



Fascism: Origins and Applications

What is fascism? Today fascism is primarily an all-purpose insult used by all sides against all other sides. It is a portable and potent poison that is poured into any of the "enemy's" wells in order to make all their principles nonpotable to any who might draw therefrom.

Where does the word come from and does it have any appropriate application to today's political situation?

Fascism is a political system defined by the Random House Dictionary as "a governmental system led by a dictator having complete power, forcibly suppressing opposition and criticism, regimental all industry, commerce, etc., and emphasizing an aggressive nationalism and often racism."

If one breaks that definition down into its component phrases, the definition becomes a frighteningly accurate description of the Age of Obama. A simple "google" search would bring thousands of hits on any one of these aspects of fascism. Or, a perusal of headlines since January 2009 would expose the dictatorial bent of this administration; the attempt to silence critics; the assumption of control over some of the largest segments of industry (auto manufacturers, banks, insurance, health care); and an overt re-casting of what it means to be a "true American." All there. All the parts present and contributing to the whole of American fascism in the making.

The word "fascism" has etymological roots in the political/social system of ancient Rome. In Rome, the fasces were a bundle of rods about 5 feet long made of elm or birchwood together with a single headed axe. The fasces were bound together by red strips of leather and were carried by lictors.

The purpose of the fasces were to be the outward manifestation of the magisterial authority and therefore symbolic of the legitimacy of the magistrate's power and the unifying role he was meant to play in the complex Roman government. As the leather strips bound the rods and axe together, so the magistrate (consuls, proconsuls, praetors, etc.) was to wield his power in the binding together of the citizens, subjects, and leaders of Rome.

The analogy to today's political leaders is imprecise, perhaps, but illuminating. Many of those on the right side of the political spectrum have taken to referring to those on the other end as "progressives." This preference seems to have been initiated by talk show host Glenn Beck and spread virally by his followers and admirers.

In truth, those so denominated by Mr. Beck are not *progressive*, but are *regressive*. That is to say, their opinions and world view are so dated and have been so often proven ineffectual to the government of a free people, that to call them progressive is to endow them with vision they don't possess.

These regressives fancy themselves the gnostics of our day. They claim to have special access to a



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knowledge of the higher purpose of government that is unattainable by the benighted many over whom they are duty bound to rule.

The principle plank of the regressives' absolutist platform is what renowned Austrian economist Friedrich Hayek called the "fatal conceit." This brand of hubris occurs when a person assumes that if the boundaries of his power were extended indefinitely then he could make perfect order of his dominion. He issues fiats and executive orders that haughtily and purposely bypass other elected officials in order that accomplishment of his perfect plan of government might progress unimpeded.

While the tedious work of carrying out this leader's vision will be left to the nameless bureaucrats who toil in the myriad agencies created to facilitate the rapid expansion of his control, the regressives of today prefer an attractive, often boyish face to represent the glory that comes with adherence to his often radical policies. This leader will draw thousands and millions to his side through words, gestures, and photos all artfully manipulated to disguise the egotism and servitude that underly the peaceful surface.

Under this version of fascism, the formerly free society is divided into rods (black, white, workers, managers, young, old, etc.). These several sticks are then bound together by the confining (unifying) strap of governmental control. Left to their own devices, so the saying goes, these various factions would destroy one another and cause their own mutual destruction. Thanks to the bureaucracy, they are held peacefully in check and all are thus able to contribute to the stability and growth of the state.

The axe, of course, is as it was in the Roman Republic, the symbol of the punishment meted out to all who work against the unity of the state. The axe in today's American Republic is generally some form of social marginalization followed by economic enslavement.

Not to worry, though, for nothing can be as bad as the enemies of the state claim. To restore faith in the system one need only look to the ultimate symbol of the ennobling power of the state — the all-taking and all-giving leader. He will mollify you with speeches, chastise you with stern warnings, and relieve you with handouts and endless diversions.

In the United States today, the program described above is being carried out every jot and tittle by an embryonic dictator and his retinue of fasces-bearing lictors. President Barack Obama uses speeches, pictures, and press conferences to appease the masses while at the same time portraying those who oppose him as enemies of good government or ignorant followers of self-satisfying demagogues ("tea baggers" to use his phrase).

Despite the seemingly successful march of the Obama brigade, there is yet a way to break the spell that the regressives have cast on so many of our fellow countrymen. Education is the first and most important step toward breaking free of the shackles these pretty words are placing on us. Our liberties and our sacred Constitution will be cast quickly onto the scrap heap of history if our efforts are not well-aimed and persistent.

These latter-day gnostics that fancy themselves possessed of an especial endowment of understanding must be disabused of that notion and the house of cards they have erected as palaces of power must be razed and their dominions laid desolate. The American people are sovereign in this Republic and as such we have the exclusive right to reform our government according to the timeless principles promulgated by our Founding Fathers in the Constitution of 1787.

We must assert our natural dominion and resist tyranny in all its forms lest we finally be bound together with unbreakable straps of regressivist statism and tossed one and all into the furnace of fascism.



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Photo: Italy's Premier Benito Mussolini, center, stands with an arm over the shoulders of his two sons, Bruno, left, and Vittorio during the young Fascists' Festival in Rome, Italy, March 14, 1935: AP Images



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