

## Fascism And Empire\*

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Fascism is revealed today as the more and more dominant policy of capitalism in crisis all over the world.

Fascism means the rule of the most violent, chauvinist elements of imperialism, throwing aside all democratic pretences, and using every device of terrorist dictatorship to smash the revolt of the working class and of the colonial peoples.

In its initial development Fascism appears as a phenomenon above all of the big imperialist countries, arising in the metropolitan centres of finance-capital to crush the rising working class movement which threatens its power. In order to achieve this task Fascism has to resort to demagoguery so as to delude the petit-bourgeois masses and backward strata of the workers into doing its work. For this purpose Fascism puts on a "national" mask. "Britain First", "Germany First", "Italy First" is the slogan of Fascism. "National self-sufficiency", "autarchy", "economic isolation" of each "nation" within its own barriers is declared to be the only path to solve the economic crisis.

But this "national" cover is only a lie to deceive the innocent. Fascism is in reality the weapon and policy of monopoly capital, that is, of imperialism, of the Thyssens and Krupps, of the Deterdings and Rothermeres, of the Monds and the Fords, of the Wall Street and the city and the German Steel Trust and the *Comite des Forges*. Monopoly capital cannot find scope for the

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gigantic modern forces of production within the national frontiers; this is only a fantasy of propaganda. It must constantly seek to extend its rule. It organises the intensified dictatorship of the big trusts within each national unit only in order to fight more effectively on the world scale, for the world market, for world domination, for new spheres of influence, *to extend the monopolist area of exploitation throughout the world*, to war with other Powers for the maintenance of existing spoils or the conquest of new spoils.

*Fascism is thus the weapon, not of "national self-sufficiency," as it pretends, but of world-power, of extended and intensified colonial domination and exploitation.*

### **Aggression and Expansion**

More territory! New spheres of world influence! This is the real war-cry of Fascism.

The future of Italy, proclaims Mussolini, lies in Asia and Africa. Italy must extend its rule over the Near East and Northern Africa.

Germany, cry the Nazis, must win back its lost colonies, and must also win new subject territory in Eastern Europe. "Today Germany" complains Hitler in his "Mein Kampf." "is not a World Power. From a purely territorial point of view the area of the German Reich is insignificant compared with those of the so-called World Powers"—i.e. the British Empire, French Empire, American Empire, etc. "The National Socialist Movement must attempt to remove the disproportion between our population and our area."

The Japanese Militarist-Fascist dictatorship of Araki and his colleagues, who proclaim their admiration of German National Socialism as their model, combines terrorists methods at home with unlimited aggression and expansion policies through the Far East.

British Fascism, voiced by the Rothermeres and Mosleys, and, in another form, by the Churchills, Lloyds and Beaverbrooks, calls for the "strong hand" to maintain colonial domination. Away with the "weakness" of Baldwin and MacDonald! Away with

"concessions" and constitutional pretences. Ruthless repression is their watchword.

The colonial rule of the finance-capitalist oligarchies, centred in Europe, the United States and Japan, is tottering. The colonial peoples are rising in ever renewed and stronger waves of assault to win their freedom. Therefore the policy of imperialism turns to ever more repressive measures.

### **Absolutism**

In the first stage after the war the attempt was made to meet the rising revolt of the colonial peoples, not only with bloody repression but at the same time with a "liberal" show of "concessions," with lying promises of "self-government" in the vague future, with "democratic" talk and caricatures of "constitutions". All this humbug, however, failed to stem the revolt, failed to win more than a section of the national bourgeoisie in each country. The oppressed and hungering masses, who could not live on a diet of formulas and White Papers, went forward with their struggle against the unchanged dictatorship.

To-day all this "liberal" talk is more and more thrown on one side. The previous promises are denied or interpreted away. The policy moves steadily to the right. The latest "Constitutional Reforms" under discussion for India drop the last shreds of "democratic" pretences, proclaim openly the absolutism of the Viceroy and the Governors in every sphere, and seek to draw in the most reactionary feudal forces, the ruling princes, to buttress the whole structure.

The British Empire in its present stage of extreme decay affords the most instructive study of the increasing tendency towards Fascism as the final policy of the ruling White bourgeoisie.

The Ottawa Conference represented the attempt of the British bourgeoisie and of the subordinate semi-independent bourgeoisies in the Dominions to overcome the growing disintegration and draw closer the bonds by a series of economic measures.

But the Ottawa measures have failed to produce any important result. Between 1931 and 1933 British exports to the Empire have fallen by £7 millions, while British imports from the Empire have risen by £2 millions. Between 1932 (the year of Ottawa) and 1933 British exports to the Empire fell by £2 millions, at the same time as British exports to non-Empire countries rose by £4½ millions, while British imports from the Empire rose by £1.3 millions. These changes are in any case minute and are solely at the expense of Britain. The Dominions bourgeoisies have taken advantage of Britains wooing to increase their hold on the British market, while their nominal "concessions" in exchange have only resulted in falling British exports to their market. Ottawa, in short, has only meant that Britain has paid blackmail to keep some hold on the disintegrating Dominions, but has reached no solution of the economic problem or problem of disintegration.

Stronger measures require to be adopted if the weakening British hold is to be maintained. And here again Fascism comes to the front, not only within Britain, but in the attempt to stimulate subordinate Fascist movements in the Dominions.

### **Fascist Movements**

The fight against Ireland is maintained on the lines of economic war, and at the same time the Blue shirt movement is developed under General O'Duffy and Cosgrave with British encouragement and support to prepare the fighting force for the subjugation of Ireland "with the maximum economy of British lives".

Newfoundland is transformed at a stroke from a Dominion into a subject colony under the dictatorship of a British Governing Commission.

In Australia the New Guard is organised under Colonel Eric Campbell to conduct the fight against the working class and maintain the control of the combined British and Australian capitalist-class.

A similar New Guard has also been organised in New Zealand and in South Africa. These movements are all organised together in the "New Empire Union".

In South Africa the formerly opposed British and Dutch bourgeois parties, the South Africa Party of Smuts and the Nationalist Party of Herzog, draw together in ever closer coalition against the enslaved African five-sixths majority of the population of the South African Union.

At the same time pressure on India and the Crown Colonies is increased. Not only does the British Government policy on India as indicated, move steadily to the right, but the demand of right-wing Conservatism becomes ever more clamorous for the dropping of all "constitutional" shams and pretences and an unlimited policy of the Iron Heel in India. This becomes the test issue of Diehardism in Britain in the present period; and its vote in the National Conference of Conservative Associations rises from below one-third in 1933 to over two-fifths at the Conference held in March, 1934.

"India must remain within the Empire"; every attempt at liberation must be "ruthlessly suppressed," writes Mosley in "Greater Britain." All the "national" pretences of Fascism here disappear from view. "The Indian market" writes the "Blackshirt" is "vital" to Britain; "this is the fundamental economic reason why British rule in India must be maintained." The Lancashire textile manufacturers, viewing their weakening hold in India, move to the support of Fascism; one of their leading representatives writes in the "Oldham Chronicle" (17.2.34): "Is there any wonder that the youth of this country, tired of procrastination, sick at heart and with no hope of improvement or employment, are turning in ever increasing numbers to the more virile policy of Sir Oswald Mosley and the creed of 'Britain First'?"

Fascism represents the supreme violent attempt to maintain a hold by every means of terrorism against both the working class in the imperialist countries and the exploited masses in the colonial countries. The struggle is being drawn together more closely than ever before. The privileged condition of the working masses in the imperialist countries is passing away. The conditions of the struggle, against ever more violent and lawless terrorism, which can only be overthrown in revolutionary battle,

are approximating closer throughout the world. Therefore the unity of the struggle grows. The united struggle will defeat the last furies of dying capitalism, will overthrow both Fascism and colonial domination. In the development of this combined struggle the League against Imperialism has a large and increasing role to play, and confidently calls for the support of all working class organisations and of all national revolutionary anti-imperialists movements. We are approaching the most critical stage of a world struggle for liberation against enslavement, war and destruction.