

FASCISM: What It Is & How to Fight It

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Workers World Philadelphia Branch
Candidacy Class - November 1st, 2020

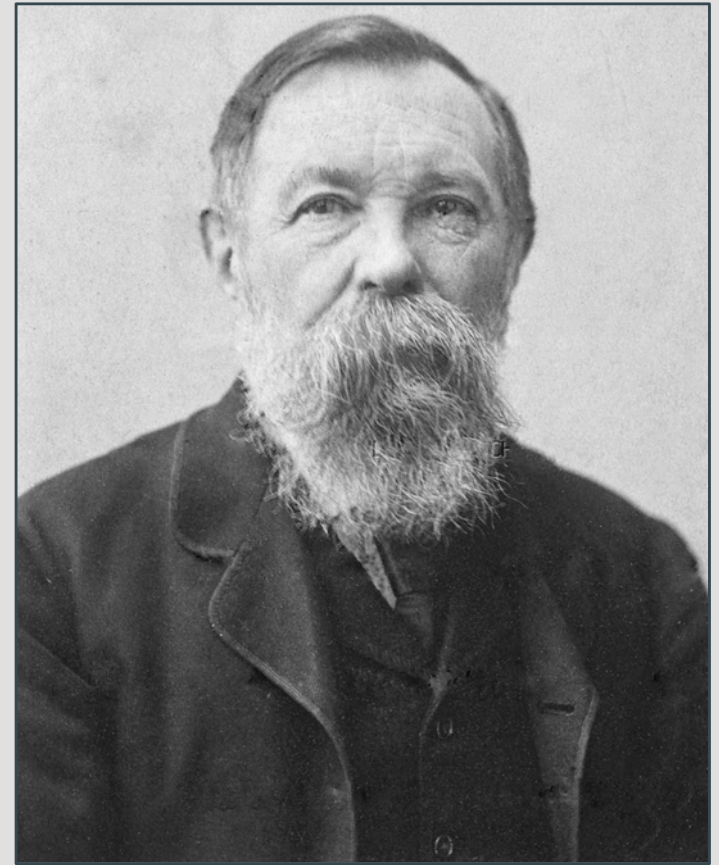
The State

What's its purpose?

Why is it necessary?

“The state is, therefore, by no means a power forced on society from without; just as little is it ‘the reality of the ethical idea’, ‘the image and reality of reason’, as Hegel maintains. Rather, it is a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that it has split into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms, these classes with conflicting economic interests, might not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, it became necessary to have a power, seemingly standing above society, that would alleviate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of ‘order’; and this power, arisen out of society but placing itself above it, and alienating itself more and more from it, is the state.”

Friedrich Engels, 1884



Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*

STATE AND REVOLUTION



VLADIMIR I. LENIN

“The state is a product and a manifestation of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms. The state arises where, when and insofar as class antagonism objectively cannot be reconciled. And, conversely, the existence of the state proves that the class antagonisms are irreconcilable.” *Vladimir Lenin, 1917*

**What are the different forms
that the bourgeois state can take?**

Forms of the Bourgeois State

1. Bourgeois Democracy
2. Constitutional Monarchy
3. Social Democracy

Forms of the Bourgeois State

1. Bourgeois Democracy
2. Constitutional Monarchy
3. Social Democracy
4. Fascism

Fascism: What It Is & How to Fight It

Leon Trotsky



Fascism - What Is It?

"What is fascism? The name originated in Italy. Were all the forms of counter-revolutionary dictatorship fascist or not (That is to say, prior to the advent of fascism in Italy)?

"The former dictatorship in Spain of Primo de Rivera, 1923-30, is called a fascist dictatorship by the Comintern. Is this correct or not? We believe that it is incorrect.

"The fascist movement in Italy was a spontaneous movement of large masses, with new leaders from the rank and file. It is a plebian movement in origin, directed and financed by big capitalist powers. It issued forth from the petty bourgeoisie, the slum proletariat, and even to a certain extent from the proletarian masses; Mussolini, a former socialist, is a 'self-made' man arising from this movement."

Fascism - What Is It? (cont.)

“Primo de Rivera was an aristocrat. He occupied a high military and bureaucratic post and was chief governor of Catalonia. he accomplished his overthrow with the aid of state and military forces. The dictatorships of Spain and Italy are two totally different forms of dictatorship. It is necessary to distinguish between them. Mussolini had difficulty in reconciling many old military institutions with the fascist militia. This problem did not exist for Primo de Rivera.

"The movement in Germany is analogous mostly to the Italian. It is a mass movement, with its leaders employing a great deal of socialist demagoguery. This is necessary for the creation of the mass movement.”

Fascism - What Is It? (cont.)

"The genuine basis (for fascism) is the petty bourgeoisie. In Italy, it has a very large base -- the petty bourgeoisie of the towns and cities, and the peasantry. In Germany, likewise, there is a large base for fascism.... It may be said, and this is true to a certain extent, that the new middle class, the functionaries of the state, the private administrators, etc., can constitute such a base.

"At the moment that the 'normal' police and military resources of the bourgeois dictatorship, together with their parliamentary screens, no longer suffice to hold society in a state of equilibrium -- the turn of the fascist regime arrives. Through the fascist agency, capitalism sets in motion the masses of the crazed petty bourgeoisie and the bands of declassed and demoralized lumpenproletariat -- all the countless human beings whom finance capital itself has brought to desperation and frenzy."

Fascism - What Is It? (cont.)

"From fascism the bourgeoisie demands a thorough job; once it has resorted to methods of civil war, it insists on having peace for a period of years. And the fascist agency, by utilizing the petty bourgeoisie as a battering ram, by overwhelming all obstacles in its path, does a thorough job. After fascism is victorious, finance capital directly and immediately gathers into its hands, as in a vise of steel, all the organs and institutions of sovereignty, the executive administrative, and educational powers of the state: the entire state apparatus together with the army, the municipalities, the universities, the schools, the press, the trade unions, and the co-operatives. When a state turns fascist, it does not mean only that the forms and methods of government are changed in accordance the patterns set by Mussolini -- the changes in this sphere ultimately play a minor role -- but it means first of all for the most part that the workers' organizations are annihilated; that the proletariat is reduced to an amorphous state; and that a system of administration is created which penetrates deeply into the masses and which serves to frustrate the independent crystallization of the proletariat. Therein precisely is the gist of fascism..."

Leon Trotsky, Extracts from a Letter to an English Comrade, 1931

What is the bourgeoisie?

What is the petty bourgeoisie?

What is the proletariat?

Bourgeoisie, Petty Bourgeoisie, and Proletariat

"Any serious analysis of the political situation must take as its point of departure the mutual relations among the three classes: the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie (including the peasantry), and the proletariat.

"The economically powerful big bourgeoisie, in itself, represents an infinitesimal minority of the nation. To enforce its domination, it must ensure a definite mutual relationship with the petty bourgeoisie and, through its mediation, with the proletariat.

"To understand the dialectic of the relation among the three classes, we must differentiate three historical stages: at the dawn of capitalistic development, when the bourgeoisie required revolutionary methods to solve its tasks; in the period of bloom and maturity of the capitalist regime, when the bourgeoisie endowed its domination with orderly, pacific, conservative, democratic forms; finally, at the decline of capitalism, when the bourgeoisie is forced to resort to methods of civil war against proletariat to protect its right of exploitation."

Bourgeoisie, Petty Bourgeoisie, and Proletariat (cont.)

“ Nevertheless, the relationship between the bourgeoisie and its basic social support, the petty bourgeoisie, does not at all rest upon reciprocal confidence and pacific collaboration. In its mass, the petty bourgeoisie is an exploited and disenfranchised class. It regards the bourgeoisie with envy and often with hatred. The bourgeoisie, on the other hand, while utilizing the support of the petty bourgeoisie, distrusts the latter, for it very correctly fears its tendency to break down the barriers set up for it from above.

"While they were laying out and clearing the road for bourgeois development, the Jacobins engaged, at every step, in sharp clashes with the bourgeoisie. They served it in intransigent struggle against it. After they had culminated their limited historical role, the Jacobins fell, for the domination of capital was predetermined."

Bourgeoisie, Petty Bourgeoisie, and Proletariat (cont.)

"But precisely with the war begins the distinct decline of capitalism and, above all, of its democratic form of domination. It is now no longer a matter of new reforms and alms, but of cutting down and abolishing the old ones. Therewith the bourgeoisie comes into conflict into only with the institutions of proletarian democracy (trade unions and political parties) but also with parliamentary democracy, within the framework of which arose the labor organizations. Therefore, the campaign against 'Marxism' on the one hand and against democratic parliamentarism on the other.

"But just as the summits of the liberal bourgeoisie in its time were unable, by their own force alone, to get rid of feudalism, monarchy, and the church, so the magnates of finance capital are unable, by their force alone, to cope with the proletariat. They need the support of the petty bourgeoisie. For this purpose, it must be whipped up, put on its feet, mobilized, armed. But this method has its dangers. While it makes use of fascism, the bourgeoisie nevertheless fears it."

Leon Trotsky, from The Only Road for Germany, 1932

What's the difference between “fascism” as
we commonly use the term
and a “fascist state?”

Sam Marcy's Klan & Government: Foes or Allies? 1982

"Symptom of capitalist disease

"It is the symptomatic importance of the rise of the KKK and neo-Nazis which is of greatest moment in apprehending the direction that events are surely taking. The Nazi-KKK menace in the U.S. is a symptom of a profoundly significant disease which has become congenital to the entire social system of capitalist exploitation and oppression.

"If the growth of the KKK and the Nazis were an isolated phenomenon divorced from the degenerative effects of monopoly capitalism, if these groups had no ties to and were not supported, encouraged, and promoted by formidable sections of the ruling class, they would be merely a sterile and stagnant combination of racist thugs, even though they are oriented to prey upon growing unemployment, economic dislocation, skyrocketing prices and the cost-of-living. But that is not at all the case.

"The growth of fascism everywhere has been securely tied to big business; that is its lifeline."

Klan & Government (cont.)

“A case might be made for the liberal apologists' view under the following conditions. If there were a prolonged softening of the class struggle, rather than its growing acuteness on a world scale; if a swift and protracted economic recovery on a truly high level of production were in the wind, if an easing instead of an aggravation of international tensions were to come, if a sharp drop rather than a tremendous hike in swollen defense expenditures were really to take place in the immediate period ahead.

"Such conditional ifs,' however, are wholly unwarranted by the very grim realities of the present situation as it continues to develop.

“Liberals don't speak for monopolist bourgeoisie

"If the bourgeois liberal view as a class force represented the viewpoint or the orientation of the capitalist establishment as a whole, as it did on occasion in the past, its forecast would have to be taken into account, at least as one element, in appraising the evolution of political trends in the period ahead.”

Klan & Government (cont.)

"But the liberal bourgeoisie, for the most part, is a cast-out element. It has been in the process of decline for a very considerable period. Far from speaking for the capitalist establishment, it is trying desperately to retain some toehold by propitiating the rightists in the imperialist firmament.

"The ruling class as a whole have rejected and disqualified the orientation of bourgeois liberalism. They are not full of optimism about a speedy recovery from the deep-going economic malaise which afflicts all of society, and whose burden falls so heavily on the shoulders of the workers and the oppressed.

"Rather than seeking peaceful solutions to international problems, the new Reaganite administrators of the capitalist state are hell-bent on war. They may decide to talk softly and cover themselves with pacifist phraseology for a period of time, but mainly for the purpose of gaining time to gear up the war machine and militarize the country as a whole."

Klan & Government (cont.)

"The two most formidable and preponderant elements in the capitalist establishment – Big Oil, that untrammelled octopus which pervades every nook and corner of social existence in the country, and the unbridled military – are the most prone to promote lawlessness and extra-legal, extra-parliamentary and paramilitary force to gain their ends. They, together with the military-industrial complex are the very infrastructure of contemporary capitalist society.

"It is they who finance the growth of a thousand-and-one single-issue reactionary organizations and who cannot but look benignly upon and covertly finance KKK and neo-Nazi thugs. To them it is just one more covert operation which for public purposes is out-of-bounds of the legal framework of the capitalist government.

"The array of giant multinational corporations that compose the monopolist bourgeoisie are all connected in one way or another with the military and Big Oil either being subjected by them or allied with them in friendly, cooperative, 'shared' areas of collaboration. None of the monopolist bourgeoisie any longer lean in or even give the semblance of leaning in a liberal direction."

Sam Marcy, The Klan & the Government: Foes or Allies? 1982

What changes in the ruling class have led to the growth of fascist organizing?

What changes in the working class make fighting fascism more possible?

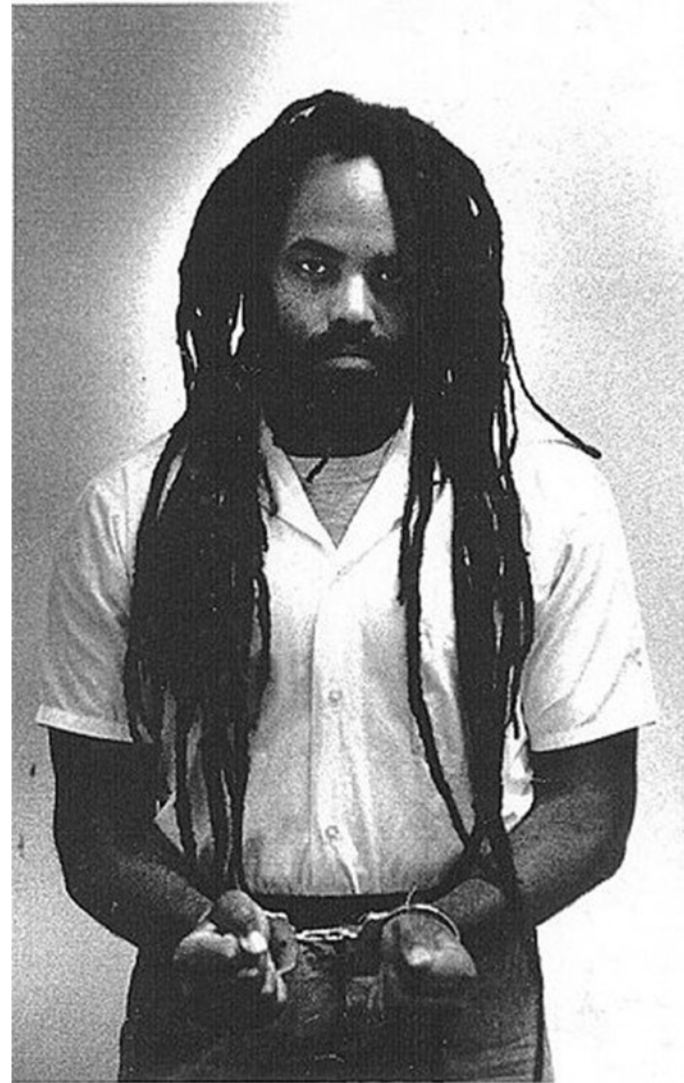
How do we fight fascism?

What is a popular front?

What is a united front?

Haven't Black and Indigenous people in the United States always lived under fascism?

Mumia Abu-Jamal



“W.E.B. DuBois writes about the Red Summers of the teens of the 20th century, 1918, 1919. And there were white riots against Black communities in Cincinnati, in Philadelphia, in Louisville, and all across the country. That was fascism. And we’re used to thinking about fascism in the context of Mussolini in Italy or Hitler in Germany. But we’re not used to seeing this read as an American face or in an American accent. And that’s our fault. That’s our problem. We have ignored history to our detriment.

“Think about this. If the American Constitution granted the rights of Black people to vote after the Civil War ended in 1865, why did it take the Civil Rights Movement of 100 years later to make those rights real and to call for the recall of laws that diminished Black freedom?

“So we’re thinking about fascism. And I think we need to look at it and then look at this era that we’re living in now.”

On a MOVE. From a Prison Nation, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Workers World, October 14, 2020

Is Trump a fascist?

Is the U.S. a fascist state?

Can one thing be true while the other is not?

Further Readings

“Answer to the fascist threat—Working class struggle!” Workers World

<https://www.workers.org/2020/10/51864/>

Engels, On the Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1884/origin-family/index.htm>

Lenin, The State and Revolution

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/staterev/>

Trotsky, Fascism: What It Is and How to Fight It

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1944/1944-fas.htm>

Marcy, The Klan and the Government: Foes Or Allies?

<https://www.workers.org/marcy/klan/>

Abu-Jamal, Ignoring History to Our Detriment

<https://www.workers.org/2020/10/51973/>

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