

'Lalkaar-Pratibaddh' Group's Understanding of Fascism

A Menagerie of Dogmatic Blunders

(Part - I)

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There has been a raging debate within the revolutionary left movement of India regarding the characterization of the Modi-Shah regime, the nature of fascism in the Twenty-first century, the elements of change that characterize the fascist rise today and the possible proletarian strategy and general tactics to fight against the present fascist rise. In this debate, several positions have emerged hitherto. One characterizes the present regime as the 'dictatorship of the neoliberal capital'; another characterizes it as fascist, but at the same time, argues that the Indian bourgeoisie is comprador; yet another tendency believes that there are fascist 'tendencies' in the present regime, however, the fascistization of the state is not complete; another tendency sees Modi regime as religious fundamentalist regime.

There is one tendency which is a peculiar example of idiocy represented by the 'Lalkaar-Pratibaddh' Group. They argue (i) since India is a multinational country, fascism will find it particularly difficult to rise to power; (ii) since there is caste system in India, fascist rise to power is quite unlikely in India; (iii) since the GDP growth rate in India has been above 7 percent in the past few years, Indian bourgeoisie is not faced with a crisis of profitability and therefore, there is no basis for the rise of fascism in India; (iv) since there is no economic crisis, there is no political crisis, which appears as an evolutionary development of the economic crisis itself, in countries where the bourgeoisie is economically incapable of preventing the economic crisis from developing into a political crisis; (v) since, unlike Germany and Italy of the early-Twentieth century, there is no revolutionary political offensive of the proletariat or organized workers' movement in India today, the bourgeoisie does not have the need to fall into the arms of fascist reaction; (vi) since there is no danger of Bolshevism and proletarian revolution hovering over the head of the bourgeoisie, the latter would not resort to fascist reaction. And there are many other points which reveal the utterly poor understanding, or a complete lack thereof, regarding fascism in the essay of Sukhwinder, the editor of 'Pratibaddh' and the leader of the 'Lalkaar-Pratibaddh' group.

In the present essay, we will deal with each of these assertions one-by-one systematically and show the particularly inane and dogmatic understanding of the leader of this group 'Lalkaar-Pratibaddh', Sukhwinder. We have demonstrated the non-Marxist, erroneous and dim-witted understanding of this group and its leader on the national question, linguistic question, the question of MSP and the agrarian and peasant questions in general, Covid crisis and several other issues. Consequently, when Sukhwinder presented his particularly imbecile understanding of fascism, we were not surprised at all. This group has singularly assumed the responsibility of spreading stupidity in the left movement of Punjab. As Marxists, we are obliged to deal with this infantile tendency repeatedly. This critique, too, is an addition in the same series. In the same process, we will also deal with certain other tendencies as a relevant and pertinent detour, which fail to understand the elements of continuity and change in the present fascist rise in India and the way in which fascism exists and functions in present phase of neoliberalism.

Now let us deal with the menagerie of dogmatic blunders committed by the 'Lalkaar-Pratibaddh' group's leadership. Before embarking upon this critique, we would like to extend the invitation to the editor of 'Pratibaddh' for the five-day international seminar on fascism in the Twenty-first century, going to be organized by the Arvind Institute of Marxist Studies in Hyderabad from 29 December 2024 to 2 January 2025, for an open public debate on the question of fascism. If he has trouble coming to Hyderabad, we can have this public debate somewhere in the North India itself. We are ready to bear all the expenses of organizing this public debate, though we are not very optimistic about the prospect of Sukhwinder accepting the invitation for such a public debate, because in the past, on every question, Sukhwinder has run away from any such debate under some childish pretext. Still, it was our duty to extend this invitation.

Before the readers start reading further, we would like to inform them that we will upload this long essay (to be published as a separate book eventually) in parts for the convenience of the readers, because it is too lengthy. In the present part, we will deal with Sukhwinder's ignorance about some basics of Marxist political theory (the dialectic of form and content, the form of the State and the State, etc.), his completely vulgar and non-Marxist understanding of economic crisis, his vulgar economic and evolutionist understanding regarding the concept of political crisis, and his poor dogmatic and historicist understanding of the concept of fascism.

1. How to Misunderstand the Basics of Marxism: The Sukhwinder Way

Sukhwinder contends in the very beginning of his essay:

"It is held by some that the B.J.P. regime, in power since 2014, is a fascist regime. Here only a façade of bourgeois democracy remains. Yet Marxist understanding of bourgeois democracy is that it is only a façade for bourgeois dictatorship. Thus, the upholders of 'facade' theory obliterate the difference between bourgeois democracy and fascist regime. The upholders of 'façade' theory hold that since 2014 a fascist regime exists in India but they do not glean out any practical task from this. According to them even when bourgeois democracy existed in India, their central task was establishment of dictatorship of proletariat and even after 2014, since the establishment of fascist regime, the task remains that of the establishment of proletarian dictatorship. Thus, once again they obliterate the difference between bourgeois democracy and fascist regime. As Gramsci said that if you speak of changed situation but do not deduce any changed task accordingly then in reality this means that according to you the situation has not at all changed." (Sukhwinder. 2023. *On Fascism and On Fascism in India*, New Horizons Publication, p. 5)

The very opening paragraph of the essay written by Sukhwinder reveals his utter inability to understand the simplest of things.

By the way, the basic ethics of dialog is that one categorically mentions their opponent in the debate or critique. This is also a sign of basic revolutionary courage. However, Sukhwinder has erected various effigies to attack and never mentions *us* in particular, even when he is shadow-boxing with us. He never mentions us as one of the targets of his criticism. However, it is very clear that he is actually targeting his understanding of our position on various points. He involves in these "intellectual" acrobatics because he lacks the courage to engage one-on-one with us in any debate, as was clear in the course of debate on the national question, the question of language, farmers' movement, and the question of MSP. And in the case of fascism, too, he is resorting to the same cowardly tactic.

For instance, he argues that our claim is that only a “naqaab” (façade, an incorrect translation of the word ‘naqaab’ by this group) of bourgeois democracy remains today. However, those who have read our writings on fascism know that we make no such claim. We argue that in the neoliberal phase of the imperialist stage, the *shell* or *form* of bourgeois democracy remains, whereas the content of the bourgeois democracy remains in the perpetual process of decay, which is never complete.

Now, the form of a thing or a process, is not simply a “naqaab” or mask. The form of something is closely related with the its content; there is a relation of relative autonomy between the form and the content, but the form corresponds to the content with a dynamic lag temporally and spatially. It is not something artificial which has been imposed or put on from without having no rigorous, organic or logical relation with the content, as is the case with “naqaab” (mask).

Similarly, the claim that bourgeois democracy is a “naqaab” or mask of bourgeois dictatorship, is such an ignorant claim that no Marxist, acquainted with the basics of Marxism, would dare to make. Bourgeois democracy is a particular *form* that the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie assumes. It is the preferred and regular form of rule for the bourgeoisie. However, there can be other forms of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Bourgeois rule can as efficiently assume the form of a monarchy (constitutional or otherwise), a Bonapartist regime, a military dictatorship or a fascist rule. *The question as to what form the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie would assume depends on the historical context and political situation in which a bourgeoisie and a capitalist system finds itself.* These historical and political conditions include the process of historical transition from feudalism to capitalism in the country in question, the state of the capitalist economy, the political situation of the class struggle in the bourgeois society, the international situation in which a capitalist country finds itself, among others.

Sukhwinder juxtaposes bourgeois democracy with fascist dictatorship or fascist rule, *as if* bourgeois democracy represents the rule of the bourgeoisie whereas the fascist dictatorship represents the rule of a different class. Sukhwinder wonders how can we set the strategic task as the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat before 2014, when we believed that there was bourgeois democracy, and also after 2014, when we allegedly believe that bourgeois democracy has vanished (even though it is a particularly dishonest vulgarization of our position)? Does not this obliterate the difference between bourgeois democracy and fascist dictatorship? For Sukhwinder, the task of proletarian revolution and establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat can be justified only if there is no fascist rule. Since, bourgeois democracy is also at the same time bourgeois dictatorship, the task of establishing proletarian dictatorship can be justified only if there is bourgeois democracy! In case of fascist rule, the task of establishing the proletarian dictatorship cannot be justified. Why? *What is the essence and class nature of a fascist dictatorship?* Is it feudal? Does it represent something else than the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie? As is clear, Sukhwinder is at sea regarding the question of *form* and *content* (*class nature*) of the state. Let us explain this point, so as to expose the total ignorance of Sukhwinder regarding the basics of Marxism.

A. *The State and the Form of the State: The Dialectic of Content and Form*

First of all, the bourgeois dictatorship (the class essence or nature of the state) can assume a variety of forms besides its regular and preferred form, namely, a multiparty parliamentary democracy. The form that it would assume depends on a variety of historical and political factors that we mentioned above.

Second, *the strategy of revolution* against the fascist rule, too, would depend on a variety of historical and political factors. The Comintern, or the German Communist Party or the Italian Communist Party did not assume that the immediate task in case of fascist rule *cannot be* the

establishment of proletarian dictatorship, and this task will *necessarily* be that of re-establishment of the bourgeois democracy. It was not always axiomatic for the international communist movement. The Comintern as well as these communist parties adopted the program of re-establishment of bourgeois democracy as a result of combination of two factors: first, a serious right deviation from 1933 on this question in the Comintern itself and second, it was adopted only when the proletarian resistance, communist movement and the working-class movement in general had been completely crushed and destroyed. Even in that situation, the correctness of this line is under serious questions, as we shall see later in this essay. On this question, our own understanding has evolved from serious suspicions about the policy of the 'popular front' to a full-fledged criticism of this policy. The readers will see this later on. Anyhow, before this political situation emerged, even in the fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, the strategic tasks for revolutionary communists had been socialist revolution and establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, even though in that period, too, the vacillation between the "left" as well as right deviation alternated. However, even those who maintained a relatively correct position among revolutionary communists did not consider it apodictic that in case of fascist regime, the only possible strategy of revolution for the proletariat would be restoration of the bourgeois democracy. We shall see the entire history of evolution of the Comintern line on the united front and also present a critical evaluation of the same, later in the essay. The point that we want to make right now is that Sukhwinder is totally oblivious about this history and when he does present an account of this evolution, that is completely off the mark.

For Sukhwinder, it is axiomatic that in case of the fascist rule, the *only* possible strategic horizon before the revolutionary communists, is the re-establishment of bourgeois democracy. We shall also see how Mao and Kang Sheng criticized this erroneous line. He is totally ignorant regarding the change in the strategy of revolutionary communists in the changing class political situation. This also reveals the illusions regarding bourgeois democracy that Sukhwinder harbors despite claiming that bourgeois democracy is just a "naqaab" of bourgeois dictatorship. Okay! Then the only difference between fascism and bourgeois democracy is that the bourgeoisie abandons that "naqaab", that mask! Or else, Sukhwinder believes that the class essence of fascist rule is not bourgeois dictatorship! If the class nature of the bourgeois democracy as well as the fascist rule is the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, then there is no change in the class nature or the class essence of the state. Then what changes according to Sukhwinder? According to him, it is merely throwing off of the "naqaab" of democracy!

Why Sukhwinder commits this ignorant blunder? Because, instead of explaining the universal applicability of the strategy of the so-called 'popular front', he assumes it beforehand and then proceeds to the analysis of fascism, which assumes a transhistorical form, a rule whose class nature is, as it were, something else than the bourgeois dictatorship.

What Sukhwinder fails to understand is the distinction between the *essence* or *class content* of a state and the *form* or *shell* of a state. The bourgeois dictatorship can assume a variety of forms depending upon a number of historical and political factors, as we pointed out above. However, for Sukhwinder, the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie assumes only one "naqaab" or mask, which is bourgeois democracy! While commenting on those who consider India semi-colonial, Sukhwinder concedes that "bare-naked dictatorship" (not "naqaab"!) takes different forms like fascism, military dictatorship, and Bonapartism. Sukhwinder comments:

"A trend amongst those who hold India to be capitalist but semi-colonial assert that imperialism has adopted a form of bourgeois democracy to dupe the people. Bourgeois democracy is dictatorship it has been termed democracy to dupe the masses. Dictatorship has only two forms, bourgeois democracy and bare-naked

dictatorship. India is moving towards bare-naked dictatorship. These comrades do not differentiate between different forms of bare-naked dictatorship such as fascism, military dictatorship, bonapartism.” (Sukhwinder, *op.cit.*, p. 6-7)

The question of the dictatorship of the class (the nature of the state) and the forms that this dictatorship assumes makes Sukhwinder completely dense and dizzy, as is evident from the first quote from his essay, too, that we have presented above. Let us clear the fog created by the imbecility of Sukhwinder.

First of all, bourgeois democracy is not simply a “naqaab” (a mask), but a *form/shell* which has a logical correspondence with the *content* of the class rule in its *particular political condition* and *particular historical context*. A “naqaab” (a mask) does not necessarily have a *logical connection* with the content; it is not rigorously *engendered by* the content of the thing in its particular stage of development. Under the shell of a custard-apple is a custard-apple and under the shell of a pomegranate is a pomegranate! And under the shell of stupidity, is the editor saab of ‘Pratibaddh’! *There is a logical relation.*

The form of the bourgeois state (the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie) has a logical connection with the particular political situation in which the bourgeois state finds itself. In normal conditions, the bourgeoisie as a political class is interested in preserving the regular and preferred *modus vivendi* of its rule, namely, a multiparty parliamentary bourgeois democracy, because this reflects the relative stability of the hegemony of the bourgeoisie. If the condition of the rule of the bourgeoisie is one of political crisis, then it can assume one of the exceptional forms. These exceptional forms include fascism, Bonapartism and military *junta*. Whether these forms will assume the appearance of a “bare-naked dictatorship” (whatever that means!), is not evident from these terms themselves. Even Bonapartist regimes and military dictatorships can function with *formal* parliamentary system; the same is true for fascism today.

Basically, Sukhwinder fails to understand the difference between the *class content of the state* and *the form of the state*. It is true that proletariat is always in favor of bourgeois democratic republic as the best form of bourgeois state, suited to the class struggle of the proletariat. As Lenin writes:

“We are in favor of a democratic republic as the best *form of state* for the proletariat under capitalism. But we have no right to forget that wage slavery is the lot of the people even in the most democratic bourgeois republic. Furthermore, every state is a “special force” for the suppression of the oppressed class.” (Lenin, V.I. 2020. *State and Revolution*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, p. 20, *emphasis ours*)

Lenin writes further:

“Democracy is a *form of the state*, one of its varieties. Consequently, it, like every state, represents on the one hand the organized, systematic use of violence against persons; but on the other hand, it signifies the *formal* recognition of equality of citizens, the equal right of all to determine the structure of, and to administer, the state.” (*ibid*, p. 98, *emphasis ours*)

More:

“To speak of *forms of government* in this connection is trebly stupid, for every schoolboy knows that monarchy and republic are two different *forms of government*. It must be explained to Mr. Kautsky that *both these forms of government*, like all transitional “forms of government” under capitalism, *are but varieties of the bourgeois state*, that is, of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

“Lastly, to speak of forms of government is not only a stupid but also a very crude falsification of Marx, who was very clearly speaking here of this or that *form or type of state*, and not of forms of government.” (Lenin. V.I. 2021. *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, p. 11, *emphasis ours*)

Regarding the smoke-screen created by Kautsky, Lenin points out:

“That is a muddle, a disgusting muddle, Mr. “Muddle Counsellor!” Dictatorship is not a “form of government”; that is ridiculous nonsense. And Marx does not speak of the “form of government” but of the *form or type of state*. That is something altogether different.” (*ibid*, p. 15, *emphasis ours*)

Thus, the first point that Sukhwinder fails to understand is the difference between the *class content of the state* and the *form of the state*, which can be materialized as a variety of types of government (for instance, a republic or a constitutional monarchy), despite no changes in the class content of the state. The dictatorship of the bourgeoisie can assume the form of a monarchy, a democratic republic, a military dictatorship, Bonapartism (of the monarchical or non-monarchical, of parliamentary or non-parliamentary type), or *open* fascist dictatorship. Therefore, the question of strategy of revolution is not simply resolved by showing that the bourgeois democracy has vanished (in form and/or content). *It is very much possible that the form of the state has changed from the bourgeois multiparty parliamentary democracy to fascist rule (with or without the form of parliamentary system) and yet the stage of revolution is socialist and the task of the day is the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The determination of the strategy will depend upon the political class situation, the alignment of class forces, the accumulation of the forces of the proletariat and its class struggle. To argue that bourgeois democratic restoration is the conditio sine qua non of the communist strategy against fascism, only betrays a total ignorance of the history of evolution of anti-fascist communist strategy with changing political situation and also an incorrigible bourgeois democratic illusion, class collaborationism and class capitulation.*

So, what does Sukhwinder not understand? One, the general relation between form and content; two, the relation between the State and the form of State; three, the fact that just like bourgeois representative parliamentary democracy (of republican type or constitutional monarchical type); Bonapartism, military *junta* and fascist regimes, too, are mere *forms* of the bourgeois dictatorship; it is not as if democracy is a mere mask that is thrown away in times of crisis and then the true character of bourgeois dictatorship as the “bare-naked dictatorship” of the bourgeoisie emerges; nothing can be more puerile than that; even the exceptional bourgeois states like Bonapartism, military junta and fascist regimes are *forms* of bourgeois dictatorships and they, too, engage in ideological mechanisms for ensuring their hegemony like direct plebiscitary methods, as Poulantzas has shown; this is not to deny the fact that fascism in particular and other exceptional bourgeois states in general, represent particularly reactionary and exceptional forms of bourgeois dictatorship; four, even the exceptional bourgeois states can assume a variety of forms, besides *democratic parliamentary system*; it can retain the form of parliamentary system, while its *democratic content* is in perpetual decay; as well shall see later authorities as disparate as Poulantzas and Dimitrov, among others, had already alluded to this possibility, and which Sukhwinder missed due to not reading them comprehensively and only scavenging for “relevant” quotes to support his own idiocy.

B. The Sukhwinderian Proposal for Doing Nothing

Since, it is Sukhwinder who is unable to see any difference between the political situation before 2014, and the political situation which has prevailed after 2014, it is he, who fails to draw any

practical conclusions. What is the particular strategy of proletarian resistance today? What is the difference between the proletarian strategy before and after 2014? Sukhwinder has no clue. Sukhwinder at one place accepts that the 1934-35 strategy of the 'popular front', as proposed by Dimitrov and accepted by the majority of the Comintern, is the only correct and possible strategy against fascism, which proposes alliance with anti-fascist sections of the bourgeoisie. At another place he criticizes those revolutionary communist organizations who, today, have allied with the revisionist and social-democratic parties in an anti-fascist front. *Why?* Social-democrats and revisionists, too, represent a section of the bourgeoisie which, at least, is ostensibly against fascism. If the strategy of the 'popular front' is the only possible correct proletarian strategy against fascism, then what is the problem with that? Sukhwinder might interject that his objection is to the non-activity of such fronts. May be. But then why does not Sukhwinder form a 'popular front' in Punjab which would be truly 'active'? Why does not he ally with all other fractions of the bourgeoisie except "the most reactionary and chauvinist elements of the big monopoly finance capital", which are anti-BJP and anti-Modi?

May be, the problem according to Sukhwinder is that since fascization of the state is not complete, since fascist regime has not arrived yet, why make such a 'popular front'? This second option seems to be the case. We will see that this line of thinking has nothing to do with Comintern's line of 'popular front', which was incorrect anyway; according to the latter, even before fascists seize power, 'popular front' has to be formed by the communists, notwithstanding the fact that the Comintern formulated this erroneous line after the fascist seizure of power in Germany and Italy. In fact, in France and Spain, popular fronts had been formed without fascist seizure of the power and simply on the basis of existence of a fascist movement. In fact, the very line of the 'popular front' originated in France before its promulgation by the Comintern in 1935, as we shall later see in this essay.

Readers can see the sheer ludicrousness of Sukhwinder's position. He assumes that since the strategy of the 'popular front' was formulated when the fascist regimes had become consolidated in an unchallenged way in Germany and Italy, in India, too, the 'popular front' should be made when the fascization of the state is complete and fascist regime has become omnipotent in an unchallenged way! This is the way in which a dimwit mechanical dogmatist thinks! Even though Sukhwinder accepts that there is a reactionary fascist movement in India, he is stubbornly persisting with his belief that since the European communists transitioned to the line of the 'popular front' after the fascist power had consolidated itself completely (an assertion which only reveals the ignorance of Sukhwinder regarding history), he, too, will first wait that the communal fascists in India openly introduce exceptional laws, abolish parliament and assemblies, abolish elections, abolish all the bourgeois democratic institutions and processes *formally*, when the communists are totally suppressed and destroyed, *then* Sukhwinder will emerge from the ashes, from inside the crevices of the cavern of Raikot and form a 'popular front' among communists (who have become non-existent by then!) and the anti-fascist sections of the bourgeoisie! Wonderful! What kind of juvenile line of thinking is that? Formally, Sukhwinder even says that the European communists harmfully delayed the formation of the 'popular front' and corrected the "left" sectarian mistake only when it was too late, he himself does not set the task of forming a popular front in India or even in Punjab. His pretext is that the communist camp has disintegrated; however, if the line to be followed is that of the 'popular front', how does that stop Sukhwinder and his group from forming the 'popular front' at least "locally" in Punjab, with forces like AAP, SAD, Congress, etc.? Moreover, since, the exact re-enactment of the fascist drama of the Twentieth century is not going to take place, what Sukhwinder is waiting for will never happen. Thus, he has not done, he is not doing and he *will not do* anything against the fascist rise! This is the proposal of this senile group: *the proposal to suspend indefinitely the most important task entrusted to us by history today.*

Whatever he formally proposes in the end of the essay as “tasks” have nothing in particular to do with fascism: “abolishing” caste system (which would only create more fertile conditions according to Sukhwinder himself for the rise of fascism, because caste system for him is one of the major hindrances before the rise of fascism in India for Sukhwinder), fighting against national oppression, fighting against reactionary ideology of fascism, etc. All these tasks are relevant without fascist rise and apply in general against the rule of the bourgeoisie. They have nothing to do with fascism or fascist rise in particular. That is why Sukhwinder has nothing whatsoever to offer as a proposal for anti-fascist proletarian strategy.

As we can see, it is Sukhwinder who draws no practical conclusions from the rise of fascism and prescribes waiting for fascism to rise to power in exactly the same way in which it did in the early-Twentieth century and only then move to the outdated and essentially incorrect strategy of the ‘popular front’ which mainly failed even in the early-Twentieth century and today it is bound to fail even more miserably as it is *totally* out of tune with the present times. It is no co-incidence that in the past 10 years, the ‘Lalkaar-Pratibaddh’ group has done nothing against the fascist RSS-BJP, except spewing Punjabi-nationalist and national chauvinist non-sense and reactionary identitarianism on the question of language, against an *anational* bourgeoisie (!) that oppresses all nations of the country! The silly thing is that, according to Sukhwinder, “blind nationalism” is a component part of fascism and this *anational bourgeoisie* has suddenly become “blind nationalist” in its fascist turn and is giving primacy to “nation” over “class”! He never specifies that the “nationalism” of fascists is based on a totally unscientific and ahistorical concept of “nation” based in turn on a *purely ideological community*, constructed by the *chauvinistic ideology* of fascism. It has nothing to do with the historical category of *nation*, as understood by Marxists and even rational social scientists. Sukhwinder talks about “blind nationalism” being a component part of fascism without any qualification, which leaves no trace of difference between the journalistic understanding of fascism and the Marxist one. Anyhow, if the Indian big bourgeoisie is *anational*, and fascism is representing the interests of the “most reactionary elements” of this big *anational* bourgeoisie, then Sukhwinder has a question to answer: “Blind nationalism” based on which nation?

That is why, it is Sukhwinder who quotes Gramsci against himself, though he has no idea about it. Readers can find the critique of the above non-Marxist non-sense in the book written by Shivani and myself, *Marxism-Leninism and the National Question: A Debate*, published by Rahul Foundation, Lucknow in 2024.

2. What is Fascism? Sukhwinder’s Ignorant, Confused and Dogmatic Meanderings

We shall begin with what Sukhwinder understands from the word ‘fascism’. Here he does not say a single word which can capture the elements of novelty and change in the phenomenon of fascism in the Twenty-first century. He completely distils his understanding of the political essence of fascism, from the exact forms that it assumed in the early-Twentieth century and precisely for that reason confuses *historical forms of fascism* with *the essence of fascism as a political movement*.

Sukhwinder writes:

“Fascism is a particular form of bourgeois reaction, which comes into existence during the highest stage of capitalism, the stage of imperialism.

“Max Horkheimer says, “Anyone who does not wish to discuss capitalism should also stay silent on the subject of fascism.” Commenting on this statement of

Horkheimer, Nicos Poulantzas said, "Strictly speaking, this is incorrect: it is he who does not wish to discuss imperialism who should stay silent on the subject of fascism." (Sukhwinder, *op.cit.*, p. 9)

Again:

"Fascism is a particular political phenomenon. Its understanding requires a deep probing of the conditions in which it originates. In the countries in which fascist dictatorship was set up, the study of their general and particular features is also necessary. In nearly 100 years of history, fascist dictatorship has been set up in two countries of the world, Italy and Germany. Franco regime of Spain is also termed as fascist dictatorship but it was more of a military dictatorship. Only on the basis of fascist dictatorship that were set up in Italy and Germany, can fascism be understood correctly, its necessary characteristics can be identified. Though there are naturally some national or country wise differences in the fascist movements that originate in different countries, but there are also common characteristics, which are necessary characteristics of fascism. Further on in this article we will identify the necessary characteristics of fascism." (*ibid*, p. 9-10)

So, Sukhwinder believes that "only on the basis of fascist dictatorship that were set up in Italy and Germany, can fascism be understood correctly, its necessary characteristics can be identified." This is what we call *historicism*, and a particularly inane version at that. There is a qualitative difference between a *historical approach* and *historicism*. To say that fascism can *only* be understood on the basis of how it unfolded in a particular historical era of capitalism, is to say that history would repeat itself as it is. The fact is that differences in the fascist movements are based not simply on 'national or country wise differences' but also on the basis of the historical conditions and political situation in which world capitalist system as well as national capitalisms in different countries find themselves. Even the "necessary characteristics" or what can more accurately be called *universal characteristic features* of fascism emerge *historically*. To argue that the set of *universal features* of fascism that emerged in the Twentieth century is an unchangeable constant, in which nothing could ever be added in the future historical development of the phenomenon of fascism, is the most infantile variety of dogmatism and idiocy. We are not surprised, as we are talking here about Sukhwinder, who represents a particularly asinine trend in the left movement of Punjab.

Further.

What follows afterwards in this article is copious summarizing of already held positions. *Sukhwinder fills 47 pages out of 54 pages of his article by borrowing quotations from the past theoretical work or when he is not quoting from them, then he is summarizing and plagiarizing what is written in them!*

He gives Poulantzas's view on how

"Fascism is only one form of regime among others of the exceptional capitalist State (Etat capitaliste d' exception). There are others, notably Bonapartism, and the various forms of military dictatorship. The specific political phenomenon of fascism can therefore only be analysed by positing at the same time a theory of the political crisis and the exceptional State which also fits other types of exceptional capitalist regimes." (*ibid*, p. 10)

Then Sukhwinder summarizes the points made by David Abraham in the article 'State and Classes in Weimar Germany' from the book *Radical Perspectives on the Rise of Fascism in Germany, 1919-1945*:

“State is the product of class contradictions. Its control is with that class which owns the means of production. Alongside repressing the rival classes state also performs economic and ideological activity. State forms policies regarding its societies main economic and social relations. It regulates the equilibrium of entire society. Finally, through the agency of state, dominant social classes are organised. This means that they rise above their selfish, personal interests and organise on the basis of common class interests. Only the private and competition based character of surplus appropriation attempts to increase the structural split between capitalist. It is through state that the dominated classes are disorganised. Their interests are reduced to the level of individual, citizen and the interests as members of a nation.

“State in the capitalist society is relatively autonomous from individual capitalists. Formal equal competition between factions of ruling classes under parliamentary democracy rule further increases this autonomy. Constant cut throat competition amongst the different fractions of capitalist class, between different groups of monopolists, between monopoly capital and non- monopoly capitalists for the maximum appropriation of surplus value, capturing of the largest share in the market. Generally, a conflict goes on between the interests of capital as a whole and the interests of a part of capital, between various fractions of capitalists for immediate and long-term interests. This conflict becomes the reason for the relative autonomy of capitalist state. This autonomy operates in the limits ascertained by the logic of capitalist development.

“This autonomy of the state is ascertained by those methods through which the economic sector depends upon the state’s activity. Broadly, these methods are -:

- i) State makes organisational and legal rules for the capitalist system
- ii) Its constructs/establishes the material prerequisites of production
- iii) State regularly participates in economic activity so that the growth rate can be maintained, crisis may be averted or solved.
- iv) The state tries to maintain the legitimacy of capitalist system and people’s loyalty towards it through the policies of “social welfare”, foreign occupations etc.
- v) To prevent social crisis, state regulates the disputes between labour and capital. It attempts to keep these disputes to a certain limit.” (*ibid*, p. 10-11)

After this, Sukhwinder gives the following quotation of Engels and writes:

“Friedrich Engels had said about the modern bourgeois state that, “*modern State, again, is only the organization that bourgeois society takes on in order to support the external conditions of the capitalist mode of production against the encroachments as well of the workers as of individual capitalists. The modern state, no matter what its form, is essentially a capitalist machine — the state of the capitalists, the ideal personification of the total national capital.*” (*ibid*, p. 11)

Finally, Sukhwinder sums up his *quotationings*, *summarizings* and *plagiarizings* in the following way:

“Generally, the state functions in the interests of the entire bourgeois system. It strives to make certain that capitalist production and reproduction continues in a proper manner. The above reference of Friedrich Engels includes this. But in the era of monopoly capital, state primarily functions in the interests of monopoly capital. Though, sometimes the regulation of state goes against the interests of some

monopolist groups, but on the whole it works in the interests of monopoly capitalists. It represents the interests of monopoly capital.” (*ibid*, p. 11-12)

There is no need to comment on the above quotes or “summarizations” as they have been lifted *verbatim* from previous Marxist authorities, without further elaborations or contextualizations by the author. He is simply paraphrasing. Nothing else. Subsequently, Sukhwinder moves to the question of the conditions in which fascism rises to power. Here, too, Sukhwinder limits himself to the sphere where he feels the safest: quotationing, summarizing and plagiarizing from authorities. Sukhwinder writes:

“The capitalist class is not a monolith and nor can it be so in any instance. The Capitalist class is split into many factions. On the basis of size, there exists monopoly, middle and small capitalists. Similarly, capitalism is also divided on the basis of occupation (sector) like industrialist, commercial and agricultural capitalist etc. A cut throat competition prevails between these factions of the capitalist class for appropriating maximum profit.

“For the protection and furtherance of their interests, these different factions of the bourgeoisie create different political parties or back various political parties by giving them financial assistance. The various factions of the bourgeoisie generally fight out their interests through political parties. The task of these political parties, which represent the interests of different factions of the bourgeoisie, is to gain mass support for the bourgeois system. Generally, these political parties participate in elections with the backing of some faction of the capitalists. Wealth has a decisive role in these elections. Normally that very party is victorious in the elections for which a large chunk of the capitalist/monopolists have loosened their purse strings. Parliamentary system is best suited for capitalist structure due to the factional division of capitalists, the incessant conflict that goes on between them. Generally, in this system (parliamentary) the various contradictions between the different factions of the bourgeoisie are peacefully resolved.

“During an economic and political crisis, when the strife between bourgeois factions cannot be resolved in the parliamentary sphere or there arises a threat (that of proletarian revolution) to the existence of bourgeois system, a faction of the bourgeois can attempt to abolish the parliamentary system. If this faction succeeds then an exceptional form of bourgeois rule (fascist, military dictatorship etc.,) is set up.” (ibid, p. 12-13, emphasis ours)

Let us now deal with this exhibition of exemplary ignorance.

A. *Why is Bourgeois Parliamentary Democracy the Regular and Preferred Form of Bourgeois Rule: Fantastically Ignorant Ideas of Sukhwinder*

Here first point to note is that parliamentary system is not simply the preferred form of the state *because* the bourgeoisie is by nature a class divided in many fractions. This is precisely what always happens with Sukhwinder. He lacks the ability even to correctly interpret the quotations from classics that he himself presents. *In fact, there has been no ruling class in the history of class society that is monolithic, homogeneous or not divided into many fractions.* Even the feudal aristocratic class was divided into many fractions and a number of wars among feudal houses took place precisely due to this division. The only difference is that the bourgeoisie is a class divided into fractions due to economic dynamic of the averaging of the rates of profit, whereas the case with the class of slave-owners or feudal lords was different, where political, social and historical factors were responsible

for the internal divisions within the class. The point that Sukhwinder fails to understand is this: *it is not that since the bourgeoisie is divided into many fractions, therefore, there is cut-throat competition among its different fractions. It is precisely this "cut-throat competition", the averaging of the rates of profit, through which bourgeoisie is constituted as a class, which is naturally divided into many fractions.* What Sukhwinder has failed to understand is the line of causality of the process. As the readers can see, even plagiarizing can be of two kinds: dimwitted plagiarizing *à la* Sukhwinder, and smart plagiarizing, which at least understands what is being plagiarized. Anyhow!

Moreover, Sukhwinder fails to understand that parliamentary democracy is the regular form of bourgeois rule, *because* the bourgeoisie is the first exploitative ruling class in history whose rule is not based simply on *dominance* but *hegemony*, that is, ruling by taking consent. We do not need to mention that this consent itself is manufactured through a variety of Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs).

Let us now come to the last paragraph of the above quotation from Sukhwinder's essay. Here the author assumes that when the bourgeoisie is faced with a political crisis of the state, it *necessarily* resorts to dismantling the *form* of parliamentary system. This assumption again stems from the dogmatism and historicism of the editor of 'Pratibaddh'. Let us comprehend the historicist illusions of Sukhwinder in a little detail.

B. The Question of the State, State Apparatus and the Exceptional Forms

First, does the advent of any form of exceptional bourgeois state, like Bonapartism, military dictatorship and fascism, *necessarily* entail the dismantling of the *form* of bourgeois parliamentary system? The answer is a big and resounding No! What Sukhwinder does not understand is the *archetypal historical forms* of Bonapartism, military dictatorship and fascism, and their *essence* or their *content*. Instead of finding "relevant" quotes to support his dogmatism, had Sukhwinder actually read Poulantzas's classic *Fascism and Dictatorship* from the beginning till the end, he would have understood the difference. Poulantzas writes:

"The question can only be posed accurately by studying both the political crisis to which the exceptional State is a response, and the particular kinds of political crises to which its specific forms correspond. *But this requires, first of all, an analysis of the question of the historical period of capitalist formations within which these political crises and exceptional regimes occur. To avoid foundering in abstract typology, we have to be clear that the kinds of political crises which produce any given form of exceptional regimes, still have features which vary according to the period in which they arise. Nineteenth-century differs from twentieth-century Bonapartism, and the same is true of military dictatorship and fascism.*

"Although the analysis of the general historical periods to which exceptional regimes belong does not in itself explain their emergence, it remains a fact that *the period affects the conjuncture of the class struggle (political crisis), which alone provides an answer.*" (Poulantzas, N. 1979. *Fascism and Dictatorship*, Verso, London, p. 16, *emphasis ours*)

Had Sukhwinder understood this basic Marxist point that Poulantzas is making here, he would have saved himself so much time of writing a peculiarly muddle-headed essay. This also makes clear that to understand fascism *as it exists today*, one can learn certain elements from the likes of Antonio Gramsci, Clara Zetkin, Palmiro Togliatti, Nicos Poulantzas, David Abraham, Kurt Gossweiler, Anson Rabinbach, and others, but one has to develop a *historical* and *dialectical* view in order to be able to understand the *movement* of history and the elements of continuity and change implicit in this

movement. Then, perhaps, he would have understood that the archetypal categories and historical forms do not *repeat* themselves as it is in history.

Now let us first deal with the question of the first exceptional form: Bonapartism. Is Bonapartist regime possible with the *formal* existence of bourgeois multi-party parliamentary democracy? Yes. It is. The leading example of such a regime today is the Putin's regime in Russia. There is a broad consensus among Marxist scholars today that Putin's regime represents a bourgeois Bonapartism, in a new form in the Twenty-first century. Ilya Matveev argues:

“How is this organized politically? It would be wrong to call Russia “oligarchic capitalism” – rather, today's Russia has a Bonapartist regime. Bonapartism is a concept of Marxist theory.”
(<https://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article7705>)

Volodymyr Ischenko agrees:

“What I'm saying is exactly in line with the Marxist theory of Bonapartism that Ilya talks about. Because Bonapartism is nothing more than a regime in which the state, independent of any particular factions of capital, forcefully defends the interests of the class of big capitalists as a whole against threats from particular capitalists or particular factions of that class.” (*ibid*)

There are many other scholars as well as communist groups and organizations which contend that in essence Putin's regime is a new bourgeois Bonapartist regime. This analysis seems to be perfectly sound. Why? Bonapartism for Marxists since the time of Marx is a situation where the executive of the bourgeois state subordinates its legislative and usurps its powers *in effect*; it happens in a situation where the bourgeoisie as a political class is unable to collectivize its class interests due to the political crisis created under the conditions of intense class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie (what Poulantzas calls the *equilibrium crisis leading to Bonapartism*), as well as, the internal strife among the fractions of the bourgeoisie. In such a situation, bourgeoisie is obliged to hand over several of its political freedoms to an individual/a clique, precisely in order to safeguard its long-term political interests. This individual/clique represents nothing but bourgeois interests, however, in a contradictory fashion, as it depends as the source of its power on petty-bourgeoisie and *lumpen* proletariat. This particular exceptional form of state assumes a greater amount of relative autonomy from the ruling class and *apparently* rules over it, besides ruling over its own social support base, namely, the petty-bourgeoisie and the *lumpen* proletariat; however, most importantly, it rules over and represses the working class. Marx writes:

“In parliament the nation made its general will the law; that is, it made the law of the ruling class its general will. It renounces all will of its own before the executive power and submits itself to the superior command of an alien, of authority. The executive power, in contrast to the legislative one, expresses the heteronomy of a nation in contrast to its autonomy. France therefore seems to have escaped the despotism of a class only to fall back under the despotism of an individual, and what is more, under the authority of an individual without authority. The struggle *seems* to be settled in such a way that all classes, equally powerless and equally mute, fall on their knees before the rifle butt.” (Marx, Karl. 2021. *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, p. 107)

Marx points out further:

“Only under the second Bonaparte does the state *seem to have* made itself completely independent. The state machinery has so strengthened itself vis-à-vis civil society that the Chief of the Society of December 10 suffices for its head – an adventurer dropped in from abroad, raised on the shoulders of a drunken soldiery which he bought with whisky and sausages and to which he has to keep throwing more sausages. Hence the low-spirited despair, the feeling of monstrous humiliation and degradation that oppresses the breast of France and makes her gasp. She feels dishonored.

“And yet the state power is not suspended in the air. Bonaparte represented a class, and the most numerous class of French society at that, the small-holding peasants.” (*ibid*, p. 108-09)

Marx here talks about the *social class basis* of Bonapartism. However, Bonapartism sets the task of serving the bourgeois order for itself. Marx opines:

“As the executive authority which has made itself an independent power, Bonaparte feels it is his mission to safeguard “bourgeois order.” But the strength of this bourgeois order lies in the middle class. He looks on himself, therefore, as the representative of the middle class and issues decrees in this sense. Nevertheless, he is somebody solely due to the fact that he has broken the political power of this middle class and daily breaks it anew. Consequently, he looks on himself as the adversary of the political and literary power of the middle class. *But by protecting its material power, he regenerates its political power.* The cause must accordingly be kept alive; but the effect, where it manifests itself, must be done away with.” (*ibid*, p. 116, *emphasis ours*)

Engels wrote to Marx in a letter regarding the situation of the bourgeoisie in the particular conjuncture of that period:

“It is becoming increasingly clear to me that the bourgeoisie does not possess the qualities required to rule directly itself, and that therefore, *unless there is an oligarchy as here in England capable of taking over, for good pay, the management of state and society in the interest of the bourgeoisie, a Bonapartist semi-dictatorship is the normal form;* it promotes the great material interests of the bourgeoisie even against the bourgeoisie, but allows it no share in the government itself. Conversely, this dictatorship itself is in turn compelled unwillingly to adopt these material interests of the bourgeoisie.” (Marx, Karl and F. Engels. 2010. *Collected Works, Vol. 42*, Lawrence and Wishart, Digital Edition, p. 266, *emphasis ours*)

Lenin in his *The State and Revolution* accepts Engels’s thesis, outlined in his *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* that

“By way of exception, however, periods occur in which the warring classes balance each other so nearly that the state power as *ostensible mediator* acquires, for the moment, a certain degree of independence of both...

“Such were the absolute monarchies of the 17th and 18th centuries, the Bonapartism of the First and Second Empires in France, and the Bismarck regime in Germany.” (Lenin, V. I. 2020. *op.cit.*, p. 14, *emphasis ours*)

Poulantzas argues that the capitalist state:

“takes charge, as it were, of the bourgeoisie’s political interests and realizes the function of political hegemony which the bourgeoisie is unable to achieve. But in order to do this, the capitalist state *assumes a relative autonomy with regard to the bourgeoisie. This is why Marx’s analyses of Bonapartism as a capitalist type of state are so significant. For this relative autonomy allows the state to intervene not only in order to arrange compromises vis-à-vis the dominated classes, which in the long turn, are useful for the actual economic interests of the dominant classes or fractions, but also (depending on the concrete conjuncture) to intervene against the long term interests of one or other fraction of the dominant class: for such compromises and sacrifices are sometimes necessary for the realization of their political class interests.*” (Poulantzas, N. 1976. *Political Power and Social Classes*, NLB, London, 284- 285, *emphasis ours*)

For Poulantzas, Marx in the *Eighteenth Brumaire* is discussing inherent structural tendency of the capitalist state to acquire relative autonomy in order to be able to efficiently organize the interests of the ruling class. Bob Jessop points out what is exceptional are the circumstances under which the autonomy comes into existence and not the autonomy itself. (Jessop, Bob. 2002. “The Politics of Representation and the Eighteenth Brumaire” in M. Cowling and J. Martin (eds.) *The Eighteenth Brumaire Today*, Pluto Press, p. 179)

Just because the way in which Bonapartism did this in the Nineteenth century, *by formally dismantling the bourgeois democracy*, it does not directly stem from this that Bonapartism will exist precisely in that mode, in which it existed in the Nineteenth century. Poulantzas is careful enough to point out that the archetypal forms in which the exceptional state of the bourgeoisie came into existence in history must not lead us to believe or assume that it would take exactly the same archetypal forms in the future. Putin’s Bonapartist rule is a testimony to this fact.

Greek Marxist scholar Spyros Sakellaropoulos has captured some very important elements, while explaining that Bonapartism does not necessarily entail the formal dismantling of parliamentary democracy, especially in the neoliberal phase. The following rather lengthy quote from Sakellaropoulos is noteworthy. He begins with the process in which Bonapartism came into existence in the Nineteenth century:

“The story begins when the proletariat takes the initiative of staging an uprising that results in the emergence of a democratic state, grounded in universal suffrage in which all social classes are represented in the decisive political institutions. The proletariat harboured the illusion that enlargement of the electorate and popular mobilization would be sufficient for moving forward in a transition to socialism. *But without social alliances, without political organization, without a political program, none of this was possible when faced with an opponent that was preparing from day one to neutralize the proletariat.* The bourgeoisie, by contrast, on the one hand forged social alliances, isolating the proletariat, and on the other constructed a materiality of state (military fortifications, normalization of the functions of parliament so as to preclude any overruling ‘from the street’, activation of ideological apparatuses for the enforcement of ‘order’) whose functioning led to the defeat of the proletariat.

“Of great interest is the sequel, when the democratic faction of the bourgeoisie came into conflict with the Party of Order which, however, rallied the great mass of the bourgeoisie. What was created in consequence was *a political schism within the bourgeoisie, but not a social schism.* The bourgeoisie did not judge that it was represented only by the Party of Order. And because the bourgeois democrats, the

petty-bourgeoisie and even the socialists continued to be a presence in the representative institutions, the Party of Order was obliged to enter into alliance with Bonaparte and the executive. On the other hand, Bonaparte was elected President, supported by a broad alliance of social and political forces opposed to the policies of the moderate bourgeoisie.

...

“Does all this signify a process of delinking of the political from the economic? This depends on what we mean. If we mean the relative autonomy of the state from the individual interests of various factions of the bourgeoisie, this is something inherent in the materiality of the bourgeois state. *If, however, we are referring to the endeavour of the great mass of the bourgeoisie, to use the exact expression of Marx, to free itself from the restrictions imposed by bourgeois democracy, then we are coming closer to the truth.* The February Revolution gave the bourgeoisie *in toto* access to political power, on the precondition, however, of its granting numerous concessions to its allies. Gradually with the development of the class struggle (a process in which the manoeuvres of Bonaparte are also to be included) *it succeeded in disencumbering itself of its allies, and in consequence was also able to revoke the institutional compromises it had already made, in other words, to be rid of France’s Second Republic.* It was of little significance to the great mass of the bourgeois class whether this liquidation should be the accomplishment of a political party or an individual personage...

“This is a critical point. *Contrary to a fairly widespread belief that capitalism and parliamentary democracy go together,* in fact the institutions of mass political representation were imposed on the dominant classes through the struggles of the dominated classes. ***Nowadays the disjuncture between relations of representation and capitalism is becoming ever more obvious: what is involved is an inexorable erosion of the powers of representative institutions and, in consequence, the shift of power to centres impermeable to popular control (from committees of technocrats in the various ministries to the all-powerful - for the countries in the Eurozone - European Central Bank)...*** When the intensity of popular reactions diminishes, the bourgeoisie prefers to be represented directly by the state mechanisms and not by the representative institutions that are characterized by the materiality of the presence of the dominated classes...

***“As for the question of whether Bonapartism is to be categorized as a form of national emergency state, or in other words a marginal variety of authoritarian state whose further oscillations will result in breakage and transformation into a dictatorship, we have two basic objections to this.* The first is historical in character in the sense that in the 19th century the bipolar schema of parliamentary versus anti-parliamentary regime is not present, precisely because parliamentary democracy is not the rule, at least in the contemporary sense, in most national formations. The second is methodological and rejects the bipolar model one extreme of which is the healthy parliamentary democracy and the other the national emergency state. *On the contrary we believe that there are no impermeable dividing walls between these different forms of state because in reality they are the results of class struggle, or more properly opposing trends within the tendency of the capitalist system not to have its dynamic restricted by institutions of popular representation.*” (S. Sakellaropoulos. 2020. ‘Re-reading The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte: The**

Phenomenon of Bonapartism as a Capitalist State Without Popular Representation', in *New Proposals: Journal of Marxism and Interdisciplinary Enquiry*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Summer 2020), *emphasis ours*)

The point that Sakellariopoulos makes here is simply this: whether Bonapartism would assume the form of an *open* dictatorship, by dismantling the very *form* of bourgeois democracy, or it will retain the *form* of bourgeois parliamentary system, which has become increasingly devoid of democratic and representative content, with the real power shifting to executive bodies of the state, is not a question of theoretical necessity. It will depend on the condition of the bourgeois democracy and the situation of class struggle. This is a very simple point that most of the Marxist scholars of exceptional forms of the bourgeois rule are understanding and underlining today, as we shall see later in this essay. However, Sukhwinder due to his obdurate historicism and dogmatism, stubbornly clings to the idea of exact re-enactment of the Nineteenth and Twentieth century history.

In fact, what Sakellariopoulos elaborates above, was pointed out by Poulantzas much before him. In his seminal work *Political Power and Social Classes*, Poulantzas discusses the functions of legislative and executive and their mutual relations which determine the *form* of the state and the conditions in which they are retained or abandoned in the situations of crises. Here Poulantzas points out the relation between the two is essential to comprehend in order to properly understand the particularities of various *forms of state* and their *relative autonomy*. Poulantzas writes:

“This relation between the legislative and the executive provides us with an excellent example for the concrete analysis of the problem of *forms of state and the degrees of unity and relative autonomy characterizing each form*. In the light of the preceding analyses, this will help us to establish the exact relevance of the criterion of legislative/executive relations for distinguishing between forms of state.” (Poulantzas, N. 1976. *Political Power and Social Classes*, New Left Books, London, p. 308)

He points out further:

“Apart from its political significance in the relations of class power, and leaving aside its constitutional-juridical expression which is most often an ideological product, this legislative/executive distinction covers several heterogeneous factors. *First of all, it covers factors of a technical order which concern the functioning of the state, in so far as the executive, in the broad sense of the term, encompasses in particular what has been called the state apparatus, i.e., the bureaucracy, administration, police, army. Its functioning within the capitalist state cannot be absorbed into the functions peculiar to the directly elective assemblies, i.e. the representatives in the strict sense. As a result, the distinction between these powers and the dominance of one of them over the other undoubtedly cover differential forms of the articulation of the economic and the political and indeed of the intervention/non-intervention of one in the other: for example, a predominance of the executive often implies a specific intervention of the political in the economic.*” (*ibid*, p. 308, *emphasis ours*)

Further:

“The distinction between the forms of state is, of course, related to *variations of the articulation of the economic and the political within the limits set by the dominance of the CMP in the periodization into phases of a capitalist formation*: it concerns a whole

series of transformations of state functions, of displacements of dominance between these functions, of differentiations of forms of the intervention of the political in the economic and of the economic in the political.” (*ibid*, p. 309, *emphasis ours*)

What is Poulantzas pointing to here? He is arguing that within the state apparatus, the relation between the legislative and executive vary according to the economic condition and political situation in which the capitalist social formation finds itself. In certain political situations, it might be necessary for the bourgeoisie that the executive dominates the legislative, because a peculiar political intervention is required to maintain the *status quo*. Poulantzas moves on to show that it is very much possible that the executive becomes dominant, whereas the legislative *formally* maintains its existence. He contends:

“In fact, although in the framework in which parliament predominates, legitimacy tends to be conflated with legality, that is to say with a specific normative system of rule-making, which presents itself as the general will decreed by the people’s representatives, the ideological processes function in a different way as regards the legitimacy of the executive: the role of parliamentary publicity decreases and this produces a masking of real knowledge about the bureaucracy (i.e. about the preponderant role of the state apparatus indicated by the predominance of the executive); ‘charismatic’ elements inserted, of course, in the type of bourgeois legitimacy, become important since they concentrate hierarchical legitimacy by delegating the power of the state apparatus to the person of a ‘leader’ (*chef*). *This ‘leader’ presents himself as the representative of the unity of the people-nation, through a whole gamut of ideological weapons, grasped today by the ideological phrase ‘personalization of power’.* Thus, the state’s relation as ‘representative’ to the social classes is short-circuited and operates here by embezzling the role of parties and by the state apparatus’s direct manipulating of public opinion, etc.

“Marx’s analyses (and in particular those of *The Eighteenth Brumaire*) in which he points to the displacement of dominance from the legislative to the executive as the relevant criterion for *forms of state* must be interpreted in this sense. The bourgeois forms of legitimacy are transformed: and this, it seems to me, is exactly what Marx wished to stress when he said that ‘the executive power, as opposed to the legislative power, expresses the nation’s heteronomy as opposed to its autonomy’. This point must be stressed, for a whole parliamentary tradition of the working-class movement has expressed its distrust of the executive power (a distrust due in particular to its idyllic illusions of the legislative) by interpreting these analyses as a challenge to the executive’s legitimacy. This has allowed them to make a cheap critique of the executive’s predominance and to refuse to make an adequate critique of the capitalist state as such.

“In short, this tradition sees parliamentary legitimacy as the only ‘authentic’ legitimacy of bourgeois political democracy (i.e. the sole legitimate expression of the ‘people’); and it sees in the predominance of the executive an illegitimate power, a kind of deformation of the national popular-class-state. It could not be more false: in the framework of the capitalist class state, parliamentary legitimacy is no ‘closer to the people’ than that legitimacy which corresponds to the predominance of the executive. In fact, these are always ideological processes in both cases. In the case of a predominance of the executive, legitimacy can perfectly well be inserted in the framework of the popular sovereignty of the capitalist type of state: unlike other types of legitimacy (e.g., charismatic legitimacy through divine right) which it resembles

only in a very superficial way, this legitimacy is only a differential form of the type of bourgeois legitimacy. In his analyses of the Second Empire, Marx demonstrates quite clearly how Louis Bonaparte managed to get his executive power to pass as the representative of the unity of the people-nation, as the incarnation of popular sovereignty, by even actually re-establishing the universal suffrage previously abolished by the parliamentary Republic.

*“Thus, the executive’s legitimacy is often characterized as a series of ruses, whereby the predominance of the executive attempts to mask its illegitimacy by borrowing features from the one possible kind of popular sovereignty, that of parliament. In fact, the situation is not at all like this: rather their common characteristics are based on the fact that they are merely differential forms of the popular sovereignty of the people-nation. The ideological processes which govern classical parliamentary legitimacy, and therefore the legitimacy of French Bonapartism, are in fact only differential forms of the same type. **The proof, as history has shown, is that the popular sovereignty of political democracy finds its expression equally well in a classical parliamentarism and in a Bonapartist semi-dictatorship.**” (ibid, p. 311-12, emphasis ours)*

Poulantzas points out further:

*“In fact, as far as the conquest of parliament by the dominated classes is concerned, class domination has at its disposal a whole gamut of defences to protect itself from such misadventures. Besides, the dominant classes have never in the long run been mistaken on this point. It is only in very rare cases that a predominance of the executive characteristic of a form of state has corresponded to any risk that the dominated classes might conquer parliament. *This is proved by the numerous western countries in which the predominance of the executive is nowadays asserted, but which, for the most part, are far from running this risk: a risk which has for a long time been defused in the classical parliamentary framework.*” (ibid, p. 313, emphasis ours)*

Poulantzas argues further:

*“In the state’s relation to the power bloc, *the displacement of dominance from the legislative to the executive is a relevant criterion for differentiating between forms of state*, in that it concerns the modifications of the hegemonic fraction of the power bloc according to the stages of a formation and the displacement of those places in which the political power of this fraction with regard to the power bloc is reflected : cf. the displacements of hegemony from the industrial fraction to the financial fraction, and then the monopolist fraction. For example, the characteristic predominance of the executive where the monopolies are hegemonic is a direct response to a particular incapacity to organize this hegemony, with regard to the power bloc, in the parliamentary framework.” (ibid, p. 314, emphasis ours)*

And finally:

“It is now necessary to consider the problem of the unity of the capitalist state in the case in which the legislative and executive are differentiated, in the manner established above. The predominance of one of these powers represents the central instance of the unity of the state in that it concentrates within it the two following principles of state unity: (i) it reflects the political legitimacy of a formation and (ii)

it is the seat of the hegemonic fraction's organization. *In a given period, however, certain dislocations may occur: **parliament may continue to present itself as the representative place of popular sovereignty, of the unity of the people-nation, whilst the hegemonic fraction is reflected in the executive.*** (ibid, p. 316-17, emphasis ours)

We have quoted observations of Poulantzas in such a detailed fashion for a reason. It is clear from Poulantzas's above quotations that *the dominance of executive over legislative in exceptional forms of bourgeois rule is not only possible with the formal retention of bourgeois parliamentary system, it is becoming more likely in the neoliberal phase, that exceptional forms of bourgeois rule would not dismantle bourgeois democracy formally.* In fact, since the 1970s, there have been so many Marxist scholarly studies which have demonstrated with evidence, that in the neoliberal phase, Bonapartism, military dictatorship as well as fascism can realize themselves without doing away with the form of bourgeois parliamentary democracy. We will come to the studies of these scholars later in the essay. In fact, towards the end of his life, in his work *State, Power, Socialism*, Poulantzas himself had begun working on this question, even though by this time, on several questions he had been assuming incorrect positions. Similarly, Domenico Losurdo has dealt with the same problematic in his work *Democracy and Bonapartism*, where he examines the forms that Bonapartism has assumed in the Twentieth century.

Now let us come to the question of military dictatorship. Can a military dictatorship come into existence while retaining the form of parliamentary democracy? Yes. There have existed situations in the recent history itself, where the real political power was in the hands of a military dictator, *in essence*, whereas the bourgeois parliaments and elections were not suspended formally. The most recent and nearest to us was the Parvez Musharraf's regime after 2002 in Pakistan. Here, a military dictator got himself elected as President, ran the country politically, with all powers of decision-making in his hands, while retaining the shell of bourgeois democracy, that is, bourgeois parliament, assemblies and bourgeois elections. The same is true for a period of Park Chung Hee's military dictatorship in South Korea.

Thus, what did the Trot-Bundists of 'Lalkaar-Pratibaddh' not understand? Sukhwinder did not understand that the essence of history is *movement*. He fails to understand the difference between the *archetypal forms* of different political phenomena, with which these political phenomena express themselves in history initially, and their *actual political content*, which can assume very different forms in future. Again, our half-witted dogmatist does not understand the dialectic of *form* and *content*. Consequently, what he does not comprehend is the fact that just because these exceptional types of bourgeois rule had formally abandoned the *shell* or the *form* of bourgeois parliamentary system in their archetypal avatars in the Nineteenth century or the Twentieth century, does not mean that they would necessarily abandon the shell or form of bourgeois democracy today, too. This precisely is the particularly illiterate dogmatism and historicism of Sukhwinder. Since, he has been quite prolific in broadcasting shameful inanities and idiocies in the left circles of Punjab, we are not surprised at all that he has come up with such a gem about fascism in general and fascism in India.

3. Sukhwinder's "Pearls of Wisdom" regarding Economic Crisis of Capitalism: An Exhibition of Ignorance and Dogmatism

Now let us move to Sukhwinder's struggles regarding the concept of economic crisis of capitalism and its relation with fascism. Sukhwinder spills "pure pearls of wisdom" when he discusses economic crisis. This is what he writes:

“The economic crisis of capitalism finds expression at certain intervals of time in the form of Recession and Depression. *If Total Real Domestic Product in an economy shrinks for two consecutive quarters, then it is said to be in recession and if it shrinks more than 10% or it shrinks for three years consecutively then it is termed as depression.* (Sukhwinder, *op.cit.*, p. 13, *emphasis ours*)

He writes further:

“What is the root cause operating in this recession or depression? This was unveiled by Karl Marx. According to Marx, the law of tendency of falling rate of profit operates in its foundation. Here we will not delve into the explanation of this law. For this, the readers can refer to Marx’s work, Capital Vol III, Part III (The law of the Tendency of Rate of Profit to Fall). Besides this, in some other books too, this law is correctly explained.

“No economic crisis facing the capitalist system is permanent. If the working class does not abolish the capitalist system, then capitalism with time due to its internal motion (or interference by the state, like shifting the burden of crisis more and more on the working class and other toiling masses and capturing the financial assets/natural resources/regions of other countries or occupying entire countries) emerges out of this crisis. But this emergence again includes the seeds of a new crisis.

“Marx writes, *“The periodical depreciation of existing capital – one of the means immanent in capitalist production to check the fall of the rate of profit and hasten accumulation of capital- value through formation of new capital – disturbs the given conditions, within which the process of circulation and reproduction of capital takes place, and is therefore accompanied by sudden stoppages and crises in the production process.....”*

*“Alongside the development of productivity there develops a higher composition of capital, i.e., the relative decrease of the ratio of variable to constant capital. These different influences may at one time operate predominantly side by side in space, and at another succeed each other in time. From time to time the conflict of antagonistic agencies finds vent in crises. **The crises are always but momentary and forcible solutions of the existing contradictions. They are violent eruptions which for a time restore the disturbed equilibrium.**”* (Sukhwinder, *op.cit.*, p. 13-14, *author’s emphasis*)

More:

“In our revolutionary movement, the trend of propagating capitalism being in permanent/everlasting crisis is dominant. Some claim that world capitalism is in permanent crisis since the last 4-5 decades. About India, they claim that its economy has been in crisis ever since 1980s or 1991 when the bourgeoisie of India extensively adopted neoliberal policies. Such claims regarding the crisis of capitalism are borne out of ignorance or surfacial knowledge of the Marxist theory of crisis. In turn these claims serve to slander Marxist political economy.” (Sukhwinder, *op.cit.*, p. 14, *author’s emphasis*)

Sukhwinder is trying to involve in a shadow-boxing with us, here. His charge that few communists in India believe in the concept of ‘permanent crisis’, is directed towards us (Ajay Sinha, Don Quixote)

de la Patna, too, subscribes to this concept, even though he plagiarized this from us only, when we ourselves subscribed to this erroneous notion before 2016). Let us see what is the truth.

A. *Sukhwinder's Dishonest Silence about his Views Regarding Capitalist Crises in General*

First of all, Sukhwinder is showing characteristic dishonesty that he has demonstrated again and again during the last few years. He was with us in our organization till 2019. From 2016 itself, we had rejected the concept of 'permanent crisis' and had developed the understanding of chronic and protracted nature of the crisis that has persisted since the 1970s. We had written a public self-criticism about the evolution of our understanding along with some other developments in certain positions that we used to hold before 2016. However, what is noteworthy here is the fact that in 2016, Sukhwinder, too, was with us. 'Pratibaddh', the journal that he edits, published our understanding of 'permanent crisis' till then. In Issue 23 of 'Pratibaddh' in September 2014, Sukhwinder wrote:

"The present crisis of world capitalism is its final crisis. It is moving closer to its death. But it will not self destruct. It will die at the hands of the working class of the world. The one after another radical strikes of the industrial working class all over the world states that the working class has geared up for the second round with world capitalism." (Editorial, 'Pratibaddh', Issue 23, September 2014, *emphasis ours*)

The above excerpt does not express our understanding of even 2014 as we were never so optimistic about the imminence of the second round of decisive battle between the working class and world capitalism, because for our organization, even then, the prospects of breaking out of such a battle depended on the question of the vanguard. Here, Sukhwinder reveals his vulgar economism. We will deal with the vulgar economism of Sukhwinder later in the essay in greater detail. Coming back to the present issue.

'Lalkaar' wrote in its November 2015 issue:

"The two salient features of the crisis that occurs in the capitalist system are that the boom after every crisis paves way for an even deeper crisis, and secondly, that time period between two crises keeps shortening. For example, after the 1930s, the second great depression occurred in 1973 and was more detrimental. During this time between 1948 and 1970, the capitalist system lived its golden era. The next great depression after 1973 occurred in 2007, and during this time the capitalist system could not relive the boom it witnessed in 1948-73. It has not witnessed any period of boom after 2007 apart from some minor reliefs for very short time periods along with persistent crises. This is how the present crisis of the world economy is most scathing of all the crises, and the devisers and intellectuals of the capitalist system have been unable to propose a solution for the present crisis, and there seems no such possibility." (*emphasis ours*)

We can clearly see the dishonesty of Sukhwinder once again. He has shown intellectual dishonesty and cowardice many times in the recent years from changing positions in every debate without any self-criticism and presenting false and manufactured quotes from Marxist documents and classics.

Whatever the case may be, but the question remains: *when did Sukhwinder realize that the concept of 'permanent crisis' is incorrect?* Has he written any self-criticism on this matter systematically anywhere? We could not find.

The fact is that he changed his position, when we wrote about it openly since 2017! Now, he is trying to impute this older erroneous understanding of 'permanent crisis' to us, whereas, *it was*

precisely our writings since 2017 that argued that the idea of 'permanent crisis' is incorrect and from these writings itself, Sukhwinder, too, copied. In fact, in May 2021, Kavita Krishnapallavi and I wrote a note on the questions on which our understanding has been evolving since the first years of 2010s. This note was published online and since then it is available in the public domain.

Similarly, in terms of crisis theory, Sukhwinder, too, subscribed to the theory of overproduction before 2017 and not the law of tendential fall in the rate of profit. It was only after completion of *our* studies of *Capital* and *Theories of Surplus-Value*, that we concluded that overproduction as well as underconsumption and disproportionality are only symptoms of capitalist crisis, not its underlying cause. The underlying cause of recurring capitalist crises is the law of the tendential fall in the rate of profit (LTFRP). Now, Sukhwinder plagiarizes *our organization's* latest positions on crisis theory (even though he understands least of it, as well shall see) and presents it as his own understanding, while at the same time, imputing the incorrect understanding to us today, that he shared with us till 2015-16. It would be useful to quote from the note that Kavita and I co-wrote in May 2021. We wrote in that note:

“Another incorrect line of thought that afflicted our thinking till mid-2016 was that since world capitalism did not see any considerably long period of boom since 1970s, the present crisis is a kind of permanent crisis or long depression, that may theoretically end with some global war, but since there are many deterrents in the present world that function against any possibility of a third world war, the present long depression will continue till the end of capitalism. We still think that it is possible that present long depression might continue for a long period to come, with no significant boom in near future and that before capitalism sees another significant boom, the series of revolutions might break out. *However, we do not think that the idea of permanent crisis is theoretically congruent with the nature of capitalist mode of production, as explained by Marx. In other words, to argue theoretically that capitalism can be permanently stagnant, mired in permanent crisis is incorrect. Theoretically, there is no such thing as 'permanent crisis'; the crisis can be short or long.* However, that is a different matter altogether. Even the 19th century saw some long periods of recession, or long recessions, as has been pointed out correctly by the likes of Guglielmo Carchedi and Michael Roberts and many others. The reason why a ‘theory of permanent crisis’ is incorrect is that the very process of crisis (which might span for several decades) is simultaneously a process of devalorization of capital, destruction of productive forces and depression of average wages that restore profitability. What makes the ‘Long Depression’ of the late-20th and early-21st centuries different from earlier ‘long recessions’ is that this time the devalorization of capital has not proceeded in a rapid fashion for a variety of reasons that have been discussed by many Marxist political economists. In the last few years, there has been a lot of research by many Marxist political economists on this question which must be read by all Marxists. There have been lively debates among Anwar Shaikh, Michael Roberts, Guglielmo Carchedi, Andrew Kliman, David Harvey, Dumenil and Levy, Alan Freeman, Fred Moseley, Michael Heinrich and many others and those who have defended the classical Marxist position of *law of tendential decline in the rate of profit*, have not only dominated the debate theoretically but have also supported their position with ample empirical data. *Anyway, from 2016, it had become clear to us that the idea of a 'permanent crisis' is theoretically incorrect and cannot be supported with empirical evidence from the history of world capitalism. It does not matter whether a depression is a 'long depression' or a short-lived depression. Theoretically, no capitalist crisis can be permanent, even though, some crisis will definitely prove to be the last one!* The

political assessment of world situation is a different thing altogether. It is very much possible that before this long depression ends, revolutions break out in the countries that can be called 'hotspots turning into flash points'. The other possibility would be large-scale devalorization of capital in some way. Still, the idea of a 'permanent crisis' is theoretically incorrect and empirically untenable. Moreover, it is important to understand that the law of decline in the rate of profit is a secular tendency. It simply means that historically the rate of profit will fall, despite rebounding periodically. Every new crisis will be deeper than the previous one and will make the contradictions of capitalism even sharper and more acute, precisely due to its recurrent nature. *The very theoretical idea of 'permanent crisis' is non-dialectical.*

"From 2013-14 our serious and intensive studies of Marxist political economy gathered momentum. By the end of 2015 or beginning of 2016 it was clear to us that it is not overproduction that is the underlying cause of crisis, but the secular tendency of the rate of profit to fall. It is this crisis of profitability that leads to the crisis of overproduction on the one hand and under-consumption on the other. The very basic teaching of Marx was that the driving force of capitalism is not consumption but profitability and 'any plethora of capital is the plethora that cannot be invested profitably'. Without understanding this, it would be impossible to define what is 'over'-production and what is 'under'-consumption and why it happens." (Sinha, Abhinav and Kavita Krishnapallavi. 2020. 'A Short Note on Something That Is Obvious but Which Certain Folks Do Not Understand', published online on 26 May, 2021)

Now, let us see what we have been writing since 2016. I wrote in 2017 in a paper presented at 150 years of the publication of the first volume of *Capital* at the New York Left Forum on 2 June 2017:

*"In the end I would briefly summarize my views on the controversy over the LTFRP and Marxist theory of crisis. In my opinion, any multicausal model is methodologically non-Marxist, metaphysical, descriptive, positivist and empiricist. A Marxist cannot content herself with describing the immediate phenomenal expressions or proximate causes or triggers of the crises and would penetrate the layers of phenomena to reach the underlying factor; secondly, a Marxist cannot be satisfied with listing the different proximate causes and saying that a combination of these causes led to crisis without determining the principal contradiction and fundamental contradiction; she must explain their interrelations and in turn their relation with the main underlying cause. Most of the factors represented by these multicausal theorists actually are derived from the law of accumulation and the LTFRP. However, they fail to see the interrelations between these and present a laundry list of causes of crises. This approach is mechanical and metaphysical and lacks the Marxist dialectical method." (Sinha, Abhinav. 2019. 'Marx's Capital 150 Years and Beyond – Old and New Controversies: A Critical Reappraisal' in *Subversive Interventions*, Rahul Foundation, Lucknow, p. 376-77, *emphasis ours*)*

I wrote in the same paper:

"In brief, it can be shown that underconsumption, disproportionality, financialization, credit crisis, turnover of fixed capital and most of the other "causes" of crises as mentioned by multicausality theorists are not unrelated to profitability and in fact they are closely linked with profitability and determined by it in the long run. I called the approach of the multicausality theorists metaphysical and

mechanical precisely because they fail to see the inter-connections between these factors which prevents them from transcending the arena of what Marx called “recording and systematizing the facts.”” (*ibid*, p. 378)

Also, about the cathartic role of crisis, which itself restores the profitability of capital in case of large-scale devalorization and destruction of productive forces, I wrote in the same paper:

“The result is a crash leading to devalorization of existing stocks and fixed capital, decline in investments, decline in employment and decline in wages until the rate of profit is restored and to use Marx’s words, the same crap begins all over. In this way, crisis plays its cathartic role in the capitalist economy.” (*ibid*, p. 372)

We also wrote in the same paper why the recurrent crises would become increasingly chronic and protracted:

“Recurrent crises do not reset the counters to zero. Crisis cannot simply be reduced to a violent mechanism to restore equilibrium *ad infinitum* (Callinicos does not say that it will happen *ad infinitum*, but his logic leads naturally to this corollary). The fact is that the occurrence of crises does not only happen in cycles, but in a spiral. And this is a downward spiral.” (*ibid*, p. 375)

The harmonist illusions about capitalist crisis setting the counter back to zero and reproduction of capitalist system *ad infinitum* is actually shared by Sukhwinder. Due to lack of understanding of historical and dialectical method, Sukhwinder views the recurrent crises as a *circular process*, rather than a *spiral process*, in which crises assumes increasingly chronic form. We will show that this view of recurring crises forming a spiral, rather than a circle, was precisely the view of Marx and Engels.

In 2017 itself, in another paper on the theories of imperialism, presented in the Sixth International Arvind Memorial Seminar, in which Sukhwinder, too, was present with us, I wrote:

“Thirdly, the state of stagnation is not permanent because every major crisis or stagnation leads to devalorization of capital, restoring profitability by precisely this devalorization. Therefore, one must not forget that every crisis is *a sudden or a protracted* cathartic process for the system.” (Sinha, Abhinav. 2019. ‘Marxist Theories of Imperialism from Marx to Present Times: A Contemporary Critical Reassessment’, in *Subversive Interventions*, Rahul Foundation, Lucknow, p. 441)

Therefore, Sukhwinder, as usual, is being dishonest about the fact that he, too, believed in the concept of ‘permanent crisis’, wrote about it (as we have shown above) and actually published my own writings which contained this concept before 2016 in ‘Pratibaddh’; secondly, about the fact, that he did not understand that LTFRP as the principal explanation of the underlying cause of capitalist crisis and believed in the explanations based on over-production. Generally all Marxists who subscribe to the crisis theory based on over-production or under-consumption, too, time to time refer to the tendency of fall in the average rate of profit, however, they do not understand that the latter is the *underlying cause* of recurring crises, whereas the former are nothing but symptoms of this crisis of profitability. In other words, the Marxist theory of crisis is LTFRP. Only through our writings, when we rectified our old error, that Sukhwinder came to know about the correct Marxist theory of crisis. He is silent like a log about this.

This again shows, besides the recent events happening in this opportunist and infantile group, that Sukhwinder has degenerated as a communist. Recent events have, in fact, only confirmed our prognosis that he would eventually degenerate. Misquoting from and distorting the Soviet

constitution, too, was evidence of Sukhwinder's degeneration, for which he never publicly apologized. His shifting positions on MSP without any self-critical statement also showed his increasing degeneration. When narrow organizational interests and individualism and egotism are given priority over ideological and political considerations, such degeneration happens as a matter of rule.

B. GDP (Gross Domestic Product) of India and GDP (Gross Doltish Potential) of Sukhwinder

Now let us come to Sukhwinder's understanding of economic health of Indian economy. Subsequently, we will discuss Sukhwinder's idea of capitalist crisis in general. On this topic, since Sukhwinder knows nothing except plagiarizing (he plagiarized our position on MSP being a monopoly rent giving surplus-profit to the agrarian bourgeoisie as well, without self-criticizing his old position that MSP reduces inflation!), and since his political illiteracy and idiocy have been caught on so many occasions, he feels safe in sticking to either our group's writings (through plagiarizing) or sticking to reproducing what has been written in classics. That is why, whenever he tries to write anything about any social, economic or political novelty, he commits such ridiculous blunders, that one can fall laughing. Here, too, he has done the same. First let us understand the relation between GDP of Indian economy and the GDP of Sukhwinder.

Sukhwinder claims that "If Total Real Domestic Product in an economy shrinks for two consecutive quarters, then it is said to be in recession and if it shrinks more than 10% or it shrinks for three years consecutively then it is termed as depression." Does this definition of recession and depression have anything to do with Marxism? No. Then, from where Sukhwinder has plagiarized this definition? Let us see. Popular bourgeois website *Investopedia* writes:

"A common rule of thumb is that two consecutive quarters of negative gross domestic product (GDP) growth indicate a recession." (<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/r/recession.asp>)

Similarly, this website defines 'depression' as:

"A depression may be defined as an extreme recession that lasts three or more years or that leads to a decline in real gross domestic product (GDP) of at least 10% in a given year." (<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/d/depression.asp>)

Rings a bell? Bingo! You are right! Sukhwinder has plagiarized his definitions from this website, which is only putting forth what has been defined as 'recession' and 'depression' by agencies like IMF and World Bank since long. Someone might ask: what is the problem in relying on these definitions? What wrong poor Sukhwinder has committed? Well, the wrong committed by Sukhwinder is idiocy of accepting an incorrect and non-Marxist definition of crisis of profitability and, of course, plagiarizing without crediting the source. Now, let us see, what is the problem in confusing the GDP as the real indicator of profitability of a capitalist economy. There has been so much work on this question from Anwar Shaikh and Ahmet Tonak's excellent study *Measuring the Wealth of the Nations* to Tsoulfidis and Tsaliki's *Classical Political Economics and Modern Capitalism*, that we cannot present quotations from all of them. However, a few basic points and quotations would suffice to show the utter ignorance and stupidity of Sukhwinder.

Tsoulfidis and Tsaliki point out:

"The main problem with orthodox national accounts is that they present many activities as 'production' while they should be portrayed as 'social consumption'. As the 'personal consumption' sphere contributes to the reproduction of individuals in

a capitalist society, the non-productive activities, such as trade, financial services or private security, in turn contribute to the reproduction and development of the capitalist system; however, their necessity does not negate the fact that as the total consumption (personal and social) increases, the part of surplus destined for the accumulation of capital is reduced and by extent the social wealth diminishes.” (Tsoulfidis and Tsaliki. 2019. *Classical Political Economics and Modern Capitalism*, Springer, p. 402)

Shaikh and Tonak argue:

“The basic problem arises from the fact that conventional accounts classify many activities as "production," when in fact they should be classified as forms of social consumption. For example, the military, the police, and private guards protect property and social structure. Civil servants and lawyers administer rules and laws. Traders in commodities and paper circulate wealth or titles to it. It is our contention that such activities are actually forms of social consumption, not production.” (Shaikh and Tonak. 1994. *Measuring the Wealth of Nations*, Cambridge University Press, p. 2)

Further:

“Within an orthodox national accounts framework, all such activities are viewed as resulting in additional output. But within a classical framework, because these same activities are viewed as forms of social consumption, their relative growth is seen as serving to absorb an increased portion of the national product and hence lower the share available for investment and accumulation.” (ibid, p. 5)

Shaikh and Tonak explain further:

“The system we develop falls between these two polar extremes. On one hand, our production encompasses both goods and services. Indeed, the vast bulk of the traditionally defined service sector falls within our definition of production activities. On the other hand, we do not identify all activities as production: trading, military, police, and administrative activities are treated as forms of social consumption, not production. At the heart of the matter is a distinction between *outcomes* and *outputs*. *The outcomes of nonproduction activities may be socially desirable results, but they are not outputs.*” (ibid, p. 18, *emphasis ours*)

Thus, GDP is only an *approximate indicator* of movements of profitability. One has to work with the data of real GDP in order to calculate *the value-product* of a national economy, which is essential for estimating the average rate of profit. Sukhwinder is oblivious to these issues and takes the bourgeois sources at their face-value. The main question is identification of productive and non-production sectors of economy and subtract the non-production sectors from the calculations of any kind of national accounts, whether GNP or GDP, or GDP calculated based on production, or expenditure, or income, though the income approach is more appropriate to translate the bourgeois national accounts in Marxian value terms. Sukhwinder is dense like a paleolithic caveman about these issues.

Moreover, Sukhwinder's slogan is: *Modi ji ne kaha hai, to theek hi kaha hoga!* (If Modi ji has said so, it must be true!) Sukhwinder believes Modi government's data on GDP, the fakeness of which has been pointed out and demonstrated by a number of economists. Is the GDP of India really above 7 percent for past few years? Let us probe this. The fact is that the actual and real GDP growth rate in India has never crossed 5 percent since 2014 and has never crossed 3.7 percent since 2016.

American economist Ashoka Mody has shown in his study that the GDP growth rate figures being publicized by the Modi government are false. Mody argues that the correctness of the GDP growth rate is probed by *the correspondence between the production income and expenditure*. The argument is simple: every sale is also a purchase. From the April-June 2024 data of Indian National Statistical Office, we can see that the production-income (that is income from the sale of production) has grown by the rate of 7.8 percent, whereas the expenditure in the same period has grown at 1.4 percent. These figures never completely overlap for a variety of reasons that every trained economist knows, but there is a broad correspondence. However, in India this data shows glaring discrepancy.

Moreover, whenever there is a real growth in productive sectors, there is a growth in the rate of employment, too. The growth in the rate of employment never matches the growth of the productive sectors, because of the rising organic composition of capital in the economy, the tendency to increase the relative surplus value as well as absolute surplus value, especially in the neoliberal phase through the processes of deregulation of the labour markets, etc. Despite this lag, the rate of employment, too, in general, expects some growth if the productive economy grows. However, in India, according to the report of the ILO, the employment growth rate in the year 2024 has been 0.01 percent! What does these statistics show? The GDP growth rate publicized by the Modi government is based on two things: first, fake data and secondly, speculative capital and non-production sectors. That is why, in the sectors like real estate, banking, insurance, the growth rate has been 12.1 percent in the same period for which Modi government publicized the data of GDP growth rate of 7.8 percent. Some economists have attempted to calculate the actual real GDP growth rate and in the tenure of Modi, the average remains between 3 percent and 4 percent.

However, Sukhwinder behaves like a Modi-*bhakt* here. He believes the fake data propaganda of the Modi government, in which the latter has outshone its fascist predecessors of the early-Twentieth century. Goebbles would have been ashamed of his failure in comparison to Modi government. Sukhwinder is bamboozled by India's GDP growth just like a dumb *bhakt*.

C. *Sukhwinder's Understanding of Marxist Theory of Economic Crisis: A Revelation of Intellectual Bêtise of Highest Order*

Now let us come to the question of the way in which crisis occurs today and see how in plagiarizing and paraphrasing from our writings as well as quotation-hunting with the instrument of a thing called 'index' and 'search' button, Sukhwinder forgot to read Marxist classics like *Capital*. We will show in what follows that Sukhwinder has totally misunderstood Marx's crisis theory as presented in *Capital*, Volume 3 and Engels' editorial comments in the same as well as his 'Preface' to an edition of the Volume 1 of *Capital*. What, however, seems more likely to us, is that he has never read the volumes of *Capital* from cover to cover, as will become clear shortly. Let us start with the basic questions.

Are the capitalist crises recurrent and cyclical even today? Yes, they are. Are there any changes in the nature and occurrence of crises today, that is, after the 1970s? Yes, there are. Affirmative answers to both these questions makes the little head of Sukhwinder go dizzy like he is in a boat spiraling down in a whirlpool! However, those who understand the basics of Marxist political economy find it natural that the answers to both the above questions are in affirmative and can only be in affirmative. Now, let us elaborate upon what the dogmatic mind of the editor of 'Pratibadhh' cannot come around.

The process of crises is recurrent and cyclical, however, this process does not form a *circle* but a *spiral*. What does that mean? *It means that as a secular tendency, the crises become more structural, more protracted and deeper.* They assume a *chronic form*, along with periods of *acuteness*.

Occurrence of crises is not complete *déjà vu*, as Sukhwinder assumes. In the 1886 Preface to the English edition of the first volume of *Capital*, Engels wrote:

“While the productive power increases in a geometric ratio, the extension of markets proceeds at best in an arithmetic one. The decennial cycle of stagnation, prosperity, overproduction and crisis, ever recurrent from 1825 to 1867, seems indeed to have run its course; *but only to land us in the slough of despond of a permanent and chronic depression.*” (Engels, F. 1982. ‘Preface’ to 1886 English edition, *Capital*, Penguin Edition, p. 113, *emphasis ours*)

Now, let us be clear, Engels is talking about the ‘permanence’ of the crisis in the *historical sense*, not *theoretical sense*. For Engels, too, the crises continued to be cathartic mechanism, through which the capitalist system deals with the fall in profitability by the devalorization of capital. However, without large-scale destruction of productive forces (such as in a war, etc.), sufficient devalorization of capital does not happen as capitalist mode of production develops further, which pushes the capitalist system into a *long recession* and sometimes, a *long depression*. The protracted recession since the 1970s with short-lived interregnums of prosperity, often fueled by speculative frenzy, is a proof of this prognosis of Engels.

Secondly, when Engels is talking about the growth of markets, he is not simply raising the question of realization, but the question of markets for selling, as well as, markets of cheap labour and cheap raw material, in other words, *opportunities of profitable investments*.

Again, in an editorial note in the third volume of *Capital*, Engels points out that the *chronic nature* of crisis was not something on which Marx would work in his manuscripts of *Capital*, that had largely been written in the 1860s, because this emerging change in the nature of crisis is product of tendencies that were only in embryonic forms at the time when Marx was writing and they assumed fuller form only after that. Engels also points out that as monopoly stage of capitalism approaches, the problem of realization, too, aggravates the crisis of profitability. Here, too, Engels talks about “cessation” of restoration of profitability in a *historical sense*, and not in the *theoretical sense*. Engels points out:

“Since Marx wrote the above passage, new forms of industrial organization have been developed, as is well-known, representing the second and third degree of joint-stock company. The speed with which production can nowadays be increased in all fields of large-scale industry, which is greater every day, is confronted by the ever-increasing slowness in expanding the market for this increased volume of products. What production produces in months the market can absorb only in years. On top of this there are the protectionist policies by which each industrial country puts up a barrier against others, particularly against England, and artificially boosts domestic productive capacity still further. *The results are general and chronic overproduction, depressed prices, falling profits, even their complete cessation;* in brief, the ancient and celebrated freedom of competition is at the end of its road and must itself confess its evident and scandalous bankruptcy. A further reason is that in each country the big industrialists in a particular branch of industry come together to form a cartel to regulate production, a committee fixes the quantity each establishment is to produce, and has the last word in dividing up the incoming orders. In a few cases it came to the formation of temporary international cartels, for instance between the English and the German Iron producers. But even this form of socialization of production did not suffice. The conflict of interests between the individual businesses broke through too often and restored competition. The next stage, therefore, in certain branches where the scale of production permitted, was to

concentrate the entire production of the branch of industry in question into one big Joint-stock company with a unified management.” (Engels, F. 1991. Editorial note, *Capital*, Vol. III, Penguin Books, p. 568-69, *emphasis ours*)

Again, one of the footnotes inserted by Engels as part of his editing of the third volume of *Capital* makes it clear that Engels is not talking about a ‘permanent’ crisis in the theoretical sense, but the prolongation of the phase of crisis in the industrial cycle. The concept of industrial cycles and waves occupy a very central place in Marx’s analysis of the overall dynamic of the capitalist system. Later, these concepts were empirically proven by various scholars like Mandel, Shaikh, etc. What Engels writes here might rescue Mr. Dizzy-head, the editor of ‘Pratibadhh’ from drowning in the slime of his own stupidity:

“As I have already noted elsewhere, (Engels is referring here to the 1886 Preface to the first volume of *Capital*, that we have quoted above – *author*) the last great general crisis represented a turning-point. *The acute form of the periodic process with its former ten-year cycle seems to have given way to a more chronic and drawn-out alternation, affecting the various industrial countries at different times, between a relatively short and weak improvement in trade and a relatively long and indecisive depression.* Perhaps ***what is involved is simply an extension of the cycle's duration. When world trade was in its infancy, 1815-47, cycles of approximately five years could be discerned; between 1847 and 1867 the cycle was definitely a ten-year one; might we now be in the preparatory phase of a new world crash of unheard-of severity?*** *Many things seem to point this way...And so each of the elements that counteracts a repetition of the old crises, conceals within it the nucleus of a far more violent future crisis.*” (*ibid*, p. 620-21, *emphasis ours*)

Again, in a letter to August Bebel in 1885, Engels pointed out the increasing chronic nature of crisis as capitalist mode of production road-rolls all obstructions, hurdles and hindrances in its path. Engels wrote:

“The *chronic depression* in all the decisive branches of industry also still continues unbroken here, in France and in America. Especially in iron and cotton. It is an unheard-of situation, though entirely the inevitable result of the capitalist system: *such colossal over-production that it cannot even bring things to a crisis! The over-production of disposable capital seeking investment is so great that the rate of discount here actually fluctuates between 1 and 1½ percent. per annum, and for money invested in short term credits, which can be called in or paid off from day to day (money on call) one can hardly get ½ percent. per annum. But by choosing to invest his money in this way rather than in new industrial undertakings the money capitalist is admitting how rotten the whole business looks to him.* And this fear of new investments and old enterprises, which had already manifested itself in the crisis of 1867, is the main reason why things are not brought to an acute crisis.” (Engels to Bebel, 28 October 1885, London, *emphasis ours*)

Mind you, Engels is not simply talking about general overproduction here, but mainly about the *overproduction of capital*, which has led to decline in the interest rates next to nothing. Now, any Marxist acquainted with the basics of Marxist political economy knows the meaning of the “overproduction” or “plethora” of capital. As Marx himself pointed out, any plethora of capital is the capital which cannot be invested profitably. It points to the crisis of profitability. Engels, too, here is alluding to the crisis of profitability, where capital cannot find opportunities of profitable investment. As the capitalist mode of production develops, Engels argues, *the chronic and protracted nature of crises is enhanced and increased.* And Engels is correct and has been proven

historically correct on this point: *as a secular tendency, the capitalist crises will assume more chronic and protracted character giving rise to what we are witnessing today, namely, a long recession since the 1970s which periodically collapses into serious depressions, like the long depression that began in 2007-08.*

Since Sukhwinder himself goes round-and-round in his merry-go-round of stupidity, he assumes that the objective process of capitalist crises, too, forms a circle, whereas it forms a spiral, a downward spiral. What does the editor of 'Pratibadhh' lack besides basic intelligence? Dialectics and a historical view. He does not have the historical view of development because of unity of opposites and through the negation of the negation, through spirals, but has the idealist Hegelian view of history as a circle. In one of his lectures on Jagrup (a CPI leader in Punjab), Sukhwinder argues that in everything, one aspect exists and then an opposite enters (from outside!), then the struggle of opposites starts! Similarly ridiculous is his understanding of the concept of negation of the negation. Therefore, it is quite natural that he utterly lacks dialectics and historical method in investigating anything, including the question of economic crisis.

Now let us see what we have said about crises since 2017 and whether it is congruent with what Engels and several Marxists after him have pointed out in the context of the evolving nature of crises.

In 2021, I wrote in my critique of Ajay Sinha *aka* Don Quixote *de la* Patna, with whom Sukhwinder was having a *bon homie* until a few months ago, presenting an idyllic picture of the holy union of dummkopfs:

"Moreover, Marx also argues why crises and general overproduction cannot be a permanent state in capitalism. The reason is that crisis is at the same time the process through which it is overcome. The theory of 'permanent crisis' goes against the very nature of capitalism and betrays an utter lack of understanding of the law of value and its derivative, the law of profitability." (Sinha, Abhinav. 2024. 'Ajay Sinha aka Don Quixote de la Patna's Disastrous Encounter with Marx's Theory of Ground-Rent (and Marx's Political Economy in General)', in For a Proletarian Line, Rahul Foundation, Lucknow, p. 234-35, emphasis ours)

In the same critique, I wrote:

"Supply and demand themselves are functions of movement of capital and profitability. Constant general overproduction (that is in all branches of production) is not a permanent condition of capitalist economy, except in periods of long depression, which take place due to slower devalorization of capital." (ibid, p. 341-42, emphasis ours)

We also wrote in May 2021:

"We still think that it is possible that present long depression might continue for a long period to come, with no significant boom in near future and that before capitalism sees another significant boom, the series of revolutions might break out. However, we do not think that the idea of permanent crisis is theoretically congruent with the nature of capitalist mode of production, as explained by Marx. In other words, to argue theoretically that capitalism can be permanently stagnant, mired in permanent crisis is incorrect. Theoretically, there is no such thing as 'permanent crisis'; the crisis can be short or long...The reason why a 'theory or permanent crisis' is incorrect is that the very process of crisis (which might span for several decades) is simultaneously a process of devalorization of capital, destruction

of productive forces and depression of average wages that restore profitability. *What makes the 'Long Depression' of the late-20th and early 21st centuries different from earlier 'long recessions' is that this time the devalorization of capital has not proceeded in a rapid fashion for a variety of reasons that have been discussed by many Marxist political economists...Anyway, from 2016, it had become clear to us that the idea of a 'permanent crisis' is theoretically incorrect and cannot be supported with empirical evidence from the history of world capitalism. It does not matter whether a depression is a 'long depression' or a short-lived depression. Theoretically, no capitalist crisis can be permanent, even though, some crisis will definitely prove to be the last one! The political assessment of world situation is a different thing altogether. It is very much possible that before this long depression ends, revolutions break out in the countries that can be called 'hotspots turning into flash points'. The other possibility would be large-scale devalorization of capital in some way. Still, the idea of a 'permanent crisis' is theoretically incorrect and empirically untenable. Moreover, it is important to understand that the law of decline in the rate of profit is a secular tendency. It simply means that historically the rate of profit will fall, despite rebounding periodically. Every new crisis will be deeper than the previous one and will make the contradictions of capitalism even sharper and more acute, precisely due to its recurrent nature. The very theoretical idea of 'permanent crisis' is non-dialectical.* (Abhinav, Kavita, *op.cit.*, *emphasis ours*)

We wrote in 2017:

"Secondly, we have also shown above that underconsumption is not the cause of the crisis but the symptom of the crisis of profitability. Thirdly, the state of stagnation is not permanent because every major crisis or stagnation leads to devalorization of capital, restoring profitability by precisely this devalorization. Therefore, one must not forget that every crisis is a sudden or a protracted cathartic process for the system." (Sinha, Abhinav. 2019. *op.cit.*, p. 441, *emphasis ours*)

Again, we wrote early in 2017:

"Crisis cannot simply be reduced to a violent mechanism to restore equilibrium *ad infinitum* (Callinicos does not say that it will happen *ad infinitum*, but his logic leads naturally to this corollary). The fact is that the occurrence of crises does not only happen in cycles, but in a spiral. And this is a downward spiral. Mandel has rightly pointed out that arguing for the 'inevitability of collapse' is not equivalent to arguing for the 'inevitability of socialism'." (Sinha, Abhinav. 2019. *op.cit.*, p. 375, *emphasis ours*)

In 2017, we revised a part our 2016 essay 'The Resistible Rise of Fascism in India' and wrote:

"Unlike most of the previous crises, the present crisis is an unprecedentedly long depression. This is a characteristic feature of the phase of neoliberal globalization. The reason for its protracted nature is that the devalorization of capital has not been undertaken at a scale that would restore the profitability sufficiently. Even though this cannot be regarded as a permanent crisis, as any such idea is incongruent with the very nature of capitalist mode of production, because the crisis is also *always-already* a cathartic process for capitalism, which destroys the 'irrational exuberance'; however, since the large-scale devalorization has not been possible for last 4 decades, the system is in a mild recession that degenerates into serious crises periodically and recovers only in a feeble way. Moreover, the decline in the rate of

profit is a secular historical tendency, which simply means that even in the *longue durée*, the rate of profit of entire capitalist system will fall historically and every new crisis will lead to even more acute and violent contradictions and convulsions. This protracted nature of the present crisis therefore is nothing surprising from Marxist point of view. This constant dialectics of stagnation and momentum is the characteristic feature of the stage of imperialism, as Lenin pointed out.” (<https://redpolemique.wordpress.com/2016/06/09/the-resistible-rise-of-fascism-and-the-challenges-of-the-working-class-movement-in-india/>)

As the readers can see, we have said nothing new when we have talked about a chronic and protracted crisis; *theoretically speaking*, we have merely followed the development of Marxist thought on crises characterized by Engels’ views especially since the 1880s and the developments in the neoliberal phase which confirm this Marxist thought. Marx himself had pointed out that the periods of crises and stagnation will increase in the industrial cycle with the further development of capitalist mode of production. Moreover, today most of the classical Marxist political economists have consensus on the increasing protracted nature of the capitalist crisis because it has been empirically proven by the history of past half century. What Sukhwinder has failed to understand is that in history, everything *develops*; it develops through the negation of the negation, that is, through spirals; the path of development is never circular; and this applies to the historical phenomena of capitalist crises as well.

Why is Sukhwinder trying so hard to show that India is not facing an economic crisis and is going through a boom? Because he wants to prove that India is not witnessing a fascist rise, as the fundamental precondition of the rise of fascism is existence of economic crisis. However, as we can see, he fails to show this, despite all his efforts, from misunderstanding and misrepresenting Marxist views on crisis to doing propaganda for Narendra Modi, regarding high but fake GDP growth rates.

Thus, what does, again, the editor of ‘Pratibadhh’ lack? It is dialectics and a historical view. Where does this lack lead him to? To a particularly crude and lousy version of dogmatism and historicism.

Such is the problem with the views of Sukhwinder on the nature of crisis historically. He stops at recognizing that crises are recurrent and cyclical, something that he learnt from our writings; however, whether this cycle is circular or spiral, he does not know, because he never reads anything from cover to cover. He, for being on the safer side, assumes that crises will keep recurring as it is, without any development or evolution of the way they occur and similarly, they will resolve the crisis of profitability, as usual, *ad infinitum*. This is precisely the harmonist illusions that led several people in the last century into the lap of social-democracy and revisionism. Why Sukhwinder falls in the pit of this stupidity? It is his general problem. *First of all, he does not read. Secondly, if he reads, he lacks the rigor to read anything properly and completely. Third, if somehow, he reads anything properly and completely, he does not understand it. And finally, he ends up making a fool of himself.* This is precisely what he has done on the question of nature of fascism, the question of the relation between the state and the form of state, on the question of retention of the *form* of bourgeois parliamentary democracy in case of exceptional types of bourgeois dictatorship, the question of nature of crises and its relation with fascism, and the other questions. We have shown above that had he even read completely the texts that he himself has reproduced from, had he read the authors and authorities in totality that he himself has quoted, he would have saved himself from a lot of embarrassment. However, we suspect that he has even partially read these sources. It appears from his essay that he has plagiarized from a number of writings, including the writings of our organization, though without mentioning the source and without properly understanding. However, when you look selectively for quotes supporting your argument, while plagiarizing from

your own opponents, you run the risk of not understanding things properly and with proper context and then babble gibberish with the confidence of a country bumpkin. Sukhwinder has behaved precisely like one. He had done the same on the national and linguistic question as well as the question of MSP.

Now let us come to the next important issue where Sukhwinder flounders in his typical silly fashion, that is, the question of the concept of *political crisis* and the pre-conditions of the rise of fascism.

4. How Sukhwinder Flounders Helplessly on the Concept of Political Crisis and the “other supporting factors” contributing to the Rise of Fascism

Let us first hear from the horse’s mouth:

“The economic crisis of capitalism can escalate and change into its political crisis or revolutionary crisis. But it doesn’t mean that this will be the case in every instance. Particularly developed capitalist or imperialist countries with strong economies can postpone this crisis for some time. This is accomplished through governmental support to capitalist enterprises (like presently USA is acting in the case of banks such as Silicon Valley and Signature Bank which are collapsing), policies of credit expansion. But these measures cannot endlessly postpone crisis.

“In times of economic crisis, normally the rules attempt to shift the major chunk of the burden of crisis onto the shoulders of working class and other sections of the toiling masses. This is, often at times, resisted by the working class and toiling masses. *If a strong revolutionary communist party exists which can correctly lead the toiling masses’ protest in such a time, a crisis can emerge for the very existence of capitalist system. In such a scenario, the capitalist class removes its façade of democracy and endeavours to establish naked terrorist dictatorship. If in such a crisis ridden country a fascist party/movement exists, then this dictatorship comes to the fore in the form of fascist regime/dictatorship.* (Sukhwinder, *op.cit.*, p. 14-15, *emphasis ours*)

Again, we can see the sheer ignorance of Sukhwinder regarding the basic concepts. Let us explain in a little detail.

A. The Relation between Economic Crisis and Political Crisis: Sukhwinder’s Crude and Vulgar Economism, Evolutionism and Incrementalism

Sukhwinder tries to follow Poulantzas, but he could not because of his inherent inability to read any work from the beginning to the end and also to understand what he reads. In case of political crisis, too, he staggers like a clown in his attempt to reproduce views of Poulantzas.

First of all, Sukhwinder’s views regarding the conditions in which economic crisis might develop into a political crisis has nothing to do with what Poulantzas and many others have written. In fact, it has nothing to do with Marxist method as such. He argues that in a rich and developed capitalist country, the ruling class can stall the process of development of economic crisis into political crisis. He presents the example of the US, where the US government prevented the economic crisis from developing into a political crisis by supporting collapsing capitalist enterprises and expanding credit. Thus, if a particular ruling class has a larger mass of surplus at its disposal, it has the capacity to prevent the economic crisis from developing into a political crisis. Thus, it is about the *economic*

capability of the bourgeoisie to stall the process of transformation of the economic crisis into political crisis. Such is the vulgar economism and particularly inane dogmatism of Sukhwinder.

By way of a meaningful diversion, we must point out that the US bourgeoisie has indeed been facing a *political crisis* since the beginning of the new millennium which aggravated particularly with the beginning of the 'long depression'. In fact, Trumpism and the rise of Trump following this crisis is nothing else, but a symptom of the political crisis, namely, the *crisis of hegemony* within the 'power bloc' due to a *particular conjuncture of class contradictions*, which precisely is the Marxist concept of political crisis. It is noteworthy that Trump was not the consensus candidate of the US big bourgeoisie. In the previous election it was Hilary Clinton. To say that the US ruling class successfully prevented a political crisis is to be politically and historically blind. In order to understand this, Sukhwinder will also need to understand that a political crisis does not necessarily lead to an exceptional state in every case. That again depends on a variety of other political and historical factors.

All of the gibberish of Sukhwinder means nothing! It presents an evolutionist-economistic view of economic crisis developing into political crisis through *quantitative intensification*, which can be prevented by the opposite act of *quantitative easing* by the state, in case, where the ruling class is rich enough! According to Sukhwinder, if the state of a capitalist country can intervene to prevent the economic collapse from expanding, it would not develop into political crisis. The parallel of this stupid economism can be found in the revisionist argument which contended that economic struggles themselves transform into political struggle through a process of development and intensification. Such argument does not understand the *relative autonomy of politics from economics*. In the context of the particular kind of political crisis which gives rise to fascism, it fails to understand that political crisis is *a conjuncture of contradictions pertaining to political class struggle* and specifically, the struggle within the *power bloc*, among the dominant classes and dominant fractions of the dominant classes, in the *general conditions of economic crisis*. What makes Sukhwinder's argument ridiculous is that immediately after the above paragraph, he quotes Poulantzas, where the latter is making precisely this point and, if you may, is anachronistically refuting the vulgar economism of the likes of Sukhwinder:

“Nicos Poulantzas says, “Fascism can only be explained by reference to the concrete situation of the class struggle, as it cannot be reduced to any inevitable need of the ‘economic’ development of capitalism.... Lenin and Mao have many times stressed the fact that, while economics plays the determinant role in the last instance (the fundamental contradiction), it is the class struggle (i.e. in the end politics and the political class struggle) which has primacy in the historical process.” (Sukhwinder. *op.cit.*, p. 15, author's emphasis)

Now, just compare this excerpt with the Sukhwinder's own line that economic crisis converts into political crisis where the bourgeoisie lacks the economic power to prevent the same! This whole line of argumentation lacks precisely the political point that Poulantzas makes in the above quote presented by Sukhwinder himself! We will come back to this point after a while in a little more detail. First, let us dwell on a couple of other absurdities of Sukhwinder.

On a secondary note, expansion of credit *does not prevent* the crises, but *aggravates it*. In case where the crisis of profitability expresses itself as a financial collapse and credit crisis, the governments may resort to reduction in the interest rates and expand credit as an immediate measure to prevent insolvency of financial institutions as well as spur the rate of investment. However, this only aggravates crises and, in all crisis-ridden countries, central banks finally increase interest rates to prevent the speculative frenzy, which ultimately deepens the crises. This, too, does not alleviate the situation structurally, because the underlying cause of the crisis, is the

decline in *the average rate of profit, about which no government intervention could do anything*. Moreover, even without governmental intervention, in the periods of crises, rates of interest have a tendency to decline, because the average rate of profit acts as a regulatory ceiling for the rate of interest. As the rate of profit falls, the demand for capital, too, falls and consequently the rate of interest falls. When there is an economic recovery, the demand for capital and the rate of investment increases and so does the rate of interest. *Wherever Sukhwinder even brushes against the fence of the territory of political economy, he badly bruises himself*.

Secondly, the countries which moved towards fascist rule in the first half of the Twentieth century, were not economically-backward countries, especially Germany. After the economic collapse and hyperinflation immediately after the First World War, from 1923 economic recovery began in Germany and the years immediately preceding the Nazi rise and before the Great Depression from 1929, were those of economic prosperity and rise of Germany as a major industrial power again. However, this could not prevent the development of a political crisis, neither could the Weimer state intervene to stall the development of economic crisis into a political crisis. What Sukhwinder fails to understand is that there is *no such non-dialectical, linear evolutionist and incrementalist relation between economic crisis and political crisis*.

Third, Poulantzas, the authority who Sukhwinder quotes to support his views regarding political crisis has no such view. For Poulantzas, economic crisis only provides *the general historical context* in which the *conjuncture of class contradictions might or might not develop into political crisis, depending upon the historical context of the political class struggle in a country*; it is precisely this *conjuncture* that we call 'political crisis'. Evidently, the development of such conjuncture has a political dimension which has *a relative autonomy from economic factors*. Therefore, it is not the economic intervention by prosperous capitalist states in the economy which, *in itself and by itself*, can prevent the economic crises from developing into a political crisis. Poulantzas writes:

"Although the analysis of the general historical periods to which exceptional regimes belong *does not in itself explain their emergence*, it remains a fact that the period affects *the conjuncture of the class struggle (political crisis)*, which alone provides an answer." (Poulantzas. 1979. *op.cit.*, p. 16, *emphasis ours*)

Further:

"This is the same as posing the problem of the political crisis, for the appearance of fascism corresponds precisely to a political crisis. The above propositions can therefore be clarified by making it evident that *the political crisis is composed of a number of particular characteristics of the class struggle: the problem raised here being similar to the problem posed by the revolutionary situation*." (*ibid*, p. 57-58, *emphasis ours*)

More:

"The essence of a political crisis which can lead to the emergence of an exceptional State lies in *particular characteristics of the field of the class struggle – the field of 'social relations'*." (*ibid*, p. 63, *emphasis ours*)

It is not about the *economic ability, per se*, of a prosperous capitalist country to intervene in order to prevent the economic crisis from developing into a political crisis. Economic factor, here too, plays the role of *fundamental contradiction*; and as always, it is the *political class struggle* as a relatively autonomous factor, which plays the role of the *principal contradiction*; Sukhwinder has no clue regarding the relation between the *economic* and the *political*, even though he does talk about the "primacy" of the political factor, while the economic factor plays the role of fundamental

contradiction. The above assertion is a classical Marxist thesis which, not only Lenin and Mao had presented, but Marx himself had presented in *Class Struggles in France, 1848-50* and many other writings. The same position was presented by Engels on several occasions.

*B. Is a Revolutionary Proletarian Offensive a Pre-Condition of the Rise of Fascism?
Sukhwinder's Orrery of Errors*

Now, let us come to the second point. *Is the existence of a powerful revolutionary working-class movement and a revolutionary communist party as its leader, a necessary pre-requisite to the rise of fascism? The answer is: NO!* It is strange that Sukhwinder keeps quoting, paraphrasing and plagiarizing from Poulantzas and yet could not understand that *Poulantzas was thoroughly opposed to this particular idea of the political crisis leading to the rise of fascism, where the revolutionary working class is resurgent and presents a threat to capitalism.* Sukhwinder also attempts to quote Clara Zetkin in his support, however, fails to see that Zetkin clearly pointed out that fascist offensive began *after* the subsiding of the revolutionary offensive of the proletariat. In fact, Poulantzas very clearly argued like many other Marxist scholars, that the political crisis which gives rise to fascism *begins* with the defeat of the revolutionary proletarian movement. It is not a real 'red scare' in a country that gives rise to fascism. It is the decisive defeat of proletarian revolution, which gives rise to fascism. Let us dig a bit.

There is a conception of two types of political crises in Poulantzas (and many other Marxist writers before him), which lead to different types of exceptional states. One conception is that of *equilibrium crisis*, to which we have referred above, too, and which is characterized by the situation where the warring classes balance each other so nearly that a political crisis emerges leading to the state becoming relatively *more* autonomous in order to collectivize the class interests of the dominant class. This type of crisis leads to *Bonapartist state*, not fascism. Thalheimer and Gramsci, in different ways (Bonapartism for Thalheimer, Caesarism for Gramsci, with slightly different models of *equilibrium crisis*), subscribed to this idea for the explanation of the fascist rise, too, in different degrees and certain ways.

Poulantzas opposed the line of many in the Comintern as well as that of Leon Trotsky who argued that it was the 'insurgent working class', 'rise of the revolutionary working class' and 'threat of socialism' which led the bourgeoisie into the arms of fascist reaction. Poulantzas ridicules this idea and says that this is tantamount to not making a distinction among *different types of political crises* which lead to *different types of exceptional states*. Poulantzas points out that the particular type of political crisis that leads to the rise of fascism is not characterized by ostensible equilibrium between the main warring classes and the revolutionary rise of the working class, threatening the existence of the capitalist system and bourgeoisie as the ruling class. *On the contrary, the political crisis which leads to the rise of fascism is characterized by the political defeat of the working class in the very beginning.* Let us see, what Poulantzas has to say about this:

"To come to the problem of the political crisis, the crucial question is whether it is possible to distinguish general features of a political crisis apart from those of the revolutionary situation in the strict sense of the term, i.e. of determining a quite specific form of State and specific forms of regimes. There are two sides to the one problem: is it possible to grasp a 'crisis' as a general concept and so to determine the special peculiarities of the exceptional State to which it leads? Further, within the general framework of the political crisis, is it possible to determine the different and particular variants of crisis, each leading to specific forms of the exceptional regime (Bonapartism, military dictatorship, and fascism)." (Poulantzas. 1979. *op.cit.*, p. 59)

Poulantzas opines further:

“As far as I know, Thalheimer and Gramsci were alone in formulating clearly the thesis on fascism which relates the political crisis to the ‘equilibrium’ between ‘equal’ forces. It is nonetheless true that from Otto Bauer to Angelo Tasca and Arthur Rosenberg, the same conception seems to underlie many old and contemporary attempts by Marxists to explain fascism. I need only mention how contemporary studies of fascism are rediscovering the work of Thalheimer in Germany and Gramsci in Italy. *But these analyses, though they include important points, seem to me to be wrong on one essential point. Neither in Germany nor in Italy did the triumph of fascism correspond to a political crisis of equilibrium in any sense of the term. The working class had already been thoroughly defeated by the time fascism came into power, and the bourgeoisie did not have to pay for this defeat with any catastrophic equilibrium. In other words, throughout the rise of fascism, the bourgeoisie remained the principal aspect of the principal contradiction.*” (*ibid*, p. 61, *emphasis ours*)

About Trotsky sharing the same erroneous view about the political crisis which leads to fascist rise, he points out:

“With Trotsky things are more complex. In his writings on Germany, Trotsky for his part is very careful to distinguish between Bonapartism, which is based on an equilibrium between the two forces, and fascism. Nevertheless, he seems to neglect the question of the specific political crisis which characterizes fascism. He insists basically on two characteristics. They are significant, for they show that despite their differences, Trotsky basically shared the Comintern’s view:

“1. That fascism represents an open ‘civil war’ by the bourgeoisie against the ‘*insurgent*’ working class, and therefore a revolutionary offensive by the working class. *In this **mistaken characterization** Trotsky came close to the Comintern position.*” (*ibid*, p. 61-62, *emphasis ours*)

Again, Poulantzas differentiates between different types of political crises giving rise to different types of exceptional state:

“The general characteristics of the political crisis can easily be defined. The element of equilibrium between ‘equals’ is specific to certain kinds of political crisis (i.e. the general equilibrium crisis and the catastrophic equilibrium crisis). ***These are not the kinds of political crisis of equilibrium to which fascism corresponds.*** Moreover, although the conjuncture of class struggle peculiar to fascism has the general characteristics of the political crisis, it also has the particular characteristics of a quite specific political crisis.” (*ibid*, p. 62-63, *emphasis ours*)

Poulantzas argues that the political crisis that leads to fascism is not at all created by the tangible threat of proletarian revolution and the revolutionary onslaught of the working class. Rather, it is more of an *internal crisis* of the power bloc of the ruling classes and ruling class fractions. Poulantzas argues:

“The appearance and rise of fascism correspond to *the deepening and sharpening of the internal contradictions between the dominant classes and class fractions, which is an important element of the political crisis in question.*

“This can only be understood on the basis of a correct conception of the alliance of classes and class fractions in relation to political domination. In a social formation composed of many social classes, and in particular in a capitalist social formation, where the bourgeois class is constitutively divided into different class fractions, no

single class or class fraction occupies the field of political domination. There is a specific alliance of several classes and fractions, which I have elsewhere described as the 'power bloc' (*le bloc au pouvoir*). Thus, the contradictions between the dominant classes and class fractions often take on sufficient importance to determine the forms of State and of regime." (*ibid*, p. 71, *emphasis ours*)

Poulantzas categorically defines the particular type of political crisis leading to fascist rise as one which is *internal and immanent to the power bloc*. In other words, it is the internal crisis of the ruling class, and working class's revolutionary onslaught plays no direct role in it, because the defeat of the working class is part of the preconditions of such political crisis:

"In the case of the growth of fascism and of fascism itself, no dominant class or class fraction seems able to impose its 'leadership' on the other classes and fractions of the power bloc, whether by its own methods of political organization or through the 'parliamentary democratic' State.

"Basically, the power bloc, like every other alliance, does not generally consist of classes and fractions of 'equal importance', sharing the crumbs of power among themselves. It can only function on a regular basis in so far as a dominant class or fraction of a class imposes its own particular domination on the other members of the alliance in power, in short in so far as it succeeds in imposing its hegemony and cementing them together under its leadership.

"*The inability of any class or class fraction to impose its hegemony is what characterizes the conjuncture of fascism; that is, ultimately, the inability of the alliance in power to overcome its intensified contradictions of its own accord. This inability to impose hegemony within the power bloc is also, however, related to the crisis of hegemony experienced by it and its members in its political domination of the ensemble of the social formation.*" (*ibid*, p. 72, *emphasis ours*)

Poulantzas explains further:

"This being the situation within the power bloc, fascism also corresponds to a complete and specific reorganization of the bloc. This involves: (a) a modification of the relation of forces within this alliance – a redistribution of the respective weight of the forces in it; and (b) the establishment by fascism of the hegemony of a new class fraction within the power bloc: that of finance capital, or big monopoly capital." (*ibid*, p. 72)

Then, Poulantzas clearly points out that the revolutionary onslaught of the working class is not only *not necessary* for fascist rise, it is *absent* as a necessary precondition of the rise of fascism:

"What basically happened in the rise of fascism, was that a political crisis of the bourgeoisie corresponded to an offensive strategy. This means, of course, that things are not going too well for the dominant classes. *But to describe this political crisis as a 'weakness' of the bourgeoisie is to say something about its relation of force with the working class, and that is precisely where the Comintern was wrong in its interpretation (making the equation 'weakness of the bourgeoisie = power+offensive of the proletariat').*" (*ibid*, p. 81-82, *emphasis ours*)

Poulantzas explains this point in detail, while critiquing the positions adopted by the Comintern and also demonstrating the evolution of these positions from the Fourth Congress to the Seventh Congress:

"It was not until the Seventh Congress of the Comintern that Dimitrov dared to suggest, in veiled terms, that the rise of fascism represented a defensive step for the working class. The suggestion came in his criticism of the Fourth Congress conception of 'workers' governments', in that it adopted this slogan, and recommended the participation of communists in such governments. But, said Dimitrov, what the Fourth Congress did not do was to point out that such governments 'were quite definitely confined to the existence of political crisis': they could only be 'governments of struggle against fascism and reaction'. Reading between the lines, though Dimitrov was very careful not to say it explicitly, one finds the conception that a rise of fascism corresponds to a defensive step by the working class.

*"Let us note in passing that Dimitrov was right to criticize the Fourth Congress, but the error of the Congress did not lie where he placed it. The slogan of 'workers' governments' was adopted by the Fourth Congress because of its conception of 'stabilization'. **It already denoted a reduction of the class struggle to the economic sphere, implying, in fact, the equation 'economic stabilization = working-class defensive', just as the Sixth Congress, in the opposite sense, believed in the equation 'end of stabilization = catastrophic economic crisis = working-class offensive'**. This explains the Fourth Congress 'workers' governments' slogan; whereas Lenin, at the Third Congress, made no identification between stabilization and working-class defensive. He was referring to class struggle, and, moreover, only used the expression of 'relative equilibrium of forces'; and he put forward the slogan 'to the masses', a very different one from 'workers' governments'." (ibid, p. 82 emphasis ours)*

Further, Poulantzas points out:

"The petty-bourgeoisie is itself divided into class fractions. This can have important consequences: although the petty-bourgeoisie as a whole basically has a common position in a conjuncture (the case of fascism is a particularly good example of this), it is also possible for dislocations to appear between its different fractions.

"These dislocations can even be deep enough for one fraction to swing one way, the other in the opposite direction. Experience shows that a common political position is generally maintained in 'normal' conjunctures of class struggle, or in conjunctures of acute political crisis where the working class is on the defensive, as in the case of fascism." (ibid, p. 244, emphasis ours)

In fact, in his uncaredful collection of disparate quotations, Sukhwinder himself presents a quotation from Clara Zetkin which points precisely to the fact that fascism is *not* a response to a revolutionary onslaught of the proletariat; on the contrary, it is the result of the *failure* of the proletariat to even mount a revolutionary offensive against the bourgeoisie. Here is that quote:

"The terror in Hungary began after the defeat of an initially victorious revolutionary struggle. For a moment the bourgeoisie trembled before the proletariat's might. The Horthy terror emerged as revenge against the revolution. The agent of this revenge was a small caste of feudal officers.

"Fascism is quite different from that. It is not at all the revenge of the bourgeoisie against the militant uprising of the proletariat. In historical terms, viewed objectively, fascism arrives much more as punishment because the proletariat has not carried and driven forward the revolution that began in Russia. And the base of fascism lies not in

a small caste but in broad social layers, broad masses, reaching even into the proletariat. We must understand these essential differences in order to deal successfully with fascism. Military means alone cannot vanquish it, if I may use that term; we must also wrestle it to the ground politically and ideologically.” (quoted by Sukhwinder, *op.cit.*, p. 19-20, *emphasis ours*)

This is amazing! Sukhwinder is quoting Zetkin against his own position that fascist rise is a response to the revolutionary onslaught of the proletariat. Why does this happen to Sukhwinder? Because, he quotes without understanding! He wants to show that he reads, and therefore, he is obliged to pile up quotations indiscriminately. The result is that he makes a fool of himself.

It is noteworthy that even Gramsci understood the fact as early as 1924 that fascist rise begins *after* the defeat of the revolutionary offensive of the proletariat. Fascism never engages with revolutionary proletarian movement. It waits till this movement subsides due to its own internal weaknesses. Gramsci pointed out:

“Fascism has never manoeuvred...when faced with a massive movement in the streets. Rather, *it waited to move until working-class organization had entered a period of passivity and then fell upon it, striking it as such, not for what it “did” but for what it “was”...*” (Gramsci, Antonio. 1978. ‘Democracy and Fascism’ (1924) in *Selections from Political Writings, 1921-26*, Lawrence and Wishart, p. 268, *emphasis ours*)

What is Gramsci pointing to here has been a well-acknowledged fact: fascism as a matter of rule thrives on the political passivity of the working class; it never engages with a working class which is ready to fight *politically*. We, too, have made this point in several of our writings on fascism.

Thus, what Sukhwinder fails to understand? Well, everything about the concept of political crisis!

More importantly, the quotation that he reproduces from Poulantzas, has been selectively edited by Sukhwinder, because the portion that Sukhwinder omits critiques precisely the position held by Comintern, an obscenely poor and misunderstood version of which is being put forth by Sukhwinder. Let us see the entire quote, with the parts omitted by Sukhwinder. Poulantzas argues:

“These considerations will make it quite clear that fascism can only be explained by reference to *the concrete situation of the class struggle, as it cannot be reduced to any inevitable need of the ‘economic’ development of capitalism*. It will also become clear how the Third International’s economism led it not only to miss the imperialist chain and the order of the links, but constantly to underestimate, theoretically and politically, the role of the class struggle in the pace and direction of the development of imperialism, which its analyses of fascism demonstrate.” (Poulantzas. 1979. *op.cit.*, p. 39)

Again, Poulantzas points out:

“To go ahead some years, let us look at the International’s analyses of the question, especially from the time of the Fifth Congress (1924). It is no exaggeration to say that they are deeply economistic. This economism gave rise to a general characteristic of the analyses, which may be termed ‘economic catastrophism’, and was especially evident in its analyses of fascism in Europe.

“Economism here consists, first of all, in giving priority to the ‘productive forces’ at the expense of the relations of production. This is accompanied, in the second place, by an economistic-technological conception of the production process and the

'productive forces' as being somehow independent of the relations of production. This makes it impossible to define correctly the way in which the production process is articulated with the field of the class struggle. Class struggle is outside the picture, in the sense that it is reduced to a mechanical economic process which is attributed primacy in historical development. Yet Lenin and Mao have many times stressed the fact that, while economics plays the determinant role in the last instance (the fundamental contradiction), it is the class struggle (i.e. in the end politics and the political class struggle) which has primacy in the historical process." (*ibid*, p. 39-40)

As you can see, an intellectual dwarf has summoned up all his intellectual might to distort the position of Poulantzas by selectively quoting him and omitting the most important parts of the quote to support his own ridiculous arguments. This also shows that Sukhwinder has the obsessive-compulsive disorder to misquote and misinterpret, as he has done it quite a few times now. This only shows his further degeneration.

He quotes Comintern's early view (that revolutionary working class movement was a necessity for the fascist rise), does not know that Comintern moved away from this position slowly and tacitly, and then also quotes Poulantzas in his support, who from the very beginning was opposed to the economic idea that without a revolutionary working-class movement and threat of the overthrow of the capitalist system, there can be no fascist rise, which was also shared in a much more vulgar form, by Trotsky.

It is important to note here that during the first instances of rise of fascism in the Twentieth century, there was indeed the presence of a socialist state and proletarian power in the Soviet Russia and then the USSR. However, within Germany and Italy, the fascist rise began *after* the proletarian political offensive had already subsided due to its own economic and "left" mistakes. As Gramsci pointed out, fascism never maneuvered when faced with an active revolutionary proletarian movement. It waited till this offensive subsided and then moved on to a frontal offensive. This does not mean that there was no *organized workers' movement* in Germany, especially, and also in Italy. However, this movement was thoroughly imbued with economism and trade-unionism under the social-democratic leadership and limited itself to clinging to the already-won economic rights, which was okay till the labour-capital compromise during the Weimer Republic and Giolitti's regime continued, that is, before the economic crisis broke out. However, faced with the economic crisis and the consequent political offensive of the bourgeoisie, social-democracy was at complete loss, as it had no revolutionary strategy. The question is, was the presence of Bolshevik power in Soviet Russia essential for the rise of fascism in Germany and Italy? No. Of course, it did contribute to the fear of the bourgeoisie, especially till the proletarian offensive was under progress, and also to some extent after the subsiding of this offensive in Germany and Italy, as this offensive was still fresh in the collective memory of the bourgeoisie as a class. However, to count the presence of a red power *internationally* as one of the defining features of the rise of fascism is deductive method. Moreover, the world capitalist system is much more fragile today as compared to the early-Twentieth century. As Poulantzas has written, "...to describe this political crisis as a 'weakness' of the bourgeoisie is to say something about its relation of force with the working class...". In other words, to speak about the relative strength of one term of the contradiction, is always, at the same time, to say something about the relative weakness of the other term. The world capitalist system is so fragile and decrepit economically today that it does not need the presence of a 'red scare' in the form of the international existence of a socialist state to move towards various forms of authoritarianism and exceptional state. Even the events like the Arab Spring, the Sri Lankan revolt, the Bangladeshi popular rebellion, Gezi Park movement, etc. can propel the paranoid bourgeoisie towards reaction. This has been proven in the past few decades,

time and again. As Poulantzas has shown, the turn to authoritarian statism in the phase of neoliberalism does not show the strength of the bourgeoisie in particular. He argues:

“Authoritarian statism does not correspond to a *univocal* strengthening of the State: it rather involves the dual aspect of *strengthening-weakening*, given that the transformations which mark the State sharpen the generic elements of political crisis.” (Poulantzas. 2000. *State, Power, Socialism*, Verso, London, p. 241)

The specific feature of present conjuncture is not the absolute strength of the bourgeoisie, but the *excess of the proletarian weakness* over the weakness of the bourgeoisie, a situation of *dual powerlessness*, as it were. Thus, the strength of the bourgeoisie can be determined precisely on this *relation of forces*, not in the absolute sense. However, the bourgeoisie itself is certainly much more fragile economically and much more paranoid politically compared to the early-Twentieth century. This is in congruence with the change in the nature of capitalist crisis itself, which we have talked about. In this situation, even spontaneous anti-capitalism of popular revolts suffices to drive this paranoid bourgeoisie into the arms of fascist reaction and other forms of far-right reaction and this has been proven repeatedly since 2007-08. Once again, Sukhwinder fails to understand the *movement* of history, the difference in the conjuncture of class struggle, nationally as well as internationally, that was present in the early-Twentieth century and one that is prevalent today.

What is important to understand is this:

one, the political crisis which leads to the rise of fascism is a particular one where there is no need for the threat of proletarian revolution or the onslaught of a working-class movement; quite the opposite; this crisis is precisely the product of prior political defeat of the revolutionary proletariat;

two, this political crisis pertains to the disorganization of the collective class interests of the bourgeoisie, as expressed in fractional interests becoming dominant within the power bloc of the ruling class;

three, in this situation, the hitherto dominant classes and class fractions within the power bloc of the ruling class, fail to perpetuate their political hegemony over the other fractions;

four, this happens in the particular situation where the working class has already been politically defeated;

five, this political defeat of the working class is owing, in particular, to economism, where an organized working class is stubbornly clinging to its economic benefits, but is systematically opposed to transcending the limits posed by the capitalist system;

six, the main force which leads the working class to the blind alley of economism is social-democracy and revisionism.

This was precisely what happened in Germany and Italy. And this is precisely what distinguishes *the political crisis leading to fascism* from *the political crisis leading to Bonapartism*, which is characterized by what Poulantzas has called *equilibrium crisis of two types: general equilibrium crisis* to which Thalheimer refers and *catastrophic equilibrium crisis* to which Gramsci refers in his analysis of Caesarism. This crisis is characterized by the situation where in the words of Engels, the warring classes balanced each other so nearly that state assumed a higher degree of relative autonomy (sometimes *appearing* to rule over all classes!) in order to collectivize the interests of the ruling class. That is why, Bonapartism for Marx was result of a political situation in which the bourgeoisie has effectively been defeated in the immediate struggle, but the working class is not in a position to seize power.

Why does Sukhwinder commit such idiotic blunder? Because when he sat to write his “epochal essay”, an odyssey of stupidity, he did not read any single book from cover to cover. He directly resorted to the index to find quotations to support his poor and ridiculous position; moreover, he referred to the editorial introductions of some anthologies of Marxist writings on fascism and plagiarized from them; in this process, *he even fails to understand where the quotation ends and where the authorial voice of the editors starts, as we shall see shortly!* As a consequence, at one place, he has presented a quote of Ignazio Siloni, which is not actually the quote of Silone, but the summarization of Siloni’s position on fascism by the editor of an anthology, David Beetham! *This is only a proof of the fact, that the editor of ‘Pratibaddh’ has again shown his particular knack for misquoting, after he had presented a false quotation from the Soviet constitution.*

It would have been better for Sukhwinder to first read the representative Marxist literature on fascism and then set out to write an essay. For one thing, this would have saved him from the embarrassment that now he is in for. Secondly, he would have realized another important point: even among the Marxist-Leninists during the 1920s, 1930s, and the 1940s and after the Second World War, there was no unified position. Even within the Comintern and among revolutionary communists of the 1920s, 1930s and the 1940s, there was no single understanding of fascism and the political crisis that leads to it. From Gramsci to Thalheimer, from Togliatti to Zetkin, from Bordiga to Thalman, from Trotsky to Dimitrov, from Lukacs to Tasca and others, there were multiple positions. Third, even temporally speaking, the positions of Comintern continued to evolve from its Fourth Congress to its Seventh Congress. *Why this multiplicity and plurality? Why this evolution?* The reason is simple: *the communists were trying to understand a phenomenon which was new and unfolding before their eyes. The same is true for the re-emergence of fascist movements in the neoliberal period. Here, too, we need to understand that we are witnessing a new unfolding phenomenon.*

The resources to understand the elements of novelty and change, would not be available merely in the past. While it is essential to understand the communist positions regarding the rise of fascism in the first part of the Twentieth century (whose understanding Sukhwinder singularly lacks anyway!), it is imperative to comprehend the fact that merely on the basis of these positions, we cannot understand contemporary fascism. Simply because in the phase of neoliberalism in the stage of imperialism, the entire world capitalist system, the nature of crises, the character of the bourgeoisie as well as the bourgeois state, the form of parliamentary system (which is not necessarily bourgeois democratic in all cases, as we shall see) has undergone profound changes. *That is why, for the problems of the analysis of the present fascist rise, the answers will not simply and merely be found in the past, but in present class struggle and future.*

This is precisely what Sukhwinder does not understand. He is imprisoned in a time-capsule and a space-capsule. While studying fascism, he just cannot get out of the Germany and Italy of the 1920s and the 1930s (though he does not even understand the German and Italian situation of 1920s-1930s!), whereas the world capitalist system, the bourgeoisie, the evolution of imperialism, the working class as well as revolutionary communism has moved much beyond that and has reached the Twenty-first century. This is precisely why we have called Sukhwinder an crude, vulgar and politically illiterate dogmatist (who is not even well-read from a Marxist perspective).

Moving on. Sukhwinder talks about “other supporting factors” that lead to fascist rise, *besides* the political crisis. Nothing can be more foolish than this. As all the other factors mentioned by Sukhwinder are nothing but the component of the political crisis leading to fascism itself. For instance, the threat of ruin that the petty-bourgeoisie faces, the treachery of social-democracy, etc.

C. *Sukhwinder's Theory of "Other Supporting Factors" besides the Economic and Political Crisis that Lead to the Fascist Rise: A Cacophony of Pure Nonsense*

Sukhwinder presents his own idea of the other factors that contribute to the rise of fascism:

"We have discussed above the most important factor in the emergence of fascist state, namely the economic and political crisis of capitalism. Besides these, some other factors too need to be discussed here. These factors are:-

- i) Capitalist development also means increase in accumulation of capital. This also hastens polarization in capitalist society. **Due to capitalist development, petty-bourgeoisie (middle class) is continuously proletarianised. It's class position is adversely affected by capitalist crises. The sword of proletarianisation always hangs over the head of this class. In the absence of a revolutionary alternative, this class becomes a part of reactionary movements due to the uncertainty, instability of its conditions. Fascism is a romantic reactionary social movement of the petty-bourgeoisie.**
- ii) Capitalists, in the throes of economic crisis, attempts to shift the burden of this crisis onto the shoulders of working class and other toiling masses. **If in such a situation, working class emerges as a challenge for the capitalist system in the leadership of its party (communist party) but fails to accomplish revolution then fearing revolution, a faction of monopoly capitalists takes refuge in reaction or fascism so that the back of organised workers' movement may be broken.**
- iii) **"The treachery of the social-democratic or revisionist parties with the working class play an important role in fascism's ascension to power.** These parties blunt the class consciousness of working class by entangling them in trivial economic struggles. They avoid resisting fascist offensive and one by one retreat from the positions won by the working class. The treachery of social democratic parties is renowned worldwide in the case of fascists coming to power in Italy and Germany. In India too, the revisionist parties (CPI, CPM, Liberation) tremendously helped the growth of fascist forces via the above mentioned methods." (Sukhwinder, *op.cit.*, p. 15-16, *emphasis ours*)

First of all, let us repeat that the revolutionary onslaught of the working class is not a precondition of the fascist rise. However, had that been the case, why would this factor not be a part of the political crisis, that is, the conjuncture of class contradictions? Why would it be counted twice? Why would it be included in "other supporting factors" *besides* political crisis?

Moreover, the other two factors, namely the economic insecurity of the petty-bourgeoisie as well as the betrayal of the social-democracy, too, are constitutive parts of the economic crisis as well as the political crisis, which is nothing but a conjuncture of class contradictions. Why count them separately as "other supporting factors" besides economic and political crisis?

As the readers can see, Sukhwinder utterly lacks any understanding of the very notion of political crisis, not to speak of his equally absolute ignorance about the concept of economic crisis. There are no "other supporting factors" because the political crisis is nothing but a result of confluence of many factors pertaining to the *political situation of class struggle, or the conjuncture of class struggle*. Sukhwinder must have thought that such a major movement like fascism must be product of "many supporting factors" besides political and economic crisis! He found himself compelled and obliged to count the very component parts of political crisis as separate factors contributing to the fascist rise. That is the reason why we have remarked repeatedly in this essay that Sukhwinder

does not read anything in totality; whatever he reads he fails to understand; he misquotes and misrepresents; whatever he writes, as a consequence, breaks a riot of laughter among people who comprehend even the basics of Marxism.

Now let us see the particular “other supporting factors” and the particular views of Sukhwinder about them.

Again, our editor *saab* is giddy-headed due to spinning in the whirlpool of contradictions! He claims that petty-bourgeoisie drifts towards fascism under the conditions of economic crisis (which is actually the condition where accumulation of capital has hit its natural barrier, capital itself!) in the absence of a revolutionary alternative. However, at the same time, he claims that it is the continuing accumulation of capital which leads to the ruin of the petty-bourgeoisie, which in turn, drives the petty-bourgeoisie into the arms of fascist reaction! Sukhwinder once again reveals his ignorance at many levels.

What does he not comprehend? First, the economic crises are result of the accumulation of capital, which cyclically leads to the problem of the crisis of profitability as a result of increasing organic composition of capital. Second, the crisis itself demonstrates the limits of accumulation of capital and consequent devalorization of capital. Third, in the periods of crises, *it is precisely this devalorization of capital which expresses itself as the ruin of, particularly, the small and medium capitalists as well as sections of petty-bourgeoisie.* Fourth, it is this social and economic insecurity that ultimately becomes the cause of the reactionary turn of the petty-bourgeoisie, which can lead it into the arms of fascism, if there is a fascist vanguard to misarticulate the discontent of the petty-bourgeoisie through fascist ideology and constructs a false/imaginary enemy in the shape of a sizeable minority before this petty-bourgeois reaction.

Sukhwinder fails to understand the process through which economic uncertainty and insecurity created by capitalist crisis leads the petty-bourgeoisie into the camp of fascist reaction. Moreover, he also fails to understand that *this crisis is, in fact, the crisis of accumulation*, created by the situation where in the words of Marx it is revealed that ‘the real barrier to capitalist production is capital itself.’ In other words, it is precisely accumulation of capital which, at a certain point, leads to the crisis of profitability and devalorization of capital.

Then, contradicting his first and second point, Sukhwinder claims that it is not in the absence of revolutionary alternative presented by the proletariat that fascism rises. It is only when the revolutionary onslaught of the proletariat to realize this revolutionary alternative fails, that fascism rises due to the fear of revolution! Wow! How can a person zip together so many contradictions, in so few words! On all these points (which are contradictory anyway!), the editor of ‘Pratibaddh’ is foolishly and embarrassingly incorrect.

First of all, as we saw, fascist rise begins with the *political defeat* of the proletariat, not its political offensive. This defeat is caused not by the failure of political offensive, but the inability of the proletariat to constitute itself as a *political class* and emerge as the leader of the masses. It is the mistake of economism and the absence of massline, that prevents the proletariat to accomplish the above tasks and mount a revolutionary political offensive in the true sense. Secondly, it is not the failure of the political offensive of the insurgent proletariat, but the *absence* of such an offensive that leads to fascism. The revolutionary onslaught of the proletariat creating an ‘equilibrium crisis’ leads to other forms of reaction, like military dictatorship or the Horthy’s regime in Hungary or Salazar’s regime in Portugal, as the quote of Zetkin presented by Sukhwinder himself shows. Zetkin points precisely to this difference, which Poulantzas also elaborates: the different kinds of political crises which lead to different forms of reaction.

Finally, Sukhwinder in the last line of the second point, also fails to understand the difference between an *organized workers' movement* and the *revolutionary political offensive of the proletariat*. This reveals the dogmatic economism and revisionism of Sukhwinder himself, which he himself attacks in the immediately next paragraph. This was precisely the point made by Poulantzas. A mere organized workers' movement might represent a defensive of the working class, rather than a political offensive of the working class. In fact, the organized working-class movement clinging to the already-won economic benefits and limiting itself to pecuniary logic, is precisely an expression of its *political failure*.

Sukhwinder continues to dabble in the quagmire of silly contradictions. He writes in the above quoted excerpt: "These parties blunt the class consciousness of working class by entangling them in *trivial economic struggles*. They avoid resisting fascist offensive and one by one retreat from the positions won by the working class. The treachery of social democratic parties is renowned worldwide in the case of fascists coming to power in Italy and Germany."

First of all, it is not about *trivial* or *significant* economic struggles! Would Sukhwinder be happy and gay, had these economic struggles been significant, rather than trivial? The Marxist critique of economism has nothing to do with trivial or important economic struggles. Economism is about limiting the working class within bourgeois legality, by limiting them to mere economic struggles, trivial or great! It prevents the working class from raising the political question, that is, the question of the state. Moreover, it also systematically trains it to give primacy to its *particular immediate economic interests* over its *general long-term political interests*. Thus, it prevents the proletariat from becoming the leader of the masses by defeating the hegemony of the bourgeois political line among the masses.

Moreover, the factor that contributes to the political crisis leading to fascism is not "one by one retreat from the positions won by the working class"; in fact, it is due to the working class intransigently clutching to the economic "positions" already won, which creates a situation of "profit squeeze" for the bourgeoisie in the times of crises. Had Sukhwinder read even the anthologies that he repeatedly quotes, he would have understood it. What is Sukhwinder dense about? The meaning of economism. It is not about fighting or not fighting for "trivial" or "important" economic rights, but limiting the working class to pecuniary logic which leads to the disabling of the working class from, in the words of Lenin, 'raising the political question', the question of the state and the question of transcending the historical boundaries of capitalism, as we pointed out above. It is precisely this refusal of the workers' movement under social-democratic leadership, which exacerbates the crisis of the bourgeoisie. Moreover, this also disables the working class from becoming the leader of the working masses, including echelons of the petty-bourgeoisie. As a result, despite the weakening of the ideological and political hegemony of the bourgeoisie in times of crisis, the proletariat is not able to establish its own political hegemony among the masses, including the masses of the petty-bourgeoisie, because, as pointed out above, economism is a tendency that leads the proletariat to give primacy to its *particular immediate economic interests* rather than the *general long-term political interests*. As we can see, despite quoting Gramsci and Poulantzas, who have particularly emphasized the question of the *crisis of ideological and political hegemony of the bourgeoisie* which contributes to the rise of fascism, Sukhwinder completely fails to understand the same. However, the proletariat's failure to establish its own political and ideological hegemony by getting rid of economism, creates a situation of dual absence. As a consequence, the bourgeoisie succeeds in re-establishing its hegemony through an exceptional means, through fascism.

(The essay will continue in its coming parts, which presents the critique of the views of 'Lalkaar-Pratibaddh' group on various theories of fascism, universal or general characteristic features of

fascism, rural petty-bourgeoisie and its relation with fascism, among others. The second part will be uploaded within a couple of days.)