

## **On the definition of fascism and the conditions for its creation**

RSF Editorial Board

We have found that the definition of fascism, let alone the conditions for its emergence, is still very vague on many parts of the left. Here we have made a preliminary study and conclusions based on some historical material.

### I. A scientific definition of fascism

The first fascist regime of modern times, or the first fascist regime of the capitalist period, was born in Italy in 1922. Fascism is the Italian translation of the word. The founder of this regime was the infamous Mussolini. Once this regime appeared in Italy, it was followed by Germany, Japan and Spain. In addition to these countries. The dynasty of Chiang Kai-shek of the Kuomintang and the reactionary rule of the Soviet traitor group were also part of the fascist dictatorship.

But we cannot simply state the historical conclusions. We need to summarise the characteristics of such regimes, so we need to quote something else.

Let us first look at what the main encyclopaedic websites have to say about this. Many of them are nowadays used as summarising tools on the Internet, often summarising a wide range of opinions on a number of topics. Many of these tend to mix in a lot of miscellaneous, redundant or wrong things. In general, however, they are still useful for reference purposes and we can draw on them critically.

Fascism is a far-right, authoritarian, ultranationalist political ideology and movement, characterized by a dictatorial leader, centralized autocracy, militarism, forcible suppression of opposition, belief in a natural social hierarchy, subordination of individual interests for the perceived good of the nation and race, and strong regimentation of society and the economy. Fascism rose to prominence in early 20th-century Europe. The first fascist movements emerged in Italy during World War I, before spreading to other European countries, most notably Germany. Fascism also had adherents outside of Europe. Opposed to anarchism, democracy, pluralism, liberalism, socialism, and Marxism, fascism is placed on the far-right wing within the traditional left–right spectrum.

Fascists saw World War I as a revolution that brought massive changes to the nature of war, society, the state, and technology. The advent of total war and the mass mobilization of society erased the distinction between civilians and combatants. A military citizenship arose in which all citizens were involved with the military in some manner. The war resulted in the rise of a powerful state capable of mobilizing millions of people to serve on the front lines and providing logistics to support them, as well as having unprecedented authority to intervene in the lives of citizens.

Fascists believed that liberal democracy was obsolete and that full mobilisation of society in a totalitarian, one-party state was necessary to prepare the country for armed conflict and to respond effectively to economic hardship. Such a state was led by a strong leader - such as a dictator and a military government made up of members of the ruling fascist party - in order to build national unity and maintain a stable and orderly society. Fascism rejects assertions that violence is inherently bad and views imperialism, political violence and war as means to national rejuvenation. Fascists often advocate for the establishment of a totalitarian one-party state, and for a dirigiste economy, with the principal goal of achieving autarky (national economic self-sufficiency) through protectionist and economic interventionist policies. Fascism's extreme authoritarianism and nationalism often manifests as belief in racial purity

or a master race, usually blended with some variant of racism or bigotry against a demonized "Other", such as Jews. These ideas have motivated fascist regimes to commit genocides, massacres, forced sterilizations, mass killings, and forced deportations.

-Wikipedia.

But it is clear that these summaries are still problematic. As far as the first paragraph is concerned, since the state in all its forms and nature has authority, the state itself is an instrument of authority, and in a class society is necessarily an instrument of authority exercised by one class over another. Let us leave the other aspects aside for the moment and look at the definition in Baidu.

Fascism is originally the phonetic translation of the word "baton", an axe tied to a number of surrounding sticks, which in ancient Rome was a sign of power and prestige. Fascism is a combination of communalism, trade unionism, authoritarianism, extreme nationalism, militarism in the form of a centralised system, anti-anarchism, anti-laissez-faire capitalism, and anti-communist political philosophy; the Encyclopaedia Britannica defines fascism as "the subjugation of the individual to the collective -e.g., a social organization under a state, nation, race, or social class."

-Baidu Encyclopedia

The Baidu encyclopedia is a little more concise, but the conclusion throws up a more complex mess that muddies the waters. We will not go into the details of which scholars are cited in these two encyclopaedias. But their summaries of the various scholarly accounts clearly muddy the waters on the subject of fascism, leaving nothing but unscientific and vague impressions. What we are presented with here is a complex synthesis of phenomena, with no distinction made between the specific and the general. This is a completely unscientific approach. According to these two encyclopaedic summaries, fascism is characterised by at least the following: the cult of the individual, the importance of ideological propaganda, excessive public power, strong social and economic unity, and the forced suppression of opposition, anti-communism, anti-anarchism, anti-liberalism and democracy, extreme nationalism, extreme right-wing, total mobilisation and participation in war, one-party rule, military government, political violence - war and imperialism - as a means of achieving national renewal, protectionist and interventionist economic policies, a particular political philosophy (combining associationism, trade unionism, authoritarianism, ultra-nationalism, militarism in the form of a centralised system, anti-anarchism, anti-laissez-faire capitalism, and anti-communism), and the subjugation of the individual to the collective.

It's just too confusing, and these features obviously add up to a big stain. It does not at all help one to understand the problem better but makes it more problematic. To us Marxists this is a cumbersome, useless and unscientific approach to the bourgeoisie. As far as these features are concerned, it is true that many of them are real phenomena, but many of the features listed here are often shared by other political systems or other scientific concepts. Is it not a fact that ideological indoctrination and authority exist in all capitalist countries? Is it only fascism, the fascist system, and not all other countries that subordinate the individual to the collective? Is fascism the only thing that opposes specific types of doctrine? So it would be impossible to distinguish one thing from another. So we need to distinguish between situations or phenomena that are first and foremost, that are specifically conditional and not unconditional, and we need to understand what they are first, second and last. It is only when such conditions are established that we can talk about its definition. We naturally know that generality is also embedded in particularity, but without generality there would be no particularity.

But we know that fascism can be either an idea or a political system. When it is a political system, it is first of all a political system that emerges in a particular country and then forms a particular system in a particular country. The state from which it emerges is the condition for its existence. The Fascist system was first born in Italy in 1922, as both Marxists and various bourgeois experts acknowledge. It was first born in a capitalist state, but it was also an imperialist state, and then it appeared in a series of other imperialist states, and then in capitalist states that were not imperialist (Franco's regime in Spain, Hungary in WWII, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Vichy France, etc.). So we can conclude that when fascism is a political system, it can only emerge in capitalist countries, and very often in imperialist countries. But the distinction between the conditions under which this system emerges in imperialist and non-imperialist capitalist countries is a more complex issue.

So, when addressing the question of capitalism and imperialism, we also have to bring in a Marxist approach to the judgement.

The main characteristics of fascism are: abandoning the veneer of bourgeois "democracy", openly practising white terror, destroying all progressive mass organisations with violence, brutally suppressing proletarian revolutions and all progressive movements, calling for the right of the "superior race" to rule over the "inferior race", and waging wars of aggression. The "superior race" had the right to rule over the "inferior race" and to wage wars of aggression. Fascism is the most brutal attack of the bourgeoisie on the working masses, a war of unbridled national aggression and banditry, a frenzied opposition to the revolution.

-The Little Dictionary of Philosophy (Dialectical and Historical Materialism), 1975

We can see what the fascist system has in addition to the first prerequisite of capitalism. The main characteristic of fascism is "the abandonment of the veneer of bourgeois 'democracy', the open reign of white terror, the violent destruction of all progressive mass organisations, the brutal suppression of the proletarian revolution and all progressive movements, the clamour for the right of the 'superior race' to rule over the 'inferior race' and the waging of aggressive wars". The 'superior race' has the right to rule over the 'inferior race' and to wage wars of aggression". But we are talking about the fascist system, and here we are also clearly talking about fascism as a whole, including the ideological aspect. So the main feature of the fascist system must be the abandonment of bourgeois democracy and the imposition of open white fear. That is to say it is first and foremost a complete and total bourgeois dictatorship, abandoning bourgeois democracy. Then as far as the core is concerned, the imposition of a fascist system is undoubtedly also the core of fascism. It is a characteristic that reinforces all the exploitation and oppression of the capitalist system to the highest level, and eliminates all the room for improvement or respite in capitalism to the lowest level. The other features of fascism are the elements that emerge from this foundation. For example, "the open reign of white terror, the violent destruction of all progressive mass organisations, the brutal suppression of proletarian revolution and all progressive movements, the clamour for the right of the 'superior race' to rule over the 'inferior race' and the waging of wars of aggression. Fascism is the most brutal attack of the bourgeoisie on the working masses, a war of unbridled national aggression and banditry, a frenzy against the revolution." The premises of this system dictate that its content must be brutal and bloody, and that this brutality and bloodshed must be constantly linked to the fate of the oppressed classes and peoples. These are the contents defined by the preconditions of the more powerful capitalist (and often imperialist) states and class societies. But the form or method by which this brutal, bloody content is to be realised is the particularity of fascism, and therefore necessarily gives rise to various forms of fascism and fascist systems.

So we can conclude about fascism. The demand for a fascist system is the main element of fascism, and the fascist countries are the main capitalist countries that have adopted such a system, which is a complete and total bourgeois dictatorship that has abandoned bourgeois democracy. It reinforces all the exploitation and oppression of the capitalist system to the highest level, and eliminates all the improvements or breathing space in capitalism to the lowest level. It is inevitably cruel and bloody in its content, and this cruelty and bloodshed is constantly linked to the fate of the oppressed classes and peoples.

## 2. How Fascism arose

Now that we know what fascism is, let's look at how fascism, and in particular the fascist state, is created.

Do not reprimand, but debate and persuade. The workers of Europe have historically been associated with parliamentary democracy. It should be made clear that the bourgeoisie has now turned its back on democracy and is moving towards fascism in one form or another, because it will not rule by other means. Unlike in the past, the struggle for parliamentary democracy is now meaningless for workers.

For the workers of Europe it must be patiently and easily explained why parliamentary democracy is no longer of value to the working class. Previously, in the struggle against feudalism, the bourgeoisie needed democracy to get the working class to follow them and make certain concessions to do so. Now that it has defeated feudalism and is facing a new enemy, the proletariat, and has to overcome great difficulties in the conditions of capitalist crisis, it cannot rule by parliamentary democracy and it takes the path of fascism, to which the bourgeoisie turns in all countries. It is the same in Britain, though in a different form.

-Stalin's Letter to Austria

Fascism is a product of the unprecedented intensification of imperialist contradictions.

-1975 The Little Dictionary of Philosophy (Dialectical and Historical Materialism section)

"Overcoming great difficulties in conditions of capitalist crisis, it cannot rule by means of parliamentary democracy and it takes the path of fascism" and "Fascism is the product of the unprecedented intensification of imperialist contradictions." These two conditions seem to be contradictory, but in fact they refer to different aspects of the problem. The unprecedented intensification of imperialist contradictions was primarily the external cause of the emergence of fascism as a whole throughout the world and not just as a system, as was the case in the Second World War when fascist states emerged in many countries that were not imperialist. On a global scale, the contradictions of imperialism were not only internal (as they were in the capitalist countries in general), but also and more importantly, they were class and ethnic contradictions in other regions. But it is the internal causes that are at the root of the contradictions, and it is the internal crises of a capitalist country that lead to the change of power, and it is at this point that the external causes play an important role.

It is evident that the crisis of capitalism at home was the main internal cause of the transformation of bourgeois democracy into a fascist system. Internal factors are the basis, external factors are the conditions. When the internal and external factors are ripe, the capitalist countries will begin to follow the path of fascism. And with the development of class contradictions, the bourgeoisie in all countries (including, in our view, even socialist countries) will move in the direction of Fascism. It only differs in its manifestations according to the situation in each country.

Apart from the capitalist countries. We also know that socialist countries can transform into capitalist countries if they do not solve their own problems. What is the relationship between this retreat from a socialist state to a capitalist state and fascism?

The present Soviet Union is a bourgeois dictatorship, a dictatorship of the big bourgeoisie, a German fascist dictatorship, a Hitlerian dictatorship.

-People's Daily, 22 April 1970

When revisionism comes to power, it means that the bourgeoisie comes to power.

-Mao Zedong, "Leninism, or Social Imperialism? -In Commemoration of the Centenary of the Birth of the Great Lenin

For many years, the struggle within our Party has not been made public. For example, at the 7,000-strong congress, I said that the revisionists were trying to overthrow us, and that if we did not pay attention and struggle now, China would turn into a Fascist dictatorship in a few years, a dozen years or a few decades.

-(The Chronicle of Mao Zedong (1949-1976), vol. 6, Central Literature Publishing House, 2013, p. 45)

There is no doubt that socialist states degenerate into capitalist states and have often directly reverted to fascist capitalist states. This has been proved both theoretically and historically. We know that our country has qualitatively changed into a state dominated by a bureaucratic monopoly bourgeoisie, and that this type of state is largely the result of the restoration of a capitalist state from a socialist state.

But as Marxist-Leninists and Maoists know, there are contradictions between the different lines of socialism, between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and the internal dominance of this contradiction is the key to the transformation of a socialist state into a capitalist state. But this is more complex and is not relevant to the subject of this paper.

So we can already make a tentative summary that the fascist state can emerge from at least two ways:

1. from the crisis of the bourgeois-democratic state
2. from the restoration of the socialist state

So, it is possible that in the future there will also be these two main types of fascist states. One is the fascist state represented by our country and North Korea. The other is the fascist state that emerges from the crisis of democracy. It is difficult to find historical examples, but we can find fascist parties and tendencies in almost all democracies, such as the extreme right-wing parties in Italy, Poland, France, Israel, etc., which are beginning to take control or are constantly trying to take control of their countries and are beginning to undermine their democracies to varying degrees. Even in Taiwan we can find such tendencies, with the DPP's constant attempts to undermine Taiwan's bourgeois democracy, the development of militarism, and the example of the National Defence Mobilisation Act, all pointing to the overall development of fascism in Taiwan. Internationally, fascism has begun to emerge as a rapidly developing thing in the capitalist world.