than Gellately and Roberts about dismissing the differences between communism and fascism, and certainly less reluctant than Roberts to revitalize totalitarianism at its most structural. Thus, Italy, Germany, and the USSR possessed charismatic leaders, used force and terror to break opposition, were opposed to "bourgeois democracy" and the rule of law, and created parties of a new type, or in the words of Richard Pipes, whom the author cites, "oligarchical fraternities of the elect" (Williamson, p. 490). In short, although acknowledging that none of the three regimes achieved complete control over their states and society, they were at least to some degree "totalitarian" and by implication revolutionary.

While Aristotle Kallis is indebted to Griffin's definition of fascism as "revolutionary national rebirth," in *Genocide and Fascism: The Elimina-*

tionist Drive in Fascist Europe, he aims to explore the links between fascism and genocide. Similarly to the way in which the Geyer and Fitzpatrick anthology handles totalitarianism, Kallis focuses less on the theory of fascism than on its specific practices and the contexts in which they arise. Thus, while acknowledging the utility of Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's notion of "eliminationism" in his discussion of German antisemitism, Kallis tries to rescue it from Goldhagen's determinist leap from eliminationist "mindset" to the Holocaust. "Eliminationism," according to Kallis, is the intent to marginalize a hated minority group, which embraces a variety of possible outcomes ranging from assimilation to legal disenfranchisement to removal. "Elimination," on the other hand, is the decision not merely to segregate or remove the "other," but to eradicate the "other" totally. The task, then, is to identify the radical circumstances that took all but the most extreme "solution" off the table.

Not surprisingly, National Socialism emerges in this analysis as the most radical outcome of the genocidal potential of fascism's worship of the homogeneous nation-state. Although rejecting a German *Sonderweg* because in his view, National Socialism did not differ from fascism's "paradigmatic core" (Kallis, p. 142), Kallis concedes its unique synthesis, which joined the obsession with racial purity, the desirability of internal cleansing and territorial expansion to realize the "rebirth of the nation," and, finally, the radicalization of the technocratic social engineering of experts in fields ranging from biomedicine to demographics. The Nazi regime succeeded in eliminating whatever moral inhibitions against genocide existed in Germany with massive repression at home and total war abroad. Antisemitism moved well beyond the varied alternatives embedded in eliminationism and moved to the point where no other "solution" would assure Germany's survival than the total destruction of the Jews. The massive effort to Germanize the East through the transfer or decimation of populations transformed the regime's "li-

cense to hate" into a "license to kill" when the difficulties of managing expansionism unleashed the ambitions of thousands of agents in the field to "solve" the problem in the most radical way possible. Aggressive majorities fixated on wholeness and purity, Kallis concludes, are obviously necessary to genocide because their hatreds make elimination a possibility. Yet intent is not enough. Mass "license" that stems from the decisions of a leadership and/or the unfolding of precedents became in the German case the "critical mass of the genocidal chain reaction" (Kallis, p. 323).

As a work of synthesis, Kallis's book presents a great deal of material that will be familiar to specialists. Even so, the contribution of this work stems from the precision with which Kallis analyzes the movement from thoughts about eliminating an "other" to their actualization. The book is particularly effective in its discussion of the participation of fascist movements in occupied Europe, puppet governments, or governments otherwise allied with Nazi Germany, and countless ordinary people in the German East who availed themselves of the opportunity to act on an antisemitism that decades of upheaval had exacerbated. If German military and civilian authorities on the ground distrusted spontaneous outbursts of violence because they might be difficult to control, and otherwise discouraged pressure from local nationalists for greater autonomy, the contributions of local activists to the Holocaust were essential. To be sure, Kallis's suggestion that Nazism was (partly) about the rebirth of the nation is problematic, for Hitler strove for something very different, the transformation of Europe from a conglomeration of nation-states to a new ethnographic order. Thus, the Third Reich endeavored to become something historically unique, an empire defined by the principle of ethnic homogeneity. Despite the internal contradictions of such a project--the need for foreign labor to prosecute total war made the use of foreigners essential, except for the Jews--the obsession with "living space," not a territorial nation-state, accounts for much of the

ferocity of the Nazi project. Nevertheless, the work offers a thorough and insightful exploration of the genocidal potential of fascism as something more than a story of mindset or intention.

As the title of Michael Geyer's and Sheila Fitzpatrick's anthology, *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared*, makes clear, historians maintain little desire to work over older concepts and controversies, whether leftist theories of fascism or totalitarianism. Over the past quarter century, the editors note, empirical historians have found them wanting. By the same token, Geyer and Fitzpatrick argue, the two regimes should be examined together "because, for one, antagonists as the two regimes were, they were quite literally on each other's throat and, for another, they shook the world in their antagonism. This may not be enough to make them of the same kind, but it is surely enough to see them in tandem and in interaction--and to explore what they might have in common" (Fitzpatrick and Geyer, p. 9). In order to accomplish that task, Geyer and Fitzpatrick commissioned ten comparative essays, each written jointly by a leading Soviet and German specialist on the broad topics of "governance," "violence," "socialization," and "entanglements." At the end, a paradox remains. "Both regimes," they note, "set out to transform and overcome history and pursued what, on the surface, appear to be parallel strategies" (Fitzpatrick and Geyer, p. 26). Yet, the editors reinforce the point that "profound differences" undermine the sameness that theories of totalitarianism once claimed. What to do? The editors suggest that the comparisons this volume offer will "help us understand the two nations and regimes better" and "bring new insight to the question of what made these regimes such quintessential forces in twentieth-century history" (Fitzpatrick and Geyer, p. 26).

The essays consistently make the case that "totalitarianism" provides few clues to understanding Nazism or Stalinism. Sheila Fitzpatrick's

and Alf Lüdtke's essay ("Energizing the Everyday") on social relationships argues against Hannah Arendt's "atomization" thesis by suggesting not only that family bonds did not weaken under either regime, but also that both regimes forged new types of associations through the workplace, youth organizations, the military, and the more informal and less organized venues of social interaction. Even the prison camps became communities of "enemies." Yoram Gorlizki's and Hans Mommsen's piece, "The Political (Dis)Orders of Stalinism and National Socialism," analyzes the ways in which terror and mass mobilization facilitated state-building and thus enabled the Soviet political order to survive Stalin. Because the Nazi regime put a premium on fealty to a charismatic *Führer*, the institutions of party and state became destabilized and incoherent. Mark Edele's and Michael Geyer's essay on the Nazi-Soviet war, "States of Exception," underscores the devastating violence of both regimes, but argues that violence as an attribution of "totalitarianism" leaves important questions unanswered, particularly that involving the aftermath of the conflict between them. National Socialism never contemplated peace with Bolsheviks, Jews, or Poles, but the Soviet Union did envision peace with Germany after the defeat of fascism. From a transnational perspective, Katerina Clark and Karl Schlögel's article on the perceptions that each side had of one another ("Mutual Perceptions and Projections") notes that both regimes claimed against the other that they would "save" Europe. For that reason alone, the authors suggest, future studies should spend less time comparing and contrasting the two systems, and more time embedding Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in "the exchange and transfer of culture and ideas that took place in a context defined by the crisis of interwar Europe" (Fitzpatrick and Geyer, p. 441). Finally, rather than looking at Nazism and Stalinism as totalitarian structures, Jörg Baberowski and Anselm Doehring-Manteuffel's essay, "The Quest for Order and the Pursuit of Terror," sees them as different

routes to imposing order in imperial space. Although both conducted wars of annihilation against internal and external enemies, the Soviet Union, already in possession of a large empire, could expel problematic ethnic groups to regions appropriate to internal exile. The Nazi regime, in aiming to expand its *Lebensraum*, pursued the removal or elimination of subject populations in areas designated for German settlement.

Many of the essays explore the implications of race, arguably the most profound difference between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. An essay that implicitly challenges Roberts's argument about the welfare states of each, David Hoffmann and Annette Timm's "Utopian Biopolitics" suggests that although both regimes introduced interventionist measures to boost population growth, the Soviets, unlike the Nazis, denounced eugenics and did not discriminate against ethnic minorities. The Soviet leadership exhorted all its citizens to raise the birth rate to make up for the USSR's huge labor shortages. Although both regimes provoked grassroots violence against "enemies" that supplemented that initiated by the state, according to Christian Gerlach and Nicolas Werth ("State Violence--Violent Societies"), Soviet violence targeted Russian and non-Russian "enemies" alike. Committed to imagining racial purity, the Nazism sanctioned the elimination of ethnic "others" to preserve Germandom. In a similar vein, Christopher Browning and Lewis Siegelbaum ("Frameworks for Social Engineering") argue that while Nazism and Stalinism denied the right of their subjects to determine their own identities, Soviet practice never equated class or national identity with bioracial characteristics. For Peter Fritzsche and Jochen Hellbeck ("The New Man in Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany"), both regimes wanted to forge heroic "new men" capable of creating their promised utopias, yet the Soviet version represented the progressive unfolding of universal socialist values across the globe. The Nazi "new man" was self-referentially Aryan and carried lit-

tle potential for transfer except to ethnic German communities outside the Old Reich.

In addition to demonstrating the results of the increasing access to Soviet archives over the past two decades, which has provided the sort of rich empirical material that German historians have been accustomed to for a longer period, this anthology's value lies in its use of both Soviet and German specialists to provide probing and relevant comparisons freed from earlier theoretical constraints. In addition to underscoring the significant differences between the two regimes and their epoch-making hostility toward each other, the essays explore subjects that neither the "atomization" theory of Hannah Arendt nor the structuralism of Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski could address, among them issues of identity, transnational exchange and competition, and popular violence, including that which the state initiated and that independent of it. Yet by throwing down the gauntlet of comparative empirical research, the editors want to do more than expose the limitations of a Cold War construct. Rather, the anthology lays the foundation for "a new round of comparative and integrative work" (Fitzpatrick and Geyer, p. 15). Aware of the deeply held ideological commitments that informed theories of fascism and totalitarianism, the editors certainly do not expect that future comparative research, whatever forms it might take, will be value-free.

Indeed, the books reviewed here make their positions clear, be they pleas for the restoration of metanarratives (Griffin and Knox), the explicit or implicit opposition of Soviet communism and Nazi Germany to liberal democracy (Gellately, Roberts, and Williamson), or especially the reinscription of fascism as revolution rather than counterrevolution (all the books except the Geyer-Fitzpatrick collection). Certainly, the now formidable literature on race alone indicates that what counts for revolution must go beyond radical social and economic change, inasmuch as Nazism's

attempt at a viciously ethnographic one left, to put it mildly, lasting consequences. Additionally, as some of these works underscore, the competition and conflict between fascism and communism remains critical to understanding the twentieth century's most violent dictatorships, whether or not one agrees with the outcomes their authors discern from it. The degree to which transnational or global perspectives will influence our interpretations of twentieth-century European dictatorships remains an open question. At the very least, as the Clark and Schlögel essay in the Geyer-Fitzpatrick volume suggests, we should perhaps explore a wider optic—that of the intra-European struggle for continental and/or global hegemony—in order to illuminate the distinctiveness of the most violent of the European imperial states.

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at

<https://networks.h-net.org/h-german>

Citation: Shelley O. Baranowski. Review of Beck, Hermann. *The Fateful Alliance: German Conservatives and Nazis in 1933: the Machtergreifung in a New Light*. ; Fitzpatrick, Sheila; Geyer, Michael, eds. *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared*. ; Gellately, Robert. *Lenin, Stalin, and Hitler: The Age of Social Catastrophe*. ; Griffin, Roger. *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler*. ; Kallis, Aristotle A. *Genocide and Fascism: The Eliminationist Drive in Fascist Europe*. ; Knox, MacGregor. *To the Threshold of Power, 1922/33: Origins and Dynamics of the Fascist and Nationalist Socialist Dictatorships. Volume 1*. ; Roberts, David D. *The Totalitarian Experiment in Twentieth-Century Europe: Understanding the Poverty of Great Politics*. ; Williamson, D. G. *The Age of the Dictators: A Study of the European Dictatorships, 1918-53*. H-German, H-Net Reviews. November, 2009.

URL: <https://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=25615>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 United States License.