

SOURCES

and lengthy bibliographies; illustrations; meaningful appendices; and a listing of entries by theme. Bibliographies contain both primary and secondary sources, and to their credit, many contributors include citations to reprints of primary sources, making those sources far more accessible to students and scholars unable to travel to remote archives.

Women and Gender in Medieval Europe is highly recommended for libraries supporting graduate-level students in history and women's or gender studies.—Kristi L. Palmer, Assistant Librarian to Bibliographic and Metadata Services and Liaison to the Departments of History, Women's Studies, and American Studies, IUPUI University Library, Indianapolis

World Fascism: A Historical Encyclopedia. Ed. by Cyprian P. Blamires with Paul Jackson. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2006. 2 vols. alkaline \$185 (ISBN 1-57607-940-6).

The term *fascism* originally referred to the extreme right-wing ideological and political movement in Italy in the early 1920s under the leadership of Benito Mussolini. As an ideology and a system of governance, Italian fascism was characterized by populism, belligerent nationalism, the notion of racial rebirth, and the exaltation of the nation over individuals or groups. Hostile to democracy, socialism, and liberalism, Mussolini's government relied on a centralized, autocratic system of rule, severe economic and social regimentation, and a commitment to violently purging groups or movements opposed to the State. In the public's imagination, Italian fascism has come to be symbolized by its devotion to youth and masculinity, mass rallies, theatric displays of military power, and the use of terror to subdue political opposition. Since then, fascism has been a dynamic, evolving political ideology that has taken on many forms in a variety of diverse nations. As a result, experts have had difficulty identifying common traits relative to a generic form of fascism and have defined it in a variety of conflicting ways. Until recently, this lack of a cohesive framework for studying fascism has made the production of an encyclopedia, whose entries must share a common perspective on a central topic, extremely difficult.

Roger Griffin, professor of modern history at Oxford-Brooks University and noted fascist-studies expert, begins *World Fascism: A Historical Encyclopedia* by outlining the developments in the field of fascist studies and describing the growing consensus of scholarly opinion for a conceptual framework and an agreed upon definition of generic fascism. Recent scholarship, Griffin maintains, has drifted toward a new approach to the subject, increasingly viewing fascism as a worldwide revolutionary ideology with a distinctive form of politics and common features. For the purposes of the encyclopedia, Griffin provides a working definition of fascism, consisting of three core elements: ultranationalism, revolution, and rebirth. Although this definition is controversial, it has permitted Cyprian P. Blamires (with Paul Jackson) to produce a distinctive and well-timed reference treatment of the subject.

Organized alphabetically in two volumes, *World Fascism: A Historical Encyclopedia* covers the period from World War II until today and features five hundred A–Z entries. Signed articles are written by an impressive list of more than one hundred subject specialists and are devoted to a wide variety of topics, including key people, significant events, important movements, relevant doctrines, and a host of other related subjects. Comprehensive coverage is given to those governments openly identifying themselves as fascist, those that have been identified as fascist in the public's mind, and those that share an affinity with fascist ideology. The generally interesting and well-written entries are scholarly in their approach and provide references and cross references. Key features of the set include lists of contributors and entries, a chronology, a general bibliography, an index subdivided by subject with cross references highlighted in bold text, and a generous supply of high-quality photographs and illustrations.

There are many other reference works devoted to Nazi Germany and Italian fascism. For all of the aforementioned reasons, however, Blamires and Jackson's effort is the first significant attempt to produce an encyclopedia giving in-depth historical and global coverage to fascism from its beginnings until the new millennium, and as such, it is without rival in its format. Nonetheless, there are several books that will serve as excellent companion volumes. Foremost among these are the works of Roger Griffin. His first important monograph, *The Nature of Fascism* (Routledge, 1991), is notable for establishing a new theory of generic fascism, and it has had enormous influence among fascist-studies scholars since its publication. More recently, his book with Matthew Feldman, *Fascism* (Routledge, 2003), provides an interesting examination of the nature of fascism, its social dynamics, its relationship with culture, and its postwar development. Two other important contributions to the literature include Zeev Sternhell, Mario Sznajder, and Maia Ashéri's *The Birth of Fascist Ideology: From Cultural Rebellion to Political Revolution* (Princeton Univ. Pr., 1996) and Robert O. Paxson's *The Anatomy of Fascism* (Vintage Bks., 2004). Both works will provide the interested reader with an engaging examination of fascism's development since its inception.

World Fascism: A Historical Encyclopedia is a unique addition that fills a glaring void in the reference literature for serious students of the postwar period. With the increasing global influence of autocratic, militaristic, collectivist, and nationalist governments, *World Fascism* will serve as a timely research tool for those readers interested in politics, modern history, racism, nationalism, and related subjects. Packaged in durable bindings using high-quality materials and unrivaled in its depth and scope, *World Fascism* is highly recommended for all academic and public library collections serving political science and history students and researchers.—Vincent P. Tinerella, Coordinator of Electronic Reference Services, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb