

Spectral Fascism

NOVEMBER 3, 2020

STRUGGLESSESSIONS



By Kavga

There is a tendency among the groveling opportunists of the legal left to see fascism anywhere and everywhere; it is impossible to hide disgust for such viewpoints. These views rely on a liberal tradition, and is like a flea-ridden dog that has been beaten all its life and instinctively rolls over on its back to show its belly, proving to any one it meets that it is not a threat; it is a loathsome beast to be looked upon with pity or condemnation but never with respect. It does not inspire.

There are numerous groupings in this camp who approach the question in various ways but all to the same conclusion—fascism is everywhere and it is a real tiger, and nothing can be done to fight it. By misdiagnosing reaction as fascism, the opportunist is granted a pass to call for unprincipled alliances, a play-it-safe strategy, and capitulation, while often their argument essentially boils down to waiting for it—the actual reaction—to pass. We should understand this as nothing but an excuse to postpone resisting the very conditions that do lend themselves to the benefit of actually existing fascist trends.

We can give a few examples without diverging into a polemic against any specific groups—after all, this trend is quite common. Most recently, the Avakianites of the so-called ‘Revolutionary Communist Party’ by way of ‘refusing Trump’s fascism’ have called for tailing the Democratic Party and voting for Joe Biden. They justify this with a paranoid tendency to announce that the US has a fascist regime prematurely and hitch any would-be opposition to the ass-end of a dead mule. This is not new, before the reconstitution of the Communist Party of Peru, Chairman Gonzalo led two-line struggle to victory against the liquidators who proclaimed that the fascism of General Valesco could only mean abandoning mass organizing. These two examples provide an understanding that the response to assumed fascism as in the case of Trump, and real fascism as in the case of Valesco have been used by opportunism to further its reactionary program.

Among those who consider any manifestation of reactionary populism ‘fascist’ are the eclectic individual and small group protesters who coalesce under the

umbrella of 'Antifa' which is limited by its own disorganized approach to confronting reaction; this is a trend unable to diagnose fascism and falling for many superficial assumptions. Everyone is a fascist, whether actual fascists with fascist programs or common people who have some mixed and backward ideas. At the same time, due to a reckless labeling of anything one dislikes as 'fascism', many actual manifestations of fascism are ignored.

Trump and the vast majority of his supporters are not fascists; they are reactionaries, defenders of US imperialism. The US is an imperialist country with a bourgeois democratic state based mainly on private ownership, and Trump and the vast majority of his followers aim to preserve this decaying system which becomes more reactionary by the day. They do not, however, represent a change in how power is organized for the ruling class in the US. Joe Biden and his supporters are essentially the same: they represent the same imperialist class, the same power, and seek to organize it the same way. Genuine fascists cannot find unity with either Trump or Biden, but due to a general state of disorganization they rely of the same frustrations as Trump in an effort to appeal to the same base—therefore some fascist groupings tail Trump and applaud his rhetoric.

Revisionists, opportunists, and no small section of the Democratic Party's base invent the claims that Trump is a fascist, with no analysis, no working definition of fascism. This superficial claim serves one thing only—the preservation of reactionary liberalism, of bourgeois democracy, in the interests of a change in management, with the same organization of power in the form of government.

These types simply seek to be represented at the head of the bourgeois dictatorship. To do this they rely on a number of deceptions that Marxists are well equipped to see through. Marxists understand that all states—without exceptions—are dictatorship. This is the case no matter how the power is organized in government. The specter of fascism raised by revisionists, opportunists, and Democrats is nothing but a scare tactic generated from bourgeois factionalism. It is a ploy to drive up support and legitimacy for the

Democratic Party by scaring sections of the working class into tailing behind them in opposition to “Trump’s fascism.” To be clear: Trump and Biden are both extreme reactionaries, and neither could turn the reactionary direction of bourgeois democracy into a progressive direction even if they wanted to.

As far as the possibility of the US turning fascist goes, this is highly unlikely. The militarized imperialist state has entered deep crisis, but the subjective enemy is not ever-present, allowing the monopoly capitalist class to preserve its preferred method of management by maintaining the system of governance most suited to their dictatorship—reactionary bourgeois democracy. For the same reasons we conclude that World War is not foreseeable, the skinny dog imperialist countries do not have an accurate chance at redividing the world through war and are gripped by their own crises. In the event of World War, following what Chairman Gonzalo has taught us, the first thing is not to fear it, the second thing is to develop it into people’s war, and to fight world war with world people’s war. The same general rule applies to fascism, since it is a law that revolution and counter-revolution are irreconcilable antagonistic opposites, bound to confront one another.

All this does not mean that the bourgeois dictatorship will refuse to mobilize fascists, but it does so precisely by holding the leash, with certain limits; it is not in dire need of the fascists and has an abundance of reactionaries to rely on, civilian and otherwise.

Fascism is always a right wing movement, but it does not always present itself as such; fascism is inherently ideologically eclectic and can present itself as revolutionary or even as leftist. It is fairly easy to understand how so-called leftists can take up a fascist program: the corporate restructuring of the state, maintaining the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, imperialism, and eroding and eradicating bourgeois democratic rights, using terror to accomplish these means, etc. Fascism has always been able to deny the basic differences between left and right, and present its far-right positions as ‘socialism’ etc.

It also stands to reason that with a pandering, elitist and submissive 'left' in view, many proletarians become disenfranchised from 'leftist' views, and become vulnerable to reactionary if not fascist influence, thus adopting some reactionary views which get consolidated when they are attacked by the same elitists who they have already come to despise. Liberalism, opportunism, and revisionism run defense for actual fascist movements; fascism can accomplish its mass base with the support of leftist elitism. This is expressed in the fact that the people in their majority have grown sick of reactionary bourgeois democracy, whether it is concealed behind terms like "neo-liberalism" (terms which mask imperialism) or not.

Exposing the fallacy of electoralism as an opposition to fascism—real or imagined—we only have to examine some history, as the great Marxist José Carlos Mariátegui pointed out in "The Biology of Fascism": Mussolini had been defeated by socialist votes, and far from preventing his ascent, this invigorated the widespread disillusionment with bourgeois democracy in a reactionary way. The electoralism within a social democratic framework was only ever meant to collaborate with the bourgeoisie politically to achieve socialism, rather than to struggle against the bourgeoisie to conquer power and establish socialism. The former of these two positions provided an excellent foundation for Italian fascism. Mariátegui in the most eloquent way explains:

"[T]hose feelings of national disappointment and depression were conducive to a violent nationalist reaction. And they were the root of fascism. The middle class is peculiarly accessible to the most exalted patriotic myths. And the Italian middle class, furthermore, felt distant and adversarial to the socialist proletarian class. He did not forgive him for his neutralism. He did not forgive him the high salaries, the state subsidies, the social laws that during the war and after it he had obtained from the fear of the revolution. The middle class was hurt and suffered that the proletariat, neutralist and even defeatist, was the beneficiary of a war that it had not wanted. And whose results he devalued, belittled and despised. These bad moods of the middle class found a home in

fascism. Mussolini thus attracted the middle class to his *fasci di combattimento*.”

We understand a tendency within fascism, especially prevalent in US fascism, to seek “a monopoly on patriotism” to use Mariátegui’s term. Efforts to provide a “patriotic” opposition to fascism in the US—the world’s sole hegemonic imperialist super power—tend to service the base of reaction just as well. In these times the mass disillusionment with the so-called ‘neo-liberal’ face of imperialism most vividly expressed by the Democratic Party has become even more palpable among the people than in the Italian example of social democracy in Italy. This condition has been Trump’s magic weapon; he is no idiot.

Trump is an extreme reactionary, and one who is quite effective at uniting dispersed fascist groups under his banner. Nevertheless, Trump still exercises restraint, only using them up to a point. He, like Biden, represents the further reactionization of the demo-liberal bourgeois state, and uses a minority of fascists in his support base opportunistically, and dangerously. This is the basis of the real odes to fascism he has made. By and large, the US imperialist ruling class is not all that divided even if the objective conditions for fascism are present. Fascism emerges from imperialist crisis to oppose a threat from the left, it does not always emerge from every imperialist crisis, mainly due to it being unwieldy and unstable; similar to atomic war, the cost could compromise imperialist profits, and they have to be very desperate to go to such lengths.

Trump poses himself as a solution to all of the crises hastened by the democratic or liberal bourgeoisie, and many of his most ardent supporters see him as an anti-establishment figure who can ‘save the nation’ from its inevitable degeneration. It is necessary to imagine that many of his supporters fancy him an American revolutionary (in the US reactionary sense of nostalgia for conquest and colonialism). What is important here is that Trump is also a liberal in the sense of being a representative of how reactionary bourgeois dictatorship is to be maintained through a reactionary demo-liberal

government. On the other hand, his opposition—no less reactionary—does the same, trafficking with revolutionary rhetoric, especially the Democratic Party's so-called “left”, the social-democrats.

This sentiment is not new for fascism either. It has been historically tested; Mariátegui again:

“Fascism, rather, believed itself to be revolutionary. Its propaganda had subversive and demagogic overtones. Fascism, for example, howled against the nouveau riche. Its principles – tending toward republican and anti-clerical —were permeated with the mental confusion of the middle class, which, instinctively dissatisfied and disgusted with the bourgeoisie, is vaguely hostile to the proletariat. The Italian socialists made the mistake of not using shrewd political weapons to change the spiritual attitude of the middle class. Even more. They accentuated the enmity between the proletariat and the *piccola borghesia*, contemptuously treated and dubbed by some hieratic theorists of revolutionary orthodoxy.”

The above fascist characteristic, while being present in non-fascist bourgeois trends too, could apply to the so-called “left” of the US ruling class as well as to its right. For anyone wanting to understand and hence oppose fascism this concept contains some important information regarding work among the people.

There is an important lesson here for the US, where the elitist so-called ‘left’ has for decades been consumed with opportunism, where there is a strong strata of labor aristocracy, and where the division of all classes is promoted by common demo-liberal and postmodern infatuations with identity politics and a tendency toward “playing victim”.

Not only has the need to change the spiritual attitude of the dwindling US middle class been ignored, but the tendency to run interference for fascism has resulted in a far more successful fascist recruitment, still slow but gaining some footing. Sections of the proletariat are not off limits either, especially

when the most threatened sections of the petty bourgeoisie find themselves in closer proximity to it.

The opportunist interference also prizes serving fascism in its tireless efforts to isolate the advanced. In every site of struggle, opportunists work among the people to red-bait and spread anti-Communism. The enmity between the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie is not coming from the fascists mainly, but from the petty bourgeois left, who are cleaving off the workers and leaving them at the mercy of reactionary and sometimes fascist recruitment, most especially the poorest rural working class. To further advance this cause, combating exploitation has almost been eradicated from the 'leftist' agenda, and instead identity politics and unclear opposition to oppression generally and to 'privilege' assume the only forms.

The fascist on the other hand is described vividly by Mariátegui: "He is the man with the truncheon, provincial, fanatic, catastrophic, warrior, in whom fascism is not a concept, it is not a theory, but only a passion, an impulse, a cry." Though Mariátegui was speaking of an Italian fascist, this is a character cut straight from Americana.

Misdiagnosing fascism, as well as the paralysis imposed upon the opportunist for fear of this spectral fascism, is a debilitating morass on the left. Meanwhile, it is a boon to real fascism. In essence, modern American anti-fascism is anything but. It is alienating; it tails the demo-bourgeoisie who have run afoul of the majority of the people. It is perpetually on the defensive, hyper-sensitive, directionless, disorganized—all traits difficult to accept for the working class. Perhaps the worst and most repulsive trait of the contemporary 'antifascist' scene is its tendency to take failures as successes: when beaten by better organized forces, true to its demo-liberal tendencies they cry victim in an effort to moralize itself against an enemy which is brutal and which constantly celebrates his brutality, deriving identity and strength from it.

Of equal or even more disastrous consequence is the tendency of the so-called anti-fascist left to declare anything they do not like fascists; this desensitizes

the people to fascism and treats it like a common epithet. Those who are reactionary but not fascist then end up being the perfect cover to real fascism, and the so-called anti-fascists fail to do everything possible to isolate fascism from whatever is its potential social base. This is alarmist; it makes exposing and confronting actual fascism more difficult if all the false alarms have been raised not only against whatever is reactionary, but whatever is socially conservative. Contradictions among the people are likewise treated inappropriately; all of a sudden any incorrect idea at all can be called fascist.

Trump's art, as a representative of his class, is to carefully toy with the fascist mass movement, controlling it and measuring it so that it does not go beyond his class interests, while still generating a buzz around him, scaring his enemies, making controversy and selling seats. This is a far cry from the opportunist paralysis which proclaims that fascism is already here, and it is critical at this point to understand this contradiction correctly in the interests of genuine anti-fascism, anti-fascism which can only be accomplished without defending reactionary bourgeois democracy. This necessarily means bringing leadership, a leadership which can only exist in the reconstitution of the Communist Party.

We must learn from the mistakes of history and never use opposition to fascism to provide impulse to tail the demo-liberal bourgeoisie. Mao solved the problem before us with the United Front in the most clear way: he solved it in proving that the United Front must not only be initiated and led by the proletariat, composed only of the oppressed classes, but also that the Front is in the strategic interests of accomplishing proletarian power, sweeping imperialism away, ending bourgeois democracy and the conditions which allow for fascism though developing—specified to conditions of each country—New Democratic revolution, socialist transformation, and cultural revolution all of which organize revolutionary violence in the interests of the class.

The fight against fascism in the US requires daring and also vertical leadership, and it must focus its ire on imperialism and the bourgeois state. It must not limit itself to confronting just the mobilizations of street fascists; this can

provide some much-needed battle conditioning, but little more in the way of political victory. Real anti-fascism today must conduct its work among the deepest masses, with anti-imperialist education, class struggle, and a sober understanding of the enemy. It must not proclaim ever the preservation of bourgeois democracy which only means reaction, imperialist fortification, and indeed the preserved potentiality for fascism to come to power. If we wish to fight fascism, the conclusion is simple—we must fight to reconstitute the Communist Party and we must fight to get liberalism out of anti-fascism.

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