

The Axis Reconsidered: Global Fascism, Mutual Representations, and Cultural-Political Relations

Organized by
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14-15 October 2023
Kyoto Sangyo University,
Tenchi-kan building, Room T203



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Abstract

During the last few years, the historical understanding of the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis has undergone significant changes. Therefore, it seems to be the right moment to take stock of the state of research on the alliance. Recent Axis studies have increasingly questioned the previous interpretation of the Axis as a dysfunctional “alliance without allies” and pointed out similarities and convergences, such as the tortuous definition of national identity in the 19th century, the sense of being victims of the postwar order, the quest for a “third way” between liberalism and communism, and the implementation of a new form of imperialism that differed from, and competed with, the Anglo-French model. Moreover, without neglecting its inner contradictions and the reasons for its failure, Axis studies strive to understand the strength of the tripartite alliance, either real or perceived, that made it appear formidable to both its enemies and its many admirers within and outside of Europe. This has led recent research to re-examine the ideological underpinnings of the tripartite alliance and focus on the category of “global fascism” as a transnational or transimperial phenomenon that allowed collaboration between ultra-nationalist regimes during the interwar years. At the same time, this line of research has emphasized the role of representational politics, promoting a renewed attention to either the discursive construction of the image of the allies or the development of those cultural-political relations and networks of contacts that facilitated the transfer of ideas and political practices. However, the relationship between ideological and cultural aspects has not yet been systematically examined from a global perspective.

The conference *The Axis Reconsidered* aims to stimulate the further development of the Axis studies by exploring the existing and potential interactions between the category of “global fascism,” the analysis of mutual representations, and the reconstruction of cultural-political relations. The conference is accordingly structured in three thematic panels: 1. *New Perspectives on the Axis and Global Fascism* will discuss fascism and the Axis, considering both their global dimension and their national or areal peculiarities. 2. *Mutual Representations between Germany, Italy, and Japan* will offer four different views on the image of the allies in order to understand differences and similarities, as well as the applicability of general interpretative models; 3. *Axis cultural-political Relations in Global Perspective* will explore the Axis cultural policy, with its structures and actors, and its significance for the building and the functioning of the tripartite alliance.

Saturday, 14 October 2023

14:00-14:30 Welcome & Introduction
Nicola BASSONI & Daniel HEDINGER

14:30-15:00 Coffee Break

15:00-17:30 **Panel I: New Perspectives on the Axis and Global Fascism**
Chair: Nicola BASSONI

Daniel HEDINGER (Kyoto University)
"The Axis and the History of Interwar Fascism. A Transimperial Perspective"

Sven REICHARDT (University of Konstanz)
"Global Fascism - Imperial Interconnectivity and Processes of Radicalization"

Giulia ALBANESE (Università degli Studi di Padova) - Online
"Circulating Italian Fascism Abroad between Cultural Diplomacy and Autonomous Appropriation"

ISHIDA Ken (Chiba University)
"A Comparison of Pre-War Monarchies in Japan and Italy"

18:30 Conference Dinner

Sunday, 15 October 2023

09.30-12:00

Panel II: Mutual Representations between Germany, Italy, and Japan

Chair: Daniel HEDINGER

Sarah PANZER (Missouri State University)

“Borrowed Valor: Japanese ‘War Gods’ in Nazi Germany and the Construction of a Global Fascist Public Sphere”

MIYAKE Toshio (University of Venice)

“Japan and Utopian Orientalism: Rethinking Racialized Civilizationism, Whiteness and Yellowness in Fascist Italy”

ITO Kimio (Kyoto Sangyo University)

“Images of Italy and the Italians in 1930-40 Japan”

Ricky LAW (Carnegie Mellon University)

“Learning the ‘Right’ Language: German, Japanese, and Italian”

12.00-14.00

Lunch

14.00-16.30

Panel III: Axis Cultural-Political Relations in Global Perspective

Chair: Nadin HEÉ

TANO Daisuke (Kōan University)

“Learn from the Nazis! The ‘New System of Labor’ and the German Model”

Francesco CASSATA (University of Genoa / Centro Linceo ‘B. Segre’, Rome)

“Dante and the Axis: Fabio Frassetto and the International Committee for Anthropological Standardization (SAS)”

Nicola BASSONI (University of Venice/Kyoto Sangyo University)

“The Paper Axis. Albrecht von Urach between Berlin, Rome, and Tokyo”

Christian GOESCHEL (The University of Manchester)

“Mussolini, the Munich Agreement and the Cultural Axis”