CONCLUSION

GEOFF ELEY

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How should we visualize fascism today? Taken together, our essays suggest several strong arguments. More than just an assortment of cases drawn from discrete parts of the world, they show fascism's emergence in a shared global setting. By the 1930s, that setting contained multiple centers with multidirectional flows: a globality of rival imperialisms caught in the fallout of a worldwide capitalist downturn. Just as World War II far exceeded a merely European framework of clashing nation-states, so fascism also had plural and varied origins. Fascism began from East Asia as well as Europe, from Africa and the Americas, with varying success across regions. These fascisms displayed similar political dynamics, ideology, and practices and had convergent political effects. An explicitly *global* understanding is vital for our purposes.[1]

By pointing to multiple *origins*, we also stress multiple *forms*. We want to pluralize the picture, whether in the movement or the regime phases, showing the diverse starting points and trajectories of national fascisms as against the progenitive primacy of the Italian and German examples. Thus fascism sought power through stealthy maneuvers and elite-driven brokerage as well as by the full-frontal challenge of a Nazi *Machtergreifung* or Mussolini's March on Rome; by more diffuse plebiscitary appeals, as against the highly organized, party-based mobilizing of the Nazis in 1928–32; and by backdoor institutional leverage rather than through popular disorders. The absence of a mass party on the Nazi pattern does not in itself mean the absence of fascism. As our essays also show, fascism could just as frequently fail, or be suc-

cessfully held at bay, rather than coming ultimately to power. In short, our range of examples reflects the convergent circumstances of political polarization and societal crisis across the globe during the interwar years, for which "fascism" then delivered the shared political language, whether as willingly embraced self-description or as a label its opponents bestowed.

We can go further. If fascism's emergence was globally dispersed, taking variable forms and multiple paths, it also settled only gradually and unevenly into generic existence. It developed cumulatively rather than unfolding from an already assembled ground of principles comparable in coherence to liberalism or conservatism and other political ideologies. "Fascism" as an everyday term preceded fascism as a category of sociopolitical analysis. But it soon named the commonalties of a variety of radical right-wing formations around the world, whose heterogeneous qualities caution against any restrictive typology of the movements that qualify or not. *First* came the loose and mobile repertoire of "fascism," borne by all of the discursive noise and visual tactics surrounding Mussolini's and similar movements, whether as viscerally unreflected sloganeering and images or as consciously chosen terminology and stagecraft by party intellectuals and strategists. Only *then* came fascism as the stabilized category of political understanding. That being the case, a broader definition seems more helpful and appropriate. Thus fascism was a brutally distinct type of politics: it wanted to silence and even kill its opponents; it preferred coercively authoritarian rule over democracy; it celebrated an aggressively exclusionary idea of the nation over a pluralism honoring difference; it presented itself in spectacles, photographs, graphics, and film as transcendently glorious, while invading every hearth and home, sitting quietly and insidiously next to fathers, mothers, and children.

Both geographically decentered and historically dynamic, this nontypological definition then becomes eminently portable, not only spatially across the globe in the early twentieth century but also across very different times, including our own today. And approaching fascism *visually* allows us to grasp that portability especially well. Historians have recently grown notably attentive to fascism's visual archive, perhaps earlier for Italy than for Germany, embracing first film and then the arts more generally, from painting and sculpture to architecture and the built environment, and now photography. Careful readings of these parts of fascism's account of itself can bring us closer to the leitmotifs of fascist ideology—to the emotional evocations and fantasies of national wholeness Julia Thomas emphasized in the introduction: from the masculinist grievances and aggressions to the "vitalist energy

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of youth, the comforts of naturally sanctioned belonging, and the necessity of righteous wars in a hostile world." From the visual archive we can begin to reconstruct not only the intended fields of officially executed meaning but also their limitations, the places where doubts and misgivings—nonconforming recognitions—retreat into the privacies of the self and where even passive resistance might occur. Materially and practically, in the machineries of propaganda and cultural production, moreover, visuality was essential to fascism's strategies of appeal, its drive for popular endorsement, whether before or after entry into power. The efficacy of those visual messages, Thomas argues, lay precisely in how "elusive and emotive" they were. The same dual effect—practical transmission, resonance of appeal—occurred across borders too, not just literally as fascist ideas traveled from one country or region of the world to another, but also ideologically as fascists sought to realize their own global imaginary of interconnectedness.

For making sense of Far Right politics today, this alertness toward the visual can help in two ways in particular: one involves the fascist invasion of privacy; the other concerns the changing circulation of images between the early twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

How should we judge fascism's ideological appeal *beyond* the elaborate orchestrations of the spectacle where treatments most easily begin? If the fascist spectacle will certainly keep both its resonance for current Far Right sympathizers and its interest for historians, the harder challenge concerns complexities of reception, whether among the immediate participants in a Nuremberg Rally or in its wider viewing and listening audiences.[2] On the one hand, the fearsome effects of fascism's founding acts of violence (in Italy in 1920–22, in Germany in 1933–34) were clear enough: the new rules of permissible behavior had a brutally intimidating effect and were explicitly sanctioned by force beneath new codes of belonging and exclusion. But, on the other hand, even as the immediate ferocity started to settle, fascist regimes moved with decisive speed and distressing success to secure popular consent. Ordinary reactions to fascism's rise or rule might well be structured psychically around "dissonance," while contrary and divergent emotions jostled uncomfortably together. Conformity and dissent, enthusiasm and misgivings, might be either managed and suppressed or consciously held apart and unthinkingly kept in play.[3] Yet, however conflicted and ambivalent the individual motivation, ordinary Japanese, Germans, and Italians—Julia Thomas's magazine readers, for example, or the viewers of Lutz Koepnick's accessible and domesticated Hitler, or Ruth Ben-Ghiat's faces in the crowd—began necessarily

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realigning their daily comportment, increasingly needing "to take a stance and position themselves according to new concepts and ideas."[4] The new times brought new interpellative mechanisms and expectations, new conditions for the fashioning of public and private selves, new emotional registers, new conditions of conscience.[5] Where fascists lacked equivalent control over a state—in the East Asian arenas examined by Maggie Clinton, Paul Barclay, and Ethan Mark, for example, or in Lorena Rizzo's southern Africa—their visualizing strategies still drew similar complexities of response.

How fascists visualized *this* normalizing process by translating it into tropes, techniques, and repertoires of image-making—and how privately made, commercialized, and nonfascist images then circulated inside the resulting visual economy—takes us far beyond the large-scale public machinery of the spectacle. As Thomas observes, fascism had many ways of seeking "to abolish the distance between the state and its subjects." Indeed, it was in the enjoyments, disappointments, and practicalities of quotidian life (through family, childhood, household, neighborhood, work, schooling, recreation, play, sexuality, intimate life) that ordinary subjects actually experienced the promises and affirmations fascists were claiming to supply. Imaginative use of photographic genres (magazine illustration, documentary reportage, tourism, hobbies, family albums) combined with an interpretive approach to ordinary people's lives that uses oral histories, ego documents, and the more conventional written archive can bring us closer to this subjective and experiential dimension, as a number of our essays (e.g., Ben-Ghiat, Thomas, Koepnick, Rizzo, Metton) show. For fascism's visual repertoire comprised not just the values choreographed into the imposing massed symbolics of the public spectacle—order, action, struggle, manliness, will, race, necessity of war, rebirth, the New Man. Its fantasies of nation and empire required roseate small-scale sentimentality too: the joys and comforts of domesticity, the wholesomeness of family and healthfulness of children, fecundity and motherhood, the robustness of homegrown morality, the haven of civilized privacy. In his reading of Hoffmann's Hitler portraiture, Koepnick shows these combining into an artfully engineered unity, where the transcendently heroic *public* was enhanced by the reassuringly idealized *private*.[6] This visual joining of the national to the local, the political to the domestic, in such close and mutually inciting collaboration, was a key element of fascist strength and innovation. Fascist visuality brought politics (qua war and expansionism) into conversation with intimacy, interiority, and everydayness.

In a variety of versions, this same potent duality of public aggressions and

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private reassurances could also be detected later. By the 1950s, once fascism and capitalist crisis were effectively decoupled, these terms were already being subtly reworked, as Nadya Bair and Claire Zimmerman each reveal: capitalist economic relations were perceived increasingly as natural and default, whereas Robert Capa's iconic antifascist photographs were depoliticized and brought down to their "human interest." But for our own time, the starkness is back: Middle Eastern and central Asian bombing offensives and drone warfare, refugee crises and massive population displacements, rampant xenophobia, anxiety about borders, and gun violence, on the one hand; fantasies of family wholeness and the healthy national body, on the other. As constitutional democracy and its rules of civility reel beneath criticism and threat while worryingly large popular constituencies and powerful interests disavow the legitimacy and entailments of pluralism and difference, the space for an aggressively right-wing politics palpably widens. Without replicating the mass parties and other features of the 1920s and 1930s, the signs are familiar: violence against enemies and opponents, coercively authoritarian rule, expansionist and exclusionary nationalism. But the conditions of political communication and exchange are now profoundly changed. Both the means and the mechanics of what a political movement can hope to accomplish have been transformed in the meantime by the bewildering extent and availability of our contemporary visual archive—not just from television, film, and the classical reservoirs of public and private photography, but now, too, from the internet and web-based digital apparatuses of image storage, circulation, and retrieval combined with smartphone technology and personally managed social media access.

This observation bridges to the second way our volume is pertinent for the present: the means of circulation and transmission per se. Of course, it was not ideas, images, and visual representations alone that traveled internationally inside the geopolitical arenas where fascists were making their history. People and things did so too. In Paul Barclay's account of the monuments and sites memorializing the dead, tourists voyaged and pilgrimaged all over East Asia for the purpose; Ethan Mark finds equally significant traffic between the colonial Dutch Indies and the Netherlands before Japanese expansionism changed the directions for such exchange. In this volume, in his account of Slovakia, a regional forecourt to the Nazis' eastward imperium, Bertrand Metton supplies cognate illustration of what that could mean—namely, the colonial circuitry of military, administrative, and economic occupation and collaboration with unfamiliar peoples that faced Germans and vice versa,

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in a hall of two-way mirrors described more obliquely by Nadya Bair for the Spanish Civil War and its rival fascist and left-wing interventions.[7] Using biographical studies of the central European emigration to southern Africa, Lorena Rizzo shows another way in which people and their ideas traveled, as her two women photographers, Ilse Steinhoff and Anneliese Scherz, reenacted subtle translations of fascist visuality.[8]

In the earlier twentieth century, the global resonance of fascist ideas both presumed and required a new mass-mediated public sphere. This made possible previously unimagined speed and quality of access to varieties of images and ideas originating elsewhere—through new visual and print technologies (illustrated magazines, advertising, cinema, photography), gramophone records and radio broadcasting, commercial entertainments, and new patterns of consumption. Mussolini's larger-than-life international popularity in the mid-1920s, reaching "veritable boom" proportions country by country, supplies one compelling illustration of this.[9] Whether in the eye-catchingly modernist graphic design described by Maggie Clinton, in poster and pamphlet illustrations, or in the conventions of newspaper and magazine photography, fascist imagery traveled thickly into global circulation. The resulting iconographies, visual tropes, and narrative patterns helped shape how fascist political formations would be perceived in the future. By means of repetition, accumulation, and interarticulation, such visual languages solidified the political narratives fascists needed in order to drive their messages home—narratives of national wholeness, of heroic and armored masculinity, of familial health and female fecundity, of youthful vigor, of racialized community, of militantly demonizing rejection of the Jewish and Bolshevik enemies. Given the transnational circuits of influence and indebtedness, such images helped vitally compose the layered ideological corpus that movements and regimes elsewhere would be able to raid.

These same processes become replicated across time. Postwar movements of the Far Right, presently far less inhibited than ever before and with apparently increasing support in many parts of the world, fish freely in this deep reservoir of iconography, signs, and associations transmitted from an earlier past, netting much material—badges, insignia, uniforms, symbols, slogans, forms of action—that is instantly usable for styling themselves inside a recognizably fascist tradition. Sometimes these movements claim indigenous descent (worryingly so in Hungary, Poland, and elsewhere); at other times they cleave vicariously to the Nazi or Italian precursors. In the United States a topography of neo-Nazi, white supremacist, militia-styled, and "Alt-Right"

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activism can be mapped in this way through its networks, writings, and websites, thereby disclosing a visual repertoire selectively continuous with the 1930s.[10] Moreover, if the past delivers a serviceable resource in this fashion, it is also more readily retrievable. With the dramatic reconfiguration of publicness that has been underway since the 1990s, the fascist proclivity for appropriating and repurposing imagery—its distinctive counter aesthetic of "undisciplined eclecticism," mobile symbolics, and aggressive negations, as Thomas explains it—flourishes but now presents itself differently. Presaged by the global diffusion of television since the 1960s, followed by the mass spread of fax machines, computers, and the early forms of the internet, the startling rapidity of new electronic communications, digital techniques, and information technologies—DVDs, cable and satellite TV, laptops, cell phones, Skype, streaming, smartphones, social media—now allows not only novel forms of web-based organizing but also incomparably easier access. Increasingly under this new dispensation, *violence* means not just physically harming and murdering opponents, but also coercively overriding democratic civility and its constitutional safeguards. It no longer relies as much on street fighting, pitched confrontations, and spectacular displays of massed force. It operates, rather, via verbal onslaughts, internet trolling, instantly transmitted and reproduced visual incitements, and all the other virtual means of displaced but no less brutal assaultiveness. This very differently constituted visual landscape, made dramatically apparent in the instantaneous global simultaneity of the spectacle of 9/11, requires its own terms of analysis. We can certainly see definite continuities from the 1930s: repetitions of tropes and repertoires and familiar patterns of rhetoric, including the masculine nation, the soldierly nation, the rageful nation, the misogynist nation, the racialized and racially armored nation, and so forth. But the contents and coordinates of contemporary visuality equally clearly diverge, not least in their globally spatialized dimensions. Events in one place become instantly transmitted to watchers in another, meanings are deceptively graspable, distance shrinks. This volume offers a casebook for recognizing and situating these lineaments of contiguity and difference.

Notes

1 Taking an avowedly global approach to fascism remains uncommon. Among the thirty-one essays in *The Oxford Handbook of Fascism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), edited by Richard J. B. Bosworth, for example, Rikki Kerstin's chapter on Japan (526–44) is the only extra-European discussion, whereas Robert O. Paxton's key treatment of "Comparisons and Definitions" (547–65) remains

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resolutely European. Broadly the same applies to the recent works of António Costa Pinto, *The Nature of Fascism Revisited* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); António Costa Pinto, ed., *Rethinking the Nature of Fascism: Comparative Perspectives* (Houndmills, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Daniel Woodley, *Fascism and Political Theory: Critical Perspectives on Fascist Ideology* (London: Routledge, 2010); Aristotle A. Kallis, ed., *The Fascism Reader* (London: Routledge, 2003); and Constantin Iordachi, ed., *Comparative Fascist Studies: New Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2010). David D. Roberts, *Fascist Interactions: Proposals for a New Approach to Fascism and Its Era, 1919–1945* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2016), does consider Japan, but only as an occasional foil to the primary European cases. Another impressive anthology, 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), is explicitly European from the outset. Two rare monographic exceptions would be Reto Hofmann, *The Fascist Effect: Japan and Italy, 1915–1952* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015); and Federico Finchelstein, *Transatlantic Fascism: Ideology, Violence, and the Sacred in Argentina and Italy, 1919–1945* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

2 Intimations from contemporary political life are plentiful enough, sometimes very directly, as in the staging of Donald Trump's 2016 campaign rallies (e.g., his descent from the skies to address crowds in airport hangars) or in the organizing of a white supremacist torchlight procession. Hollywood has for decades drawn on the imagery of plebiscitary and charismatic acclamation exemplified by long-established readings of the Nuremberg Rallies and Leni Reifenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*. Examples range from *Privilege* (Peter Watkins, 1967) and *Network* (Sidney Lumet, 1976) to *The Hunger Games* trilogy (Gary Ross, 2012; Francis Lawrence, 2013 and 2014–15) and *Money Monster* (Jodie Foster, 2016). Among literary versions of this syndrome, my own essay in this volume (chapter 3) opens with Don DeLillo's novel *White Noise* (New York: Penguin, 1985).

3 See Mary Fulbrook, *Dissonant Lives: Generations and Violence through the German Dictatorships* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

4 Kathryn Sederberg, "The 1930s in Nazi Germany as Seen through Diaries," in a review of Janosch Steuwer, *"Ein Dritter Reich, wie ich es auffasse": Politik, Gesellschaft und privates Leben in Tagebüchern 1933–1939* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2017), published on H-German in H-Net Online, January 2018, www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=50185/.

5 See Claudia Koonz, *The Nazi Conscience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

6 See also Despina Stratigakos, *Hitler at Home* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015).

7 Elsewhere Metton explores the role of hiking and youth movements during the later 1930s and 1940s in mapping the European imaginary of a Nazi-dominated New Order: Bertrand Metton, "From the Popular Front to the Eastern Front:

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Youth Movements, Travel, and Fascism in France, 1933–1945" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2015), and "Nazi Europe and the Atlantic Wall: On Spatial Theory and the Wartime Fascist Worldview," unpublished. Also Ruth Ben-Ghiat, *Italian Fascism's Empire Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015); Stephanie Malia Hom, *The Beautiful Country: Tourism and the Impossible State of Destination Italy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015); and Stephanie Malia Hom, "Empires of Tourism: Travel and Rhetoric in Italian Colonial Libya and Albania, 1911–1943," *Journal of Tourism History* 4, no. 3 (2012): 281–300.

8 For the transnational circulation of fascist ideas, see Benjamin G. Martin, *The Nazi-Fascist New Order for European Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016); Johannes Dafinger, "The Nazi 'New Europe': Transnational Concepts of a Fascist and *Völkisch* Order for the Continent," in Bauerkämper and Rossoliński-Liebe, eds., *Fascism without Borders*, 264–87; Roel Vande Winkel and David Welch, eds., *Cinema and the Swastika: The International Expansion of Third Reich Cinema* (Houndmills, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

9 Hofmann, *Fascist Effect*, 38. See also Adam Tooze, "When We Loved Mussolini," *New York Review of Books*, August 18, 2016, 55–56; John P. Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism: The View from America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972); Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi, *Fascist Spectacle: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini's Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 50–55.

10 For the growing literature surveying this scene, see Alexander Reid Ross, *Against the Fascist Creep* (Chico, CA: AK Press, 2017); Mark Bray, *Antifa: The Anti-Fascist Handbook* (Brooklyn, NY: Melville House, 2017); David Neiwert, *Alt-America: The Rise of the Radical Right in the Age of Trump* (London: Verso, 2017); Vegas Tenold, *Everything You Love Will Burn: Inside the Rebirth of White Nationalism in America* (New York: Nation Books, 2018).

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