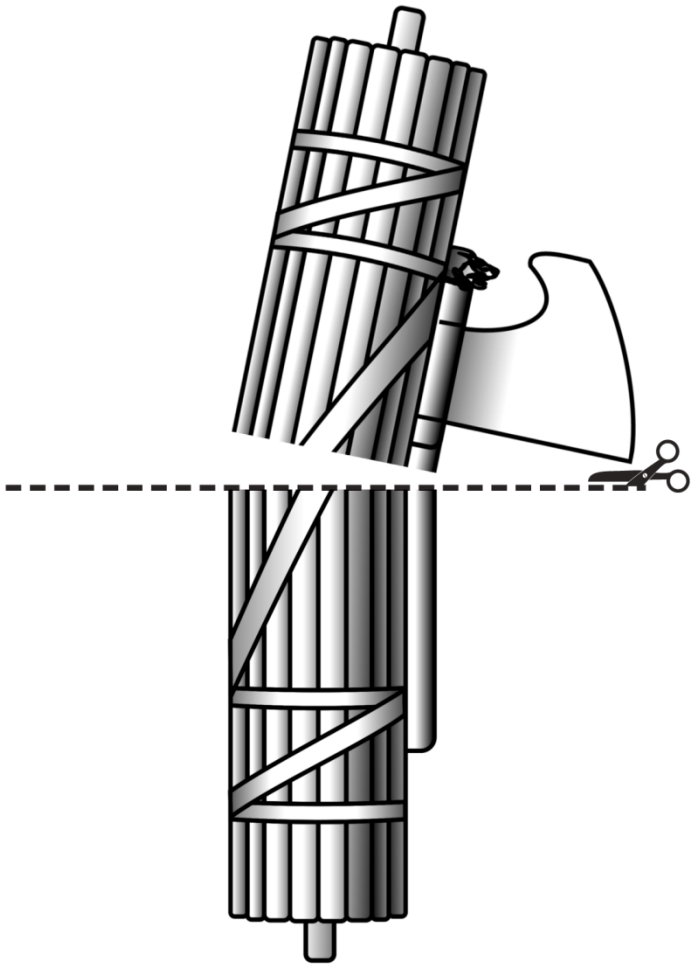
Confronting the Nucleus

Taking Power from Fascists



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Introduction

I've written this analysis as an introduction to the structural and social politics of fascism and anti-fascism. This text is meant to examine mechanisms of the fascist ideology not often touched on in popular media discourse, while also examining possibilities for confronting the fascist influence in our political and economic system.

Usually, a vague and misrepresented description of fascism accompanies popular media analyses on the rise of fascism in the United States. Everyone knows Fascism is dangerous and to be stopped at all costs, few know how to identify it when it's revealed to them. Since this is the case, we must find an accurate description of fascism before we can begin this analysis.

If you get your politics from conservative leaning media, the narrative is often that the defining "fascistic" attribute is "violent suppression of political opponents and free speech". Therefore, you will understand fascism as, generally, illegitimate political aggression. This definition is extremely similar to the tactical implications of defining "terrorism" as an outside phenomenon, dissolving all nuance and complicity. This definition used to define fascism ignores all structural and ideological mechanisms of fascism while also leaving room to excuse it for "legitimacy".

If you get your politics from more progressive leaning media, the definition is “authoritarian nationalism and the destruction of democratic institutions”. This is a bit more coherent, but it’s fundamentally inadequate and almost indistinguishable from neo-liberalism. This shows that the economic engine of fascism is being outright ignored by progressive media, leaving fascism misunderstood and covered in a mask of cognitive dissonance.

The fundamental difference between neo-liberalism and fascism is the interest being served by the private institutions. If the private institutions operate for the interest of the capitalists, we have neo-liberalism. If the private institutions operate for the interest of the nation-state, we have fascism. Within this context, fascism can more accurately be described a tool of the state to manage the economic system for it’s own supremacy. By fault of the dangerously expansive nature of private interest, fascism can also be described as a defensive mechanism for our modern capitalist market economy.

In the Doctrine of Fascism, Mussolini describes this transfer of the “Liberal State” to the “Fascist state”:

"The foundation of Fascism is the conception of the State, its character, its duty, and its aim. Fascism conceives of the State as an absolute, in comparison with which all individuals or groups are relative, only to be conceived of in their relation to the State. The conception of the Liberal State is not that of a directing force, guiding the play and development, both material and spiritual, of a collective body, but merely a force limited to the function of recording results: on the other hand, the Fascist State is itself conscious and has itself a will and a personality -- thus it may be called the "ethic" State."

This relationship between the capitalist market economy is fundamental in understanding how fascism manifests as a reactionary ideology as well as a phenomenon of capital accumulation.

The Reaction

Since the election of Donald Trump there's been an emergence of generally fascist and anti-fascist movements trying to solidify their political influence through radical propaganda. Marches and rallies especially so, as they are ultimately propagandist demonstrations. The far-left wants to silence the political influence of the far-right and the far-right wants to silence the political influence of the far-left. So much so that they're willing to engage in illegal and violent activity to gain political power over the other.

To the general public, that's what this conflict consists of, stripped of any nuance.

The Debate

As a result, a public “debate” emerged around the ethics of violent tactics against fascism and, furthermore, what fascism is in the first place. Consequentially, we’re given opposing narratives of either: fighting the fascist ideology with public debate, or fighting fascists themselves with tactical violence. Either option leaves us with very little to work with for a tactical defensive or offensive strategy against fascism. To that point, the way this argument is framed leaves little room for analyses of fascism’s ideological formation in the social realm or as an elite phenomenon.

Hitler’s insight on what could have stopped the Nazi movement echoes the same strategic incoherence on both accounts, “…if our adversaries had understood its principle, established a clear understanding of our ideas, and not offered any resistance; or, alternatively, if they had from the first day annihilated with the utmost brutality the nucleus of our new movement.” (1) While this advice is upheld as some sort of tactical secret, it derives from his social Darwinist conviction that applies the evolutionary concept of natural selection to social nature. His belief holds that not only does violence beget violence; violence is necessary to social

progress. This is to say that if there’s no violence, the fascist ideology could not reproduce, if there is violence, it will be the most brutal who survive.

Non-Violence

Liberals often refer to the first half of Hitler’s insight, that we must “not offer any resistance”, and we must confine the conflict in what’s often called the “marketplace of ideas”. The problem with this fixation on public debate in the “marketplace of ideas” is that “public debate”, ironically, takes place through media platforms that exist within a market. Thus, the sides of discourse fluctuate as irrationally as capital in a market economy. If you’ve ever been on the Internet you probably noticed it’s not the rational media that goes viral and gets advertising space. The way far right ideologues and personalities spread their propaganda so effectively is by poking at the viewers insecurities and alienation while providing scapegoats and easy answers. This also happens to be the perfect click-bait. In this way, debate can often serve to push the fascist narratives over the more rational ones.

This isn’t to say we shouldn’t challenge fascist ideologies where they present themselves. The

fascist propaganda must be confronted. However, we must be extremely careful not give them a platform through debate. Fighting fascism through discourse must adequately confront the fascist narrative and leave no room to be derailed.

Violence

I have to emphasize here, as it’s often overlooked, fascism shows its true face in violence. As the liberal narrative desires to confine the conflict in a peaceful way, we cannot use this to discredit self-defense. Whatever faith you have in non-violence won’t save you in a war zone. We have to keep in mind that there are in fact legitimate forms of violence. It’s a line in the sand that has to be identified while debating “tactical violence”.

In leftist circles we are only given the second half of Hitler’s insight, that we must “annihilate the nucleus”. For those of you paying attention to the social presence of the "alt-right" fascist movement, it would seem far left anti-fascist action has beaten their charisma to a halting point. In fact, alt-right figurehead Richard Spencer admits this fact outright. In reference to his particular movement, he said “When they become violent clashes and pitched battles, they aren’t fun… Until

the situation changes, we are up a creek without a paddle.” (2) If this is the case this would stand as evidence to the liberal narrative that confronting their movements head on would inspire a greater reaction and thus a larger presence. This evidence is given to us by the left as a complete tactical guide to confronting fascism.

The fixation on tactical violence as a means of combating fascism can overlook non-violent tactics in combating fascism. It’s easy to overlook the peaceful resistance that accompanied the violent resistance when it’s the violent tactics the fascists give credit to. However, it was the peaceful resistance that legitimized the militant self defense of the left. Both can be credited to the derailment the alt-right movement.

The Reactionary

The problem is we’re lead to believe that these movements are the “nucleus” itself. However, the “nucleus” is not going to be located in the actions or organization of fascists. This would assume that fascism is a byproduct of simple mis-education and wise propaganda. The “nucleus” is going to be located in that which produces the conditions for the fascist ideology. If we take a look at the beliefs

held by the fascists we can gain a better sense of where they might originate from.

The ideas most common to fascism include:
1. Anti-Immigration
2. Racial Purity
3. White Supremacy
4. Anti-Semitism
5. Social Darwinism
6. Extreme Nationalism
7. Extreme Authoritarianism

What's important about identifying these ideas is not so much about identifying their incoherence, but identifying where they come from. This is where we will find the so called "nucleus".

In most cases, those involved in the fascist movements are members of a privileged group who have become dispossessed, such as poor whites. In the public realm, fascism can be seen as a reaction to broken promises of privilege. These groups of people are referred to as "reactionary" fascists. They are foot soldiers for the fascist ideology, but they do not manage their own conditions. This dispossession and alienation manifests by material conditions created by capitalism. It is the scapegoating that directs their reaction away from the ruling class.

The Nucleus

The true fascists are those who benefit from the ideology. Institutionally, these ideas originate from the far right and conservative members of the ruling class who are afraid the expansive strategies of the progressive elite will destabilize our economic system. Fascism for the elite is a way to manage labor, preserve social hierarchy, preserve traditional values and defend against progressive and revolutionary activity among the working class. In other words, it is a defense mechanism by the state to manage the capitalist market economy. The ideas of social Darwinism and authoritarian nationalism convey this ideal, while ideas of anti-immigration and white supremacy convey who’s targeted by the fascist ideology.

Anti-Fascist Action

So when we're told that the conflict between fascists and anti-fascists is the division created by the fascists in power, we have to understand who the real victims are. Immigrants, people of color, Jewish people, the lgbtqa+ community, the disabled, the poor, the houseless, etc. These are the people the fascists in power are trying to divide us from. Anyone who wishes to further divide us from them are enemies of the working class.

In our inevitable conflicts, we have to be clear about how and when these tactics of violence and non-violence actually respond rationally to the motives of the state and the threats of the reactionaries. Yes, we must disrupt the public response to fascist propaganda. However, we can't be confused by this tactic to define this disruption as a victory. These tactics can silence an infant movement, but they do not remove the fascists from the state who put it together, and it does not remove the alienation of capitalism which form the tools for these elite fascists.

Conclusively, if we wish to confront the "nucleus" of the fascist movement, we must build an intersectional, anti-authoritarian and anti-capitalist movement focused on decentralizing power away from the state and restoring political

power to the people. This means that the most important tactic in confronting fascism is building networks of democratic power to create a new form of politic. This new form of politic is essential not only for confronting fascism, but for creating a future that’s sustainable, rational and liberatory; A new form of politic that confronts the corruption of power and hierarchy that persist the expansion of capital and the necessitation of fascism. Without this new form of politic we will be stuck in the streets fighting the tools of the state until we’re eventually crushed and all prospects for progressive revolution with it.

Recommended reading:

- “Americanism Personified: Why Fascism Has Always Been an Inevitable Outcome of the American Project” by “Colin Jenkins

- “Fascists are the tools of the state” by Peter Gerlderloos.

- “Libertarian Municipalism, an overview” by Murray Bookchin.

Citations:

1. Hitler, “Die Reden Hitlers am Reichsparteitag 1933,” http://archive.org/stream/Die-Reden-Hitlers-am-Reichsparteitag-1933/DieRedenHitlersAmReichsparteitag1933193427Doppels.ScanFraktur#page/n21/mode/1up

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2. “'Alt right' leader Richard Spencer says his rallies aren't 'fun' anymore” https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2018/03/12/alt-right-leader-richard-spencer-says-his-rallies-arent-fun-anymore/416579002/