BRILL

Building the European 'New Order'

Corporatism and Dictatorship under Axis Rule

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Abstract

Military occupation is the maximum level of political intervention based on coercion, but even under Axis rule, the institutional design of dictatorships by their 'collaborationist' elites was influenced by different models and political families. Military occupation opened a window of opportunity for the takeover of power by different segments of authoritarian and fascist elites, and the tension and forced pacts between different projects of dictatorial institutionalizations were a clear sign of this dynamic process. This article examines how the complicated relationship between the radical right, authoritarian conservatives and fascists were present in the institutional crafting of new regimes.

Keywords

The theme of the relationship between fascism and the radical right in studies on the crisis of democracy and the institutionalization of interwar dictatorships has been extensively studied and debated, both from the perspective of classifying political movements and regimes and from their relationship within right-wing political families in the twentieth century.[1] The purpose of this article is to demonstrate how even under Axis rule, the dynamics of the institution-building of political regimes of occupation under the direct or indirect control of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy was characterized by varied tensions and forced compromises between native fascists, conservatives and radical-right movements and elites, with the occupier far from being a political actor with a unified strategy of regime promotion.[2]

Military occupation represents 'the maximum level of influence based on coercion . . . opening the possibility of installing political structures or procedures that can guarantee mid-range influence on the regime's character'.[3] Nevertheless, even under Axis rule, the institutional design of dictatorships by their authoritarian elites was influenced by different models and political families, often with the relative watchful indifference of the occupant, but at times also with hostility and intervention. This article examines how the complicated relationship between radical right, authoritarian conservatives, and fascists were present in the institutional crafting of new regimes. Military occupation opened a window of opportunity for the takeover of power by different segments of these authoritarian and fascist elites and the tension and forced pacts between different projects of institutionalization of dictatorships were a clear sign of this dynamic process. In this context, the debates and the praxis of the construction of new dictatorial political systems will be analyzed, by identifying the design of their institutions, the segments of the political elites that hegemonize them, the diffusion models present and the attitudes of the Axis powers before them.

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1   See Constantin Iordachi, ed., *Comparative Fascist Studies: New Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2009); António Costa Pinto and Aristotle Kallis, eds., *Rethinking Fascism and Dictatorship in Europe* (London: Palgrave, 2014); Marco Bresciani, ed., *Conservatives and Right Radicals in Interwar Europe* (London: Routledge, 2020); Kurt Weyland, *Assault on Democracy: Communism, Fascism and Authoritarianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

2   For the development of Axis rule as an empire, see Davide Rodogno, *Fascism's European Empire: Italian Occupation during the Second World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire* (New York: Penguin, 2008); Shelley Baranowski, *Nazi Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

3   Marianne Kneuer and Thomas Demmelhuber, 'Conceptualizing Authoritarian Gravity Centers: Sources and Addressees, Mechanisms and Motives of Authoritarian Pressure and Attraction,' in Marianne Kneuer and Thomas Demmelhuber, eds., *Authoritarian Gravity Centers: A Cross-Regional Study of Authoritarian Promotion and Diffusion* (London: Routledge, 2021), 12.

Fascism, Radical Right and Authoritarian Institution Building

When looking at models for new authoritarian political institutions during the era of fascism, those most often mentioned during the late 1930s were the Italian Fascist regime and German National Socialism. Nevertheless, with personalized leadership, the single party and corporatist political representation as an alternative to liberal democratic parliamentarism as the three main institutional features of the new fascist era dictatorships, few looked to Nazi Germany when crafting their political institutions.[4] The same cannot be said of Italian Fascism and even of regimes more sympathetic to the radical right, such as Dollfuss's Austria and Salazar's New State in Portugal, which presented more coherent diffusion models.[5] Nevertheless, there were many variations, emulation processes and even regime promotion in various directions during the genuine authoritarian political laboratory of the era of fascism.

Italian Fascism and this 'authoritarian third way' based their project of authoritarian political institutions on varieties of corporatism in terms of social and political representation and the single party. Social corporatism offered autocrats a formalized system of interest representation with which to manage labour relations: legitimizing the repression of free trade unions through the co-optation of some of their groups into state-controlled unions, often with compulsory membership. During the interwar dictatorships, social corporatism became synonymous with the forced unification of organized interests into single units of employers and employees tightly controlled by the state, which ended their independence, especially the independence of the trade unions. During this period, political corporatism mainly referred to the comprehensive organization of political society beyond state-social group relations, which sought to replace liberal democracy with 'an anti-individualist system of representation based on an "organic statist" view of society in which its organic units (families, local powers, professional associations and interest

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4 On the diffusion of NS social institutions and of corporatism see Sandrine Kott and Kiran Klaus Patel, eds., *Nazism across Borders: The Social Policies of the Third Reich and Their Global Appeal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); António Costa Pinto, ed., *Corporatism and Fascism: The Corporatist Wave in Europe* (London: Routledge, 2017); António Costa Pinto and Federico Finchelstein, eds., *Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Europe and Latin America: Crossing Borders* (London: Routledge, 2019).

5 See Jens Steffek, 'Fascist Internationalism,' *Millenium: Journal of International Studies* 44 (2015): 3–22; Matteo Pasetti, *L'Europa corporativa: Una storia transnazionale tra le due guerre mondiali* (Bologna: Bononia University Press, 2016); António Costa Pinto, ed., *An Authoritarian Third Way in the Era of Fascism: Diffusion, Models and Interactions in Europe and Latin America* (London: Routledge, 2022).

organizations and institutions) replace the individual-centred electoral model of representation and parliamentary legitimacy, and thereby becoming the primary and/or complementary legislative or advisory body of the ruler's executive'.[6]

When Nazi Germany became the dominant power in occupied Europe during the early 1940s, several cultural, social and especially economic projects for a European 'new order' were developed by Nazi institutions, sometimes in collaboration (and some tension) with Fascist Italy.[7] Nevertheless, between pressures from national (and sub-national) collaborationist elites, and the diversity of German political, economic and military institutions operating in the field, the Axis policies in Europe evolved towards a sort of 'polycratic fabric of occupations'.[8]

From Denmark's 'model protectorate' to the Slovak state of Monsignor Tiso, the Vichy Regime and Albania under Italian Fascism, Axis rule opened a window of opportunity for the construction of several types of collaborationist regimes. The interwar period, as Kurt Weyland wrote, was characterized on the right of the political spectrum by 'a division between most established elites, who preferred conservative, top-down, non-mobilizational authoritarianism, and charismatic upstart leaders and their fervent, violent mass followers, who spearheaded a dynamic bottom-up push for mobilizational, fascist totalitarianism'.[9] When examining new authoritarian political institutions and models under Axis rule, this dynamic is also present, with a different mix of fascist, conservative and radical-right winners and losers. From this perspective, the fate of corporatism in authoritarian institution-building under Axis rule is illustrative of several facets. On the one hand, it indicates the degree of independence and diversity of the national political elites in the institutional design of these regimes and the varied conditionality of the occupying forces. On the other, because 'the corporatist system of interest representation . . . had ideological

6   António Costa Pinto, *The Nature of Fascism Revisited* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2012), 122.

7   Benjamin George Martin, *The Nazi-Fascist New Order for European Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016); Raimund Bauer, *The Construction of a National Socialist Europe during the Second World War: How the New Order Took Shape* (London: Routledge, 2020); Georges-Henri Soutou, *Europa! Les projets européens de l'Allemagne nazie et l'Italie fasciste* (Paris: Tallandier, 2021).

8   Birthe Kundrus, *'Dieser Krieg ist der große Rassenkrieg': Krieg und Holocaust in Europa* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2018), 149, cited in Sven Reichardt, 'Fascism's Stages: Imperial Violence, Entanglement and Processualization,' *Journal of the History of Ideas* 82, no. 1 (2021): 87.

9   Weyland, *Assault on Democracy*, 83.

roots beyond fascism', it highlights the different varieties permeating different political families of the right, with a clear suspicion of German National Socialism.[10]

Amid a conjuncture of war and sudden changes in the decision-making of the occupants, these dictatorships did not consolidate themselves. In many cases, their political systems almost did not come into operation or were blocked. However, they left an impressive ballast of legal norms, constitutions, projects and models of parties and institutions that defined state-society relations and which are the main sources used in this article.[11] Authoritarian constitutions and their equivalents are, in a way, mirrors of the initial power coalition and its political programmes. Even if, in many respects, they are window dressing, they represent the backbone of the new political system and play a significant role in the consolidation of a new distribution of power, laying down the principles, institutional arrangements and procedures of decision-making.[12] The nature of the single party they almost all try to create is another crucial indicator of the hegemony of radical right versus fascist elites in the institution building of these dictatorships.

The short analysis of the process of institution building of regimes in some countries and regions under German and Italian occupation (Vichy France, Slovakia, Croatia, Serbia, Norway, Albania, and Slovenia) that is presented below is structured around three axes: the nature of leadership and executive elites; the creation of a single or dominant party; and levels of institutionalization of corporatist institutions and respective diffusion models.

Vichy France: 'The House That Pétain Built'[13]

The first constitutional law of Marshall Pétain's French state declares:

> The National Assembly concedes all powers to the government of the Republic, under the signature and authority of Marshall Pétain, president

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10   Ibid.

11   One of the best anthologies of the main sources in English is still Raphael Lamkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government Proposals for Redress* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944).

12   See Tom Ginsburg and Alberto Simpser, eds., *Constitutions in Authoritarian Regimes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

13   Shepard B. Clough, 'The House That Pétain Built,' *Political Science Quarterly* 59, no. 1 (1944): 30–39.

of the council, to promulgate one or more acts of the new constitution of the French state. This constitution must guarantee the right to work, families, and the fatherland. It will be ratified by the nation and applied by the assemblies to be created.[14]

Pétain and his inner circle presented a public discourse based on an organic view of society, the basis of which were the family, the region and the profession.[15] Independently of the institutional tensions in the construction of authoritarian political institutions, the dominant cultural model in Vichy, expressed in its propaganda and ideological legitimation bodies, was 'a conscious and organized traditionalism . . . that favoured images of a rural, corporatist and religious society'.[16] Associated with this traditionalist propaganda was a familist 'Natalo-corporatist' ideology that sought to legitimize the regime's natalist reforms.[17]

Corporatism had a strong presence in almost all its varieties in interwar France: from fascists to conservative Catholics and technocrats.[18] In addition, the ideological and legitimating output based on corporatism was strongly developed and present in the discourse of Marshall Pétain and some sections of the Vichy elite.[19] In fact, of all the regimes associated with the Nazi occupation, Vichy was the one in which corporatism had by far the greatest presence and, significantly, where it was most rooted ideologically among the political elite, their institutions and their propaganda. Nevertheless, while social corporatism made a real attempt to become institutionalized, the same cannot be said of political corporatism, which was only vaguely sketched out in some constitutional projects. The traditionalist segment of the Vichy elite, institutions and corporatist think tanks, like the *Institut d'études corporatives et sociales* [Institute for Corporatist and Social Studies], which were full of economists and law

14   Cited in Georges Berlia, 'La loi constitutionnelle du 10 juillet 1940,' *Revue du droit public et de la science politique* 60 (1944): 45–57.

15   Michèle Cointet-Labrousse, *Vichy et le fascisme: Les hommes, les structures et les pouvoirs* (Brussels: Editions Complexe, 1987), 179.

16   Pascal Ory, 'Preface,' in Christian Faure, *Le project culturel de Vichy* (Lyon: CNRS-Presses Universitaire de Lyon, 1989), 7.

17   Éric T. Jennings, 'Discours corporatiste, propagande nataliste, et contrôle social sous Vichy,' *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 49, no. 4 (2002): 103, https://doi.org/10.3917/rhmc.494.0101.

18   Mike Hawkins, 'Corporatism and Third Way Discourses in Inter-War France,' *Journal of Political Ideologies* 7, no. 3 (2002): 301–314.

19   See Olivier Dard, 'Vichy France and Corporatism', in *Corporatism and Fascism: The Corporatist Wave in Europe*, ed. António Costa Pinto (London: Routledge, 2017), 216–225.

experts, looked to Italian Fascism and especially to Portugal and Austria, which were, according to the constitutional law professor Boris Mirkine-Guetzevitch, examples 'of a neo-absolutist corporatism'.[20] Salazar's New State, as the majority of scholars of Vichy corporatism stress, fascinated an important segment of the French radical right, who saw in it a model that avoided the 'revolutionary rhetoric of Italian Fascism'.[21]

Like other dictators of the time, Pétain used several constitutional acts to concentrate legislative power to his person and ensured ministers answered to him alone. Both parliament and the senate were suspended before being closed entirely in 1942. Later, in the context of a difficult regime coalition and Nazi demands, Pétain created the office of vice-president of the council for Pierre Laval and increased the powers of a head of government, giving it a more bicephalous model.

The single party that had often been discussed in Vichy was never institutionalized. Against the background of a tense 'limited pluralism', which included Catholics and liberal conservatives as well as fascist parties, the internal tensions hindered its effective institutionalization, determining the centrality of a controlled administration.[22] In 1940, Marcel Déat assembled a small group of MPs of several tendencies and created *Le Comité de constitution du parti national unique* [CCPNU; Commission for the Creation of the National Single Party]. Written with a clear purpose to unify several political tendencies, the draft of its manifesto sent to Pétain includes 'the organization of economic life in a syndicalist and corporatist way under the control of the State'.[23] However, without Pétain's green light and decisive intervention, Déat could not force the unification of conservatives and the various fascist parties from above. Other projects developed, including the *Comité du rassemblement pour la révolution nationale* [Assembly Committee for the National Revolution]. However, none

20   Boris Mirkine-Guetzevitch, 'Le néo-absolutisme corporatif: Autriche, Portugal,' *L'Année politique française et étrangère*, Octobre 1934, 251–272.

21   Alain Chatriot, 'Un débat politique incertain: Le corporatisme dans la France des années 1930,' *Les Etudes sociales*, no. 157–158 (2013): 238, https://doi.org/10.3917/etsoc.157.0231. See, Olivier Dard and Isabel Sardinha-Desvígnes, 'Vichy and the Salazarist Model,' in *An Authoritarian Third Way in the Era of Fascism: Diffusion, Models and Interactions in Europe and Latin America*, ed. António Costa Pinto (London: Routledge, 2022), 107–121.

22   Marc Olivier Baruch, *Servir l'État français: L'administration en France de 1940 à 1944* (Paris: Fayard, 1997).

23   Jean-Paul Cointet, 'Marcel Déat et le parti unique (Été 1940),' *Revue d'histoire de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale* 91 (1973): 7.

were to be institutionalized, and neither did the *Legion française des combattants* [LFC; French Combatants' Legion] obtain the minimum powers of a single party.[24]

As in other dictatorships of this period, one of the first corporatist structures to be created by the Vichy regime—even before the approval of the labour charter—was the *Corporation nationale paysanne* [National Peasant Corporation]. It was created at the end of 1940 and designed to assist with the economic and social reorganization of the rural world. This coincided with the legacy of rural associations defending corporatism, such as Jacques le Roy Ladurie's *Union centrale des syndicats agricoles* [UNSA; Central Union of Agricultural Syndicates], and was also a consequence of the urgent need for the administration to reorganize and regulate production, distribution and agricultural price policies.[25]

The labour charter—the law on the 'social organization of professions'—was introduced in October 1941.[26] While it was inspired by Fascist Italy, Franco's Spain and Salazar's Portugal, because of the powerful presence of corporatist economists, law professors, technical experts, political activists and former union leaders, it was not a straight adaptation of the charters published in these countries. The Catholic Church hierarchy, with a more nuanced reaction than its unions, and Catholic Action, both endorsed the charter. In addition to establishing compulsory union membership and outlawing strikes, the charter organized the world of work into twenty-nine professional families. The report addressed to Marshal Pétain introducing the law stressed that the purpose of the charter was clear: 'the creation of future corporations that are the great hopes for France's future'.[27]

The efforts of Hubert Lagardelle, a former syndicalist and head of the Labour Ministry in 1942 and 1943, to put in place the centrepiece of the charter—single unions or professional social committees—had limited results, with the single unions struggling to see the light of day and the first professional social committee not established until 1943.[28]

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24   Jean-Paul Cointet, *La Légion francaise des combattants vers le parti unique: Vichy 1940–1944* (Paris: Henri Veyrier, 1991).

25   See Isabel Boussard-Decaris, *Vichy et la Corporation paysanne* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1980).

26   See, Jean-Pierre le Crom, *Syndicats, nous voilà! Vichy et le corporatisme* (Paris: Editions del'Atelier, 1995) and 'La defense du corporatisme integral sous Vichy: Ses acteurs, leurs inspirations, leurs realisations,' *Les Études sociales*, no. 157–158 (2013): 245–259, https://doi .org/10.3917/etsoc.157.0245.

27   Cited in Louis Baudin, *Le corporatisme* (Paris: Librairie general de droit et de jurisprudence, 1942), 213.

28   Christine Bouneau, 'Une expérience corporative: Hubert Lagardelle et la Charte du Travail

When on 10 July 1940, the National Assembly (the Senate and Chamber of Deputies sitting together) delegated full powers to Marshal Pétain, the head of both institutions, which were in the meantime suspended, waited for Pétain to present France with a new constitution.[29] Ironically, the *Conseil national économique* [CNE; Council for National Economy], the almost corporatist institution inherited from the Third Republic, was dissolved in 1940.[30] The creation of the *Conseil national* [National Council] as a consultative chamber may have been the embryo of a Vichy corporatist chamber. However, it was short-lived and, as in many other cases, unable to articulate social corporatism as functional representation.[31] The context of its creation was also complex and generated tensions between Pétain and other groups within the Vichy elite. With 213 members, this consultative chamber included forty-nine deputies, twenty-eight senators and 136 representatives of social, economic and cultural interests.[32] It only operated between 1941 and 1942, introducing advisory opinions and constitutional projects. The way the national council ran did not differ very much from the Portuguese New State's corporatist chamber. There were no plenary sessions as it operated only through commissions, and its debates were held privately. In some constitutional projects discussed by the national council, there was a concern about including corporations in a future constitution by reflecting its integration into representative-consultative institutions. However, they never saw the light of day.

The Conseil national was tasked with drafting a constitution, and its commission presented four different drafts to Marshal Pétain. The first projects opted for authoritarian and corporatist models, mainly inspired by the 1933 Portuguese constitution, to evolve later towards a 'rationalized parliamentarism'[33] In one of the first versions, the National Assembly had a non-elected 'Grand Council' and a corporatist 'National Council'. Hubert Lagardelle, Francois Perroux and Gaetan Pirou, important corporatists participated in this first

du régime de Vichy', in *Les expériences corporatives dans l'aire latine*, ed. Didier Musiedlak (Bern: Peter Lang, 2011), 345–368.

29　Paul Smith, 'Pluralism, Parliament and the Possibility of a "Sénat fédérateur", 1940–1969,' in *Pluralism and the Idea of the Republic in France*, eds. Julian Wright and H.S. Jones (London: Palgrave, 2012), 235.

30　Alain Chatriot, 'Les renouveaux de l'histoire politique française du contemporain,' *Studia Politica: Romanian Political Science Review* 3 (2009): 401–423.

31　See Michèle Cointet, *Le Conseil national de Vichy: Vie politique et réforme de l'État en régime autoritaire, 1940–1944* (Paris: Aux Amateurs de Livres, 1989).

32　Cointet, *Vichy et le fascisme*, 61.

33　See Etienne Le Floch, 'Les projets de constitution de Vichy (1940–1944)' (doctoral thesis, Université de Paris Pantheon-Assas, 2003).

project.[34] The second one, known as the 'Gignoux' project, after its author Claude-Joseph Gignoux, is more organic in its several versions: its main principals were 'famille, travail, patrie'; 'professional suffrage'; and a bicameral National Assembly that was closer to the integralist corporatist type of representation.[35]

Unlike the labour charter, corporatist representation was never dominant in any Vichy constitutional text that saw the light of day. At the beginning of 1944, Pétain approved a constitutional project to introduce a compromise between liberal and light corporatist representation that never came into force, defining a parliament elected by individual suffrage and a senate with representatives of the corporatist institutions and members of the country's elite: in both cases nominated by the head of state. The remaining 250 members were to be elected via colleges that incorporated departmental councillors and delegates of the municipal councils.

Catholic Slovakia: 'One God, One People, One Party'

While Pétain's regime proved to be poorly institutionalized, the same cannot be said of Catholic Slovakia. In the case of the Slovak state, authoritarian political Catholicism, nationalism and the creation of the National State were created from above, initially establishing a political regime that strongly identified with both Dollfuss's Austria and the Iberian dictatorships, and then experienced the political intervention of Nazi Germany. This limited and partially altered its political and social institution building project. As in other countries in Axis Europe, other Nazi institutions, government offices, the party, DAF and the SS were also to be influential in specific areas.

When the Slovak state was created as a German protectorate in 1939, the expanded successor to Andrej Hlinka's *Hlinkova slovenská ľudová strana* [HSLS; Slovak People's Party] became the single party, led by his successor and vice-chairman, the Catholic priest Józef Tiso, under the motto: 'One God, one people, one party'.[36] Heavily influenced by Austrian Social Catholics and by Ignaz

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34   Gaetan Pirou, *Essais sur le corporatisme* (Paris: Librairie du Recueil Sirey, 1938); François Perroux, *Capitalisme et communauté de travail* (Paris: Librairie du Recueil Sirey, 1938); see Nicolas Brisset and Raphaël Fèvre, 'The "Community of Labour" in Troubled Times (1926–1944): François Perroux's Irrational Foundations of Economic Expertise,' *The European Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 27, no. 5 (2020): 735–761.

35   Cointet, *Le Conseil national de Vichy*, 301–306.

36   Richard J. Wolff and Jörg K. Hoensch, *Catholics, the State and the European Radical Right,*

Seipel, 'as early as 1931, [Tiso] moved away from parliamentary democracy by endorsing the Catholic corporatism of *Quadragesimo Anno*'.[37] As Tiso noted in 1930, the nation was a single set of origins, customs and language, constituting an organic whole. For Tiso, politics should be 'guided by the two utmost ideas: God and the nation'.[38] However, despite being the guide of the dictatorship and the single party, Tiso had to share power with Vojtech Tuka, who was more radical and had been appointed prime minister and whom Nazi Germany wished to retain.[39] In fact, in the single party, the government and some political institutions, factionalism was clear, with the political elite divided into one group associated with Tiso and a more radical faction led by Tuka.

The new constitution, inspired by Salazar's Portugal and Dolfuss's Austria, sought to reconcile liberal parliamentarianism with corporatism. Within the single party, the *Strana slovenskej národnej jednoty* [SSNJ; Party of National Unity], the pro-corporatist clerical faction was the most important.[40] Minorities could have their own parties, but with ethnic-cultural, not political, representation. The regime's brief existence, Tuka's more radical faction and the influence of Nazi Germany and the German minority prevented the appearance of a more consolidated corporatist and organic system.[41]

The 1939 constitution proclaimed Slovakia a Catholic state in which 'the nation participates in state power through the HSLS', and the single party took control of parliament.[42] The newly created Council of State developed into a corporatist upper house to advise Tiso, who had, in the meanwhile, become president and who, in 1942, was to be proclaimed leader by the Slovak assembly. Members of this privy council included the prime minister, the president of the Slovak assembly and members nominated by Tiso, the single party and

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    1919–1945 (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1987), 174; Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, 141–142.

37   James Mace Ward, *Priest, Politician, Collaborator: Jozef Tiso and the Making of Fascist Slovakia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013), 119.

38   See Diana Mishkova, Marius Turda and Balazs Trencsényi, eds., *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe 1770–1945*, Vol. 4: *Anti-Modernism: Radical Revisions of Collective Identity* (Budapest, Central European University Press, 2014), 106.

39   Nadya Nedelsky, 'The Wartime Slovak State: A Case Study on the Relationship between Ethnic Nationalism and Authoritarian Patterns of Governance,' *Nations and Nationalisms* 7, no. 2 (2001): 221.

40   Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, 142; Yeshayahu Jelinek, *The Parish Republic: Hlinka's Slovak People's Party* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1976), 47–51.

41   Ludovit Hallon and Michal Schvarc, 'Ideas, Reality and the International Context of the Social State in the Slovak Republic of 1939–1945,' *Historický časopis* 63, no. 5 (2015): 901–937; Ward, *Priest, Politician, Collaborator*, 211–217.

42   *Slovenský zákonník*, Vydaná 31. júla 1939, 1.

each corporation (*stände*): moreover, like Mussolini's Fascist Grand Council, this council, according to chapter five of the constitution, chose the candidates for parliament.[43] The implantation of a corporatist system called Christian solidarism, designed by chapter seven of the constitution, was then programmed.

In a series of articles on the main corporatist principles of the 1939 constitution, a leader of the party and deputy speaker of the Slovak parliament, Karol Mederly, was clear: this 'must be built on two basic pillars: the Christian worldview and nationalism. In this way, we will achieve a firm ground of Christian and national solidarity as a basic condition for the Slovak state'.[44]

According to the legislation published in January 1940, all Slovaks were obliged to join one of the corporations that replaced the unions. The political cadres within these corporations had to be single party members.[45] 'The summit of the corporatist system would be the Supreme Corporatist Council, composed of a praesidium and body of representatives comprising the representatives of the central bodies of the individual corporatist organizations with equal numbers of employees and employers. The Supreme Corporate Council would be headed by a president of the corporatist bodies appointed by the head of state and two vice-presidents elected by the council of representatives'.[46]

As in other dictatorships, the institutionalization of social corporatism was resisted by industrialists, who denounced the plan as 'revolutionary',[47] but the most important negative reaction came from the German minority and soon after from the embassy and the institutions of National Socialism through external intervention, accompanied by Tuka's radical faction, who saw it as 'the work of a group of parish priests'.[48] In a report to Berlin dated April 1940, the German ambassador stressed the fact that the 'Slovak state as a close ally of Nazi Germany could not continue to be directed by the ideology of political Catholicism and it could not be allowed to construct a corporatist system on the ideological basis of the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* in the same spirit as the corporatist system of Dollfuss'.[49] This lack of trust in the

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43   Wolff and Hoensch, *Catholics*, 180.

44   Cited in Hallon and Schvarc, 'Ideas, Reality and the International Context of the Social State,' 910.

45   The six corporations created by chapter seven of the constitution were called 'estates'. See *Slovenský zákonník*, Vydaná 31. júla 1939, 3; Jozef Lettrich, *History of Modern Slovakia* (New York, NY: Praeger, 1955), 147–148.

46   Hallon and Schvarc, 'Ideas, Reality and the International Context of the Social State,' 913.

47   Ibid., 914; Ward, *Priest, Politician, Collaborator*, 207.

48   Hallon and Schvarc, 'Ideas, Reality and the International Context of the Social State,' 915.

49   Ibid., 915–916.

dominant segment of the political elite led Hitler in July 1940 to invite Tiso, Tuka and Mach, then commander of the Hlinka Guard and chief of the propaganda office, to Salzburg, reinforcing Nazi Germany's position. Germany's interference in Slovakia was further enhanced by the appointment of advisers to key institutions; however, Tiso and the 'clerical faction' remained the dominant force in the administration, and he strengthened his control of the single party.

In 1942 Tiso received the title of 'Leader' from the Slovak assembly in an apparent move to add charismatic elements to strengthen his position and present a more global fascistization of the regime. At the same time, Tiso 'admitted that neither Catholic corporatism nor a copy of German rule was emerging in Slovakia, but rather "a combination of both systems"'.[50] Tuka and some intellectual politicians close to him developed a corporatist alternative in 1942 that was more compatible with National Socialism, with the establishment of a 'Slovak working community' organized around 'four interest associations, divided according to the type of productive activity and employment, namely the Agricultural Association, Association for Industry, Small Business and Finance, Association of Members of the Free Professions, and the Association of State and Public Employees'.[51] The different projects of corporatist reforms were thus a symbol of a dynamic of tension and among factions in the process of institution building of what many defined as a 'Clerico-fascist' regime in Slovakia.[52]

Although some segments of the Catholic Church viewed a Slovak clerical state in the orbit of German National Socialism with some embarrassment, its institutionalization, legitimation and political elite were dominated by the Catholic elite.[53] As in other cases of 'German Europe', the authoritarian corporatist regime of Tiso represented the relative autonomy of national elites and a dynamic of tension between political families in respect of the regime's institutional design, but if the corporatist Catholic worldview of the first year was never fully institutionalized, the pro-Nazi radical faction did not dominate. Simultaneously, the antisemitic dimension also made significant qualitative

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50 Cited in Miloslav Szabó, 'Hitler's Priests in Slovakia? On the Convergence of Catholicism and Fascism in Nazi "New Europe"', *Czech Journal of Contemporary History* 29, no. 3 (2022): 706.

51 Hallon and Schvarc, 'Ideas, Reality and the International Context of the Social State.'

52 Hana Kubátová and Michal Kubát, 'The Priest and the State: Clerical Fascism in Slovakia and Theory,' *Nations and Nationalism* 27, no. 3 (2021): 734–749.

53 Jan Bank and Lieve Gevers, *Churches and Religion in the Second World War* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 129–133.

leaps, causing internal tensions—especially with the Vatican—while repression, propaganda and ethnic-cultural radicalization marked the evolution of Slovakia.[54]

The 'Independent State of Croatia'

After the Axis forces attacked the Kingdom of Yugoslavia on 6 April 1941, and its territory was partitioned between Germany, Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria and other client regimes, there were some different strategies for political control.[55] In the case of Croatia, the Axis established the *Nezavisna Država Hrvatska* [NDH; Independent State of Croatia]. At the same time, most of Serbia was placed under a German administration that gave some powers to a more fragile local government. The NDH was set up under the political leadership of Ante Pavelić and his Ustasha. The Ustasha was a radical ultra-nationalist organization associated with fascism and terrorist political action. Ante Pavelić, a lawyer and extreme-right politician whose main political activity in interwar Yugoslavia was always associated with the independence of Croatia, went into exile in Germany and Italy on many occasions, which was where he founded the Ustasha.[56] During the 1930s, the movement was increasingly influenced by Italian Fascism and German National Socialism.[57] By the late 1930s, however, it was developing a racist ideology through its demand for a 'Gothic' identity for all Croats and by idealizing the peasantry. The Ustasha was fiercely Catholic, identifying Catholicism with Croatian nationalism. As corporatism became an element of ideological convergence between the Croat Catholic movement and Ustasha, most Catholic intellectuals in Croatia supported constructing a social system

54   Richard J. Wolff, 'The Catholic Church and the Dictatorships in Slovakia and Croatia, 1939–1945,' *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia* 88, no. 1/4 (1977): 3–30; Ivan Kamenec, 'The Slovak State,' in *Slovakia in History*, eds. Mikuláš Teich, Dušan Kováč, and Martin D. Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 175–192.

55   See Jozo Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia: Occupation and Collaboration* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001); Marie-Janin Calic, *History of Yugoslavia* (West Lafayette, ID: Purdue University Press, 2019), 125–141, http://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/24993; Nevenko Bartulin, 'The NDH as a "Central European Bulwark against Italian Imperialism": An Assessment of Croatian-Italian Relations within the German "New Order" in Europe, 1941–1945,' *Review of Croatian History* 3, no. 1 (2007): 49–73.

56   See Goran Miljan, 'From Obscure Beginnings to State "Resurrection": Ideas and Practices of the Ustaša Organization,' *Fascism: Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 5, no. 1 (2016): 3–25, https://doi.org/10.1163/22116257-00501002.

57   See Erik Gobetti, *Dittatore per caso: Un piccolo duce protetto dall'Italia fascista* (Naples: L'Ancora del Mediterraneo, 2001).

based on an organic view of society. As the decade progressed, the Ustasha 'adapted the Italian Fascist model to Croatian conditions. In the case of corporatism, as on the national question, there was an unmistakable convergence of views between the Ustasha and radical Catholics'.[58] The appropriation of German and Italian social policies in the NDH is also very much present.[59]

According to one of its main legal theorists, The NDH's principal ideology was nationalism, solidarity, the social obligation of work and 'estate corporatism'.[60] Despite its Catholic matrix and the influence of Italian Fascism, as in Slovakia, the corporatist discourse of the leaders and institutions of the NDH was more radical and 'socialist'. Ethnic cleansing was at the forefront of NDH ideology, and 'totalitarianism and violence remained woven into the very structure of the state'.[61] In fact, one of the basic goals of Ustasha ideology was to create an 'ethnically pure Croatia'.[62]

Decision-making within the NDH was increasingly centralized in the person of Ante Pavelić, who arbitrarily broadened and narrowed his circle of close advisers according to circumstances and who was 'always very unwilling to convene government meetings'. However, the very first government included a Ministry of Corporations, signalling the centrality of the institutionalization of a corporatist regime.[63]

The NDH introduced most authoritarian and fascist-inspired institutions, even though these were often poorly developed: the single party, a youth organization, a system of national labour syndicates and an outline of 'professional organization chambers' as the beginning of a social corporatist system. In 1940, it created the *Hrvatski radnički savez* [HRS; Worker's Chamber of the Croatian Workers' Union], which was later subsumed, as were all trade unions, into one main syndicate, the *Glavni savez stALIŠKIH i drugi postrojbi* [GSS; Main Alliance

58   Mark Biondich, 'Radical Catholicism and Fascism in Croatia, 1918–1945,' *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 8, no. 2 (2007): 396.

59   Alexander Korb, 'From the Balkans to Germany and Back: The Croatian Labour Service, 1941–1945,' in *Nazism Across Borders: The Social Policies of the Third Reich and Their Global Appeal*, eds. Sandrine Kott and Kiran Klaus Patel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 83–97.

60   Cited in Nevenko Bartulin, *The Racial Idea in the Independent State of Croatia: Origins and Theory* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 146.

61   Rory Yeomans, *Visions of Annihilation: The Ustasha Regime and the Cultural Politics of Fascism, 1941–1945* (Pittsburgh, PA, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013), 26.

62   Ibid., 27.

63   Ivo Goldstein, 'Ante Pavelić: Charisma and National Mission in Wartime Croatia,' in *Charisma and Fascism in Interwar Europe*, eds. António Costa Pinto, Roger Eatwell, and Stein Ugelvik Larsen (London: Routledge, 2007), 87–96.

of Syndicates]. Its leader and chief ideologue was Aleksandar Seitz, who had the clear goal of introducing an economy based on corporatist principles.[64]

In 1941, the Ustasha regime established the *Glavni savez staliških i drugih postrojbi* [General League of Estate and Other Fasces]. Although set up within the framework of the Ustasha movement, membership of one of the sixteen— later eighteen—fasces soon became compulsory, as the system's aim was to include and steer all of Croatia's economy and society. In May 1941, the Ustasha leadership established special communities (*zajednice*), membership of which was also compulsory and which were intended to be collective organizations for the entire economic process. In the following year, the 'law concerning chambers and professional associations' came to give the legal foundation to the forced 'promotion of harmony' of organized interests and labour, creating four chambers that encompassed the entire social and economic sphere under the supervision of the state, and which liquidated all free associations and transferred their property to the new chambers.[65]

The Ustasha reconvened the Croatian parliament, the *Sabor*, with reference to the medieval kingdom. Members of parliament were selected by the Ustasha government from among five categories, and meetings were convened just a few times after the first session. Its composition resembles the Vichy Conseil national: surviving members of the last Sabor; HSS deputies elected to the Belgrade *Skupshtina* [Parliament] on 8 December 1938 and life members of the party's central committee of that party; surviving members of the Council of the Croatian Party of the Right; ranking members of the Ustasha supreme command; and two representatives of the German minority.[66] The State Sabor had nine commissions (treasury, national economy and transportation, education, judiciary and religion, health, co-operatives and corporatism, appeals and petitions, membership, and a house committee). As in almost all authoritarian legislatures, plenary sessions were not to occur except in rare circumstances. The deputies had to ask permission to address the assembly and were prohibited from reading their speeches. Pavelić's signature was necessary to validate any law.

In 1942, a consultative assembly, the State Council, was created in preparation for a corporatist parliament.[67] German reports noted Pavelić intended to construct a new Sabor with representatives of corporations, and in fact, he

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64   Yeomans, *Visions of Annihilation*, 196.

65   Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, 609–610.

66   Yeshayahu Jelinek, 'An Authoritarian Parliament: The Croatian State Sabor of 1942,' *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 22, no. 2 (1980): 263.

67   Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, 608–609.

often mentioned the idea of a corporatist assembly that was inspired by the Italian corporatist chamber. However, as one student of the NDH remarked: 'creation, transfer and abolition of institutions and offices were frequent'.[68]

As in other regimes under Nazi rule, different ideas of corporatism had their own areas of influence. The 'opposing views about the nature and the future of corporatism in the NDH mirrored the factional infighting in existing corporatist institutions', and the building of several centres of power inside corporatist institutions, mirroring the global tendency of the regime did not help its consolidation.[69] Influential intellectual politicians succeeded each other at the head of some corporatist institutions. Advocates of Croatian socialism (Aleksandar Seitz, for example) were especially receptive to the Nazi social policies that dominated the General Union of Estates and Other Associations. Pavelić gave Ivan Oršanić, the new head of the General Union, the opportunity to introduce a form of political corporatism closer to Catholic corporatism into the country's political system. Therefore, corporatist institutions were stages of factional conflict based on diverging corporatist visions.

The NDH was marked by improvisation, disarticulation between the party and the state, and generalized terrorist violence against all 'foreigners', particularly Serbs, Jews and Roma.

Nedić's Serbia: 'Labour, Family and Nation'

In military-occupied Serbia after the brief 'Commissar government' of May to August 1941, the German authorities established a domestic 'Government of National Salvation' with very limited powers from September 1941 to October 1944 with the radical-right-wing General Milan Nedić at its head. Nedić 'envisioned an ultraconservative rather than a fascist Serbian state and stood closer to Pétain than to Ante Pavelić'.[70] Ironically, in order to fashion the institutions and government policy, Nedić turned to Dimitrije Ljotić, the former justice minister in the Royal Dictatorship of King Alexander, who had resigned after the rejection of his corporatist constitution. After his brief time in government, Ljotić became leader of *Zbor*, a radical-right party based on small fascist groups,

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68   Jelinek, 'An Authoritarian Parliament,'262.

69   Leo Marić, 'The Three Faces of Croation Corporatism, 1941–1945,' in *An Authoritarian Third Way in the Era of Fascism: Diffusion, Models and Interactions in Europe and Latin America*, ed. António Costa Pinto (London: Routledge, 2022), 161.

70   Alexander Prusin, *Serbia under the Swastika: A World War II Occupation* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2017), 68.

created in 1935. Initially strongly influenced by the teachings of *Action française*, Ljotić blended it with the institutional model of Italian Fascism. Its political programme was a blend of corporatism and anti-liberalism, in the political and economic senses, associated with an antisemitic nationalism.[71]

During the Nazi occupation, Ljotić and his associates were able to reorganize Zbor and its militia, which became of central importance within the collaborationist Serbian administration.[72] The result was a conception of the state as a blood community, religious Christian-Orthodox mysticism and corporatist principles.[73] Both Nedić and Ljotić perceived themselves as prophets of Serbia's national regeneration and attempted to eclipse the limitations German authorities imposed on them by 'direct' collaboration.[74] General Nedic, probably emulating Pétain, always cited the motto 'labour, family and nation' in his speeches.[75]

As with the NDH in neighbouring Croatia, several social corporatist organizations were established. Dimitrije Ljotić and other supporters of 'organic sociology' campaigned once more for the merits of the corporatism state, which would demonstrate the 'resurgent, persistent and flexible nature of corporatist theories in the Serbian context'.[76]

Ljotić did not accept a position in the government. Still, some of his followers received ministerial posts and viewed the occupation as an opportunity to create the State of Zbor. Included in the plans to improve the status of Serbia presented by Nedić to (and rejected by) the Nazi authorities, the project to build a new 'organic' political structure for the creation of a Serbian state also included a representational structure that would be articulated through several 'people's chambers' at the village, municipality and state level. It was conceived as a hierarchical and non-elected structure up to a 'National Assembly of Serbia' that would be directed by state leadership and would only have advisory powers. All decision-making power would be in the hands of the head of government administration, general Nedić, as the 'first master of the peo-

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71   Milos Martic, 'Dimitrije Ljotic and the Yugoslav National Movement Zbor, 1935–1945,' *East European Quarterly* 14, no. 2 (1980): 219–239; John Paul Newman, *Yugoslavia in the Shadow of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 228–229.

72   See Philip J. Cohen, *Serbia's Secret War: Propaganda and the Deceit of History* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1996), 38.

73   Milan Ristović, 'General M. Nedić: Diktatur, Kollaboration und die patriarchalische Gesellschaft Serbiens 1941–1944,' in *Autoritäre Regime in Ostmittel und Südosteuropa 1919–1944*, ed. Erwin Oberländer (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2001), 646–650.

74   Prusin, *Serbia under the Swastika*, 70.

75   Ibid., 67.

76   See T. Kuljic, 'Serbian Fascism and Sociology,' *Sociologija* 16, no. 2 (1974): 237–268.

ple'.[77] Ljotić was not among those who drafted the Serbian cultural-civilian plan in 1942, although he influenced it to some extent. The draft was intended to be the institutional basis for the new 'Serbian co-operative peasant state' that was to be led by Nedić.[78] This draft plan for creating an organic Serbian state was sent in two memorandums to the German occupation administration, which rejected the project after some hesitations, with the commanding general in Serbia, Paul Bader, suggesting Italy had been behind the proposal.[79]

Quisling's Norway under Fascism: 'National Revolution from Above'[80]

Quisling's brief and limited rule in Nazi-occupied Norway represents the take-over of (limited) power by a small fascist party, *Nasjonal Samling* [NS; National Unity], which was influenced by National Socialism and Italian Fascism in both its ideology and political programme, but which was closer to Nazi Germany in its international relations.[81] On the very first day of the Nazi occupation of Norway, Vidkun Quisling, the leader of the NS, led an initially unsuccessful coup against the Norwegian government. Sometime later, though, NS became the single party and the main instrument of Norwegian collaboration. During one of these phases, the Nazis gave the Norwegian authorities some scope for manoeuvre and political autonomy with which to construct a regime under occupation. When the opportunity arose at the end of 1942, Reichkommissar Terboven announced the transfer of power to Quisling, who was appointed president-minister of an 'autonomous government'. The Reichskommissariat

77   Milan Ristović, 'Rural "Anti-Utopia" in the Ideology of Serbian Collaborationists in the Second World War,' *European Review of History / Revue européenne d'histoire* 15, no. 2 (2008): 187.

78   For an example of the ideological foundations of this project see the article by one of Zbor intellectuals who collaborated with the Nedić government, see Svetislav Stefanovic, 'The Building of New Serbia as a Peasant State' (1942), cited in *Anti-Modernism: Radical Revisions of Collective Identity*, eds. Diana Mishkova, Marius Turda, and Balazs Trencsenyi (Budapest: Central European University, 2014), 388–395.

79   See Z. Janjetović, *Collaboration and Fascism under the Nedić Regime* (Belgrade: Institute for Recent History of Serbia, 2018), 441–448.

80   Quisling cited in Hans Fredrik Dahl, *Quisling: A Study in Treachery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 244.

81   See Dahl, *Quisling: A Study in Treachery*, 110–117; Stein Ugelvik Larsen, 'Charisma from Below? The Quisling Case in Norway,' in *Charisma and Fascism in Interwar Europe*, eds. António Costa Pinto, Roger Eatwell, and Stein Ugelvik Larsen (London: Routledge, 2007), 97–106.

was overseeing the most important decisions, and German supervisors were in place in every major department of government and administration.

When Quisling was appointed to this position, according to one of his biographers, his intentions were threefold: 'to conclude peace with Germany; introduce a corporatist state; and summon a council of the Kingdom'.[82] Corporatism had been a part of National Unity's programme since the 1930s, calling for the organization of a corporatist chamber that would unite workers and employers under the same umbrella. During the 1930s, the manifestos of NS proposed the creation of a corporatist chamber as a supplement to parliament, as an advisory body to the Storting on 'corporate matters'.[83] While its proposals to reverse parliamentarianism were vaguer than those of other fascist movements, National Unity agreed with other Scandinavian fascist parties, which 'wholeheartedly opted for corporatist ideas'.[84]

Social corporatism under National Unity rule was given its first push with the creation of the Office for Corporations within the Ministry of the Interior in 1941. Almost all voluntary associations were to be registered 'to become corporate members of the state'.[85] This process of institutionalizing a 'labour corporation' faced strong and partially unexpected resistance from organized interests, with even civil servants fearing the domination of the state apparatus by the party, expressing their discontent to the German authorities.[86]

Quisling's plan was quite clear as it was implemented: the creation of autonomous, legalized guilds (corporations) 'along Italian lines'.[87] The organization of guilds licenced by the state and the new basis for a national assembly to replace the old parliament was the realization of the new order's authoritarian representation. Only the state-organized guilds were represented. A memo from the interior ministry detailed the number of representatives sent by each

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82   See Paul M. Hayes, *Quisling: The Career and Political Ideas of Vidkun Quisling, 1887–1945* (Newton: Abbot, David and Charles, 1971), 278.

83   Stein Ugelvik Larsen, 'Corporations against Corporatism in Quisling Norway, 1940–1950s,' in *Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Europe and Latin America*, eds. António Costa Pinto and Federico Finchelstein (London: Routledge, 2019), 95–109.

84   Ulf Lindström, *Fascism in Scandinavia, 1920–1940* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1985), 20; see Salvatore Garau, *Fascism and Ideology: Italy, Britain and Norway* (London: Routledge, 2015), 209–210; Martin Kristoffer Hamre, 'Norwegian Fascism in a Transnational Perspective: The Influence of German National Socialism and Italian Fascism on the Nasjonal Samling, 1933–1936,' *Fascism: Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 8, no. 1 (2019): 36–60, https://doi.org/10.1163/22116257-00801003.

85   Dahl, *Quisling*, 212.

86   See Odvar K. Hoidal, *Quisling: A Study in Treason* (Olso: Norwegian University Press, 1989), 575–578.

87   Dahl, *Quisling*, 211.

corporatist body, noting that members of the single party 'would be required to function as delegates'. In total, there were 120 representatives from the thirteen corporations, of which six had been established by the spring of 1942.[88] This corporatist advisory parliament, the *Riksting*, consisted of two chambers: the *Næringsting* [Economic Chamber] and the *Kulturting* [Cultural Chamber].

Scholars of Quisling's short rule in Norway offer different reasons for the abrupt end to the project to convene the Riksting and institutionalize the National Assembly. Among the reasons was that this Riksting, with its limited authority, did not have the unanimous support of the National Unity leadership, who feared the old parties would infiltrate it. There was also some resistance from organized interests, particularly from within the economic sector, to the forced integration into the state, while the Nazi authorities, fearing social conflict, viewed it with suspicion. Reichskommissar Terboven found the situation critical and foresaw a situation where vital German interests could be threatened. However, the most plausible explanation may be the social resistance to 'corporatization' and the lack of belief that Quisling's controlled assembly 'could be trusted as state organs'.[89] Quisling then decided to make plans for a legislature that was based on the single party rather than on the corporations. However, he decided to make the Næringsting and Kulturting advisory bodies to the ministries of industry and culture, respectively. He announced this plan at the National Unity convention in September 1942. He informed the party that a new constitution would have to create a new political representation based on the single party. The corporatist chambers should be, in his own words, 'exclusively of a professional and not a political nature'.[90]

The already mentioned resistance of interest groups encouraging resignations and denials to participate in the new institutions and the fear of social turmoil provoked the intervention of Reichskommissar Terboven cancelling the Riksting plan, with Quisling receiving a message from Berlin telling him to stop until the war was won. As a result, 'Quisling's vision of a corporatist Riksting as the basis for a new form of representative body was left in tatters, and his hopes of signing a peace treaty with Hitler, in which Norway would become an independent state within the German federal union, was ended'.[91]

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88   Hayes, *Quisling*, 285; Dahl, *Quisling*, 274.
89   Dahl, *Quisling*, 226.
90   Cited in Dahl, *Quisling*, 277.
91   Larsen, 'Corporations against Corporatism in Quisling Norway,' 104.

Fascist Italy in Albania and Slovenia: Exporting Fascist Institutions

In 1939, Fascist Italy occupied Albania.[92] Between the entry into the war and the fall of Mussolini in 1943, it conquered and shared with Nazi Germany several territories in the eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans, from Dalmatia to parts of Slovenia. Although with different legal statuses, levels of institution building and cooperation with local elites, Italian political dimensions of military occupation were 'less fragmented in decision-making compared with Germany, even if knowing some polyocracy as well.'[93]

The case of Albania under Italian occupation represents the only case of occupation in Axis Europe in which Italian Fascism created a political regime that somehow stood for the 'ideal type' of the exportability of Fascist institutions. In 1939, 'Italy hoped to give the impression to the world, and the Albanians, that the new regime would rapidly bring the country to new prosperity after the dark years under the deposed King Zog'.[94] In fact, during the first months after the Italian troops landed in Albania, there was a great effort to build a fascist Albania by creating new economic, social and political institutions.

In April 1939, a National Constituent Assembly was called to proclaim the creation of a union between Italy and Albania and to offer the crown of Albania to the King of Italy. This was soon followed by the treaty signed in Rome, according to which Italy would manage the foreign affairs of Albania and represent it abroad. This 'personal union of Italy and Albania under Victor Emmanuel III' was already difficult to explain in 1939 for a dictator suspecting the monarchy and the king. However, the political instruments of domination were under his control and that of the Fascist Party.

The new constitution, the 'Basic Statute' of the Kingdom of Albania, was written by Italian jurists to replace the 1928 constitution. As a US law professor wrote in 1939: 'The new order in Albania is a model for countries conquered by European dictatorships. The constitutional laws of the kingdom reveal, furthermore, how a modern dictatorship can completely and effectively dominate a vassal state by means of a streamlined organization'.[95]

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92   See Alberto Basciani, *L'impero nei Balcani: L'occupazione italiana dell'Albania 1939–1943* (Roma: Viela, 2022).

93   Paolo Fonzi, *Oltre i confini: Le occupazione italiane durante la Seconda Guerra Mondiale (1939–1943)* (Florence: Le Monier, 2020), 209; see also H. James Burgwyn, *Empire on the Adriatic: Mussolini's Conquest of Yugoslavia: 1941–1943* (New York: Enigma, 2005).

94   Giovanni Villari, 'A Failed Experiment: The Exportation of Fascism to Albania,' *Modern Italy* 12, no. 2 (2007): 158.

95   R.M.W. Kempner, 'The New Constitution of Albania: A model Constitution for European Vassal States,' *Tulane Law Review* 15 (1940–1941): 430.

According to the statute, the king was the 'supreme head of the state' (article 13) and exercised executive power (article 6) through a lieutenant general. He concentrated the legislative power 'together with the collaboration of the Consiglio Superiore Fascista Corporativo (Superior Fascist Corporatist Council)' (article 5), which was an advisory body consisting of sixty to seventy MPs and which replaced parliament and included the members of the Central Council of the Albanian Fascist Party and effective members of the *Consiglio centrale dell'economia corporativa* [Central Corporatist Economy Council]. The agenda was defined by its president, no votes were taken in the superior council, and no subject could be placed on the agenda without the king's consent (that is to say, without the consent of the lieutenant general).[96]

The Central Corporatist Economy Council was established in 1940 as an advisory body that would prepare *parere* [reports] on all matters relating to economy and labour. It comprised a president, four vice-presidents and twenty-four members of the Fascist Party. It was organized into four sections: agriculture, industry, commerce and professions and arts.

The lieutenant general answered politically to the Italian foreign minister. However, he had total administrative control of all political life in Albania, including the authority to name and dismiss councillors, revoke the secretary of the Albanian Fascist Party and validate the functions of members of the *Consiglio superiore fascista corporativo* and the Central Council of Corporatist Economy.

Even when composed of an Albanian prime minister and a council of ministers, the government was controlled by the Italian authorities, and each ministry had a permanent Italian counsellor attached to it. In this way, the Italian advisers acted on the lieutenant general's instructions and directed the ministries' work. The council of ministers included ministers of justice, the interior, finance, public education and the national economy and was headed by the president of the council. A *Direzione generale per la stampa, la propaganda e il turismo* [General Office for Press and Propaganda] which later became the *Ministero della cultura popolare* [Ministry of Popular Culture] was established under the president of the council. While the provincial administration remained largely unchanged, it was placed under the control of nominated prefects.[97]

The first prime minister nominated by Fascist Italy was Shefqet Vërlaci, a great landowner who opposed King Zog. In the summer of 1941, recognizing

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96   'Fundamental Statute of the Kingdom of Albania, June 4, 1939,' *British & Foreign State Papers* 327, 1939, 329–330.

97   Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, 102.

Vërlaci's government was incapable of controlling the growing internal unrest, especially in newly-occupied provinces such as Kosovo, the lieutenant general proposed the appointment of a new prime minister in the shape of Mustafa Merlika Kruja, who remained in post until 1943. Known as Albania's 'Quisling' after the war, Kruja, who had no fascist past, was, above all, a passionate nationalist and anti-communist who was exiled during the last years of King Zog's rule.[98] A supporter of establishing an Italian protectorate that he believed was the only way to preserve the state and facilitate the construction of an independent Albania after the end of the First World War, Kruja has served as a minister and an MP in opposition to Ahmed Zogu during the 1920s. While in exile, he accepted financial support from the Italian government to co-found the pro-Italian nationalist Zara Group. Because of this loyalty to Italy, Ciano approved his appointment to the post of prime minister, regarding it as a gesture to the Albanian nationalist intellectual and political elite. Kruja's government, which included members of nationalist intellectual groups, was granted a degree of autonomy from Rome.

The Albanian Fascist Party (AFP), created as a single party one day before the constitution was approved, was entirely dependent on its Italian counterpart. Defined as 'non-native and non-autonomous', but rather as an affiliate of the Italian National Fascist Party and as a 'voluntary civilian militia' serving Mussolini, the 'creator and Duce of Fascism', the AFP intended to create and control other ancillary organizations.[99] On April 1939, Achille Starace, secretary of the Italian National Fascist Party, arrived in Albania to announce the foundation of the AFP. Giovanni Giro, the party's inspector general, directed the activities of the general secretary of the AFP, Teik Mborja, who, on account of his position as general secretary of the party and following the Italian example, sat in the Albanian cabinet where he held the rank of minister. The party's central council was one of the two elements in the corporatist chamber that replaced the old parliament. The party exercised considerable influence within local administrations. It controlled several ancillary organizations, from youth to women, including the *Federazióne della gioventù albanese del Littorio* [Albanian Littorio Youth Federation], *Femminile del Littorio* [Littorio Women's Youth], the Balilla and the *Ente Assistènza Fascista* welfare association. The single party also played a leading role in the corporatist organization within the Corpo-

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98   Enriketa Papa-Pandelejmoni, 'Albania during WWII: Mustafa Merlika Kruja's Fascist Collaboration,' *The European Legacy* 19, no. 4 (2014): 433–441.

99   Cited in Silvia Trani ed., *L'Unione fra l'Albania e l'Italia: Censimento delle fonti (1939–1945) conservate negli archivi pubblici e privati di Roma* (Rome: Ministero per I Beni e le Attività Cultirali, 2007), 45.

ratist Fascist Supreme Council and the Central Corporatist Economy Council. The same was to happen with the corporatist unions and interest associations integrated into the new corporatist system. 'In exercising these political, educational, welfare and economic roles, the party exercised considerable power over the Albanian population'.[100] There was no compulsion to join the party, but it was informally mandatory for civil servants. An interesting aspect of the AFP's activities was its attempt to create organizations in the Albanian diaspora, particularly in Greece, and the symbolic marble facades of the new buildings in Tirana that made up the headquarters of both the AFP and the regime's youth movement.

As Davide Rodogno notes, 'The Albanian solution would also probably have been applied to other Balkan countries had not the circumstances of their occupation induced the Fascist regime to take contingent measures that were at variance with the model'.[101] In fact, in Dalmatia and the parts of Slovenia annexed by Italy, the entire fascist institutional panoply was created almost immediately, including the corporatist ones. Plans for creating a Montenegrin protectorate along Albanian lines were also designed. In Dalmatia, where Fascist Italy created a protectorate along the lines of those established by the Germans in Bohemia and Moravia, the new governor, the fascist *squadrista* Giuseppe Bastianini, established the *Ufficio del lavoro per la Dalmazia* [Dalmatia Labour Office], which was controlled by the Italian Fascist party and paved the way for the introduction of corporatist reforms. The *Consigli provinciali delle corporazioni* [Provincial Guild Councils] were created following the dissolution of the unions and chambers of commerce and industry.[102] In Slovenia, the attempt to introduce corporatist institutions was also clear. In 1941, Mussolini appointed a high commissioner to the new Ljubljana Province and established an advisory Slovenian Council to assist him.[103] The head of this council was Marko Natlačen, an Italian Fascist sympathizer since the late 1920s. This council consisted of fourteen members, who included the rector of Ljubljana University and representatives of employers and employees of the most important economic sectors, 'in line with the principles of fascist corporatism'.[104] While the institutionalization of corporatism took a step forward with creat-

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100   Bernd J. Fischer, *Albania at War, 1939–1945* (West Lafayette, ID: Purdue University Press, 1999), 46.

101   Rodogno, *Fascism's European Empire*, 60.

102   Ibid., 124.

103   Marco Cuzzi, *L'occupazione italiana della Slovenia (1941–1943)* (Rome: USSME, 1998).

104   Tone Ferenc, *La provincia 'italiana' di Lubiana: Documenti 1941–1942* (Udine: Istituto friulano per la storia del Movimento di liberazione, 1994), 48.

ing the Provincial Workers Union to represent all unions within the Ljubljana Province and the Provincial Guild Councils, plans for creating a single party did not materialize.[105] In Slovenia, conservative political Catholicism paved the way towards collaboration with Italian Fascism, which Gregorij Rožman, the Bishop of Ljubljana, mainly drove.[106] The dominant political force, the *Slovenska ljudska stranka* [People's Party of Slovenia], led by Antun Korošec, was a Catholic party that subscribed to the corporatist views set out by the Austrian Christian Social party, which led to a leading scholar stating it 'ended up with the fascist version of the same ideology'.[107] The Italian occupying forces had reasonable success in their attempt to spread Fascism's mass organizations into Ljubljana up until 1943.

Conclusion

In November 1940, just a few months after the German invasion of Denmark, a group led by an entrepreneur proposed establishing an authoritarian regime along corporatist lines to the Danish king, who rejected the idea.[108] In neighbouring Norway, however, the leader of the small fascist movement, Vidkun Quisling, had the opportunity to lead a 'commissars' government' and an attempt to institutionalize a fascist and corporatist regime under German rule, but the German authorities quickly delayed this experience. In the Netherlands, the German occupation forces denied the Catholic *vernieuwers* [renewers] associated with the Catholic corporatist movement the opportunity to introduce segments of their political programme, but the same programme was offered to Monsignor Tiso in Slovakia.[109] In the Netherlands, segments of the conservative elites created a party from above, the *Nederlandse Unie* [NU; Netherlands Union], as a collaborationist party that sought to reorganize Dutch

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105   Gregor Joseph Kranjc, *To Walk with the Devil: Slovene Collaboration and Axis Occupation, 1941–1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 87.

106   Ibid.

107   Marina Cattaruzza, *Italy and Its Eastern Border, 1866–2016* (London: Routledge, 2016), 161.

108   Joachim Lund, '"Salazar's Splendid Dictatorship": Selling Authoritarian Ideas in Democratic Denmark,' in *An Authoritarian Third Way in the Era of Fascism: Diffusion, Models and Interactions in Europe and Latin America*, ed. António Costa Pinto (London: Routledge, 2022), 59–75.

109   Robin de Bruin, 'Portuguese Salazarism as an Example for a Third Way "Renewal" in the Netherlands, 1933–1946,' in *An Authoritarian Third Way in the Era of Fascism: Diffusion, Models and Interactions in Europe and Latin America*, ed. António Costa Pinto (London: Routledge, 2022), 76–90.

society as 'conservative nationalist, authoritarian and corporatist alternative to both the fascism of the National Socialist Movement in the Netherlands (NSB; Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging in Nederland) and the by then defunct democratic parliamentary system'.[110] Reich Commissioner Seyss-Inquart dissolved the NU in December 1941 and recognized the NSB as the only legal party in the occupied Netherlands while planning for its leader, Anton Mussert, to establish a fascist regime in a move rejected by Hitler.

When we look at other parts of Europe, it seems empirically accurate to note, for example, that 'a comparison of Slovakia and Romania . . . sketches out the Reich's general policy towards south-eastern Europe: a preference for conservatives over radicals . . . that suggests a rather pragmatic German line in occupied Europe'.[111] In most cases, however, the response from Nazi Germany to the pressure 'from below' by the collaborationist elites was not consistent and identified political families, parties and elites that were involved in these processes of institution building and sometimes opting for different combinations among them. Nevertheless, at the party level, German rule had an important consequence: the autonomous survival, and sometimes even the development, of national fascist parties in situations where the authoritarian elites dominated institution building, limiting the capacity of the authoritarian collaborationist elites to build a single party from above and consolidate their power. Antonescu's crushing of the fascist Iron Guard in Romania, with the support of Germany, is an exception.

What was a stake in these institution-building processes was the tensions between and often the 'forced unification' of the radical right and fascists in these regimes. With the 'window of opportunity' of the simultaneous breakdown of democratic regimes and direct or indirect military occupation, different political families took part in authoritarian regime building, with there very rarely being any violent conflicts among them; however, this should not be interpreted as a global option for authoritarian versus fascist elites or vice versa, and we should be cautious about making generalizations. If, while in Slovakia, the German embassy suspected the construction of 'a corporatist system . . . in the same spirit as the corporatist system of Dollfuss',[112] in Norway, the main

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110   Philip Morgan, *Hitler's Collaborators: Choosing between Bad and Worse in Nazi-Occupied Western Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 74; Gerhard Hirschfeld, *Nazi Rule and Dutch Collaboration: The Netherlands under German Occupation 1940–1945* (Oxford, New York and Hamburg: Berg, 1988).

111   Yeshayahu Jelínek, 'Slovakia's Internal Policy and the Third Reich, August 1940—February 1941,' *Central European History* 4, no. 3 (1971): 269.

112   Hallon and Schvarc, 'Ideas, Reality and the International Context of the Social,' 915–916.

factor beyond the forced postponement of Quisling's proposals was the resistance of local organized interests and the fear of disruption in the economy of war. It would be a little excessive to say the 'Nazi regime exported the organized chaos of its system of rule in Germany to the *tabula rasa* of occupied territories'.[113] However, it certainly had 'a patchwork character'.[114]

After this brief tour of some experiences of political regime institutionalization in Axis Europe, the most salient characteristics of the processes of institution building presented below is the attempt to institutionalize social and political corporatism, whether by external imposition—as in the Italian occupation of Albania and Dalmatia—or by national elites—as in the case of German occupations—the different versions of authoritarian corporatism that were proposed by fascists and radical-right elites seem to be the institutional cement of regime building. From Vichy's constitutional projects to the French Labour Charter, from Quisling's projected corporatist parliament to the constitution of Slovakia or even Nedić's rejected projects in Serbia, what was at stake in most of these dictatorships were different versions of authoritarian corporatist-based political systems. The predominance of corporatism in regime building under Axis rule illustrates the weak diffusion of National Socialism, both as a model and as the external imposition of political institutions, compared with its minor partner, Italian Fascism.

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113   Morgan, *Hitler's Collaborators*, 78–79.
114   Gordon Wright, *The Ordeal of Total War, 1939–1945* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), 29.