

ZETKIN JOURNAL

FASCISM RISING

**Perspectives from
the Americas, Africa
and Asia**



Atul Chandra -
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Parallels and Contrasts
to Historical Fascism

Steven Lee - Blood
Oaths, White Skulls, and
Martial Law: A Brief View
on Korean Fascism

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East and North Africa: On
the Nature of Zionism
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Type, as Seen from Latin
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Fascist Reserve for the
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Introduction

By Zetkin Forum for Social Research

“The old world is dying, and the new world
struggles to be born: now is the time of monsters.”¹

The Italian communist and anti-fascist Antonio Gramsci wrote these famous words in 1930 during the inter-war period in Europe. Today, almost a century later, they once again ring true.

During Gramsci’s time, the organised working-class movement identified in fascism an open terror in the interests of the ruling monopoly bourgeoisie. This phenomenon was not limited to Italy and Europe. Progressive anti-colonial theorists were quick to draw a parallel between the barbarism of German fascism, which had colonised large sections of Europe by the early 1940s, and the violence and exploitation of the colonisation of the Global South, which had been the precondition for primitive accumulation in Europe. The Martinican poet and thinker Aimé Césaire put it succinctly:

“[...] it is Nazism, yes, but before [the Europeans] were its victims, they were its accomplices; they tolerated that Nazism before it was inflicted on them, they absolved it, shut their eyes to it, legitimized it, because, until then, it had been applied only to non-European peoples [...]”²

It remains a complicated yet indispensable task for progressive movements to analyse the current political situation and develop an understanding of what fascism is today. This is not an academic amusement. It is of the utmost practical relevance to understand exactly what form of political rule one is dealing with, what social forces it produces, and what interests it expresses. Since the 1920s, the revolutionary workers’ movement in Europe has struggle with the question of how to organise resistance to fascism; how the struggle for democracy could be linked to the struggle for socialism without perpetuating the conditions that had allowed fascism to emerge in the first place.

1 This translation has been popularized, but it is not entirely correct. The original quote from the Prison Notebook 3 (1930) of Gramsci reads as such: “The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born: in this interregnum, morbid phenomena of the most varied kind come to pass.”

2 First published as ‘Discours sur le colonialisme’ by Éditions Présence Africaine, 1955.

These questions are as relevant today as they were 100 years ago. There is no template, no general definition that can spare us from the arduous task of undertaking a concrete-historical analysis of national conditions.

The present dossier is intended to contribute to this by exploring the contemporary conditions and historical developments of far-right forces in **India**, the **Republic of Korea**, the **MENA** region (Middle East and North Africa), **Kenya**, **Latin America** and **North America**.

Atul Chandra discusses the connection between “neofascist” tendencies in **India** and the general capitalist crisis. He argues that, unlike historical fascism, neofascism does not abolish the democratic cloak of capitalism and does not use open terror in the same way. Rather, neofascism is characterised by the continuation and intensification of neoliberal policies.

The contribution of **Steven Lee** takes us through the historical roots and continuities of fascism in **South Korea**, from the Japanese occupation to the subordination to US interests that is still effective today. Collaborators of the Japanese colonisation are still the mainstay and rallying point for the fascist spectrum, which has been given a new boost by Yoon's attempt to introduce martial law.

Arwa Hashhash intervenes in the debate with an assessment of the inherent and symbiotic relation between Zionism and fascism. She argues for a concrete historical analysis of the role of political Islam in the **MENA** region and pushes back against the narrative around ‘Islamofascism’ that is often propagated in the West, even amongst sections of the political left.

Booker Omole argues that the government of William Ruto in **Kenya** is increasingly adopting fascist methods. He argues that this “fascisation” is not happening despite, but rather on the basis of Kenya's neocolonial position. It is part of a global turn to the right that in Kenya means a return to the ruling methods of the colonial era and the early post-independence period.

In **Miguel Enrique Stédile's** contribution, the symbolic figures of the shift to the right in **Latin America**, Milei and Bolsonaro, are presented as a “far right of a special type”. Like Atul Chandra, the author argues that the extreme right of the present is characterised by its close symbiosis with liberalism. The new right is needed to enforce the ongoing austerity measures against the population.

Brian Becker sees the absence of a strong revolutionary workers' movement as a key difference between the situation in Germany prior to 1933 and the situation in the **United States** today. Even if one cannot speak of fascism under Trump, it is nevertheless clear that his administration is building and supporting fascist forces in North America, but also in Europe and Latin America, as a possible reserve of political power, he argues.

This dossier is no endpoint to the debate. Many questions and discussions follow from the contributions. Was it the case that fascism in Europe was economically anti-liberal, and what was the relation between parliamentary democracy and fascism at this time? How have the changes in the imperialist system affected the international manifestation of fascism today?

In June 2025, an international conference will be held in Berlin, Germany under the title '**Fascism Back in Europe?**'. An array of speakers from around the world will delve into the reality and history of fascism and explore its manifestations in Europe and beyond. We welcome all engagement and responses to this material and hope to foster an active international debate to better grasp the character and function of fascism.

Neofascism in India: Parallels and Contrasts to Historical Fascism

By Atul Chandra, Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research (India)

A global turn to the far right: capitalist crisis breeds fascism

The resurgence of far right and fascist forces across the world signals a deep crisis in the global capitalist system. These reactionary movements are not aberrations but products of specific social, historical, and economic contradictions inherent in capitalism. As Marxists like Prabhat Patnaik have long argued, economic crises create conditions for the emergence of reactionary mass movements when sections of capital seek authoritarian solutions to maintain hegemony. He terms it as the “neo-liberal-neo-fascist alliance”. It is important to understand the structural and historical factors behind the rise of fascist tendencies, the intricate link between fascist actors and the rule of capital, and the ideological tools employed by these forces of capital to gain influence among the working class.

Historically, fascism arises in periods of systemic crises when the ruling class faces challenges in governing through traditional liberal-democratic mechanisms. In the contemporary period, economic stagnation, de-industrialization, and mass unemployment have provided fertile ground for far-right mobilization and governments. The global financial crisis of 2008 was a crucial turning point, accelerating the collapse of centrist political formations and leading to the proliferation of authoritarian regimes. In Europe, parties like France’s National Rally and the Alternative for Germany (AfD) capitalized on anti-immigrant sentiment, blaming “outsiders” for economic woes. Similarly, in Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro’s rise mirrored the playbook used by Narendra Modi in India, which combines neoliberal reforms with authoritarian nationalism. These movements thrive on the ruins of social democracy, offering scapegoats instead of systemic critique.

Though India’s political landscape under the Modi regime has been a subject of intense debate among scholars, activists, and political analysts, many have questioned whether Modi’s rule constitutes outright fascism or whether it is more accurately described as a regime with neofascist characteristics. To avoid analytical imprecision, it is crucial to understand India’s political conjuncture within a broader analysis of fascism’s evolution, interrogating its ties to capitalist structures, its national and imperialist roots, and its appeal to sections of the working class.

The neoliberalist attack on the working class was exploited by fascist forces in India

The rise of fascist and neo-fascist forces cannot be divorced from the crisis of capitalism we see today. Neoliberal austerity, privatization, and the erosion of welfare states have fragmented working-class solidarity, creating fertile ground for right-wing demagoguery. In India, the Congress Party's neoliberal turn in the 1990s, marked by deregulation, cuts to public sector employment, and the dismantling of labour protections, lead to declining left-wing unions. This moment in history was exploited by the Sangh Parivar³, which fuses Hindu majoritarianism with pro-corporate policies.

The shift from manufacturing to service economies left millions in precarious jobs, devoid of union protections. In India, the informal sector employs over 80 percent of workers, who lack social security. This precarity, coupled with the Sangh's welfare schemes, creates a dependency on paternalistic state gestures, undermining class solidarity.

The collapse of social democracy globally, as seen in the decline of India's socialist movements and Europe's social democratic parties, left workers and peasants disillusioned. As Vijay Prashad notes, the Indian Left's weakening allowed the Sangh Parivar to rebrand itself as a defender of "cultural identity," masking its alignment with capital. The Sangh's mass fronts, such as the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), paradoxically oppose neoliberal labour reforms while remaining subservient to the RSS's fascist agenda.

Historical contingencies further enabled this shift. Faith in the Congress Party's secularism was eroded by Indira Gandhi's Emergency rule (1975–77) and the 1984 Anti-Sikh Riots. The post-1991 neoliberal consensus also alienated the working poor. The Sangh Parivar's decades-long infiltration of cultural and educational institutions allowed it to naturalize Hindutva as synonymous with Indian identity, weaponizing nostalgia for a mythologized past against the uncertainties of globalized capitalism.

Aijaz Ahmad (2013) argues that communalism in India and the global rise of the far right cannot be viewed merely as cultural or ideological phenomena but as responses to the deepening contradictions of capital accumulation. Communalism is a modern phenomenon that is deeply intertwined with colonial and postcolonial power structures, particularly in South Asia. It is a political ideology that constructs and mobilizes religious identities for political and social dominance. The weakening of organized labour and the decline of the post-war welfare state created a vacuum that the right has successfully filled. The far-right's ascendancy is a political strategy of capital, where

3 The Sangh Parivar is an umbrella term for the Hindutva organisations created by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). These organisations included the political party Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which governs India today.

finance capital and monopoly capital align with reactionary cultural forces to deflect class antagonisms onto racial, religious, and ultra-nationalist lines.

Neofascism: a tool of monopoly capital to hollow liberal democracy from within

In his famous address to the Communist International in 1935, Georgi Dimitrov defined fascism in power as "the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic, and most imperialist elements of finance capital." Dimitrov underscored that fascism in power is not merely authoritarian rule but entails the complete suppression of democratic rights, the physical liquidation of political opponents, and the restructuring of the state to align entirely with monopoly capital.

Classical fascism relied on open terror to suppress working-class movements, but neofascism operates differently. Today's fascist movements are deeply enmeshed within neoliberal regimes, serving as shock troops for capitalist restructuring while maintaining the illusion of populist anti-elitism. As Vijay Prashad (2022) notes, contemporary neofascist actors do not seek to abolish capitalist democracy but to restructure it in a way that concentrates power further in the hands of ruling elites while maintaining a mass base. The fascist project today is not one of dismantling liberal democracy but repurposing it for heightened authoritarianism.

Dimitrov's definition of fascism emphasized its deep entanglement with monopoly capital. In India, the Modi government has fostered an oligarchic economy where select corporate elites – such as the Ambanis and Adanis – receive disproportionate state patronage. This crony capitalist model ensures that economic policies serve the interests of big business at the expense of workers and small-scale producers.

Financial and corporate elites, while formally distancing themselves from fascist rhetoric, often benefit from these movements as they help in repressing workers' struggles and deepening privatization. The far-right gains institutional support through its alignment with capital's needs – whether in suppressing unions, implementing reactionary policies, or fostering an exclusionary nationalism that serves as an ideological tool against class solidarity.

Prabhat Patnaik underscores the symbiotic relationship between fascism and monopoly capital. In *Heads I Win, Tails You Lose* (2022), he argues that capital tolerates – and often funds – fascist movements to suppress working-class resistance during crises. The RSS-BJP nexus exemplifies this dynamic. The BJP's electoral dominance, facilitated by corporate funding and media monopolies, illustrates how capital sustains neofascist regimes without overtly abolishing democratic norms.

Finance capital plays a decisive role in the rise of these movements. In India, large corporate conglomerates have actively supported right-wing Hindu nationalist organizations, ensuring that their interests remain safeguarded under neoliberal economic

policies. The RSS and its affiliated organizations (BJP, VHP, Bajrang Dal) have received significant financial backing from major business houses, reinforcing their ability to propagate communalism and authoritarian nationalism.

However, unlike classical fascism, which sought autarky and war economies, Modi's neoliberal economic model is deeply integrated into global capitalism. His government dismantles labour protections, privatizes state assets, and suppresses trade unions. This marks a significant departure from the strategic economic nationalism of early 20th-century fascism.

Characteristics of neofascism in the Modi regime

Unlike classical fascism, which sought to dismantle liberal democracy entirely and establish a one-party dictatorship, neofascist regimes operate within the shell of liberal democracy while systematically hollowing out its democratic content. The Modi regime, while deeply authoritarian and majoritarian, has not yet crossed the threshold of outright fascism as per these historical definitions.

The BJP's rule is not an outright negation of democracy but a managed democracy where institutions are restructured to serve the ruling party's interests. This differs from the Nazi model, where the state was entirely subsumed under a fascist party apparatus. However, parallels exist in the use of paramilitary groups (e.g., Bajrang Dal) to incite violence, reminiscent of Hitler's Brownshirts.

The BJP operates within a compromised liberal framework. However, the state exhibits neofascist traits:

1. Majoritarian Legalism: Laws like the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) criminalize dissent while legitimizing state violence. The National Register of Citizens (NRC) targets Muslims, rendering them stateless.
2. Cultural Hegemony: State-backed rewriting of textbooks and erasure of Mughal history enforce Hindu supremacist narratives. Renaming cities (e.g., Allahabad to Prayagraj) erases syncretic heritage.
3. Corporate-Fascist Synergy: Privatization of public assets (e.g., Air India) and labour deregulation (2020 Farm Laws) align state policy with monopolistic capital.

The "Ten Theses on the Far Right of a Special Type" (Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research, 2024) notes that contemporary far-right regimes manipulate institutions, deploy state-backed propaganda, and use selective repression to manufacture consent. Modi's BJP has mastered this strategy, combining majoritarian nationalism with corporate cronyism while eroding civil liberties. In Modi's India, mainstream media operates largely as a propaganda machine, amplifying state narratives and vilifying

dissenters. Journalists critical of the regime face imprisonment, legal harassment, and exile. Digital surveillance has been weaponized to monitor and suppress opposition, making freedom of speech increasingly precarious.

The BJP's use of sedition laws, the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), and draconian measures against student activists and human rights defenders demonstrates how state power is leveraged to criminalize dissent. While outright fascist regimes eliminate all political opposition, Modi's government neutralizes opponents (e.g., the media organisation Newsclick) through a combination of legal persecution, media control, and economic coercion.

The far right's ability to attract working-class support stems from its exploitation of material despair and ideological manipulation. In India, the BJP has co-opted segments of the lower middle class and informal workers through welfare schemes like Ujjwala Yojana, free ration for poor families, direct money transfer schemes like the Ladli Behna framed as "gifts" from a paternalistic leader. Simultaneously, it scapegoats Muslims and Dalits, leveraging caste hierarchies to fracture class solidarity. The BJP's IT Cell orchestrates disinformation campaigns via WhatsApp and Twitter, branding critics as "anti-national." Fake news about "love jihad" or "cow smuggling" incites violence, diverting attention from economic failures. Hindutva ideology co-opts lower-caste groups through symbolic gestures (e.g., Ram Temple construction) while maintaining Brahminical hegemony. The unity of the oppressed classes and sections with regard to minorities and the lower caste is seen as a threat to Hindutva and is disrupted through targeted violence and legal persecution.

Conclusion

Recognizing that the Modi regime is not classical fascism does not downplay its authoritarianism. Rather, it pinpoints the specific historical form of class rule in India today. Neofascism thrives not by dismantling democracy in one stroke but by gradually eroding its foundations while maintaining the façade of legality.

Elections still occur, opposition parties exist (albeit under immense pressure), and the state apparatus, though highly compromised, does not function as a fully-fledged fascist state. However, it does exhibit many features characteristic of neofascism, including authoritarian legal frameworks, corporate-fascist alliances, and the weaponization of cultural narratives to sustain reactionary nationalism.

Understanding these dynamics is crucial for resisting the far right and building a counter-hegemonic movement that challenges both neoliberalism and its authoritarian manifestations. Grassroots movements, like the farmers' protests of 2020–21, demonstrate the potential for united resistance. International solidarity, as seen in global climate strikes, must extend to combating fascism, recognizing it as a global capitalist phenomenon.

Blood Oaths, White Skulls, and Martial Law: A Brief View on Korean Fascism

By Steven Lee, International Strategy Center (ISC, Republic of Korea)

Since the early 20th century, South Korea has experienced authoritarian manifestations of capitalist class power along with the right-wing tendencies that promote it. While rooted in collaboration with Japanese fascism, their growth was fostered by Korean anticommunism and its security apparatus. The democratization struggles in the 1980s had weakened their influence, but recently there was an attempt at a resurgence of terror. With it, the Korean right returned to violent, reactionary extremism. Only the actions of the people in solidarity have kept this resurgence at bay.

The influence of Japanese fascism

Korea's first contact with fascism was the beginning of Japanese colonial occupation in 1910. A heavy-handed regime of "military policy" was imposed, where schoolteachers wore uniforms and carried swords. Korean labour and resources were expropriated, and dissent was repressed with terror. With rising resistance exploding into the 1919 March 1 Movement, Japan relented and allowed a period of liberalization. It was not until the 1930s, as it geared up for total war, that Japanese fascism began in full throttle across the empire. In Korea, people were mobilized into mandatory mass organizations and conscripted as soldiers and workers; Korean culture faced an eradication campaign. At the same time, avenues of promotion into the state apparatus became open to Korean collaborators, with some achieving high ranks.

After the southern half of Korea changed hands from Japan to the United States in 1945, these collaborators became the pillar of the US-backed Rhee Syngman regime, the first government of South Korea which killed hundreds of thousands for suspected communist sympathies. Rhee sabotaged and eventually dissolved the National Assembly's committee for investigating collaborators. Consequently, amidst the division of Korea and the hostilities following the Korean War, fascist collaborators of the colonial past escaped justice and rehabilitated themselves as anticommunist patriots, establishing themselves as a cornerstone of conservative power in South Korea.

One such collaborator was General Park Chung-Hee, who seized power through a coup in 1961 and then further consolidated his dictatorial authority in a self-coup in 1972. During the colonial occupation, Park had volunteered a pledge of allegiance written in his own blood as he applied for officer candidacy in the Japanese army. His admiration for the colonial regime was such that he named his self-coup the October Restoration after the Meiji Restoration that established the Japanese Empire. With Japanese fascism as the role model, Park further dismantled nascent democratic institutions, imposed a military-style discipline over the entire society, and pushed for rapid industrialization and the growth of big capital, all the while repressing any semblance of progressive movements in Korea.

Throughout this period, the security apparatus, represented by the Korean Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Security Command, gained sweeping extrajudicial powers under the pretext of fighting the North Korean threat. When Park was assassinated in 1979, this apparatus filled in the power vacuum with a coup in 1980, led by General Chun Doo-Hwan, the head of the Defense Security Command. With permission from the US, Chun massacred the popular uprising for democracy in Gwangju and continued the rule of dictatorial terror in South Korea. However, the spirit of the Gwangju Uprising continued to animate the South Korean civil society, especially the student movement, driving the fight for democratization. This process culminated in the June Struggle of 1987, toppling the Chun regime and transitioning South Korea into a liberal democracy.

The return of the far right from within the liberal democratic system

For a time, the authoritarian right-wing forces seemed to be on the retreat. Political concessions were given to the people, such as the direct election of the presidency and improvements in freedoms of speech, press, and political activities. However, when the Great Workers' Struggle erupted in July 1987 demanding humane working conditions and guaranteed right to organize unions, the new government tried to repress it with brutal police violence. The workers emerged victorious, culminating in the founding of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions in 1995, but every administration that followed, whether liberal or conservative, abided by the neoliberal consensus, eroding workers' rights, deregulating and privatizing industries, and signing free trade agreements. When the 2016 Candlelight Protests led to the impeachment of Park Geun-Hye (the daughter of Park Chung-Hee) for corruption, it dealt a critical blow to the right-wing forces, and the popular expectation was that the incoming Moon Jae-In government would reform authoritarian government institutions and corporate conglomerates.

Moon's failure to deliver on the reforms that he had promised, combined with his adherence to the neoliberal status quo, caused the people to be disillusioned in his Democratic Party. This disappointment in the liberal establishment, along with the division of the progressive forces, led to the far-right regaining its strength from the brink of death and resulted in the election of Yoon Suk-Yeol of the conservative People Power Party in 2022. Through his presidency, South Korea became further entrenched into the neoliberal consensus and the US imperialist project, but as much as he attacked the progressive forces, Yoon appeared to operate within the bounds of liberal democracy.

President Yoon's self-coup

On December 3, 2024, Yoon declared emergency martial law to "eliminate anti-state forces," recalling the shadow of South Korea's military dictatorships. Inspired by the past coups, the martial law decree prohibited all political activities and suspended

constitutional rights. Yoon's plan was to start with the "first roundup" of hundreds of opposition politicians, journalists, and trade unionists, then "flattening all leftist forces to the ground" and provoking a war with North Korea to justify the extreme measures. Before this plan could see fruition, his self-coup was quickly defeated by popular mobilization and a parliamentary vote to lift the martial law, and, a month later, Yoon was impeached and charged with treasonous insurrection. However, large rallies in defence of Yoon and his coup soon emerged, revealing the mass character of the far-right forces in South Korea.

Urged by his words to "fight until the end," Yoon's supporters gathered en masse every week. These rallies contained sporadic outbursts of violence from shouts to "break the trade unionists' bones" to assaulting journalists and throwing stones at anti-Yoon protestors. Sponsored by Yoon's party, the far-right re-established the White Skulls, a paramilitary force that hunted pro-democracy activists during the dictatorship. The right-wing violence escalated and culminated in the January 19 riot, where pro-Yoon protestors stormed the Seoul Western District Court to capture the judge who had issued the warrant for Yoon's arrest. This riot has been compared to the 2021 US Capitol insurrection as a direct assault by the far-right against a branch of government in defence of a disputed leader: the legislative in the US, the judiciary in South Korea.

The similarities do not end there, as the Korean right have been directly modelling themselves after Trump supporters in the US. Pro-Yoon rallies even copied the Trumpist slogan "Stop the Steal." Just as Trump declared that the 2020 presidential election had been rigged against him, the Korean right pushes the conspiracy theory that China rigged the general election and that Yoon's impeachment is a Chinese plot. Their sino-phobic rhetoric has festered to such a degree that pro-Yoon protestors have begun to attack even each other, with accusations of being Chinese infiltrators simply based on their physical appearances. Fuelled by conspiracy theories, the red scare so deeply embedded in South Korean society is growing into a paranoid witch hunt.

Along with anticommunism, another pillar that undergirds Korean conservatism is its devotion to the US and the 'ironclad alliance forged in blood.' Every conservative leader from Rhee to Yoon abided by these two pillars. Unlike the right-wing politics of many other countries, the Korean right is not much concerned with nationalism, disavowing the history of national liberation struggles and instead locating its foundational myth in the Korean War and the industrialization that followed. For their intervention in the Korean War, the US is worshipped as a divine saviour of South Korea from communism, and one can see as many American flags as Korean flags in right-wing rallies. A consequence of this notion is that rather than espousing the supremacy of their own nation as other fascists tend to do, the Korean right militantly upholds the US-led order, contenting themselves as its chief enforcer. This can be seen in the program of Freedom Village, a major far-right organization. The first point states that it counts the alliance with the US as one of its fundamental principles, while the ninth point states that the goal is to overtake China and become the "G2 nation",

second greatest after the US. This constant subordination to American supremacy, along with their apologia of Japanese colonialism and Korean collaborators thereto, suggests that the Korean right can be characterized as a comprador-like tendency, unable to stand on their own and prioritizing the authority of their imperial suzerain.

The social forces for and against Yoon

What then is the composition of this far right? The character of those arrested at the January 19 riot provides a sample of the most extreme end of Yoon's faction. The Korean right has been dominated by the elderly for years, but more than half of those arrested in the riot were young men in their 20s and 30s. Occupation-wise, across all ages, small business owners were the largest group at 28.9%, with the unemployed as the second-largest at 26.3%.

While it is a small sample, these figures may indicate that sections of the petit-bourgeoisie and lumpenproletariat, agitated by evangelical churches and right-wing YouTube channels, likely form the most active core of the Korean far-right. The ruling capitalists in South Korea have not shown overt support for the December 3 coup. Had it succeeded, they would have thrown their weight behind the new regime, using it to smash working-class power. However, the coup failed so quickly and decisively that they concerned themselves more about its negative impact on the South Korean economy and their profit margin, with the Chamber of Commerce urging for a swift return to stability.

On the other hand, the struggle against Yoon and his coup has been spearheaded by the BISANG Action coalition, composed of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, the Korean Peasants League, and numerous other civil society organizations across different tendencies from liberals to socialists. They garnered widespread support from the masses, with the rally turnout reaching a million or more at the peak of the push for Yoon's impeachment. Discriminated identities came to the fore, with many speakers opening their speeches with a declaration of their own identities: worker, woman, youth, queer, migrant, person with disabilities. However, this growth in identity politics was accompanied by an explosive surge of solidarity that cut across identities. This could be seen when a group of farmers marched across the country with their tractors calling for Yoon's arrest. They were repelled by police violence in Namtaeryeong, one of the entryways into Seoul, on December 21. In response, over ten thousand people, especially the urban youth, gathered to support the farmers, defending them overnight on the streets in the freezing cold. They quickly mobilized food, coffee, blankets, and other supplies to share freely so that the struggle could continue. One of the speakers emphasized their unity, saying, "We are all different, but we came together in one mind to fight against police repression." The next day, the police retreated under the pressure of the gathered protesters, and the march could continue onward, eventually reaching the presidential residence. 'The Victory at Namtaeryeong' has already come to be a byword for the power of the people united in solidarity.

However, the struggle against Yoon Seok-Yeol has so far remained just that: against Yoon. Once he is removed from office, there will be a presidential election, which will likely be won by the Democratic Party. Beyond its nebulous calls for social reform, the progressive coalition has yet to produce a credible alternative. A return to the Democratic Party's liberal order means a return to the same contradictions that led to the resurgence of the far-right. To overcome the limits of liberal democracy and prevent the rise of another dictator, power must be taken away from the authoritarian presidency and the entrenched two-party regime and returned to the sovereign people, a step towards direct democracy. The 1987 constitution, with its unsolved legacy of dictatorship, must be replaced. With millions agitated by the failed coup, now is the chance for a breakthrough. Progressive forces must overcome their hesitation and lead the way for a more just world.

Fascism and Anti-colonialism in the Middle East and North Africa: On the Nature of Zionism and Political Islam

By Arwa Hashhash, Palestinian People's Party

In Western discourse, it is not uncommon to hear an equation of political Islam with fascism. At the same time, Israel is said to have an unconditional "right to exist" and "right to self-defence", despite being an occupying force by its own admission. To understand which forces are advancing fascism in the region and which are resisting, it is necessary to delve into the nature of Zionism and analyse religious movements in their specific historical and social contexts.

The roots of anti-colonialism in the Arab and Maghreb regions go back to the earliest nuclei of national liberation movements, which combined calls for a cultural and religious renaissance of the region's peoples with efforts to establish political systems independent of colonial rulers. These movements drew on issues of identity and religion, as they formed the common ground that united the diverse peoples of the region. Thus, many enlightenment movements of the time sought to reinterpret Islamic theology in order to develop a social project that resists colonialism while seeking to modernize society and achieve progress. The Arab Renewal Movement emerged out of this context and helped to spawn various organisations such as the Muslim Brotherhood and the Arab Nationalist Movement. In Palestine, the national movement arose in opposition to Zionist immigration and British colonialism, with prominent figures such as Haj Amin al-Husseini and Izz al-Din al-Qassam.

Conversely, Western imperialist powers – led by Britain and the United States – sought to thwart liberation projects in the region, along with the associated enlightenment movements, whether through direct military and political intervention or by supporting local allies (often tribes or reactionary and conservative forces). These imperialist powers also worked to create an allied entity that would safeguard their interests in the Middle East. To that end, Britain very early on issued the Balfour Declaration in 1917, in which it recognized the exclusive right of Jews – most of whom were immigrants – to establish a national homeland in Palestine, while denying the national and political rights of the indigenous population (Christians and Muslims), who made up more than 90% of the population at the time.

In the context of Israel's current war of extermination in Palestine, Western complicity reveals the deep-rooted connection between imperialism in its most brutal form and Zionism. This reality raises critical questions about the nature of the relationship between Zionism and fascism on one hand, and the nature of the forces resisting imperialism and Zionist colonialism on the other.

The seeds of fascism in Zionism

Like other colonial projects, the Zionist movement – prior to the establishment of the State of Israel – adopted a racist discourse that portrayed Jewish immigrants to Palestine as an extension of European civilization. It drew upon colonial methods developed by European imperialism, attempting to strip Palestinians of their status as a “people” by depicting them as racially backward and barbaric, lacking in human advancement and progress – even to the extent of dehumanizing them altogether.

Early recommendations for violence against Palestinians – as expressed by David Ben-Gurion and Ze'ev Jabotinsky – led to the emergence of Zionist paramilitary organizations such as the Haganah and the Palmach, which were later integrated into the Israeli occupation army in 1948. These forces became the most established, wealthiest, and influential institutions within Israeli Jewish society. Racist discourse and the establishment of a Jewish military force, along with Western support, were key conditions that enabled the Zionist movement to carry out the crime of ethnic cleansing against Palestinians in 1948. This resulted in the expulsion of over 700,000 Palestinians from their land, the destruction of more than 500 Palestinian villages and towns, and the establishment of the State of Israel on their ruins. Since its inception, the State of Israel has pursued a relentless expansionist strategy: in 1967, Israel invaded and occupied the remaining parts of historic Palestine, as well as parts of Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt. Today, Israel is greatly intensifying its ethnic cleansing of Gaza and openly planning to rule over the territory indefinitely.

Contrary to some current debates that argue Israel is increasingly drifting toward fascism today, Israel carried the seeds of fascism within it from the very beginning. Jewish “national” supremacism, militarism, and expansionism were its defining characteristics from the outset. The Zionist doctrine propagated monistic values of one ancient people destined to establish a “homeland”, an exclusive ethnostate: “A land without a people for a people without a land”. This project inherently involved ethnic cleansing and occupation.

Stephen Bennett wrote that the genocidal crimes committed by Israel would not have been possible without decades of anti-Palestinian racism. “There has been a concerted effort to dehumanize Palestinians through racist frameworks and orientalist slogans over many decades,” he noted – an effort that became particularly entrenched after October 2023, “in order to neutralize public outrage over what may amount to the worst ethnic cleansing since the Nakba of 1948, and what constitutes genocide at the hands of one of the most powerful armies in the world.”⁴

4 Stephen Bennett, On the Dehumanization of the Palestinians, Institute for Palestine Studies, 23 October 2023.

Islam and Islamic movements in Arab national liberation struggles

Addressing the issue of Islamic forces requires consideration of the historical, ideological, political, and social dimensions that frame and contribute to their transformations. Engaging with the religious question in general – and political Islam in particular – is of great importance, especially given the role it plays in the Maghreb and North Africa. This region has, since the past century, been a central arena of conflict among colonial and imperial powers, and today it constitutes a key pillar in the strategies of the United States and its Western allies, particularly in the context of an emerging multipolar world order.

Understanding the nature of political Islam forces and how to engage with them requires a particular effort from leftist movements around the world. Leftist political positions on these issues are often marked by a great deal of ambiguity, which frequently stems from a simplistic atheistic tendency that conflates criticism of religion as a belief system with criticism of the political use of religion in class struggle.

On the other hand, Islam has been framed in dominant Western media as inherently fundamentalist, often linked to terrorism and violence, with practicing Muslims frequently portrayed as incapable of integrating into modern liberal Western societies. For many political forces around the world, the concept of Islam and Islamic movements has become shaped by Western propaganda, which offers a fragmented and offensive view that serves to justify colonialism, genocide, racism, wars, and the various brutal imperialist projects that have targeted the Arab and Maghreb regions, as well as Muslims globally.

The position on Islam must distinguish between several levels: Islam as a faith, acts of worship, and ethics; Islam as a set of laws (Sharia); and Islam as a key component of identity – meaning, as a part of culture and civilization in its broadest sense. Therefore, one's position on Islam is a position on all of these dimensions. As leftists and democrats, we believe in freedom of belief and the right to freely practice religious rituals and worship. We also consider that a socialist state must respect the religious sentiments of the popular masses and must explicitly and clearly guarantee freedom of belief and the freedom to practice religious rituals.

On the other hand, political Islamic movements base their societal project on the model of the Medina State during the time of the Prophet, which they regard as the ideal model of the virtuous state, a living embodiment of divine will, and the origin of past Islamic glory. In their view, all current misfortunes and crises stem from Muslims' deviation from the model of the early Muslims – the righteous ancestors (*al-salaf al-salih*). As a result, calls to reform the condition of Muslims have taken on a fundamentalist character – calls to return to a past seen as one that embodied justice, brotherhood, prosperity, and freedom. Thus, returning to Sharia – despite disagreements among Muslims about its content – and adhering to it is seen, in this vision, as the key to solving the problems of the Muslim masses.

While these fundamentalist calls have been used to pursue various agendas – and today, nearly every movement seeking to mobilize the masses raises the banner of a return to "true Islam" (whether it be a nationalist movement suffering under the oppression of a former Islamic empire, a movement of the exploited and oppressed, or one representing specific social groups) – they gain particular momentum when Muslim populations are subjected to attacks by their enemies and face the threat of identity erasure. This is something they have continuously experienced through colonial campaigns and imperialist wars.

Within this framework, leftist forces must distinguish between the doctrinal dimension of Islam and the positions of groups that claim to carry an "Islamic project." This requires deepening their understanding of the religious phenomenon in its doctrinal aspect, which offers human beings answers to existential and emotional questions within cultural frameworks tied to the material realities of the region's peoples. Understanding political Islamic forces also requires distinguishing between them based on the roles they play in political struggle – roles that vary from one movement to another, and from one country or region to another.

Political Islamic forces have emerged historically in response to various invasions and crises: they called for resistance during the Mongol invasions following the fall of the Abbasid Caliphate; fundamentalist calls reappeared in the face of the Crusades, then again during colonial invasions, and today they re-emerge in response to the deepening social, economic, and cultural decline caused by dependence on imperialism in the Islamic world. However, these forces are riddled with contradictions, each expressing the interests of specific social classes and groups. There are conservative Islamic forces aligned with existing regimes that serve authoritarianism and imperialism; on the other hand, there are takfiri (excommunicating) forces tied to foreign agendas – most of them linked to foreign intelligence agencies. At the same time, there are Islamic forces deeply rooted in the people, expressing their interests and capable of leading popular mobilization and resistance against colonialism, tyranny, and imperialism.

Given the contradictions that shape political Islamic forces – ranging from conservative allies of authoritarian regimes to externally manipulated extremist groups, alongside movements rooted in popular struggle – it becomes essential to evaluate each within its specific historical and social context. In the case of Palestine, and in the face of continuous Israeli crimes backed by Western powers for nearly a century, the Palestinian people have developed various forms of resistance, including Islamic movements. One of the earliest and most prominent examples is the movement led by Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Qassam in 1935, which helped ignite the peasant and workers' revolt of 1936. This uprising featured one of the longest general strikes in the history of modern revolutionary movements. Following the collapse of the Arab nationalist project and the decline of the left after the fall of the Soviet Union, Islamic movements reemerged as significant forces of resistance against colonialism and imperialism.

The discussion around Islamic political forces is not a battle over the past, it is a struggle over the present and the future. It is a struggle aimed at contributing to the creation of a popular, emancipatory political project that respects all components of the people and deepens their unity in the face of the current global transformations.

The Fascisation of the Kenyan State under Ruto

By Booker Omole, Communist Party Marxist – Kenya (CPM-K)

Kenya stands at a crossroads. Under President William Ruto's administration, the spectre of fascism has begun to take form, threatening to undo decades of hard-won democratic and progressive gains. This is not merely a crisis of governance but a systematic reconfiguration of the Kenyan state into an apparatus of fear, repression, and authoritarian control.

Fascism as Intensified Capitalism

Fascism emerges as capitalism's most violent and reactionary form, weaponised in moments of crisis to protect ruling-class interests. Ruto's regime exemplifies this transformation. Its alliance with foreign monopoly capital, consolidation of state power, and suppression of the working class reflect the very essence of fascist practice. This is not "ordinary repression" under a neocolonial state—it is the systematic dismantling of democratic spaces to enforce class domination through fear and violence.

While some argue that Kenya's position as a neo-colonial state precludes it from fascism, we counter that neo-colonial dependency intensifies its susceptibility. Ruto's comprador regime, far from being merely subservient to Western imperialism, adopts fascist methods to ensure the continued extraction of surplus value for its foreign patrons and local bourgeoisie. This marriage of state and capital solidifies Kenya's position as a neofascist entity within the imperialist world order.

Hallmarks of Ruto's Fascist Tendencies

1. Institutionalised Repression and Torture

Ruto has reintroduced and legitimised state terror on an unprecedented scale. Torture chambers, abductions, and enforced disappearances—tools once associated with colonial and post-independence authoritarian regimes—have become routine. Unlike covert state violence of the past, Ruto's administration normalises and publicises these actions, a clear tactic to instil fear and suppress dissent.

2. Extra-Judicial Killings and Death Squads

The regime's use of extra-judicial killings is not merely punitive but exemplary, targeting opposition leaders, activists, and ordinary citizens. Victims are mutilated, and their bodies discarded in public to send a message: resistance will not be tolerated. These death squads, often operating with the support of foreign intelligence agencies such as the USA's CIA and Israel's Mossad. They mirror the secret police and paramilitary units of former fascist regimes', from Mussolini's blackshirts to Franco's Falange.

3. Outsourcing Repression to Foreign Paramilitaries

The reliance on foreign paramilitary forces from Uganda, Somalia, and Sudan further underscores the regime's fascist leanings. By outsourcing violence to non-state actors and foreign militaries, Ruto undermines Kenya's sovereignty and uses foreign alliances to suppress domestic dissent. This not only demonstrates the regime's desperation but also its willingness to sacrifice national integrity for power consolidation.

4. Erosion of Constitutional Safeguards

The Kenyan Constitution has been rendered a mere facade under Ruto's administration. Judicial independence has been undermined, and the executive now rules with impunity, bypassing legal processes to enforce its will. This subversion of constitutionalism mirrors historical fascist regimes, where the law was reshaped to serve authoritarian agendas rather than the people.

5. Weaponisation of Tribal and Identity Politics

Fascism thrives on division, and Ruto's regime is no exception. By inciting tribal animosities, scapegoating marginalised groups, and fostering ethnic conflict, the administration creates a smokescreen to obscure its class agenda. Like Hitler's racial propaganda or Mussolini's nationalist fervour, Ruto uses identity politics to fragment opposition and consolidate his rule.

6. Crackdown on Youth Movements and the Gen Z Uprising

The Gen Z protests epitomise the growing discontent of Kenya's youth, driven by systemic unemployment, inequality, and state violence. Instead of addressing their grievances, Ruto's government has responded with brutal repression: arrests, torture, and extra-judicial killings. This reflects the fascist fear of organised youth movements, which historically have been catalysts for revolutionary change.

A Warning to the Kenyan People

The current trajectory of Ruto's administration is not an isolated phenomenon but part of a broader global resurgence of ultra-right politics. The "fascisation" of the Kenyan state is a direct response to the growing contradictions of capitalism and the threat posed by organised resistance. By normalising repression, co-opting unions, and eroding democratic institutions, Ruto's regime aims to consolidate a neofascist dictatorship tailored to Kenya's neocolonial context.

The Role of the CPM Kenya

As the vanguard of Kenya's working class and revolutionary movement, the Communist Party Marxist – Kenya remains unwavering in its commitment to fighting fascism in all its forms. We recognise that the struggle against fascism is inseparable from the struggle against imperialism and capitalism.

Our task is clear:

- Mobilise the masses against the regime's fascist tendencies through political education, agitation, and organisation.
- Forge alliances with progressive forces locally and internationally to resist the imperialist forces propping up Ruto's regime.
- Advance the cause of socialism as the only antidote to the crises of capitalism and fascism.

Finally, comrades, fascism in Kenya is not a distant threat—it is here, adapting to our specific historical and geopolitical conditions. President Ruto's administration represents a dangerous convergence of neocolonialism, imperialism, and authoritarianism, posing an existential threat to Kenya's democratic and progressive aspirations.

The Kenyan people must resist this regime with the full force of their collective power. The CPM Kenya calls upon all workers, youth, and progressive forces to join us in this critical struggle. Together, we can dismantle the foundations of fascism and build a socialist Kenya that guarantees freedom, equality, and justice for all.

A Far Right of a Special Type, as Seen from Latin America

By Miguel Enrique Stédile, Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research (Brazil)

Since the rise of far-right movements, there has been an effort to define and classify them, resulting in various diagnoses and labels from both political and academic perspectives. Given such manifestations' fragmented and multifaceted composition, these attempts have often been ineffective. Despite their specific characteristics, we argue that Jair Bolsonaro and Javier Milei are part of the same phenomenon as Donald Trump, Viktor Orban, and Narendra Modi. At the Tricontinental Institute, we call this trend the "far right of a special type", a new kind of right. Why not define it as fascism? And what is the practical application of this choice?

First, the Brazilian philosopher Leandro Konder defines fascism as a manifestation of the imperialist phase of capital, characterized by the leadership of financial capital and a state monopoly capitalism at the service of the concentration of capital. This phase presupposes a reactionary preparation that succeeded in undermining the anti-fascist forces, especially the communists.⁵ We can add to this definition the cult of action and the contempt for reason; the concealment of contradictions and the need for an identity that stands above these contradictions - national identity, for example - whose interpreter is the leader. And, foremost, that has the middle class as its social base. For the Brazilian sociologist Marilena Chauí, the heterogeneity of this segment's composition, its ideological ambiguity and economic "dispossession," together with the fear of proletarianization and the desire for ascension, have made the middle class not only conservative but also intrinsically reactionary.⁶ The risk of proletarianization, a social and economic decline, is the trigger that starts - through the discourse of institutional, political, economic, and social crises - the adhesion of the middle classes to fascism.

Here, an initial observation is crucial. Except for a few short-lived organizations - especially in Brazil and Argentina, where there was German and Italian immigration - and the creation of fascist-inspired laws to regulate labour as such, it is not possible to acknowledge the existence of large-scale and strong fascist movements in Latin America in the 20th century. This is either due to the weakness of financial capital in the realm of peripheral societies - still primarily agrarian and experiencing an underdeveloped form of industrialization - or because of the hegemony of another form of conservatism supported fundamentally by the Catholic Church. The military regimes that ravaged the continent in the 1960s and 1980s are better understood as National

5 KONDER, Leandro. *Introdução ao Fascismo*. São Paulo: Expressão Popular, 2009, p.53.

6 CHAUI, Marilena. *Apontamentos para uma crítica da ação Integralista Brasileira*. In: CHAUI, Marilena, FRANCO, Maria Sylvia Carvalho. *Ideologia e mobilização popular*. Rio de Janeiro: Centro de Estudos de Cultura Contemporânea, Paz e Terra, 1978, p. 590.

Security Dictatorships, steered by the guidelines of the National Security Doctrine (NSD), reflecting the context of the Cold War, anticommunism and the invention of an internal enemy to be exterminated.

Characteristics of the far right of a special type

Returning to the concept, a decisive factor distinguishes the far right of a special type from fascism. Although a movement of financial capital, the latter is a reaction and opposition to liberal capitalism. On the other hand, the far right of a special type seems to defend capitalism against its self-destruction through the neoliberal pact, ensuring that capitalist institutions have a large base among the population, who has been bewildered by the impact of the Third Great Depression (Tricontinental, 2024). In other words:

*This is what we called 'the intimate embrace between liberalism and the far right', following the writings of our late senior fellow Aijaz Ahmad. The formulation of this 'intimate embrace' allows us to understand that there is no necessary contradiction between liberalism and the far right and indeed that liberalism is not a shield against the far right, and certainly not its antidote.*⁷

This century's first far-right wave, embodied by movements such as France's National Front (FN), was in some ways a conservative reaction to the failure of neoliberalism, incorporating a certain level of economic nationalism and a rejection of the European Union project. Since 2008, a new far right has emerged out of capitalism's inability to solve its own structural crises, out of its incapacity to generate economic growth. In order to uphold a society ruled by the super-rich 1 percent, financial capital needs increasingly repressive approaches to maintain and escalate austerity policies. Therefore, the far right is not a side effect of neoliberalism, but its next phase, necessary to deepen and maintain authoritarian policies in the economy or in rights.

In Latin America, the Jair Bolsonaro administration brought together two forces. The first is linked to the military and survives from the traces of the National Security Doctrine. The second is ultraliberal, associated with financial capital, such as its Minister of Economy—a banker and speculator respected on the stock market. In the Javier Milei government, the weight of ultra-capitalism and ultra-liberalism is even more explicit.

Another distinction between the far right of a special kind and the old fascism is that this new manifestation dismisses the existence of mass parties, typical of an

7 PRASHAD, Vijay. Ten Theses on a Special Kind of Far Right. Weekly Newsletter No. 33. Tricontinental: Institute for International Studies, 2024. Available at: <https://thetricontinental.org/en/newsletterissue/ten-theses-on-a-special-kind-of-far-right/>

industrial society. On the contrary, it primarily relies on the neoliberal definition that society consists of individuals, and, secondly, mainly through social networks, it does not build a real community, except when it comes to the parasitic relationship with religious communities. Instead, it develops the idea of "community through the internet or community through mass mobilizations of individuals or community through shared symbols and gestures".⁸

General shift to the right

Finally, there are challenges the left faces. Initially, one must ask why the opposition to Donald Trump's second term is non-existent or shrinking, unlike his first presidency. Or why the antagonism to Milei has led to so many difficulties in Argentina. A hypothesis is that after this right of a new type emerged, a small and mild progressive wave was represented by victories in Bolivia, Colombia, and Brazil. However, faced with an aggressive right, it also witnessed the ascension of a moderate left, such as the election of Alberto Fernandez in Argentina, when Kirchnerism got back to power. By adopting a practice and a discourse located at an ideological extreme, and being successful in this movement, the far right displaced the right itself in this direction, while social democracy moved to occupy the conventional space in the center, and so on, successively, with the left. All took a step to the right. As a common ground, none of them effectively presented solutions to the structural causes of the crisis.

This is also a good argument for adopting the definition of a far right of a special type. The classic political formulation supposes the creation of popular fronts, bourgeois and proletarian, against the fascists. And here, nothing is more illustrative than the "Macron trap": the austerity of the "CEOcracy" strengthens the far-right alternatives, as the neoliberal right demands that the left ally itself with the center or the right to avoid its extreme while maintaining economic austerity.

In a way, this is similar to the Brazilian situation. Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva was elected to defeat Jair Bolsonaro, and the financial capital was split between the two candidates. Currently, any move "towards the left wing" by Lula is considered a rupture of a "broad front," which, in practice, has existed electorally but not programmatically. Part of the government argues that an alliance with the right is the only way to prevent the far right from returning, even if that costs not addressing the workers' demands.

Lastly, the old fascism also arose to eliminate communism and progressive threats. This kind of danger has not existed in any of the places where the far right of a special type now rules, even though the anti-communist rhetoric has been useful propaganda. Unfortunately, the extreme right emerged without a real force on the left that could have stopped it. In general, the left wing has not yet been able to overcome the three crises that the neoliberal hegemony imposed in the 1990s: the theoretical crisis, as, by abandoning historical-dialectical materialism, it lost the ability to interpret reality

appropriately; because of the lack of understanding of the changes in geopolitics and the world of Work, the left has not been capable of presenting a set of transformations supported by the masses; and the party and union as instruments of struggle have kept their structures and functions as at the beginning of the 20th century, without incorporating the multitudes of workers and oppressed people of the world.

Perhaps nothing speaks more sincerely to this far right of a new type than the culture industry. TV shows like *The Walking Dead* clearly express how this movement frames the world. There is no future and no collective way out. Instead, only individual against individual and a mass of zombies left over. If the left wants to stop the far right, it must confront financial capital and denounce the fallacy of liberalism and its complicity with the far right; it shall challenge the latter in all fields – including culture. Furthermore, it must once again offer a future and a possibility of transformation.

Building a Fascist Reserve for the USA and Beyond

By Brian Becker, Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL, USA)

Fascism is an organic feature connected to modern capitalism. The fact that Spain, Italy, and Germany were dominated by fascist regimes by 1940 was an indication that fascism was not a country-specific anomaly, but rather a trend in capitalism. By 1941-42, all of continental Europe was under fascist governments. There was also a rising tide of pro-Nazi sentiment within the United States prior to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941. Shortly after the attack, Germany declared war on the United States, which had the effect of liquidating the pro-German support within the American bourgeoisie and other strata in society.

The triumph of Nazism in Germany with the ascension of Hitler to the position of Chancellor in January 1933 was a policy choice of the German bourgeoisie. The Nazis did not seize power; they were handed power. The German capitalist ruling class had decided that Nazism could liquidate the German left and German left-led unions, and impose discipline over the entire German labour movement. This decision was taken after multiple efforts by the German working class to seize state power in 1918, 1921, and 1923. It was obvious by the mid-1930s that the traditional political centers within ruling class power in Germany opted for fascist extremism as a way to liquidate the left once and for all.

The particularities of Trump's rule

The rise of the far right in the United States today takes place in circumstances far different from that which existed in Germany in the years prior to 1933. The US capitalist ruling class does not fear any revolutionary thrust by the unions or left wing, or communist parties. In fact, bourgeois democracy has been a highly effective system for class rule in the United States. Even when mass discontent has risen to high levels, as happened during the administration of George W. Bush, the bourgeois democratic electoral process provided an effective safety valve for mass anger. The election of Barack Obama by a discontented population was an extremely safe outcome. The democratic party and the republican party, regardless of which individual has been the leader of the party at any particular moment, are loyal servants of the existing capitalist order. There is no need to resort to a fascist party to replace these organizations. The coming to power of a fascist organization would have a destabilizing impact on capitalist control over US society.

With that said, Donald Trump and his cabinet represent a far-right sector of the US ruling class that seeks to change the form of governance in the context of bourgeois democracy. Their goal is to eliminate all of the social, economic, and political reforms that were accomplished by the labour movement in the 1930s, as expressed princi-

pally in Franklin D. Roosevelt's "New Deal", and the later concessions granted to the mass civil rights movement that shook US society at its very foundation.

Within the Trump White House there are fascistic tendencies. Most notably, the administration fully embraces a white supremacist political orientation. Make America Great Again (MAGA) means to them that the United States should go back to an earlier era where apartheid or apartheid-like policies reign supreme. But this is in the context of the application of political authority by the existing Republican Party, not through the ascension of a fascist party.

Most of the far-right policies of the Trump White House are unpopular in society, including with the working class and the voting base of the Republican Party. But Trump, as a political figure, is very popular. To the extent that he is embracing the program of the far right, they feel that these policies can be rammed down the throat of the larger society. The frenetic pace of Trump's executive orders was a pre-planned operation by the authors of Project 2025, whose home is in the Heritage Foundation. The reason they are moving so quickly is they know that mass opposition will grow in response to their policies, precisely because these policies are unpopular. They are approaching this with a military-type strategy. They want to seize the political territory and hold it.

Project 2025, the Heritage Foundation, Elon Musk, JD Vance, and Trump, are also committed to supporting far-right parties who they hope will take control of the government in Germany and throughout Europe. They have a similar political project for Latin America.

Because the United States political establishment under Trump is taking the lead in this endeavour, because the US media has such a broad, global reach and influence, their initiative poses the danger of unleashing fascist forces globally.

To summarize, we consider that the Trump White House has a domestic and global agenda that is designed to give additional political power to far-right forces in Europe, in the United States, and Latin America. Within these forces there are fascistic tendencies, groupings, organizations, and nascent movements. In the event of a more profound social/economic crisis, this project could easily birth a renewed, explicitly fascist movement in Europe and beyond.

Why is this not fascism?

There are several reasons we have not declared that this is 'fascism.' One is that we believe that this is a premature prognosis that will only lead to political passivity. There is no reason to run and hide. This right-wing project can be turned back. This is not, in our opinion, like Germany in February 1933. Immediately after the Reichstag Fire, the Communist Party in Germany was banned and within a few weeks more than 20,000 of its members were arrested. By May 1933, the real, existing left-led labour unions were outlawed throughout Germany. Police and storm troopers raided labour

offices. Union funds were confiscated, and the organizations were dissolved. We are not, at this moment, on the verge of having the communist, socialist movements and unions liquidated.

Rather, there is a great amount of political space to organize and fight back. Moreover, the ruling class in the United States is not at all inclined, at the moment, to liquidate bourgeois democracy. Again, it is a system that has worked well for capitalism. Trump and his team want to seriously eliminate certain democratic features within the existing form of governance. Even these efforts are causing alarm, not only among the population, but also within the summits of the ruling class. People are holding their breath, so to speak, because of the fast pace of Trump's attack on some of the institutions that have been taken for granted within the US governmental system. His bravado and bombastic threats against anyone who directly opposes his policies has created some element of fear. Trump is waging a witch hunt within the US government against any sector that he considers to be outside of his complete control, with very little resistance from the Democratic Party establishment. But should there be a deepening economic or social crisis in the short term inside the United States, we believe that there will be considerable opposition to Trump and Trumpism within elite sectors.

Our focus is building a grassroots, independent, socialist movement. We do not look to the Democratic Party, or to any sector of the ruling class, as a credible alternative to Trump and Trumpism. In fact, the ruling class as a whole, including the Democratic Party, have moved considerably to the right in the past decades, which has been facilitative of the rise of Trump and the far-right sector that he represents.



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