

# ENCYCLOPEDIA OF GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

## Volume I

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**Also available as a printed book  
see title verso for ISBN details**

sources of tension affecting all of the conservative movements of the West, and these may well determine its survival.

### CONSERVATIVE CAPITALISM: LINES OF CLEAVAGE

The contest between the individualist and communitarian elements in conservative capitalism has been made evident in the struggles over income security, education, the devolution of central political authority, and many other issues. What has become increasingly apparent is that there are cross-cutting splits that divide each tendency along lines of class attitude, if not of class itself.

Within traditionalist conservatism, there is a split between establishment conservatives based in the customary institutions of Western society, and moralist conservatives who base their politics in evangelical churches, single-cause organizations and patriotic associations. Both favour the use of governmental authority to shape individual behaviour by limiting certain freedoms. There is, however, a considerable difference of degree and of moral purpose separating these points of view.

While establishment conservatives are supporters of a moderate accommodation with the welfare state as a matter of sustaining social stability, moralist conservatives are more inclined to think of government provision as a means of fostering dependency and personal laxity. Where establishment conservatives find government programmes of population control acceptable, moralists wish to use government policy to restrict abortion, constrain sexual freedom and censor pornography. Establishment conservatives are inclined to restrain licence in individual behaviour, while moralists tend toward the imposition of discipline as a means of moral improvement.

Moralist politics in the United States were a prominent factor in securing Republican control of the US Senate from 1980–6, and in the presidential candidacy of evangelist Pat Robertson in 1988. The selection of Senator Dan Quayle as Vice-President was predicated in part on developing a coalition between the establishment politics of George Bush and the moralist appeal of the Senator from Indiana.

On the individualist side of conservative capitalism, there is a similar division between populist conservatives and corporate conservatives. Populism has a long history in American politics of both left and right. On the right, populism has been associated with nativism and nationalism. In its new incarnation, the populism of the right is concerned with threats to individual freedom arising from government regulation as well as the collusion of the major financial and commercial concerns in an elite politics that threatens small business people, independent entrepreneurs, farmers, non-union workers, and those who believe

in the pure theory of the free market. Populist conservatives tend to be wary of major corporations, and especially multinationals.

Those conservatives who are based in the corporate-banking sector and whose interests are tied to the largest units of production also claim allegiance to the free market. Their orientation is to economic development as a solution for social problems, but there is also a willingness to make government an active agent in promoting economic freedom and protecting capitalist interests against internal regulation and external encroachment. By co-operating at the elite level, corporate conservatives see the government as a useful asset in the struggle to maintain the mobility and independence of capital.

Populist conservatives would quite willingly divorce the government from its role in monetary regulation, for example, while corporate conservatives see monetary regulation as a principal means of influencing economic policy in a manner favourable to their interests. The appeal of populism has historically been to the smaller commercial interests, while major corporations have operated with a substantial level of security and continuity. Recent policy changes that have made corporate take-overs easier have sharpened the division between corporate conservatives and populists. The latter find the prospect of genuine competition at the major corporate level to be refreshing, while the targets of take-over efforts seek ways of avoiding the logic of a speculative market.

These internal tensions in conservative capitalism are not yet as consequential as the splits within the left that have permitted conservatives to acquire power in most parts of the Western world. They may, however, have prevented the consolidation of that power. President Reagan's conservative agenda was stymied fairly effectively by Congressional opposition from 1983 on, some of which came from moderate Republican resistance to the violation of customary understandings concerning income security policy, among other issues. Prime Minister Thatcher faced several rebellions from traditionalists in her own party prior to being unseated by a challenge based in that faction. It has been generally apparent that moralist conservatism has been honoured more as a recruiting device than as a source of serious policy initiatives by regimes on both sides of the Atlantic.

It is in the nature of politicians to build coalitions, and the most likely result of these splits is that the challenge of conservative politics will lie more in maintaining coalitions among rival tendencies than in mobilizing any sector in its pure form. At the same time, reform liberals in the United States may be seen to have adopted some of the moralist conservative policies by advocating strong anti-drug initiatives, prosecuting pornographers, or endorsing the death penalty as a way of outflanking the political appeal of the conservative movement.

There is also the possibility of using the contradictory elements of conservative capitalism as mutual reinforcing explanations. Declines in

productivity can be attributed to indolence among poor people, rather than to the debilitating effects of corporate warfare. The plight of the poor can be attributed to bad personal choices in a free market, rather than to the perpetuation of inequities in the distribution of life chances. These opportunities for rationalization within the broader ambit of conservative capitalism may override the effects of inconsistent policies on the loyalties of those who vote conservative.

There are several alternatives to the classification scheme suggested in this essay that centre on distinctions between what is new and what is old in conservatism, neo-conservatism (Kristol 1983), the New Right for example (King 1987). The problem with these labels is that there is little agreement as to what it is that is new, possibly because neither the traditionalist nor the individualist stream represent new thinking. Some see the New Right as a combination of moralist and populist conservatism as against the coalition of establishment and corporate conservatism that characterized conservative parties prior to the mid-1970s. This classification captures the sense in which electoral victories have been based on a coalition that has never before had such success. Others see the New Right as a name for individualist conservatism as against traditional conservatism. What is presented as new here is the arrival in the conservative camp of advocates for a minimalist version of classical liberalism. The problem with either variant is that attention is directed away from both the historical basis and the enduring power of the larger conservative frame of reference. There is also the implication that this is a united movement, when in fact it is not. Indeed, some pre-eminent thinkers cited frequently by conservatives, such as Friedrich Hayek, disavow the conservative label entirely (Hayek 1960:397–411). To refer to conservative capitalism is to suggest the hybrid nature of the movement and to retain the critical conceptual references to its historical roots.

Looking to the future, a shift in emphasis from issues such as anti-communism and economic development to the environment and the issues associated with the politics of human development suggests a long-term threat to the survival of conservative capitalism. The issue of the environment brings the corporate base of conservative politics into a direct confrontation with increasingly large majorities of public opinion. Issues associated with parental care, health benefits and the improvement of educational opportunity may breach the wall of separation conservatives have laboured to build between the market and government.

The record of conservatives in promising sustained economic growth, a reduction in crime and the gradual elimination of social problems has not, on the whole, been persuasive. Western countries have witnessed economic expansion based, in the case of the United States, on personal, corporate and government debt. In Britain, the sale of nationalized assets and the revenue from oil rights has

sustained an uneasy compromise between the old welfare state and the new market freedom; however, there may be a limit to the financial underpinnings for such gains as have been made.

The United States has witnessed a major increase in imprisonment and the re-introduction of the death penalty—neither of which seem to have made the streets safer. Agitation on moral issues continues to intensify in the face of continued family breakdown, particularly among the poor. Both countries have experienced a widening of income and wealth inequality even in the face of sustained economic expansion.

Consequently, conservative capitalism has succeeded in reshaping the agenda of Western politics, though it has not yet developed a substructure of the same durability as that of the New Deal in the United States, or the postwar expansion of social services in Britain. While traditional conservatives may be able to address the increasingly significant issues of the environment and human development, the individualist tendency has few solutions to offer. Take away the threat of communism and conservative capitalism as a political movement is in danger of losing its way among its own internal divisions.

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# MARXISM

TOM BOTTOMORE

Only after Marx's death was his 'critique of political economy' developed as a comprehensive social theory, a world view, and a political doctrine. Engels began the process of codification of Marx's ideas as 'the Marxist world view', which he compared with classical German philosophy (Engels 1888), expounded as 'scientific socialism' (1880), and extended to include a 'dialectic of nature' (1873–83). His works were widely read in the rapidly growing socialist movement, and through these and his correspondence Engels had a profound influence on the first generation of Marxist thinkers. By the end of the nineteenth century Marxism had become established, largely outside the sphere of formal academic institutions, as a distinctive social theory and political doctrine (and to some extent as a comprehensive philosophical system) in which three main elements are distinguishable.

The first element is an analysis of the types of human society and their historical succession, in which a pre-eminent place is assigned to the economic structure or 'mode of production' as a determining or conditioning factor in shaping the whole form of social life. In Marx's own words: 'the mode of production of material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life' (Marx 1859: preface). The mode of production itself comprises two elements, the forces of production (the available technology) and the relations of production (the way in which production is organized, and in particular the nature of the groups in society which either own the instruments of production—the 'masters of the system of production'—or contribute their labour to the productive process—the 'direct producers'). Two of the fundamental ideas of Marxist thought emerged from this analysis: a periodization of history conceived as a progressive movement through the ancient, Asiatic, feudal and modern capitalist modes of production; and a conception of the fundamental role of social classes, defined by their position in the system of production, in constituting and transforming the major types of society.



The second element in Marxism is an explanation of how the change from one type of society to another is brought about. Two processes play a crucial part in such changes: the development of the forces of production and the relations between classes. From one aspect, the main agent of change is the progress of technology, and Marx himself emphasized this in his well-known statement that 'the handmill gives you a society with feudal lords, the steam mill a society with industrial capitalists' (Marx 1847: chapter 2, section 1); but from another aspect it is the struggle between classes over the organization of production as a whole and the general form of social life which produces major transformations. These two processes, however, are related in so far as the evolution of the productive forces is bound up with the rise of a new class, and at the same time makes impossible the continuance of the existing economic and political organization, which has become an obstacle to further development. Thus, in studies of the transition from feudalism to capitalism, which has been a privileged model for the Marxist theory of history, the emergence of modern capitalism is portrayed as the rise of a new class, the bourgeoisie, equipped with a new technology, which by degrees transformed the system of production and established itself as the dominant class. However, differences of emphasis in the description and explanation of historical changes, different degrees of 'determinism' or 'voluntarism', appeared at an early stage in Marxist thought, and have persisted.

The third element in Marxism is the analysis of modern capitalism and its development, to which Marx himself and later Marxists devoted their main efforts. Capitalism is conceived as the final form of class society, in which the opposition and conflict between the two principal classes—bourgeoisie and proletariat—becomes ever clearer and sharper, and the economic contradictions of the capitalist mode of production, manifesting themselves in recurrent crises, steadily grow. At the same time the economic system is increasingly socialized with the rise of cartels and trusts and the development of a close relationship between manufacturing and bank capital, and the strength of the working-class movement as a political force committed to the creation of a new society steadily increases. This analysis of capitalist development, and the growth of mass socialist parties (notably in Germany and Austria), necessarily led to a preoccupation with the conditions in which a transition to socialism would occur, and to the elaboration of Marxism as a political doctrine which provided intellectual guidance to the socialist parties, and which was an important factor in their cohesion as well as an ideological weapon in their struggle against bourgeois dominance.

From the outset, however, there was some diversity of view about the nature and scope of Marxist thought. For Kautsky, whose writings had a pre-eminent place in theoretical discussions throughout the period from the late 1880s to 1914, Marxism was above all a theory of the historical development of human

society, a scientific, evolutionist and deterministic theory which had close affinities with Darwinism (as Engels had also affirmed). On the other hand, Plekhanov, the 'father of Russian Marxism', presented Marxism as an all-embracing world view, described as 'dialectical materialism', within which historical materialism was conceived as an application of its general principles to the particular study of social phenomena. During the first decade of the twentieth century the various elements of Marxism were all vigorously developed, but in several different directions and amidst increasing critical debate. In Germany, under Kautsky's influence, Marxism as a scientific theory of historical development and the capitalist economy had a dominant position, although some of its claims had begun to be questioned in the 'revisionist debate' initiated by Bernstein (1899), who contested the ideas of an increasing polarization of society between bourgeoisie and proletariat, and of an eventual economic collapse of capitalism as a result of ever-worsening crises. In Austria, Marxism was also expounded as a social theory, and more specifically as a sociological system, by the group of Austro-Marxists who constituted the first distinct 'school' of Marxist thought (Bottomore and Goode 1978). They were, like Kautsky, positivists, but in a more sophisticated manner, influenced by neo-Kantianism and by Mach; their philosophical views, elaborated principally by Max Adler, were conceived not as a metaphysical system but strictly as a philosophy of science. The Austro-Marxists not only gave a systematic form to Marxist social science but were also innovators in extending this science into new fields in their studies of nationality and nationalism (Bauer 1907), the social functions of law (Renner 1904), and the recent development of capitalism (Hilferding 1910). At the same time they were all active in the rapidly growing socialist movement, so that their work was informed by a continuous close relationship between theory and practice. In Russia, however, where there was no mass socialist movement, Marxism was at first an intellectual movement, shaped largely by Plekhanov's conception of it as a philosophical world view, which Lenin inherited. Out of this matrix developed the idea of bringing a 'socialist consciousness' to the masses from outside, and the construction of a Bolshevik ideology emphasizing the dominant role of a disciplined revolutionary party, which in due course became the ideology of the Soviet state.

### MARXISM BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS

The First World War and the Russian Revolution changed profoundly the conditions in which Marxist thought would henceforth develop. The outbreak of war was seen as confirming the theories of imperialism propounded by Hilferding, Bukharin and Lenin, but it also revealed the weakness of the working-class movement in Western Europe in the face of nationalism, and

created deep divisions in the German Social Democratic Party which by the end of the war and after the defeat of revolutionary uprisings in 1918–19 had lost its former pre-eminence as the centre of Marxist thought and practice to the Bolsheviks. However, the war itself brought increased state intervention in the economies of the belligerent countries, and it seemed to many Western Marxists, of a more gradualist persuasion, to create new opportunities for a transition to socialism, posing new questions about how that transition would be accomplished and what form a socialist economy would take. It was the revolution in Russia, however, which had the greatest impact on Marxist thought, in several different ways.

First, Soviet Marxists had to grapple in practice with the problems of constructing a socialist society, and during the 1920s there were intense debates about the policies of the transition period, in particular about the pressing need for rapid industrialization of a backward agrarian society as a specific problem which Marxists in the industrially developed countries had never had to confront (Bukharin 1920; Preobrazhensky 1926; Erlich 1960). These preoccupations impressed upon Soviet Marxism one of its distinctive characteristics.

Second, the success of the Bolsheviks in establishing the ‘first workers’ state’, contrasted with the failure of the socialist movement elsewhere in Europe, endowed their version of Marxism (soon to be known as Marxism-Leninism) with a special prestige. Marxism, like the working-class movement itself after the creation of separate communist parties and the foundation of the Third (Communist) International, was sharply divided into two main streams. Soviet Marxism, influenced by the legacy of Plekhanov and Lenin and by the specific socio-economic circumstances of Russia, developed as a comprehensive world view and increasingly, as Stalin consolidated his dictatorship, as a dogmatic state ideology, imposed by the ‘vanguard party’ and its leaders, which excluded all critical reflection and debate. Marxist thought then became largely identified, in the 1930s, with Soviet Marxism, which was widely disseminated through the Third International and its affiliated parties, acquiring increasing political influence in the prevailing conditions of economic depression and the rise of fascism in the capitalist world.

Outside the Soviet Union, nevertheless, Marxism continued to develop in more diverse, open and critical ways in response to new problems: the apparent stabilization of capitalism in the 1920s; the increasingly bureaucratic and totalitarian character of Soviet society; the economic depression of the 1930s (which failed, however, to engender an effective socialist alternative); the development of the fascist states; and the renewed threat of war. Thus Hilferding (1924) defined the changes in capitalism during and after the war as a development of ‘organized capitalism’, characterized by an extension of economic planning as a result of the dominance of large corporations and banks, and of greater state

involvement in the regulation of economic life. He conceived this continued 'socialization of the economy' as a further stage in the transition to socialism, although later, after the experience of National Socialism in Germany and Stalinism in the Soviet Union, he recognized that the process could well lead, and in these cases had led, to a totalitarian society; in his last work he began a systematic revision of the Marxist theory of the state (Hilferding 1940, 1941). Others, among them Gramsci, Trotsky and Bauer (Beetham 1983), undertook an analysis of the economic and social conditions which had made possible the rise of fascism, and Neumann (1942) published a major study of National Socialist Germany as a regime of 'totalitarian monopoly capitalism', while the psychological bases of the fascist movements also began to be studied (Fromm 1942; Adorno *et al.* 1950).

However, the interpretations of fascism and more generally of the inter-war period as a whole by Western Marxists were diverse, although two main currents of thought can be distinguished. The social democratic Marxists, while recognizing that the fascist regimes had to be opposed by force, remained generally committed to a view of the transition to socialism as a long, evolutionary and relatively peaceful process arising out of the economic development of capitalism itself. Those Marxists who adhered to the new communist parties, however, and notably Korsch (1923), Lukács (1923) and Gramsci (1929–35), rejected the versions of Marxism which presented it as a scientific theory of society, and emphasized the factor of consciousness in the working-class movement; hence the crucial role of revolutionary intellectuals in developing a socialist world view. This was conceived by Lukács as conveying to the working class a true insight into the historical process, or a 'correct class consciousness', but he subsequently disowned the 'revolutionary, utopian messianism' expressed in this book (Lukács 1967) and his later work was primarily devoted to literary criticism and aesthetic theory. Gramsci also conceived the socialist world view as a body of ideas and beliefs elaborated by the intellectuals of a progressive class, which was essential if the class were to establish a social and cultural hegemony, as well as political dominance, and embark successfully on the construction of a new social order.

A similar view of Marxist theory, influenced at the outset by the writings of Korsch and Lukács, was developed by a group of intellectuals associated with the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research (established in 1923), which later flowered luxuriantly into the Frankfurt school of 'critical theory'. Those most closely associated with the Institute in the 1930s—Horkheimer, Marcuse and Adorno—gave to Marxist thought a distinctive academic orientation, disconnected from any direct involvement in political action and increasingly sceptical about the role of the working class as an agent of social transformation in the Western capitalist societies. Their critical studies were directed primarily against bourgeois culture, especially as it manifested itself in philosophy and the social

sciences in the form of 'traditional theory', interpreted as the implicit or explicit outlook of the modern natural sciences, expressed in modern philosophy as positivism and empiricism.

By 1939, however, many of these Western Marxist thinkers were either dead or in exile, and the European scene was dominated even more completely by Soviet Marxism. It was only two or three decades later that their ideas began to be influential in a new intellectual renaissance of Marxism.

### MARXISM AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR

The Second World War and its aftermath created a radically different situation in which Marxist thought could develop. The geographical area in which Soviet Marxism reigned virtually unchallenged was extended by the establishment of Stalinist regimes in the countries of Eastern Europe, though this total dominance was short-lived. Yugoslavia seceded at an early stage from the Soviet bloc, introduced an original economic and social system based upon workers' self-management, and began to develop a distinctive form of Marxist thought, centred upon the *Praxis* group of sociologists and philosophers, which had many affinities and close relations with some forms of Western Marxism (Markovic and Cohen 1975: part I). Elsewhere in Eastern Europe, after the death of Stalin, a growing intellectual restlessness and a succession of revolts against the Stalinist system also engendered more dissident forms of Marxist thought, again partly inspired by Western Marxism, and there was increasing contact with Western philosophy and social science.

Outside the Soviet sphere, Marxist thought developed more rapidly than at any time since the first decade of the century. In the immediate post-war period socialist and communist parties were stronger than they had ever been in Western Europe, and Marxist thought was widely diffused, not only in political and cultural movements but also, for the first time, in the academic social sciences, philosophy and the humanities. In some quarters, and notably in the French Communist Party, Marxism retained much of its Stalinist character, but it was strongly contested by a new current of existentialist Marxism inspired by Sartre. Western Marxism as a whole, in its diverse forms, became increasingly critical of the orthodox Soviet version, both as a social theory and as a political doctrine, most trenchantly after the Hungarian revolt in 1956 and the rise of the 'New Left'.

From the late 1950s the pre-war writings of Lukács, Gramsci and the members of the Frankfurt Institute (re-established in Germany in 1951 and gradually assuming the character of a 'school') began to reach a wider audience, but one which was now primarily academic. Except in Italy, where Gramsci's writings played an important part in changing the outlook of the Communist Party, and to a lesser extent in Austria, where Austro-Marxism continued to have

some influence in the Socialist Party, Marxist thought spread most rapidly in the universities and in the student movement of the late 1960s. For the first time in Western Europe (and elsewhere) Marxist theory acquired a major place in academic teaching, not only in history, sociology and political science, where it had long had some kind of presence, but in economics and anthropology, philosophy and aesthetics. This efflorescence provoked a new interest in some of Marx's own lesser known writings (unpublished during his lifetime), above all the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (Marx 1844) which encouraged widespread discussion by philosophers and sociologists of the notion of 'alienation', and the *Grundrisse* (Marx 1857–8) which suggested new conceptions of the process of development of capitalist society.

Many of the ideas newly discovered in these Marxian texts were close to the preoccupations of Lukács, Gramsci and the Frankfurt school, and for a time, under these various influences, Marxist thought in one of its important manifestations became primarily a critique of bourgeois culture as a 'reified' system of thought, constituted, according to the Frankfurt school, by a positivist, scientific and technological world view. This concern with bourgeois thought-forms, pursued by the following generation of Marxists in this tradition (and notably by Goldmann and Habermas) gave rise to intense methodological debates, concentrating on problems of the theory of knowledge and the philosophy of science (Goldmann 1964; Habermas 1981). Thus Habermas in his earlier writings continued the critique of positivism in the social sciences (Adorno *et al.* 1969; see also Wellmer 1969) and attempted to provide an epistemological foundation for critical theory. Subsequently he developed a theory of communicative action (Habermas 1981) which emphasizes the role of language and communication in social evolution and restates the Frankfurt school view of the domination of modern societies by instrumental or technological rationality (Marcuse 1964), which is contrasted with the function of practical reason in the social 'life-world'. There is an evident continuity with the critical theory of Adorno and Horkheimer in Habermas's preoccupation with cultural phenomena—rationality, legitimation, modernism—but at the same time a partial return to such Marxist themes as class, the economic development of capitalism and the role of the state, which had largely disappeared from critical theory by the late 1960s (Bottomore 1984:55–85).

The kind of Marxist thought influenced by Lukács, Gramsci, the Frankfurt school, the *Praxis* group, and existentialism can be broadly categorized as 'humanist', in spite of the considerable differences between individual thinkers, in the sense that it was primarily concerned with human consciousness, the interpretation of cultural products and the critique of ideology. But this was not the only type of Western Marxism that flourished in the post-war period. In economics, and to some extent in other social sciences, a more empirical, and in a broad sense positivist, approach prevailed and research was concentrated upon



such subjects as the post-war development of the capitalist economy, the class structure, and the problems of Third World development in relation to international capitalism. This orientation of Marxist thought was strengthened by the introduction of structuralist ideas, already influential in linguistics and anthropology, through the work of Althusser, who argued that Marx, after his early 'humanist' period, eliminated the human subject from social theory and constructed a 'new science' of the levels of human practice which are inscribed in the structure of a social totality. Marxist theory, in its mature form, is therefore seen as concerned with the structural analysis of social totalities (for example, mode of production, social formation), its object being to disclose the 'deep structure' which underlies and produces the directly observable phenomena of social life (Althusser 1969, 1970; Godelier 1977: part I, chapter. 1). Althusser's principal aim was to establish the 'scientificity' of Marxism, on the basis of a theory of knowledge and science, and the new conception of theory which he elaborated influenced the social sciences in a number of different fields: for example, studies of pre-capitalist societies (Hindess and Hirst 1975; Seddon 1978) and of the class structure in capitalist societies (Poulantzas 1975). His conception of Marxism as a science, however, was also strongly criticized, both for its total exclusion of human agency from the processes of social life, and for an anti-empiricism so complete that it makes knowledge a purely theoretical, self-contained entity; Althusser's influence waned rapidly in the 1980s. During this period, however, the idea of Marxism as a 'natural science of society' has been expounded in a more discriminating way in the realist philosophy of science (Bhaskar 1979, 1991), which postulates the existence of an underlying structure of social life, possessing 'causal powers', but mediated by human consciousness in the production of its effects.

### PROBLEMS OF MARXISM TODAY

Over the past few decades two major divisions have persisted in Marxist thought: that between Soviet and Western Marxism, although the former has by now lost most of its influence and much of its distinctiveness; and more importantly, that between the broad and partially overlapping categories of 'humanist' and 'scientific' Marxism. At the same time Marxism has become altogether more varied and diffuse, its boundaries increasingly difficult to delineate, and more ambiguous in its relation to the social changes of the late twentieth century. In the present situation Marxism has become to a very great extent an academic 'subject', a focal point for much intellectual disputation, while its influence on social and political movements has significantly declined.

In the first respect Marxist thought has become increasingly involved with more general controversies in the social sciences and the philosophy of science;

and the influence of other theoretical and philosophical views—always present to some extent, as its engagement at various times with positivism, Hegelianism, phenomenology, existentialism and structuralism makes evident—has grown to a point where it can be suggested, for instance, that ‘the concept of Marxism as a separate school of thought will in time become blurred and ultimately disappear altogether’ (Kolakowski 1969:204). The alternative, of course, is that Marxism, in the course of its confrontation with alternative theories, will assimilate some of their conceptions and renew itself as one of the most powerful explanatory schemes so far constructed in the social sciences. But the problems that face any regenerated Marxist social theory are formidable: to provide a convincing analysis of the long-term development of capitalist economies, which have been conceptualized in very different ways as ‘organized capitalism’, ‘state monopoly capitalism’, or ‘corporatism’, and most recently in terms of the neo-Marxist approach of ‘regulation theory’ (Aglietta 1982), and of the reconstruction of socialist economies which aims to achieve some combination of central planning and market relations; to reconsider the role of social classes, and the significance of other social movements, in the recent development of capitalist societies; and to rethink the Marxist theory of the state in relation to the twentieth-century experience of nationalism, totalitarianism and democracy.

Historically, however, Marxism has been a political doctrine just as much as a theory of society, and the two aspects were closely linked at the time when Marxist thought provided the body of ideas which unified and guided mass socialist and communist parties. Today this political function is greatly attenuated. In the West, Marxism now occupies a very small space in the doctrines or political programmes of socialist and social democratic parties; and in recent years, in the region previously dominated by Soviet Marxism, political debate has departed radically from its Marxist framework. The current discussions of democracy and political pluralism owe little to Marxism, and what they reveal above all as a great lacuna in Marxist political thought is the absence of a systematic examination of the idea and practice of democracy, and in particular of what is meant by socialist democracy.

Present-day Marxist thought has a protean character, spreading into, absorbing from and contributing to many other styles of social thought, and it is scarcely to be represented any longer as a highly specific, uniform, and precisely articulated theory of human society and history. But as a very broad and flexible paradigm it continues to exert a major influence on the social sciences and humanistic studies, and in this roundabout way may still have a diffuse effect on political action. As a world view which directly inspires a distinctive political doctrine, however, its influence has undeniably waned, not least because the circumstances and problems of human societies in the late twentieth century differ so radically from those of the time when Marx formulated his major ideas



and his early followers elaborated them into a comprehensive scheme of theory and practice.

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# FASCISM

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Fascism has been one of the most controversial political phenomena of the twentieth century, first of all because of the complete absence of any general agreement about the definition of either the term itself or the broader political developments to which it refers. Fascism is frequently employed as a derogatory epithet and applied to widely varying political activities. At one time or another it has been attached by critics to nearly all of the major movements, particularly the more radical ones, whether of the right or left.

Historically, the term originated with the radical nationalist movement of the *Fasci Italiani di Combattimento*, organized by Benito Mussolini and others in 1919. *Fascio* in Italian means 'bundle' or 'union' and was a common name given to varying types of new political groupings, particularly those of more radical character. The *Fasci Italiani di Combattimento* were in turn reorganized two years later, in 1921, as the *Partito Nazionale Fascista*, or Fascist Party for short, converting the original substantive into an adjective. In October 1922 the Fascist leader Mussolini became prime minister of Italy, and in 1925 converted his government into a one-party dictatorship, thus creating the first, and prototypical, 'fascist regime'.

As early as 1923, however, there developed a growing tendency to generalize beyond the Italian example and apply the term fascist or fascism to any form of right-wing authoritarian movement or system. In the broadest sense, therefore, the trend was to identify any form of non-leftist authoritarianism as fascist, while competing left-wing groups, particularly Soviet Stalinists, began to apply the term to leftist rivals. By the 1930s the term fascist had sometimes become little more than a term of denigration applied to political foes, and this categorical but vague connotation has remained to the present day.

Despite the vagueness, a limited consensus has emerged among some of the leading scholars in the study of fascism, who use the term to refer to the concrete historical phenomena of a group of radical nationalist movements which emerged in Europe between the two World Wars, first in the Italian Fascist and

German National Socialist movements and then among their numerous counterparts in other European countries. This consensus is that specific movements bearing the same characteristics did not exist prior to 1919 and have not appeared in significant form in areas outside Europe or in the period after 1945. None the less, disagreement persists among scholars as to whether the various reputedly fascist movements of inter-war Europe can be linked together as a generic and common phenomenon, or whether they so differed among themselves that they can accurately be discussed only as individual phenomena. The weight of opinion now tends to fall on the side of the former argument, viewing fascism not merely as an Italian or German political form but as a more general phenomenon.

A successful definition of fascism as a generic entity must be able to define common unique characteristics of all the fascistic movements in Europe during the 1920s and 1930s while also differentiating them from other political phenomena. Such an understanding must comprehend basic features such as:

- 1 the typical fascist negations;
- 2 fascist doctrine and goals; and
- 3 the relative uniqueness of fascist style and organization.

Fascism postulated a unique new identity and attempted to occupy a new political territory by opposing nearly all the existing political sectors, left, right and centre. Thus it was anti-liberal, anti-communist (and anti-socialist at least in the social democratic sense) and also anti-conservative, though fascists proved willing to undertake temporary alliances with rightist groups, and to that extent diluted their anti-conservatism.

In terms of ideology and political goals, fascist movements represented the most intense and radical form of nationalism known to modern Europe. Their aim was to create new nationalist and authoritarian state systems that were not merely based on traditional principles or models. Fascist groups differed considerably among themselves on economic goals, but had in common the aim of organizing some new kind of regulated, multi-class, integrated national economic structure, which was variously called national corporatist, national socialist or national syndicalist. All fascist movements aimed either at national imperial expansion or at least at a radical change in the nation's relationship with other powers to enhance its strength and prestige. Their doctrines rested on a philosophical basis of idealism, vitalism and voluntarism, and normally involved the attempt to create a new form of modern self-determined secular doctrine (although several of the minor fascist movements were remarkably religious in ethos).

Fascist uniqueness was particularly expressed through the movement's style and organization. Great emphasis was placed on the aesthetic structure of meetings, symbols and political choreography, relying especially on romantic

and mystical aspects. All fascist movements attempted to achieve mass mobilization, together with the militarization of political relationships and style, with the goal of a mass party militia. Unlike some other types of radicals, fascists placed strong positive evaluation on the use of violence, and stressed strongly the principle of male dominance. Although they espoused an organic concept of society, they vigorously championed a new elitism and exalted youth above other phases of life. In leadership, fascist movements exhibited a specific tendency toward an authoritarian, charismatic, personal style of command (the *Führerprinzip*, in German National Socialist terminology).

The Italian Fascist movement was first organized in Milan in May 1919 by a small group of military veterans, ex-socialists and former revolutionary syndicalists, and Futurist cultural avant-gardists. At first it failed to attract significant support, adopting at that time an advanced 'leftist' nationalist programme. Fascism became a mass movement only towards the end of 1920 when it spread into the north Italian countryside, gaining wider backing by its assault on the Socialist Party in rural areas. Fascists at first criticized the Socialists for their internationalism and not for their economics, but the movement soon moved to the right on economic issues as well. Fear of socialism made the Fascists seem attractive to conservatives as shock troops, and the Fascists in turn made an appeal to nearly all sectors of society as the only new national movement not bound by the past or by class interests. After the parliamentary system became stalemated, Mussolini led the so-called 'March on Rome' in October 1922 that convinced the King to appoint him as constitutional prime minister. The following two years were a time of growing authoritarianism, but also of uncertainty as to what form a Fascist government should take. Only after some hesitation did Mussolini install a direct political dictatorship in January 1925.

The new Fascist regime was then constructed between 1925 and 1929. It adopted the myth of the 'totalitarian state', yet the Mussolini regime was far from a total dictatorship. Its control was limited in large measure to the political sphere. The King, not Mussolini, remained head of state, and many aspects of the Italian Constitution remained in force. Elite sectors of society remained unmolested, the economic system enjoyed considerable freedom, the military remained partially autonomous in administration, censorship in culture was comparatively limited, and a new concordat was signed with the Roman Catholic Church. A system of national syndicates, later termed national corporations, was organized and administered by the government to regulate economic affairs, but in practice industry and management enjoyed wide autonomy. Parliament itself was replaced in 1928 with a new 'corporate chamber', composed of representatives chosen not by direct nomination and vote but by government and economic groups. During most of the 1920s the

economy prospered, and Italian society seemed to accept the new regime which hailed itself as the alternative to the conventional left and right.

Fascists also proclaimed themselves revolutionaries and empire builders, but Mussolini showed little inclination to carry out a full-scale social or institutional revolution. The Fascist Party itself was reduced to a limited bureaucracy and subordinated to the regular government administration, rather than being placed in complete control of it, as in the Soviet Union. The Fascist regime thus functioned as a limited or semi-pluralist dictatorship rather than as a truly totalitarian system. When the depression of the 1930s brought economic distress, Mussolini did not rely on the new national corporations to rescue the economy so much as on the extension of state administrative agencies. Despite mass propaganda, there was no revolution in the educational system, either.

Mussolini was well aware that he had failed to effect a true revolution, but was none the less increasingly overcome by a kind of megalomania and his own myth of the 'Duce' (leader). He became convinced that Fascism would become great by creating a new African and Mediterranean empire, using the conquest of Ethiopia in 1935 as the beginning of this expansion. He believed that after the construction of a new empire another generation of Fascist dominance in Italy would somehow create a new Fascist culture and the Fascist 'new man'.

Though Italian Fascism created the original terminology, when many commentators speak of 'fascism' they refer primarily to Adolf Hitler's National Socialist movement in Germany, whose character and history were in key respects strikingly different. Whereas Italian Fascism was converted into a major mass movement in scarcely more than two years, the same process in Germany required more than a decade. Hitler's original National Socialist German Worker's Party (NSDAP in German) had to compete with numerous other small radical nationalist and rightist groups. After one brief bid for power in 1923, it had to devote ten years to building up a strong party organization and mass following. Its great opportunity came with the major political and economic crisis provoked by the Depression, which threatened German society with further chaos after the disasters of the First World War and the immediate post-war period.

By 1932 the 'Nazis', as they became known after the pronunciation of the first two syllables of 'National' in German, had become the largest single party in Germany, primarily by promising all manner of things, however contradictory, to diverse sectors of German society. They portrayed themselves as the only strong national force able to bring unity and restore security and prosperity to a divided, languishing country. Adolf Hitler became Chancellor (the equivalent of prime minister) on 30 January 1933, through legal constitutional processes, just as had Mussolini, with a parliamentary majority of Nazis and rightists in support.

Hitler moved to establish a complete political dictatorship within only six months, also becoming legal head of state by taking over the German presidency in mid-1934. A general *Gleichschaltung* or 'co-ordination' of most German institutions was carried out to extend Hitler's control. The German dictatorship became both more efficient and more thoroughgoing than that of Italy, but in Germany the emphasis also lay on government political power rather than on thorough institutional or social revolution. The Nazis proclaimed a new 'people's community' of common interest, with nominal equality of status but with differentiation and subordination of social functions. Most of the country's social and economic structure remained intact and the principle of private property was generally honoured, as in Fascist Italy.

Yet whereas Mussolini had great difficulty creating a fully coherent programme or even defining his own goals, Hitler had certain basic ends in view from the early 1920s onwards. Hitlerian doctrine was grounded in the racial principle of Aryanism or Nordicism, which reduced all values and achievements to racial criteria and the inherent superiority of the Nordic race. In Hitler's thinking, the true Nordic master race could only develop if it were also given 'space', and that meant conquest of *Lebensraum* (space for living) in eastern Europe. Only after a successful war to dominate most of Europe could the true Nazi revolution take place, which in Hitler's view was neither a social or economic revolution, nor even a cultural revolution, but an actual racial and biological revolution to rid the German race of inferior elements and create the new breed of 'supermen'. Economic and political doctrines were secondary to this peculiar ideology grounded in race and war, a kind of international social Darwinism. Thus for Hitler war must precede revolution, for only a successful war could create the conditions for racial revolution.

During the first years of Hitler's regime, in 1933–4, relations with Italy were rather tense. Fascists were well aware of the extremist racial tendencies in Nazi doctrine and of the inferior place of south Europeans in such an ideology. Hitler, however, was the only major European leader to support Italy's conquest of Ethiopia and looked to Mussolini as the only kindred spirit directing one of the larger European countries. His view was that Italy and Germany were natural allies, since Italy was interested in the Mediterranean and Africa, neither of them primary targets of German expansion.

In 1936 Italy and Germany both intervened on the side of the right-wing Spanish Nationalists in the Spanish Civil War. In October of that year they first established the 'Rome-Berlin Axis', a loose understanding aimed at mutual consultation and co-operation. By 1937 Mussolini had fallen under Hitler's spell, his attitude toward Germany fuelled by a combination of fear and envy. Convinced that a militarily powerful Germany would soon dominate Europe, he carried out a partial and superficial 'Nazification' of Italian Fascism in 1938,



introducing the goose step and a new doctrine of 'Italian racism'. The latter was a feeble attempt to create a special place for the Italian 'race' in the new racial order, though this belated doctrine defined the Italian race as the product of history and culture, rather than mere biology as in the Nazi scheme.

Mussolini entered the Second World War only in June 1940, shortly before the fall of France. He then endeavoured to launch his own 'parallel war' in Africa and the Balkans to create an autonomous Italian sphere of power. This soon met shattering defeat, and by 1941 Mussolini had become a satellite of Hitler. As the war came directly home to Italy in July 1943, he was overthrown by a coalition of the Italian Crown, the military and dissident Fascists. Rescued by German commandos, Mussolini ruled a new 'Italian Social Republic' in German-occupied northern Italy during 1944–5 in an unsuccessful attempt to rally support for a return to the semi-collectivist doctrines of early radical Fascism.

Hitler's own goals aimed at the domination of nearly all continental Europe, after which Germany could complete the racial revolution and eventually dominate the entire world. After France fell, Hitler turned in 1941 to his principal rival, invading the Soviet Union, declaring a special 'war of racial extermination' for the final conquest of *Lebensraum*.

This also coincided with the most sinister of Nazi policies, the 'Final Solution' for the liquidation of European Jewry. In Hitlerian doctrine, the arch-enemy of the Nordic race, and of all true races, was held to be the Jews, defined as a malevolent 'anti-race' of parasites devoted to racial pollution and the destruction of all true culture. In this paranoid nightmare, Hitler came to believe that the world could only be made safe for the creation of a master race by the total extermination of Jews, a process that had begun as early as 1939–40, but finally took the form of mass extermination camps two years later. By the end of the war and the destruction of Nazism, nearly six million Jews had been liquidated, the greatest single act of deliberate genocide in all human history. (Italian Fascism, by contrast, had not originally discriminated against Jews. The proportion of Jewish members of the Fascist Party in the 1920s was greater than that of Jews in Italian society as a whole, and Fascist officials had publicly lauded Jews. When the first legal measures of discrimination were adopted in 1938 in imitation of Germany, they were unpopular both with the general Italian populace and even with many Fascists themselves.)

German Nazism was by far the most powerful and influential variant of what historical analysts sometimes call 'generic fascism', but fascist-type movements existed in nearly all European countries during the 1930s, as well as in other parts of the world. The great majority of these fascist-type movements were complete failures, for in most countries and under most conditions the extremist doctrines of fascism had little appeal. By the late 1930s, in Europe as a whole, there were considerably more anti-fascists than fascists.

None the less, at least four other fascist movements gained considerable popular support and merit brief attention. For example, the only other fascist-type movement to rival German National Socialism in popular support was the Hungarian Arrow Cross movement. Whereas the Nazis gained 38 per cent of the popular vote in Germany in 1932, the Arrow Cross may have held nearly 35 per cent in the Hungarian elections seven years later. There were proportionately more different fascistic parties and movements in Hungary than in any country in the world, in part because of the trauma of the First World War and because the loss of territory and population was proportionately greater in Hungary than anywhere else. Aggrieved nationalism was, if anything, even keener than in Germany. The Arrow Cross movement of Ferenc Szalasi appealed especially to workers and poor peasants, and espoused a greater degree of social collectivism and economic reorganization than did many other fascistic movements. Szalasi's goal was a 'Greater Danubian Federation' led by Hungary, but he himself did not endorse war and violence to the same extent as Hitler and Mussolini. The Arrow Cross was strongly anti-Semitic, however, and was finally placed in power by Hitler in 1944 after the German military had taken over Hungary. The few fleeting months of Arrow Cross rule that followed prior to the Soviet military conquest did not provide time to create a genuine new system, though radical political and economic changes were imposed.

In Romania, the Legionary, or Iron Guard, movement led by Corneliu Zelea Codreanu became a major force in the late 1930s. Although Romania was one of the victors in the First World War, it was economically backward and politically divided. The Legionary movement was built on the support of university students and eventually developed considerable backing among poor peasants. Iron Guardists were distinct from most fascists in their emphasis on religiosity—Romanian Orthodoxy being strongly endorsed as essential to the life of the nation. Yet the Legionaries did not have a genuine programme; their goal was the '*Omul nou*', the new man, to be created by radical nationalist and religious culture. The existing government and elite were to be swept away in favour of the interests of the common Romanian people, even though it was not clear how these interests were to be articulated and structured. Codreanu and the top Legionary leaders were murdered by the government police in 1938, but the movement was eventually brought into the government in 1940 when General Mihai Antonescu overthrew the monarchy and established a new dictatorship. The Guardists then made a desperate attempt to seize sole authority in January 1941, but were easily defeated by the Romanian army, a blow from which they never recovered.

In Croatia a radical new fascist-type movement, the Ustasi (Insurgents), became influential among young nationalists during the 1930s. After his military conquest of greater Yugoslavia in 1941, Hitler divided the country into zones, making most of Croatia autonomous under the Ustasi leader Ante Pavelic. The

Ustasi regime of 1941–4 was the only other fascist-type regime to rival that of Hitler in sheer gruesomeness. It carried out its own liquidation of native Jewry and then attacked the sizable Serbian population living in southern and eastern Croatia, resulting in possibly 300,000 wanton murders.

The Spanish Nationalist dictatorship of General Francisco Franco that came to power in the Spanish Civil War of 1936–9 also at first contained fascistic features. In 1937 Franco took over the native fascist party, Falange Española (Spanish Phalanx), and made it his official state party, adopting its Twenty-six Point programme (based generally on that of Fascist Italy) as the official ideology of his new state. The Falange enjoyed considerable political influence particularly during 1939–42, when Franco cultivated close relations with Nazi Germany.

The Franco regime, however, was also based on Spanish Catholicism and cultural traditionalism, and carried out a sweeping new right-wing neo-traditionalist revival. Many Catholics and rightists were strongly anti-Falangist, and Franco was careful to limit the influence enjoyed by the new state party. By 1943, when it had become doubtful that Hitler would win the war, Franco initiated a tentative ‘defascistization’ of his regime. This was rapidly expanded at the end of the war in 1945, when the Falange was drastically downgraded and the regime refurbished as a ‘Catholic corporatist’ system of ‘organic democracy’. Defascistization became, in fact, a continuous and ongoing feature of the regime, which progressively transformed itself in chameleon fashion. An attempt by moderate Falangists to make a comeback was defeated in 1956, and by 1958 the Twenty-six Points had been replaced by nine anodyne ‘Principles of the Movement’, a series of platitudes about the nation, its unity and familial values. By the time that Franco died in 1975, the quasi-fascist aspects dating from the origins of his regime had long since disappeared.

The dual rightist/fascist character of the early Franco regime presents a striking example of both the potential alliance and disharmonies of fascist groups and the radical right. Although the two sectors had much in common, they were also distinct and marked by significant differences in almost every European country. Radical rightist groups shared some of the fascists’ political goals, just as revolutionary leftist movements exhibited some of their stylistic and organizational characteristics. The uniqueness of the fascists compared with the radical right, however, lay in their rejection of the cultural and economic conservatism, and the particular social elitism of the radical right, just as they rejected the internationalism, egalitarianism and materialist socialism of the left. The historical uniqueness of fascism can be better grasped once it is realized that significant political movements sharing all—not merely some—of the common characteristics of fascism existed only in Europe during the years 1915–45.

During the 1930s efforts were made to imitate fascism outside Europe in China, Japan, southern Asia, South Africa, Latin America and even in the

United States. None of these extra-European initiatives gained mass support or enjoyed any political success. The peculiar combination of extreme nationalism together with cultural and social radicalism that made up fascism could grow neither in the soil of non-European democracies nor in more backward and traditionalist societies elsewhere. During its great war effort of 1937–45, imperial Japan adopted only a few of the features of fascism. The legal institutional order of the country was scarcely altered, and comparatively normal parliamentary elections were held in 1942. No single-party system was ever installed in Japan, where leadership was provided by traditional elites and the military.

Fascists claimed to represent all classes of national society, particularly the broad masses. Marxists claimed conversely that they were no more than the tool of the most violent, monopolistic and reactionary sectors of the bourgeoisie. Neither of these extreme interpretations is supported by empirical evidence. In their earliest phase, fascist movements often drew their followers from among former military personnel and small sectors of the radical intelligentsia, in some cases university students. Though some fascist movements enjoyed a degree of backing from the upper bourgeoisie, the broadest sector of fascist support, comparatively speaking, was provided by the lower middle class. Since this was one of the largest strata in European society during the 1920s and 1930s, the same might also have been said for various other political groups. In both Italy and Germany a notable minority of party members were drawn from among urban workers. In Hungary and Romania, primary backing came from university students and poor peasants, and there was also considerable agrarian support in some parts of Italy.

A bewildering variety of theories and interpretations have been advanced since 1923 to explain fascism. One of the most common sets of theories are those of socio-economic causation, primarily of Marxist inspiration, which hold that this phenomenon was the product of specific economic forces or interests, or of specific social groups, such as big business, the bourgeoisie or the petite bourgeoisie. A second set of concepts emphasizes psychocultural motivations, related to certain kinds of personality theories or forms of social psychology. Another approach has been derived from modernization theory, which posits fascism as intimately related to a specific phase in modern development. Theorists of totalitarianism, on the other hand, sometimes include fascism as one major aspect of the broader phenomenon of twentieth-century totalitarianism. The most flexible and effective approaches, however, are historicist in character, employing multi-causal explanations in terms of the major dimensions of European historical development, and especially its key variations in different countries, during the early twentieth century.

An historicist approach would account for fascism by attempting to isolate key historical variables common to those national circumstances in which

significant fascist movements arose in various countries. These variables should identify key differences in the areas of national situation, political problems, cultural tendencies, economic difficulties and social structure. The common variable with regard to national circumstance was generally one of status deprivation or severe frustration of nationalist ambitions. In terms of strictly political circumstances, strong fascist movements arose in certain countries when they were just beginning, or had only recently begun, the difficult transition to direct democracy. (Conversely, neither advanced and experienced democracies nor very backward countries not yet introduced to democracy were susceptible.) The key variable of cultural milieu probably had to do with the degree of acceptance of rationalism and materialism, as distinct from idealism and vitalism, the latter currents being much more propitious to fascism. Fascism also developed significantly only in countries experiencing major economic difficulties, but the exact character of those difficulties differed enormously, from highly industrial Germany to very backward Romania. Probably the most common feature of the economic variables involved was a general belief that problems were national in scope yet somehow vaguely international in origin. In terms of social mobilization, differing syndromes may be encountered, but the most common variable concerned widespread discontent among the young and among the lower middle classes generally, though this discontent had to some extent to spread more broadly into the lower classes for fascist movements to develop a strong mass basis. Again, no one or two or even three of the aforementioned variables sufficed to produce a significant fascist movement. Only in those few countries where all five variables were present at approximately the same time were conditions propitious.

That fascism temporarily became a major force in Europe was due above all to the military expansion of Nazi Germany, for the purely political triumphs of fascist movements were very few. Similarly, the complete defeat of Germany and Italy in the Second World War condemned fascism to political destruction, making it impossible for fascist movements to emerge as significant political forces after 1945. Above all, the identification of fascist-type policies not so much with Fascist Italy as with the militarism and mass murder wrought by Nazi Germany fundamentally discredited them for following generations.

Nevertheless, fascism did not completely die in 1945. Efforts to revive fascism have been rather numerous, and literally hundreds of petty neo-fascist grouplets have emerged during the second half of the twentieth century, usually each more insignificant than the next. These groups have been concentrated in western Europe, but are also found in North and South America, as well as in other parts of the world. Neo-fascist parties are usually movements of extreme protest, operating far outside the political mainstream and unable to mobilize support. Extreme racism has been a prime characteristic of such groups in the United

States and in some European countries such as France, one recent example being the 'skinhead' white racist movement of the late 1980s. In Germany itself, the only movement that tried to some extent to build on the Nazi heritage failed to mobilize 2 per cent of the vote. The most successful neo-fascist movement, however, has been the 'Italian Social Movement' (MSI), principal Italian successor to the original Fascist Party. The MSI has tried to modernize and revise fascist doctrine in a more moderate and sophisticated direction, and in a few areas of Italy has garnered 6 per cent or more of the vote in local elections.

Does fascism have a future? Worried foes sometimes fear so, but it is doubtful if the specific forms of early twentieth-century European fascism can be successfully revived. Broad cultural, psychological, educational and economic changes have made the re-emergence of something so murderous as Nazism in a large industrial nation almost impossible, just as the late twentieth-century era of international interdependence seems to rule out war among the major European and industrial countries. The prevailing culture of materialism and consumerism militates against extreme positions, and any appeal to mass vitalist and irrationalist politics.

Movements and regimes with most similarities to certain aspects of fascism during the second half of the twentieth century have been much more important in some countries of the Third World than in the West. There nationalist regimes of one-party dictatorship have not been uncommon, and more than a few governments in Afro-Asian countries have preached their own versions of national socialism or national corporatism, also relying on elitism and violence, as well as ideologies of mysticism and idealism, in certain instances. There too the 'cult of personality' and charismatic dictatorship has sometimes been powerful, so that more of the specific features of fascism have assumed prominent roles in Africa and Asia than in the Western world in recent decades. None the less, it is not possible to refer to more than specific features and tendencies, for the nationalist movements and dictatorships of the Third World have also developed unique identities and profiles of their own, and in no case have literally copied or revived European fascist movements and regimes.

When some commentators speculate about the 'return of fascism', they are referring not so much to revival of the specific forms of early twentieth-century European fascism and Nazism as to the emergence of new forms of authoritarianism and dictatorship, which is a rather different question. The 'authoritarianism temptation' in varying forms is present in diverse kinds of extremist politics. While the development of new modern dictatorships in major Western countries is not likely, it cannot be ruled out in all forms. Any new authoritarianism in the 1990s would however, have to develop particular characteristics appropriate for its own times and could never be a literal revival of the past.

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# FUNDAMENTALISM

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In the 1950s and 1960s many social scientists argued that secularization was an inevitable concomitant of modernization. Increasing economic and political development would disseminate secular values, hence the role and impact of religion in society and in politics would subside to negligible levels. The 1970s and 1980s, however, witnessed developments diametrically opposed to those predicted by the modernization theories. Around the world, and particularly in Muslim countries, the power of religion did not diminish but increased substantially instead. Indeed, it can be argued that Westernization and secularization served as a catalyst for the revitalization of religious political movements, mobilizing large numbers of people in support of fundamentalist causes. Thus the contemporary emergence of fundamentalism challenges the central assumptions of the modernization literature and poses important questions for investigation.

One of the most difficult and challenging questions that social scientists confront is how to understand and analyse populist religious fundamentalist movements. In some parts of the world, religious fundamentalism has been the means for progressive social change, improvements in social welfare for the poorest members of society and increased political participation by formerly disenfranchised masses. In other parts of the world, religious fundamentalism has mobilized popular support for conservative causes and for efforts to circumscribe or abolish the rights of certain members of the political community. The same phenomenon then could be said to foster both justice and injustice.

This essay will consider three distinctive forms of religious fundamentalism: Islamic fundamentalism, Christian fundamentalism and Jewish fundamentalism. Although each form of fundamentalism shares a commitment to a hegemonic ideal and manifests a willingness to engage in diverse modes of political action to realize that ideal, the differences among these forms of fundamentalism are more prominent than their commonalities.