

Fascism

A Workers Solidarity Movement Position Paper

Workers Solidarity Movement

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What is the Purpose of this Position Paper?

It is important to have a firm understanding of what fascism is beyond vague generalities about racism and authoritarianism so that we may correctly spot it and be effective in preventing its success, especially given that fascist organising requires an emergency response.

What is Fascism?

1. **Incoherent**

Due to its psychological and reactionary nature and its peculiar history of development. It can't be simply summarised like anarchism or republicanism can be, rather it is like a device with its pieces hastily glued and taped together.

2. **Adaptive**

Fascism first arose in early 20th century Europe, but has its antecedents throughout human history. It is always an expression of the current situation and won't necessarily re-emerge in the exact same form as in 1920s/30s Europe, as we are seeing today.

3. **The Opposite of Anarchism**

Fascism is as close to the exact opposite of anarchism as is possible.

4. **Ingroup Statism**

It is highly mistaken to view fascism as just a form of extreme racism. It is more about bringing a large number of people together by their membership of a worthy ingroup and consolidating that with huge state power.

5. **Reactionary**

In the basic sense, it arises as a reaction to changes in society and presents itself as a force which will overcome those 'degenerate' changes. It is sick of modern 'decadence', uppity and promiscuous women, queers, Jews, and people of colour getting ahead of their station, intellectuals corrupting the youth, and so on. The domestic 'culture' and 'civilisation' must be defended from outside invaders and the enemy within.

6. **'Revolutionary' and 'Radical'**

In the sense of seeking sweeping and immediate changes to society.

7. **Emotional Reaction to Disgrace**

'There is no philosophy of Fascism, but only a psycho-analysis'. Broadly speaking it is an emotional reaction to disgrace which seeks to restore past greatness, whether real or imagined. Bottled up bigotry is made legitimate with an attitude of 'screw you I'm not going to take it anymore and I don't care what anyone thinks!'. That disgrace can relate to nationality (e.g. Versailles and Germany), gender (cis male), sexuality (straight), income / class (e.g. unemployed worker, relatively impoverished middle class). These people position themselves as oppressed and swindled victims who demand reparations.

8. **A Spiritual Movement**

Which seeks to overcome alienation, disgrace, and misery, by achieving heroic heights, by

being part of something great – fascism is egotism, living vicariously through the collective. Fascism seeks simplicity in a scary and complicated world. It provides community to the ingroup by turning the state into a religion and the Party into a church. The individual transcends their own fears and mortality by surrendering to the collective.

9. **Worships Normality**

Difference is hated, normality is worshipped. A central task of fascism is defining what is normal. Unconventional lifestyles are to be eradicated, along with those with physical or mental disabilities (or differences deemed to be ‘defects’).

10. **Anti-Individual**

There is no individual, only the collective and the ruling order. Order and duty are the chief values, not freedom.

11. **Anti-Rational**

Rises on an outpouring of unthinking emotion. Values action over reflection, faith over reason. It is not for a person to think for themselves, but to fulfil the role which has been set for them.

12. **Focuses on ‘Nature’ rather than ‘Nurture’**

Problems are seen as due to essential traits in people. Rather than analysing society systematically, it proclaims all social problems are the result of a moral crisis. The finger is pointed at shady ‘elites’ pulling the strings, but not at hierarchy itself. This moral crisis will be solved by submitting to a new order which will purify society from corrupting influences which are perceived as deviant and foreign.

13. **Sexist and Queerphobic**

As much as it is racist. Led by men. It is the political expression of toxic masculinity, irate because of a disappointed sense of entitlement, prizing force and militarism, pre-occupied with dominance, despises weakness, meekness, and sympathy. Traditional gender roles must be rigidly enforced. The fascist mission always involves putting women back in the kitchen to be baby-making vessels – this tendency can be seen today in the ‘pick up artists’ and ‘Men’s Rights Activists’ who populate the far-right. Notably trans people are top of the list of targets.

14. **Hierarchical, Anti-Democratic**

Venerates hierarchy as the natural ‘law of the jungle’, seeing democracy as an impotent indulgence. Parliament will be used as a tool at first but eventually dissolved into dictatorship. This ‘meritocratic’ elitist sensibility makes fascism a good fit with capitalism. Realpolitik is central, getting the job done rather than dallying about human rights and due process.

15. **Street Politics and Direct Action**

What also distinguishes fascism from parliamentary politics is it has a mass street politics with its own poisonous direct action component, using violence to intimidate and attack those at the wrong end of their ideology, including attempting to make left political opposition impossible. Probably this more than anything else distinguishes fascism and gives it the particular pre-power danger that requires confrontation.

16. **Anti-Socialist, Anti-Communist, Anti-Anarchist, and Anti-Trade Union**

Because:

1. The left is seen to be emblematic of everything degenerate in society.
2. The left is the chief competitor of fascists and left ideas and organising make it harder for fascism to spread.
3. Unions represent an independent power in society, but under fascism there ought only be the state.
4. The left stands for egalitarianism and fascists stand for aristocracy.
5. Fascism can find wealthy backers if they crush unions and the left.
6. It helps morale to have a sworn political enemy.
7. Historically this was the case so it persists today.

17. **No Class Awareness**

There is only national and ethnic consciousness, no class consciousness or human consciousness. The richest and the poorest are supposedly on the same team despite opposite financial interests. There is no awareness of a united humanity, only brethren of the nation or race.

18. **Politics and Economy Merge**

The state merges political and economic power, both by the state asserting its authority over all economic affairs and private power asserting its influence over the state.

19. **Simplistic, Improvised, and Populist**

Fascism tends to be highly simplistic and makes it up as it goes along. Fascist parties will have very crude programmes, centred on vague notions of purging the nation of corruption and outsiders, achieving national greatness, and maintaining law and order. Policies will be adopted on the fly to appease the populace.

20. **Within a Broader Far-Right**

Fascism exists within a broader spectrum or ecosystem of far-right politics. It is impossible to definitively say at exactly what point a group becomes fascist rather than ultra-nationalists, extreme racist and sexist authoritarians, right-wing militia men, etc. This problem is intensified by the fact that fascists take pains for obvious reasons to hide the fact they are fascists.

21. In this vein, while parties like UKIP are not fascist, they live within that fascist ecosystem and serve the same agenda, drawing a broader group of people into the orbit of the far-right and shifting the discourse towards xenophobia and authoritarianism. Similarly for Donald Trump, who benefits greatly from the rise of neo-confederates, white supremacists, neo-Nazis, etc, but has of yet not attempted to seize absolute state power.

22. All of the above makes it clear that the 'alt-right' is indeed fascism wearing a new hat.

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*Position paper on **Fascism** as collectively agreed by the February 2018 National Conference. This paper sits under 'The Role of the Anarchist Organisation' and above 'No Platform for Fascists'.*

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