

## *Guest Editors' Note*



On 17–18 November 2011, a conference was held at Uppsala University in Sweden on fascism in northern, east-central and south-eastern Europe, with the title 'Fascisms on the Periphery'. The purpose was to encourage a comparative look at historical interwar and wartime expressions of fascism outside the 'fascist core' countries of Italy and Germany. Instead of using the regimes of Mussolini and Hitler as the benchmarks for comparison, presenters were encouraged to shed light on the local roots of fascist politics in their respective societies, as well as giving evidence of mutual contacts, inspiration, and collaboration between movements that did not necessarily go via Rome or Berlin. Instead of teleologically analysing these movements as primarily collaborators with Axis occupation regimes during the Second World War, each movement's ideology and political agenda is examined in its own right and national context, which in some cases offers significant new interpretations as to the hows and whys of wartime collaboration in, for example, the Holocaust. By doing so, we propose shifting these 'peripheral' fascisms from the margins of comparative fascist studies more towards the core of scholarly inquiry. By looking away from fascism in power (as in Italy in Germany) to fascism in opposition and anticipation, we can learn more about the nature of fascism and its apparently persistent appeal.

In this first of two special issues devoted to the theme of 'Fascisms on the European Periphery', the focus will be on northern Europe, with articles on cases from the Nordic and Baltic countries. The historical phenomena discussed herein, unfortunately, have a great deal of resonance for today. Whether it be the terrorism of the Nordacist national socialist Anders Behring Breivik, or the recent proposal by a Finnish politician to resurrect the Lapua movement, such examples reveal unsettling continuities in the fascist worldview, even if such views are only held by a small minority. On a more indirect level, the current refugee crisis affecting the Middle East and Europe has led to discussions of the future of the 'white race' resurfacing in Baltic public discourse. Given that these countries were significant loci of genocidal violence during the Second World War, and the fact that the current Latvian coalition government

includes a faction with pronounced fascistic tendencies, this should raise important warning flags. More research into fascism in northern Europe, both historical and contemporary, is clearly needed.

Funding from the Swedish Foundation for Humanities and Social Sciences (*Riksbankens Jubileumsfond*) was instrumental for the 2011 conference and resulting publications, of which this special issue is the first. At the suggestion of the editors of *Fascism*, we have also included an article on the internationalisation of contemporary Swedish fascism. Although this paper relates to a different chronological period to that of our conference, its inclusion underscores our desire to shift the scholarly focus away from the 'fascist core'.

*Matthew Kott*

Uppsala University

*matthew.kott@ucrs.uu.se*

*Tomislav Dulić*

Uppsala University

*tomislav.dulic@valentin.uu.se*