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The Anatomy of Fascism by Robert O. Paxton

[The Anatomy of Fascism](#) Written by [Robert O. Paxton](#) **Book**, 336 pages | Vintage | History - Europe - Western | **\$15.00** | 978-0-307-42812-7 (0-307-42812-5)

From the author of *Vichy France*, a fascinating, authoritative history of fascism in all its manifestations, and how and why it took hold in certain countries and not in others.

What is fascism? Many authors have proposed succinct but abstract definitions. Robert O. Paxton prefers to start with concrete historical experience. He focuses more on what fascists did than on what they said. Their first uniformed bands beat up "enemies of the nation," such as communists and foreign immigrants, during the tense days after 1918 when the liberal democracies of Europe were struggling with the aftershocks of World War I. Fascist parties could not approach power, however, without the complicity of conservatives willing to sacrifice the rule of law for security.

Paxton makes clear the sequence of steps by which fascists and conservatives together formed regimes in Italy and Germany, and why fascists remained out of power elsewhere. Fascist regimes were strained alliances. While fascist parties had broad political leeway, conservatives preserved many social and economic privileges. Goals of forced national unity, purity, and expansion, accompanied by propaganda-driven public excitement, held the mixture together. War opened opportunities for fascist extremists to pursue these goals to the point of genocide. Paxton shows how these opportunities manifested themselves differently in France, in Britain, in the Low Countries, and in Eastern Europe—and yet failed to achieve supreme power. He goes on to examine whether fascism can exist outside the specific early-twentieth-century European setting in which it emerged, and whether it can reappear today. This groundbreaking book, based on a lifetime of research, will have a lasting impact on our understanding of twentieth-century history.

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The Anatomy of Fascism by Robert O. Paxton

[The Anatomy of Fascism](#) Written by [Robert O. Paxton](#) Trade Paperback, 336 pages | Vintage | History - Europe - Western | **\$16.00** | 978-1-4000-3391-1 (1-4000-3391-8)

What is fascism? Many authors have proposed definitions, but most fail to move beyond the abstract. The esteemed historian Robert O. Paxton answers this question for the first time by focusing on the concrete: what the fascists did, rather than what they said. From the first violent uniformed bands beating up "enemies of the state," through Mussolini's rise to power, to Germany's fascist radicalization in World War II, Paxton shows clearly why fascists came to power in some countries and not others, and explores whether fascism could exist outside the early-twentieth-century European setting in which it emerged.

The Anatomy of Fascism will have a lasting impact on our understanding of modern European history, just as Paxton's classic **Vichy France** redefined our vision of World War II. Based on a lifetime of research, this compelling and important book transforms our knowledge of fascism—"the major political innovation of the twentieth century, and the source of much of its pain."

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