

The Concept of Fascism: A Review of Italian Ideology

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ABSTRACT: Today most of the scholars agree with the fact that Europe's first fundamentalist pioneer, Benito Mussolini, took the name of his gathering from the Latin word 'fasces', which alluded to a heap of elm or birch bars (more often than not containing a hatchet) utilized as an image of correctional specialist in antiquated Rome. Albeit fundamentalist gatherings and developments contrasted altogether from each other, they shared numerous attributes for all intents and purpose, including extraordinary battle ready. Although fascist parties and movements differed significantly from one another, they had many characteristics in common, including extreme militaristic nationalism, contempt for electoral democracy and political and cultural liberalism, a belief in natural social hierarchy and the rule of elites, and the desire to create a Volksgemeinschaft, in which individual interests would be subordinated to the good of the nation. The present research paper highlights key aspects of fascism in the contemporary political scenario of this concept during World War 1ST and 2nd.

KEYWORDS: Fascism, Fascist Movement, Mussolini, Europe, World Wars, Nation.

INTRODUCTION: The fact is that by 1939 there were at least seven Arab 'shirt' movements, including the Syrian People's Party, also called the Syrian National Socialist Party; the Iraqi Futuwa Movement; and the Young Egypt Movement, also called the Green Shirts. In this perspective several rival protofascist and fascist movements operated in Japan after 1918, and their activities helped to increase the influence of the military on the Japanese government. Among the most important of these groups were the Taisho Sincerity League, the Imperial Way Faction, the Greater Japan National Essence Association, the Anti-Red Corps, the Great Japan Political Justice Corps, the Blood Brotherhood League, the Jimmu Association, the New Japan League, the Eastern Way Society, and the Great Japan Youth Party.

The Concept of Fascism: Most of the scholars agree with the fact that Political ideology that imposes strict social and economic measures as a method of empowering the government and stripping citizens of rights. This authoritative system of government is usually headed by an absolute dictator who keeps citizens suppressed via acts of violence and strict laws that govern the people. The most noted form of Fascism was implemented under Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler, who both stripped citizens of their rights and maintained strict regimes that resulted in the deaths of thousands of humans. Some of the defining characteristics of fascism are: (1) racism, (2) militarism, (3) dictatorship, and (4) destructive nationalistic policies.

Fascism in Italy: Italy is one of the important place where fascism became a popular movement. It is also known simply as Fascism, is the original fascist ideology as developed in Italy. The ideology is associated with the Fascist Revolutionary Party (PFR), founded in 1915; the succeeding National Fascist Party in 1921, which under Benito Mussolini ruled the Kingdom of Italy from 1922 until 1943; the Republican Fascist Party that ruled the Italian Social Republic from 1943 to 1945; and the post-war Italian Social Movement and subsequent Italian neo-fascist movements. Italian Fascism was rooted in Italian nationalism and the desire to restore and expand Italian territories, deemed necessary for a nation to assert its superiority and strength and avoid succumbing to decay. Italian Fascists claimed that modern Italy is the heir to ancient Rome and its legacy, and historically supported the creation of an Italian Empire to provide spazio vitale or living space for colonization by Italian settlers and to establish control over the Mediterranean Sea. It is also to say that Italian Fascism promoted a corporatist economic system whereby employer and employee syndicates were linked together in associations to collectively represent the nation's economic producers and work alongside the state to set national economic policy. This economic system intended to resolve class conflict through collaboration between the classes.

The first meeting of the Fasci of Revolutionary Action was held on January 24, 1915, led by Benito Mussolini. In the next few years, the relatively small group was various political actions. In 1920, militant strike activity by industrial workers reached its peak in Italy. Mussolini and the Fascists took advantage of the situation by allying with industrial businesses and attacking workers and peasants in the name of preserving order and internal peace in Italy. Fascists

identified their primary opponents as the majority of socialists on the left who had opposed intervention in World War I. The Fascists and the Italian political right held common ground: both held Marxism in contempt, discounted class consciousness, and believed in the rule of elites. Fascism began to accommodate Italian conservatives by making major alterations to its political agenda—abandoning its previous populism, republicanism, and anticlericalism, adopting policies in support of free enterprise, and accepting the Roman Catholic Church and the monarchy as institutions in Italy. To appeal to Italian conservatives, Fascism adopted policies such as promoting family values, including policies designed to reduce the number of women in the workforce by limiting the woman's role to that of a mother. The fascists banned literature on birth control and increased penalties for abortion in 1926, declaring both crimes against the state. Though Fascism adopted a number of positions designed to appeal to reactionaries, the Fascists sought to maintain Fascism's revolutionary character, with Angelo Oliviero Olivetti remarked that, the Fascism would like to be conservative, but it will be by being revolutionary. The Fascists supported revolutionary action and committed to secure law and order to appeal to both conservatives and syndicalists.

Furthermore, we can trace out that by beginning in 1922, Fascist paramilitaries escalated their strategy from attacking socialist offices and homes of socialist leadership figures to violent occupation of cities. The Fascists met little serious resistance from authorities and proceeded to take over several northern Italian cities. The Fascists attacked the headquarters of socialist and Catholic labor unions in Cremona and imposed forced Italianization upon the German-speaking population of Trent and Bolzano. After seizing these cities, the Fascists made plans to take Rome. On October 24, 1922, the Fascist party held its annual congress in Naples, where Mussolini ordered 'Blackshirts' to take control of public buildings and trains and converge on three points around Rome. The Fascists managed to seize control of several post offices and trains in northern Italy while the Italian government, led by a left-wing coalition, was internally divided and unable to respond to the Fascist advances. King Victor Emmanuel III of Italy thought the risk of bloodshed in Rome to disperse the Fascists was too high. Victor Emmanuel III decided to appoint Mussolini as Prime Minister of Italy, and Mussolini arrived in Rome on

October 30 to accept the appointment. Fascist propaganda aggrandized this event, known as 'March on Rome,' as a 'seizure' of power because of Fascists' heroic exploits.

Key Features of Fascism: On the basis of an analytical study of the concept of fascism in political scenario we can point out some features as under:

- It is a far-right authoritarian political ideology that emerged in the early 20th century and rose to prominence after World War I in several nations, notably Italy, Germany, and Japan.
- Fascists believe that liberal democracy is obsolete and regard the complete mobilization of society under a totalitarian one-party state, led by a dictator, as necessary to prepare a nation for armed conflict and respond effectively to economic difficulties.
- Fascist regimes are often preoccupied with community decline, humiliation, or victimhood and by compensatory cults of unity, energy, and purity, culminating in nationalistic and racist ideologies and practices, such as the Holocaust in Nazi Germany.
- The term originated in Italy and is derived from fascio, meaning a bundle of rods, and is used to symbolize strength through unity: a single rod is easily broken, while the bundle is difficult to break.
- After the end of the World War I, fascism rose out of relative obscurity into international prominence, with fascist regimes forming most notably in Italy, Germany, and Japan, the three of which would be allied in World War II.
- Fascist Benito Mussolini seized power in Italy in 1922 and Adolf Hitler had successfully consolidated his power in Germany by 1933.

End of Fascism: Facing pressure on the home front due to increasingly stressful wartime conditions and rebelliousness from within his own ranks, Mussolini was removed from office by the king and the Grand Council in July of 1943. The Allies had re-taken northern Africa away from Italy and Sicily was now in Allied hands as they prepared to invade Italy itself. Il Duce's days had been numbered. Forces loyal to the Italian king arrested Mussolini and imprisoned him. They kept him locked away in a remote hotel in the mountains of Abruzzi. German forces initially decided there would be no rescue before soon changing their minds. German

commandos crash-landed gliders into the side of the mountain behind the hotel before freeing Mussolini and airlifting him back to Munich, where he could confer with Hitler. The Führer convinced Il Duce to set up a Fascist state in northern Italy — where it all began — with Milan as its headquarters. That way, Mussolini could hold power while Hitler maintained an ally. Mussolini returned triumphantly and kept suppressing his opposition. Members of the Fascist Party tortured anyone with opposing views, deported anyone with a non-Italian name, and maintained an iron grip in the north. German troops worked alongside the blackshirts to maintain order. This reign of terror came to a head on Aug. 13, 1944. Fascists rounded up 15 suspected anti-Fascist partisans, or people loyal to the new Italy, in Milan's Piazzale Loreto. With German SS soldiers looking on, Mussolini's men opened fire and killed them. From that moment onward, partisans called this place the 'Square of the Fifteen Martyrs'.

Thus by the spring of 1945, the war in Europe was over and Italy was broke. The south was in ruins as Allied troops advanced. The country was broken and battered, and it was, many thought, all Il Duce's fault. But arresting Il Duce was no longer a viable course of action. Even though Hitler was surrounded by Allied troops in Berlin, Italy didn't want to take any more chances with its own destiny.

CONCLUSION: After Alamein and Stalingrad, in order to save the regime, Mussolini's main concern became how to reach a compromise peace agreement with Soviet Russia. As Hitler remained obdurate, however, the sole option left to the duce was to send stern warnings to Berlin about the precariousness of his domestic position. Mussolini's growing apathy and unusual passivity facing domestic opposition, as well as his demeanour during the Grand Council of Fascism, between 24 and 25 July 1943, which eventually spelled his fate, have often been interpreted as the result of his declining health or of his overconfidence. On the contrary, in his desperate struggle to sway Hitler, Mussolini needed to provide him with a last and unquestionable proof of how awful the situation had become for the regime in Italy and for himself. In Mussolini's twisted calculations, by deliberately provoking the opposition against him, the vote in the Grand Council would have provided that evidence. It proved to be his last political gamble.

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