

# Abstracts

Raoul Pupo

*Fascism on the frontier. An interpretive key towards a comparative approach*

The article offers a comparative discussion of the provinces of Venezia Giulia and Alto Adige (South Tyrol) as a contribution to the history of 'frontier fascism'. In order to verify differences and similarities between these regions, the author examines a range of themes: the relationship between fascism and nationalism; the most striking actions undertaken by fascist squads; the relationship with the respective worlds of reference for the national minorities - German and Yugoslav - in these provinces; the involvement of minority elements in the structure of the regime; policy towards the Church; the results of de-nationalization policies, and the reactions provoked by them.

Anna Maria Vinci

*Fascism on the eastern frontier – themes and considerations*

This contribution analyzes questions and problems relating to the peculiarities of 'frontier fascism'. The definition of 'frontier fascism' derives from the narrative of fascism itself and it is also linked to the representation of the 'eastern frontier', as it was presented to the nation at the end of the Great War. Already a 'mobile' border in 1918, it was a frontier characterized by contrasts and divisions, in line with the history of national borders in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Moreover, this was an instance of a history that was unusual within the Italian context and had greater affinities with that of East-Central Europe. The author reflects in particular on the question of national minorities, which forms a central theme in the article, especially the multiple aspects involved in models of Italianization and / or de-nationalization. By contrast, the transition from the liberal to the fascist state represents an area still open to further historical investigation. Over the longer term, those 'diversities' that impel problematic confrontations within a web of rigid identities remain the 'hidden nerve' of modern society.

Tullio Omezzoli

*Aspects of Fascismo in the 'most Italian' (italianissima) and francophone Valle d'Aosta*

At the end of the First World War the elites in the Valle d'Aosta – a small mountain province in the far north-west of Italy, bordering on France and Switzerland – began to lose their traditional hold over the local population.

This was evident in the gains made by the Socialist Party in the elections of 1919 and 1921. The elites therefore viewed favourably the emergence of fascism, which they interpreted as a healthy, but ephemeral reaction to the threat of Bolshevism and, more generally, as the establishment of a new order which placed the old equilibrium in crisis. Fascism grew initially among (Italian) immigrants to the Valle d'Aosta, mainly workers and salaried employees, but it slowly spread among the local population as well, especially in the industrial centres. When the Fascists seized power, the Valdostan elites tried – not unsuccessfully – to exert a leading role in its networks. If this did not constitute an idyllic scenario, it certainly amounted to an understanding which – with certain exceptions – lasted until 1940.

### Stefan Lechner

#### *Between the Brenner and Salurn: the limits of Fascism in South Tyrol*

In South Tyrol, fascism came up against a set of cultural, social, economic and geographical conditions, which substantially determined the implementation of its goals. Strategies that had proven successful elsewhere had only limited purchase in the northern border region, to the extent that fascism was repeatedly prevented from unfolding its full potential. The article attempts to bring out the particular features of fascism in South Tyrol and, above all, to demonstrate the set of circumstances which distinguished it from fascism in other provinces. In doing so, three aspects are examined more closely: the ethnic and cultural situation in the frontier region, the internal 'border' with neighbouring Trentino, and the state border with Austria, and later the German Reich. The aim is to investigate the relative weakness of local fascism and to demonstrate its limits – limits which were foreign to fascism as a phenomenon that understood itself as an expansive and offensive force, capable of overcoming resistance by violent means.

### Carlo Romeo

#### *Archives and national documentation in the inter-war period in Alto Adige / South Tyrol*

Using a number of examples, the article looks at the politics surrounding the management of historical archives in the province of Bolzano / Bozen after its annexation by Italy and during the two decades of fascist rule. In the first years after the end of the war, the main efforts were directed towards the recovery of relevant archival material from Vienna and Innsbruck. Once the possibility of bringing these documents to Trento had been discounted, they were concentrated instead in the State Archive in Bolzano, which had been established in 1920 and formed a separate section from Trento until 1930. The

principal problems were the inadequacy of the archive building (housed in Castel Mareccio) and the scarcity of financial means. Above all, the departure of Leo Santifaller from the archive in 1927 laid bare the lack of trained personnel who also possessed good knowledge of the German language.

The evaluation of source materials was oriented primarily around the goal of documenting traces of 'Italianness' (italianità) within the territory of the province. A good example in this respect was the political preoccupation with the disappearance of the famous Urbario di Laces, an important fourteenth-century document in the Ladin language from the Venosta valley. The last part of the article deals with the consequences in the cultural and artistic spheres of the 'Option' agreements of 1939. In the years 1940-42, there developed a heated confrontation between Italian and German state offices regarding the transfer of historical and cultural objects. Within this context, on the initiative of the prefect Agostino Podestà, a major publication project saw the light of day: the three-volume *Alto Adige: alcuni documenti del passato*, which represented the summation of the efforts at national documentation in Alto Adige / South Tyrol under the fascist regime.

Massimo Bertoldi

*Theatre for the masses, propaganda and Italianization*

The article reconstructs the experience in Alto Adige undergone during the 1930s by the Carro di Tespi, a wandering theatre conceived by Giovacchino Forzano following the example of the celebrated Greek tragedian of the same name, who lived in the sixth century B.C. Forzano aimed to disseminate theatrical spectacles among a popular audience in the smaller towns and localities within Italy, as well as on the peripheries of the state. Aside from its functions of propaganda and bringing the consumption of comedies and melodrama to the masses, the Carro di Tespi, also had its own local versions. Above all, in Alto Adige it assumed the difficult task of trying to Italianize a cultural fabric that was traditionally German, as emerges from the analysis of tours undertaken in the years 1930, 1934, 1935, 1938, 1939, and 1943, principally in the towns of Bolzano / Bozen, Merano / Meran, Bressanone / Brixen, and Bruneck / Brunico.