

*Those who take the meat from the table  
Teach contentment.  
Those for whom the taxes are destined  
Demand sacrifice.  
Those who eat their fill speak to the hungry  
Of wonderful times to come.  
Those who lead the country into the abyss  
Call ruling too difficult  
For ordinary men.*

*Bertoldt Brecht*

## *Chapter II*

### **The Fascist Solution to the Crisis of Imperialism**

Fascism as a form of rule did not emerge until the modern era, with the rise of imperialism and proletarian revolution. But the political philosophy of fascism and the emergence of absolutist dictators is not new. In periods of chaos in class society, when economic, political and social decay sets in, absolutist rulers who promise salvation from chaos and confusion step in. In Rome, when the empire was dying, the Caesars emerged. In the Middle Ages, when the old feudal order began to crumble, the absolutist power of the kings arose. When the European monarchies grew unstable, Napoleon stepped in. And finally, when imperialism entered its period of general crisis, when its parasitic and decaying nature were revealed, fascism as a form of state emerged to replace the capitalist democratic state.

The term fascism is derived from *fasces* which were bundles of thin rods bound together around an axe. The rulers of Rome carried them as a sign of authority and the strength which comes with indivisible unity. The term fascism is the Italian description of the movement and the form of rule which emerged after World War I. There were reactionary movements and absolutist states before imperialism, but only with the arrival of imperialism does there arise a specifically fascist type of reaction. And it is the crisis of imperialism that brings fascism to state power.

The fascist ideology and fascist state are based upon various anti-democratic concepts, including absolutism — the belief in the absolute superiority of the state over the individual. It is fleshed out with countless racial and social myths, intertwined with reactionary nationalism; the rods

bound around the axe. All in all, fascism represents an attempt to strangle social progress, to prevent the extension of democracy. In order to do this, the contradictions of the class struggle, the contradictions within the capitalist mode of production itself, and the contradictions among the imperialist powers must be suppressed. Often fascism emerges as an alleged third alternative to capitalism or socialism. In reality, fascism is a form of capitalist rule, not an alternative to capitalism. The negation of fascism and the denial of democracy, is socialism and genuine democracy for the majority.

After World War I, in response to the victory of socialism in the Soviet Union and the wave of revolutionary struggles in several countries, new regimes emerged in numerous states — in Albania, Austria, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Rumania, Spain and elsewhere. Dictatorships of open terror were consolidated. Attempted democratic revolutions were crushed and democracy obliterated. Mussolini gloated that fascism was a “shield against the red menace”.

Thus fascism as a political form of state arose with the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, as a response by the capitalist class to the revolutionary storm that was sweeping Europe and the colonies, and which ushered in the period of the general crisis of capitalism.

Fascism had at its foundation the most extreme nationalism and racism, as evidenced in Germany, Italy and Japan prior to World War II. The doctrine of “our house, our town, our country” was the watchword. Racial purity and racial superiority were essential weapons in the fascist arsenal. Sometimes it utilized the concept of “the people”, or “the race” or “the community”, always in defense of “kultur”.

The road to fascism took different forms in different countries. In Italy, Mussolini was invited to become premier by finance capital. In Japan, after World War I, the fascists grew in strength until they seized power in a coup in 1936. In Germany, the Great Capitalist Crisis of 1929 opened the door to both revolution and reaction. For a variety of reasons, including the position of Germany within the world imperialist system and shortcomings in the revolutionary movement, Hitler managed to win an election in 1933. While he utilized fascist terror in his bid for power, the already existing capitalist elections offered a road to victory. It was only after his election that the fascist state was established.

In each case, fascism came to power with the encouragement and full backing of monopoly capitalism as the huge banks and financiers sought greater stability for greater profits and new markets abroad. Fascist coordination, whether the Italian “corporate state” or the “nation” of Nazi Germany, aims to remove the obstacles to the unbridled activities of the monopolies. Extensive new measures are taken to reorganize the state for this purpose. All excess is cut to minimize costs for the capitalist class and maximize costs for the people. Fascism, in every instance, has come to power with promises of a new beginning and national salvation.

In the past as now, fascism promises political order and stability. It promises strong leadership and decisive policy. It promises personal

liberty and protection by the state in exchange for absolute allegiance. It promises complete self-sufficiency for the nation, racial and national purity and eternal glory. In the past it has brought only terror, repression, inequality and barbarism for the people.

In the past as now, fascism promises an end to the conflict between labor and capital through collaboration. It promises economic growth, prosperity and expansion. It promises a higher standard of living. In the past, it has brought only poverty, starvation and ruin for the people.

In the past as now, fascism promises racial and national salvation. It promises a safe and happy home, social stability and intellectual orthodoxy. It offers an answer to all perplexities and an end to all questioning. In the past, it has brought only intellectual gangsterism, racism, savage nationalism and book burnings.

Fascism promises all things to all men, but in the past as now, fascism has never brought a solution to the crisis of imperialism, only a means to prolong its life.

The most concise and definitive characterization of fascism is: “the open terroristic dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinist and most imperialist elements of finance capital.” Among the many important analyses of fascism and the struggle against it, George Dimitrov’s writings from the 1930’s stand out. Looking back today, from the historical experience of the fight against fascism we can draw some general conclusions.

Fascism is a form of state and a form of rule which belongs to the imperialist stage of capitalism, to its final, monopoly stage.

The fascist form of capitalist state does not differ in its class content from the democratic form of capitalist state, but only in the form of rule employed. The rule of capital prevails in both.

Fascism represents the destruction of democracy in content, and often in form. The limited rights to assembly, speech, press and to strike, organize and protest are obliterated.

Fascism may come to power espousing the interests of the middle classes or “the common man”, but it always represents the interest of monopoly capitalism, the interests of the banks and trusts which have the most to gain by a reign of domestic terror and international aggression.

Fascism means the employers have absolute control over the conditions of labor. Unions and such organizations are destroyed or totally subordinated to direct state control, collective bargaining is outlawed and strikes are prohibited.

Fascism means the further fusing of civilian and military life, the adaptation of military norms to all aspects of life and all aspects of state operation.

Fascism means fanning the flames of racial hatred, white supremacy, national chauvinism and anti-semitism. Its call is for strict racial purity and it breeds unbridled nationalism.

Fascism generates the most rampant anti-scientific, metaphysical views. It encourages authoritarian religion, tribalism and every primitive ideology

for the purpose of enslaving the minds of the people. It assumes a messianic tone and outlook. It destroys genuine scientific inquiry. It destroys all aspects of democratic culture.

Fascism means the removal of women from political life and often from production, as they are driven back into the home to produce children for the fatherland. It leads to an increase of anti-female propaganda, to widespread pornography and the abuse of women.

Fascism means the regimentation of youth for the sole purpose of warfare and "defense of the fatherland".

Fascism means the organization of the entire society for global war and plunder, for empire and aggression.

Fascism means the escalation of every form of individual degeneration and pathology.

Fascism represents a crisis for the major capitalist political parties and for the revolutionary party of the working class. The exit from the capitalist parties and the disunity of the working class is an important factor for the triumph of fascism.

Fascism represents the most savage anti-communist attacks against the communist party and all revolutionary forces. It represents a relentless aggression against the working class organizations on all fronts.

In conclusion, the rise of fascism reflects the decay and degeneration of capitalist society. It is the attempt to find a solution to the crisis of imperialism. It is the result of both the internal contradictions of the class struggle and the objective processes of the decline of imperialism as a world system.

To hide the fact that fascism is an outcome of imperialism, it was portrayed in Germany as "national socialism". In the U.S., we are constantly assaulted with the lie that fascism and communism are the same. Hitler, who led the world fascist camp, is portrayed as the same as Stalin, who led the anti-fascist camp! In reality there was nothing socialist about fascism in Germany. Fascism represents the most extreme rule and control by the monopolies over all aspects of life. Socialism represents the broadest possible extension of democracy, real power in the hands of the people. They are two totally different economic and political systems. Of course Wall Street today points to the present dictatorship in the Soviet Union to try and prove that socialism is reaction and dictatorship. They seek to hide the reality that socialism was long ago defeated in the Soviet Union, and that the Soviet Union is today merely socialist in words, but imperialist in its economics and politics. Furthermore, genuine socialism is the first stage of communism. There are no communist societies today. A communist society is one in which classes are abolished and the exploitation and oppression of man by man does not exist. It is the total opposite of fascism. But because there exist today several countries who portray themselves as socialist, but who in fact are not, the capitalist class has an easy time portraying socialism, or communism as the same as fascism. (For further discussion of this question, *Communism Versus Fascism* by William Z. Foster is recommended.)

While fascism arises as a result of objective processes in the decay of

imperialism and the inability of the capitalist class to rule in the old way, fascism has its active proponents. It is evident today that the main promoters of fascist dictatorships are the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. On every continent, the U.S. has established fascist regimes to serve and protect its interests. In Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, South Korea, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Chile, Brazil, Argentina, South Africa, Rhodesia, Israel, Turkey and elsewhere, U.S. imperialism has been the handmaiden of fascism.

By contrast, in words the Soviet Union claims to be a socialist country. Yet in deeds, since the death of Stalin, the Soviet Union has become an imperialist superpower, unleashing aggression and plunder worldwide. Soviet military advisors in Angola, Afghanistan and Ethiopia are the bulwark of vicious fascist regimes. Within the Soviet Union, a fascist dictatorship exists which has completely abandoned the revolutionary road.

The U.S., on the other hand, while propping up fascist dictatorships abroad, has not yet found it necessary to initiate a fascist state at home. But the crisis of world imperialism, headed by U.S. imperialism, is driving U.S. monopoly capitalism in that direction. Because fascism represents imperialism's alternative to dollar democracy, we cannot understand the fascist menace in the U.S. without a beginning understanding of the evolution of capitalist democracy and the American experience.