

'Lalkaar-Pratibaddh' Group's Understanding of Fascism

A Menagerie of Dogmatic Blunders

(Part – II)

○ Abhinav Sinha

5. Sukhwinder on “Various Theories of Fascism”: Unintelligent and Shameless Plagiarizing and Paraphrasing and Few More Original Vacuities

Sukhwinder's meanderings in the land of ludicrousness continue when he discusses various theories of fascism. Even though he refrains from saying anything new about these theories and limits himself to simply paraphrasing, quotationing and plagiarizing from three anthologies (*Resistible Rise*, edited by Margit Köves and Shaswati Mazumdar, *Radical Perspectives on the Rise of Fascism in Germany* edited by M. N. Dobkowski and I. Walliman and *Marxists in Face of Fascism* edited by David Beetham), he fails to understand what he is quoting which becomes apparent whenever he is trying to elaborate the ideas expressed in these quotations, plagiarizings and paraphrasings.

A. Sukhwinder, the Plagiarizer par excellence

He discusses these theories very briefly since they were discussed very briefly in the source text itself (Köves and Mazumdar's anthology) and Sukhwinder has real difficulty in writing anything new and his past attempts at writing something new (remember his position on the National Question) have led to some really tragi-comic and disastrous outcomes! Also amusing is the fact that Sukhwinder only mentions Jürgen Kocka's reference as taken from *Resistible Rise*, instead of honestly conceding that he has reproduced (by method of summarizing and sometimes word-to-word reproduction without using double-quotes) this segment of his article from the 'Introduction' to *Resistible Rise*! Anyways, he discusses the following (page no. 17-20 in Sukhwinder's essay):

1. Theory of Führer state
2. Fascism as Totalitarianism
3. Fascism as a result of national particularities (Sukhwinder refers to Jürgen Kocka as the same was referred to in the source text)
4. The theory of centrality of Holocaust
5. Fascism as the reactionary social movement of petty-bourgeoisie

Now let us first see how Sukhwinder dishonestly and shamelessly plagiarizes from the 'Introduction' written by Köves and Mazumdar, almost *verbatim*, without using any quotation marks or giving any reference. The only minor differences in words come from the fact that he has translated these words of Köves and Mazumdar from English to Punjabi, which, then have been translated back to English. Still, the similarity is uncanny. It becomes clear to any reader that the portion has been plagiarized from Köves and Mazumdar, as we shall show shortly. This is typical of Sukhwinder and reveals his political degeneration.

This plagiarizing has been done to impress his own cadre with a false image of his intellect and erudition. However, all such attempts always go in vain and ultimately prove to be counter-

productive. Let us compare what Sukhwinder has written and what Köves and Mazumdar have written. Sukhwinder writes about the first theory, that is, the Theory of the Führer state:

“This theory centres upon the role of Hitler. This theory is the explanation of fascism as the dictatorship of one person (with some leaders). This theory, in its original form, emerged after the end of second world war and the defeat of fascism. This theory mainly surfaced in Germany. This theory fails to answer many questions. For instance, why fascist movements emerged in almost all the capitalist countries after the first world war? Why do some classes more than the other are influenced by fascist propaganda? Why the big bourgeoisie benefits from the crushing of the workers’ movement?” (Sukhwinder, *op.cit.*, p. 17)

Now let us see what Köves and Mazumdar have written:

“This theory centred essentially on the role of Hitler and explained fascism as the dictatorship of an individual (along with some other leaders)...In its basic form the theory emerged soon after the end of the Second World War and the defeat of fascism, particularly in Germany...The theory of Führer-state does not explain several facts. Why did fascist movements emerge in almost all capitalist countries in the period after the end of the First World War? Why were certain social classes more susceptible to fascist propaganda than others? Why did big business benefit whereas the working class movement was crushed...?” (Köves and Mazumdar. 2003. *op.cit.*, p. 5)

Now let us come to Sukhwinder’s uniquely “original” views about the theory of totalitarianism:

“This theory emerged during the staring period of cold war, when the anti-fascist alliance between Soviet Union and western powers collapsed. The central idea of this theory is that both fascism and communism, in its nature are essentially same. meaning both are totalitarian, both are threats to “democracy”. During cold war it was an important ideological weapon of the imperialists for combating the danger of communism. This is used even today in one form or another by the imperialists and their “thinkers.” (Sukhwinder, *op.cit.*, p. 17)

Köves and Mazumdar anachronistically (using a time-machine) “plagiarize” from the great thinker of Raikot:

“The most influential theory of fascism, which gained ground with the start of the Cold War and the end of the antifascist alliance of the Western powers with the Soviet Union, was the ‘totalitarianism’ theory. The central postulate of this theory is that fascism and communism are essentially alike in nature, both totalitarian...both a threat to democracy... in the confrontational climate of the Cold War, this theory functioned as the major ideological weapon against communism...It is perhaps worth noting that the theory of ‘totalitarianism’ continues to play a decisive role...in the twenty-first century.” (Köves and Mazumdar. 2003. *op.cit.* p. 6-7)

Coming to the theory of national peculiarities or particularities (a change created due to the ‘loss in translation!’), Sukhwinder again shamelessly plagiarizes from Köves and Mazumdar. However, by this time, he has also developed some fear that sooner or later someone will catch this intellectual theft. So, he adds a note that the particular views of Kocka have been taken from Köves and Mazumdar’s book! However, we will see, that he is not only lifting Kocka’s views from this anthology, but the entire section from the ‘Introduction’ of the same. Let us see what Sukhwinder writes:

“This theory sees the roots of fascism, particularly those of German fascism in its pre-industrial backwardness, delayed nationhood, delayed industrialisation and

underdevelopment of bourgeois democratic institutions resulting from it. Jürgen Kocka was one of the major theoreticians of this theory. Jürgen Kocka goes to the extent of making the false claim that “German society in the true sense has never been a bourgeois society.” Germany’s particular path of development is termed to be responsible for the popular effect of reactionary, anti-democratic and illogical ideologies which ultimately made fascism and its horrible crimes possible.

“Jürgen Kocka, transforms the above mentioned quote of Max Horkheimer, in his own words, “One who does not wish to discuss pre-industrial, pre-capitalist, pre-bourgeois traditions should stay silent on fascism.”

“This theory, that terms fascism as the product of some national particularities, does not answer many questions. For instance, it fails to clarify the question that during sharp social conflicts why do certain classes as opposed to others not support reactionary movements/ideologies like fascism? This theory also does not answer this question as to why after the first world war fascism emerged in almost all the capitalist countries including countries such as France, England (no one doubts the validity of these being modern capitalist countries)? Etc. The upholders of this theory fail to see the roots of fascism in capitalism’s crisis.” (Sukhwinder, *op.cit.* p. 17-18)

Now let us see what Köves and Mazumdar have written:

“...saw the roots of fascism in Germany’s pre-industrial political backwardness, that is, in its delayed nationhood, its delayed industrialization, and therefore in its inadequately developed bourgeois democratic institutions...One historian has gone so far as to say that ‘German society was never truly a bourgeois society’. This peculiar German path of development was held responsible for the rise and mass influence of reactionary, anti-democratic and irrational ideologies that finally made national socialism and its heinous crimes possible...”

“It does not adequately explain why these reactionary ideologies were actively supported and propagated by specific social interests against others at a time of intense social conflict...it diminishes the significance of the fact that fascist movements emerged in a specific period of crisis in almost all capitalist countries.” (Köves and Mazumdar. 2003. *op.cit.*, p. 9-10)

Finally, let us move on to Sukhwinder’s plagiarizing from Köves and Mazumdar’s ‘Introduction’ regarding the theory of the centrality of the ‘holocaust’:

“In common folk’s conception of fascism, the massacre of Jews on a large scale has an important place. After the trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem in 1961, a trend emerged in the theory of fascism which stressed that racial ideology and ‘Holocaust’ (this term has been taken from ancient Greece which means sacrificing someone for the gods by burning) are characteristics that define fascism. This theory stresses that the inhuman crimes committed by Nazis are out of the ambit of scientific analysis and logical explanation. This theory ignores the fundamental causes of the origins of fascism. In this way it attempts to undermine the resistance against its re-emergence.” (Sukhwinder, *op.cit.*, p. 18)

Now let us compare this with Köves and Mazumdar’s words:

“In public perception, the organized mass murder of the Jews has come to be seen as the most striking and most characteristic feature of German fascism. Yet scholarly engagement by German historians with this areas in fact only seriously began in the wake of the trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem in 1961... on the

one hand, there emerged the tendency to interpret the 'holocaust' and the racist ideology on which it was based as the main defining feature of Nazism. (in footnote, Köves and Mazumdar write: "...the term 'Holocaust' is derived from ancient Greek and has the meaning of a burnt sacrificial offering to God"-author)...its extreme inhumanity was interpreted as being essentially beyond rational comprehension and scientific analysis...it refuses to look for causes and thus disarms efforts against the reappearance of such barbarity." (Köves and Mazumdar. 2003. *op.cit.* p. 10-11)

This is the limit of dishonesty and shamelessness, as the readers can see. This group's cadre, who are honest, too, must try to comprehend the level of cheap trickery and chicanery employed by their leader. Those who have decided to close their eyes to such levels of intellectual degeneration cannot be persuaded by anything in the world. Now let us see what our intellectual imposter writes about the theory of fascism as a reactionary social movement of the petty-bourgeoisie.

Under the last sub-head Sukhwinder writes:

"The abovementioned theories of fascism fail to scientifically explain this phenomenon. These are either superficial, piecemeal, incomplete theories or reactionary (like the theory of fascism as 'totalitarianism'). This theory fails to identify the grounds of the origin of fascism as well as the class roots of fascist movements. The theory that sees fascism as a reactionary social movement of the petty-bourgeoisie is the sole scientific theory of fascism. The large scale involvement of petty-bourgeoisie in the fascist movements of the world attests to this fact. Petty property owners, traders, handicraftsmen, people involved in self-employment, government employees employed in unproductive sectors etc., make up the petty-bourgeoisie. The process of the accumulation of capital threatens their existence. The sword of proletarianisation forever hangs over their head. In the absence of a revolutionary alternative, the petty-bourgeoisie, especially urban petty-bourgeoisie comes under greater influence of fascist propaganda and actively becomes part of fascist movements. Fascist movement is a romantic upheaval of petty-bourgeoisie. Fascism in power does not fulfil any aspiration of the petty-bourgeoisie because fascism now, at the cost of all other classes interests, serves the interests of a section of monopoly capital." (Sukhwinder, *op.cit.*, p. 18-19)

Again, when Sukhwinder resorts to elaboration of the quotes that he himself has presented, he clearly reveals his utter inability to understand these very quotes! Let me elaborate.

B. The Question of Petty-bourgeoisie as a Social Class, Production Labour and Non-Production Labour: Sukhwinder's Befuddled Understanding of Political Economy

Among the echelons or sections of petty-bourgeoisie, Sukhwinder enumerates among others, "government employees employed in unproductive sectors". How can a sane person write a sentence so meaningless? What about the government employees in the productive sectors who are not involved in productive labour, or those whose salaries reflect wages over and above the average wages due to their being *a functionary of capital* in the process of production? Why the sections of petty-bourgeoisie in the unproductive sectors only? Sukhwinder is basically confused by Poulantzas's account of the class of petty-bourgeoisie! As a matter of fact, Sukhwinder gives a description, and an incorrect one at that, of the petty-bourgeoisie. He does not understand the *concept* in terms of political economy. What is petty-bourgeoisie? There are two elements of the answer to this question. First, as clarified by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao, petty-bourgeoisie in terms of political economy is the class which is *neither the seller of labour-power, nor the exploiter of labour-power*. This term has often been carelessly used for small capitalists, too, however, in terms of political economy, the above-mentioned definition is

the correct one. It is the class involved in simple commodity production. Poulantzas divides it into two parts: *small-scale production* and *small-scale ownership*. However, if one reads the description, both are *essentially* the same.

The second element is the determination of the class in terms of their *political and ideological articulation within the capitalist social formation*. In other words, the political and ideological constitution of a class depending upon its political and ideological place in the state apparatus and in the social formation, in general. Here, Poulantzas points to the fact that one section is the non-production workers. However, he also points to a problem which he does not intend to deal with in his work:

“However, we can also define certain groups as part of the petty-bourgeoisie who have quite a different place in the economy. This is what may be termed the ‘new’ petty-bourgeoisie, whose importance was already recognized by Lenin. It is new in the sense that, unlike the first, it is not in the least fated to disappear; rather, the expansion of the capitalist mode of production (CMP), and its passage to the stage of monopoly capitalism, provide the conditions for its development and growth. I refer to non-productive salaried employees.

“I shall leave aside the problem of the ‘technical personnel’ of the firm (the ‘bearers of science’) in order to avoid the complicated discussion about whether they are ‘non-productive workers’. I shall restrict myself to the most important groups of employees whom Marx defined unequivocally as not being productive workers, that is, not direct producers of commodities and surplus-value in the CMP.” (Poulantzas. 1979. *op.cit.*, p. 238-39, *emphasis ours*)

Even then the description of Poulantzas is not accurate, to which we will come later. However, this much is certain that Sukhwinder does not even understand the correct nuances of this inaccurate account. The inaccuracy is too much for Sukhwinder to understand, as he flounders like a drunkard in the realm of political economy.

First of all, Poulantzas has talked about *unproductive workers*, not the *unproductive sectors*, as Sukhwinder thinks; well, a mistake in plagiarizing! We will come to this point after a little while. The fact is that Poulantzas “restricts” himself to the main category of unproductive workers, basing himself on Marx. However, even certain sections of productive workers constitute parts of petty-bourgeoisie, *ideologically and politically*. For instance, the higher echelons of the class of teachers of schools and more importantly the class of teachers in the university. Remember, for Marx, teachers constitute a class of productive workers. Marx wrote:

“For instance, Milton, who wrote *Paradise Lost*, was an unproductive worker. On the other hand, a writer who turns out work for his publisher in factory style is a productive worker. Milton produced *Paradise Lost* as a silkworm produces silk, as the activation of his own nature. He later sold his product for £5 and thus became a merchant. But the literary proletarian of Leipzig who produces books, such as compendia on political economy, at the behest of his publisher is pretty nearly a productive worker since his production is taken over by capital and only occurs in order to increase it. A singer who sings like a bird is an unproductive worker. If she sells her song for money, she is to that extent a wage labourer or merchant. But if the same singer is engaged by an entrepreneur who makes her sing to make money, then she becomes a productive worker, since she produces capital directly. A schoolmaster who instructs others is not a productive worker. But a schoolmaster who works for wages in an institution along with others, using his own labour to increase the money of the entrepreneur who owns the knowledge-mongering institution, is a productive worker.” (Marx, Karl. 1982. *op. cit.*, p. 1044)

Marx also wrote:

“If we may take an example from outside the sphere of *material production*, a schoolmaster is a productive worker when, in addition to belabouring the heads of his pupils, he works himself into the ground to enrich the owner of the school. That the latter has laid out his capital in a teaching factory, instead of a sausage factory, makes no difference to the relation. The concept of a productive worker therefore implies not merely a relation between the activity of work and its useful effect, between the worker and the product of his work, but also a specifically social relation of production, a relation with a historical origin which stamps the worker as capital's direct means of valorization.” (*ibid*, p. 644)

The point is to understand that the same worker can be productive or unproductive depending upon *the social relation of production*. Then, there is the concept of labour that is productive *as such*, which adds to the wealth (use-values) of society, in tangible or intangible forms. However, this does not include the spheres of material production only. It also includes use-values which are not goods but services, which have a useful effect. For instance, the labour of a domestic help hired by a household produces useful things (for instance, food) as well as useful services (like cleaning, etc.). But this is not productive labour for capital in general, because it does not produce surplus-value. This labour is productive *as such*, but not *for capital*.

This particular point that a use-value can be a useful thing or a useful service applies to production of commodities, too. For instance, the transport sector does not produce a material good, but a useful service, namely, the change of place of persons and goods, where the production and consumption of this commodity are simultaneous. Marx includes transport among productive sectors. The capitalist mode of production considers only *that* labour productive which not only produces use-values but also values and surplus-value, that is, the labour which is productive *for capital*. Transport companies, for instance, involve productive labour that produce a useful effect as a commodity and thus produce value and surplus-value.

Finally, there is the question of non-production workers in the non-production sectors (like circulation labour in commerce) who are productive *only for the individual capitalists* because they allow these individual capitalists to appropriate a part of the surplus-value produced by productive sectors. These workers also do not form a part of the petty-bourgeoisie. Let us delve deeper in this issue to understand the inaccuracy in the account of Poulantzas as well as the utter inability of Sukhwinder to understand either Poulantzas's position or Marxist political economy in general.

We can talk of many sectors which are productive sectors and within these sectors there is a class which is salaried employee and yet they are part of petty-bourgeoisie due to the ideological and political articulation that they find in the social formation. Singers, higher echelons of the class of teachers, trainers, etc. *hired by firms*, too, can be part of that. A part of the scientific and technical workers, too, form the part of productive workers. Marx points out:

“Since the immediate purpose and the authentic product of capitalist production is surplus-value, labour is only productive, and an exponent of labour-power is only a productive worker, if it or he creates surplus-value directly, i.e. the only productive labour is that which is directly consumed in the course of production for the valorization of capital.” (*ibid*, p. 1038)

Finally, Marx points out:

“The desire to define productive and unproductive labour in terms of their material content has a threefold source.

“(1) The fetishism peculiar to the capitalist mode of production from which it arises. This consists in regarding economic categories, such as being a

commodity or productive labour, as qualities inherent in the material incarnations of these formal determinations or categories;

“(2) Looking at the labour process as such, labour is held to be productive only if it results in a product (and since we are concerned here only with material wealth, it must be a material product);

“(3) In the actual process of reproduction - considering only its real moments - there is a vast difference which affects the formation of wealth, between labour which is engaged on articles essential to reproduction and labour concerned purely with luxuries.” (*ibid*, p. 1046)

Moreover, while talking about productive and unproductive sectors, we cannot determine the character of particular workers directly from it. The reason is simple: there are unproductive workers within the productive sectors, too. These are workers who are not directly involved in the production of surplus-value, but involved in reproducing the social conditions which ensure the production of surplus-value. For instance, a security guard at a factory-gate or a music concert held by a firm is working in the productive sector, but he himself is not a productive worker.

Therefore, Sukhwinder has created a muddle here and what is amusing is that he does not understand that he has created one! On the contrary, he is wallowing in the delusion that he has said something very profound! Also, Sukhwinder misunderstands Poulantzas. *Poulantzas is not talking about unproductive and productive sectors, but productive and unproductive workers, as we pointed out above. He categorically says, “I refer to non-productive salaried employees.” And this is what Sukhwinder says, “government employees employed in unproductive sectors etc.” Unproductive workers work not only in the unproductive sectors, but also in the productive sectors. The question here is not that of productive/unproductive sector, but that of productive/unproductive workers or employees. Moreover, did it not occur to Sukhwinder why limit the definition to “government employees employed in the unproductive sector”? What about “employees employed in the private unproductive sectors”? Are they productive for Sukhwinder? He has confused this unproductive worker with himself, it seems! The crux of the matter is that he does not understand the Marxist categories of productive and unproductive workers.*

Our only criticism of Poulantzas is that whenever we talk about *productive and unproductive labour*, we must specify whether we are talking about *labour that is productive as such, labour that is productive for capital in general or labour that is productive for individual capitalists, but not for capital socially*. The domestic work of the women, too, is productive as such, as it creates use-values, for instance cooking; however, that is not productive labour for capital because it does not produce commodities and therefore does not produce any surplus-value. Moreover, the labour of the circulation workers working under a commercial capitalist, too, is productive for that particular capitalist, because it allows this particular commercial capitalist to appropriate a share of surplus-value from the industrial capitalist, even though, this labour is *not productive as such* and also *not productive for capital socially* because it does not produce use-values and secondly for the entire capitalist economy, too, it is not productive because it does not produce surplus-value. *Without these qualifications, as Marx points out, any talk about productive and unproductive worker would only create confusion.*

Also, Poulantzas does not mention those productive workers in the productive sectors, whose ideological and political role within the factory, as well as, the fact that he/she receives wages over and above the average social value of labour-power of the workers of his category, in general, and plays the role of functionaries of capital in production. These productive workers *can and do* become petty-bourgeoisified and systematically and consciously represent the bourgeois line among the mass of workers. This can include higher echelons of technical and highly-skilled workers, foremen, etc. For instance, today, *a section of IT industry workers (who*

are productive workers actually producing surplus-value as well as intangible commodities, namely, softwares), is certainly petty-bourgeoisified and, *as a class fraction*, consciously supports a bourgeois line and sometimes even supports the fascist forces. *Therefore, the definition of petty-bourgeoisie presented by Poulantzas is incomplete and inaccurate.*

Similarly, all unproductive workers are not part of the petty-bourgeoisie even ideologically and politically. For instance, a common worker working in a shop as labour of circulation is not necessarily a part of the petty-bourgeoisie, but proletariat. The point here is not whether this worker is *producing* commodities, but the fact that *his/her labour-power* is a commodity, spent in non-production sector, but at the same time enabling his/her own commercial capitalist to appropriate a share of surplus-value produced elsewhere (in the production sectors) which is greater than the value of his/her labour-power.

However, Sukhwinder does not even understand this inaccurate and incomplete definition of the petty-bourgeoisie. More importantly, he does not understand Poulantzas on those points, too, which are correct. As we have seen above, this is a general problem of Sukhwinder. He does not understand basic Marxist concepts and positions and continues to be on his own trip.

Following this, Sukhwinder unknowingly quotes Clara Zetkin against himself, where Zetkin points out the difference between the political crisis leading to fascism and other forms of political crises. We have already referred to this foolishness of Sukhwinder above, and have also presented the said quote of Zetkin there.

6. Some Other Prominent Follies of Sukhwinder regarding “Some Other Prominent Ideas on Fascism”

Under this subhead Sukhwinder briefly discusses the ideas of Kurt Gossweiler, Reinhard Opitz, Reinhard Kühnl, and Nicos Poulantzas. This section, too, has been reproduced from the ‘Introduction’ of *Resistible Rise* except for the quotation of Nicos Poulantzas, which has been taken from Poulantzas’s work *Fascism and Dictatorship*.

Sukhwinder writes:

“**Kurt Gossweiler** in his analysis on fascism takes as the starting point Dimitrov’s definition that **fascism is the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinist and most imperialist elements of finance capital**. But he also warns that this definition should not be considered as an all-encompassing, universal formula. Gossweiler says that in the era of imperialism fascism can originate in any country though the country might not have an iota of their own finance capital. Most importantly fascism does not merely express the interests of finance capital but also other sections of the ruling class including the landlords.

“We cannot agree with Gossweiler’s criticism of Dimitrov’s definition of fascism. Firstly, Dimitrov does not say that fascism is the dictatorship of finance capital rather he says that it is the dictatorship of a fraction of finance capital. Gossweiler also incorrectly states that fascism is also the dictatorship of other sections of ruling class (including the landlords). Fascism primarily is the dictatorship of a fraction of monopoly capital. Later on, we shall discuss this further.” (Sukhwinder, *op.cit.*, p. 20-21, *author’s emphasis*)

Sukhwinder writes further:

“**Reinhard Opitz** says that fascism represents the general interests of monopoly capital and not as stated in Dimitrov’s definition i.e., the interests of a particular fraction of finance capital.

“This criticism of Reinhard Opitz is incorrect. This sees monopoly capital as monolith. It does not consider the conflict between different factions of the capitalists.

“**Reinhard Kühnl** disagrees with Gossweiler and Opitz on this point that both reject the need of mass movement for fascism. He says that it is precisely mass movement that separates fascism from other reactionary terrorist dictatorships of monopoly capital. He opines that such differentiation is important not merely for academic correctness but also for political decisions as the strategies of combating both would be different. Kühnl’s criticism of Gossweiler and Opitz is correct to a large extent but Kühnl himself while stressing the mass movement character of fascism does not clarify as to which class’ mass movement is it primarily.” (Sukhwinder, *op.cit.*, p. 21)

This, once again, is pure paraphrasing and plagiarizing from the ‘Introduction’ written by Shaswati Mazumdar and Margit Köves in their edited anthology named *Resistible Rise: A Fascism Reader*. What is not surprising at all is that Sukhwinder *does not understand* what he plagiarizes. Moreover, his utter ignorance of basic principles of historical materialism are evident at every step and in every line that he writes. Let us see how Sukhwinder achieves this not-so-ordinary feat.

A. *Sukhwinder on Gossweiler and Dimitrov: A Dramedy of Dogmatic Debacle*

The fact is that Gossweiler does not refer to Dimitrov even once in his paper ‘Economics and Politics in the Destruction of the Weimer Republic’. What Sukhwinder presents are the Margit Köves’s and Shaswati Mazumdar’s views expressed in their introduction to the *Resistible Rise* about Gossweiler’s position. Sukhwinder in his hurry to plagiarize, forgot to cross-check and imputed the same to Gossweiler. Be that as it may, there is no denying the fact that fascists *did* receive support from the other sections of the ruling class including the landlords and, on this question, Gossweiler is correct. Now, Gossweiler did argue that fascism was a political decision for the top rung of the German ruling class, it was not an economic necessity for German capitalism. Gossweiler argues:

“This decision (*turn to fascist dictatorship-author*) was taken above all by the top levels of the most important German companies, the leaders of the landed aristocracy, and the Reichswehr generals. They were joined by the most of the big bourgeoisie politicians – except where the latter had already been commensurately active – as evidenced by their approval of the Enabling Act.” (Gossweiler, K. 2005. ‘Economy and Politics in the Destruction of the Weimer Republic’ in Shaswati Mazumdar and Margit Köves (eds.), *Resistible Rise*, Left Word Books, p. 138)

Is this position correct? Yes, it is broadly correct. To see fascism as the ‘naked terrorist dictatorship’ of only ‘the most reactionary fractions of the financial monopoly bourgeoisie’ is not at all a Marxist position. Why? Because fascism emerges as a response to the crisis of the ‘power bloc’ of the dominant classes and class fractions which cannot be resolved through regular means. Even in general, there is the hegemony of one dominant class or class fraction within the ruling class. However, when a conjuncture of political contradictions is created in the general context of economic crisis, a political crisis emerges. *What does this crisis consist in?* This crisis is *the crisis of hegemony* within the ‘power bloc’ of the ruling classes, where the hitherto dominant fraction is unable to establish its political hegemony through regular means; as a consequence, the *collectivization of the bourgeois interests* is jeopardized. In such a situation, this is achieved by an exceptional means: fascism, which restores the process of collectivization of the class interests of the bourgeoisie, but *in essence* through non-democratic means, even if the shell of formal bourgeois democracy remains.

However, if fascist dictatorship is the dictatorship of one class fraction, the very question of collectivization of class interests becomes irrelevant and superfluous. This collectivization always happens under the hegemony of one fraction of the 'power bloc'. Under fascism, too, this happens through the establishment of the hegemony of one fraction, albeit, through exceptional means. If we do not understand this collectivization of the bourgeois class interests, and think that the fascist regime is only the rule of "the most reactionary fractions of the finance monopoly capital", then it becomes a fascist dictatorship on the other fractions of the bourgeoisie, too. Such a line leads us to class collaboration with and capitulation to other fractions of the bourgeoisie. This is a thoroughly incorrect understanding of Dimitrov, to which we will come later in this essay.

This much is clear: it is precisely due to this collectivization of the scattered fractional interests of the bourgeoisie through extra-ordinary means that gives state under fascist regime a higher degree of relative autonomy. *In fact, if one fraction totally subordinates the state, then there is no need for relative autonomy at all!* Thus, Sukhwinder only learns from the mistakes of Dimitrov thesis of the Comintern, with the exemplary skill of a professional idiot.

Is fascism a dictatorship of the most reactionary fractions of financial monopoly bourgeoisie over all other dominant classes and fractions, including other fractions of the bourgeoisie? No. In essence and content, *it is the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie in general*, with the hegemony of the financial monopoly bourgeoisie within the power bloc, established and maintained through exceptional means. Let us see what Poulantzas has to say about this. Poulantzas points out:

"The three main conceptions of this seem equally *mistaken* to me:

"(a) The conception, increasingly dominant in the Comintern, according to which, by contrast with the 'parliamentary democratic' State in the framework of which other dominant classes and fractions of classes play a decisive political role, the fascist State represents a total grip on the State by the big monopoly capital fraction alone. *According to this conception, the capitalist State has thus reached a stage of total subordination to the narrow interests of this fraction, the fascist State being simply the 'agent' (in the strong sense) of this fraction, a 'tool' which it can manipulate at will, to the exclusion of the other dominant classes and class fractions. Clearly this view allows the fascist State no relative autonomy from the 'power bloc' and its hegemonic fraction.*

"*This deep-rooted illusion in the Third International went back to a whole 'instrumentalist' conception of the State, closely combined with economism, and still governs the analysis present-day communist parties give of the State in the age of 'State monopoly capitalism'. In this respect, the analyses of the fascist State and the present-day State are absolutely identical. This was the view which became dominant with Dimitrov and the Seventh Congress.*

...

"*This conception of the relation between the fascist State and big capital after fascism comes into power determines the major mistake, which we shall return to, about the relations between big capital and the fascist party throughout the rise of fascism. The fascist party is mainly seen as the 'paid agent' in the service of big capital. The fascist party, the 'military weapon in big capital's fight' is often identified as a 'pack of white guards', a mere 'armed militia' in the pay of big capital, a tool it can manipulate at will.*" (Poulantzas. 1979. *op.cit.*, p. 83-84, *emphasis ours*)

Poulantzas argues further:

“So on the one hand the question which attracts most attention is the financing of fascist organizations, whereas the organizational relation between the fascist party and the bourgeoisie is much more complex. On the other hand, the military aspect is not only seen as the main aspect of the rise of fascism throughout, but even as being detached from the political aspect of the phenomenon; whereas in fact, firstly, the military aspect is constantly determined by the political aspect of the process and, secondly, the political aspect holds the dominant role, except in the very final step. This latter feature is peculiar to the rise of fascism. In this respect, Clara Zetkin’s warning to the executive committee of the Comintern on 23 June 1923, is still correct: ‘The error of the Italian Communist Party lies mainly in the fact that it has seen fascism only as a military-terrorist movement, not as a mass movement with deep social roots. It must be stressed that before fascism wins militarily, it has already won the ideological and political victory over the working class...’” (*ibid*, p. 84)

Poulantzas has captured the crux of the matter here. In the last part of this excerpt, where Poulantzas quotes Clara Zetkin, this, too, becomes clear that fascism does not emerge when the bourgeoisie is threatened with a revolutionary upsurge of the proletariat, as Sukhwinder thinks. In fact, on the contrary, it is precisely on the basis of *political defeat* of the proletariat, that fascism emerges due to the internal crisis of the ‘power bloc’ of the ruling class, that is, the bourgeoisie.

To return to the present question, it is very clear that fascism does not represent the rule of one particular fraction of the bourgeoisie; it represents the rule of the bourgeoisie with the hegemony of one fraction (just like any other form of bourgeois rule), *established through exceptional methods in the conditions of political crisis*. Dimitrov thesis is even more vulgar as it narrows down the class character of fascism not even to the entire fraction of big monopoly capital, but to “the most reactionary elements/fractions of the big monopoly capital.” This led to disastrous results theoretically as well as politically.

Further.

B. Sukhwinder’s Baffling Confusions Regarding What He Has Plagiarized and From Whom He Has Plagiarized

Regarding Reinhard Opitz, we cannot simply rely on what Mazumdar and Köves have written. Opitz’s writings are not yet available in English. What Kühnl writes about Opitz in his essay in the anthology *Resistible Rise* (Kühnl’s essay in *Radical Perspectives on the Rise of Fascism in Germany* has no reference to Opitz) has nothing to do with the *social movement-character* of fascism. It is about Opitz’s and Kurt Patzold’s understanding of the Nazi treatment of the Jews, its underlying causes, ideological use of anti-semitism by the Nazis to construct an image of false enemy. Then, from where do Sukhwinder’s ideas about this come? From the paraphrasing and plagiarizing from the ‘Introduction’ of *Resistible Rise* written by Mazumdar and Köves. In fact, the entire excerpt from Sukhwinder’s essay that we have just quoted, is not based on studying the original (Sukhwinder has not read even the original essays collected in the anthology!), but is merely plagiarization from the Mazumdar and Köves’ ‘Introduction’.

Still, had Opitz really said what Mazumdar and Köves argue and what Sukhwinder plagiarizes, would he be considered correct? Was fascism a dictatorship of the entire monopoly capital or certain fractions of monopoly capital? None! It was the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie under the hegemony of big monopoly capital. Any dictatorship of the bourgeoisie is always materialized through a ‘power bloc’ comprising of dominant classes and their dominant class fractions. The political crisis of the bourgeoisie emerges precisely when one particular fraction fails to establish its hegemony within the bloc. Why is this hegemony required? Because only through the hegemony of one fraction can the interests of the bourgeoisie as a political class be collectivized.

If we talk about the dictatorship of one fraction of capitalist class, we do not understand the very notion of political crisis and the problem of collectivization of the bourgeois class interests, because all other fractions, then, are at the receiving end of the dictatorship and therefore form a part of 'the masses' or 'the people'. Moreover, if one fraction has established its dictatorship, then there is no such thing as collectivization of the bourgeois class interests, there can be no notion of the 'power bloc' and there can be no notion of 'political crisis'. Nor can there be any concept of 'relative autonomy of the state' in general, or, more pertinently, the 'higher degree of relative autonomy of the fascist state.' It is precisely this view of things that presents a monolithic and homogenous image of a class, contrary to the claims of Sukhwinder.

Regarding fascism being a reactionary social movement, there is no need for an explanation. We can only say that what Sukhwinder has plagiarized from Mazumdar and Köves is broadly correct. However, Sukhwinder has to show that he is not just an empty pot, but also has something of his own to say. So, he says something. And as usual evokes a fit of laughter. He says that Kühnl should have specified the class character of the "mass movement" of fascism; which class is the main component of this "mass movement". Has Kühnl denied the petty-bourgeois class character of the fascist social movement? Not at all; on the contrary, he has been criticized for allegedly reducing the class basis of fascism to the petty-bourgeoisie! Then why is Sukhwinder saying this? Because, about Kühnl, Sukhwinder plagiarizes from Anson Rabinbach's essay in the same anthology, *Resistible Rise*. However, it is, in fact, Rabinbach who while criticizing Kühnl, argues that there is no need to identify the fascist reactionary movement with middle classes only and there can be other social classes that become the support base of this movement.

However, Sukhwinder failed to understand what is being said by Kühnl and what is being said by Rabinbach and he falsely imputes this argument to Kühnl that fascist movement has no particular class character, or, Kühnl fails to identify any class character of the fascist social movement. In fact, Rabinbach critiques Kühnl for reducing the class character of the fascist social movement to the class of petty-bourgeoisie only. Let us see what Rabinbach has written, and you will understand how miserably Sukhwinder has failed to understand what he himself is plagiarizing:

"At the same time, however, the central problems of a theory of fascism are by no means solved in Kühnl's work, which should be seen as important, but preliminary step. With some justification, critics have pointed to a number of problematic aspects: to his formal and descriptive rather than analytic categories, to unsubstantiated assertions and insufficient considerations of those fascist movements that did not result in the seizure of power, to a lack of concrete socio-economic analysis and in the unwarranted case of Nolte, to 'political pamphleteering' instead of scholarship. Other problems are also apparent. His two major interpretive works do rely almost exclusively on secondary materials and lack adequate Italian sources. *Middle class support was central to fascist-type movements, but not necessarily universal, as exhibited by working class elements in Peronism, in certain European movements, and more recently in the Wallace movement in the USA.*" (Rabinbach, Anson. 2005. 'Towards a Marxist Theory of Fascism', in Mazumdar, Köves (eds.) *Resistible Rise*, Leftword Books, p. 66-67, *emphasis ours*)

*Now, readers can see the utter imbecility of editor of 'Pratibaddh'. Sukhwinder has failed to see what is the point made by Rabinbach and what is the point made by Kühnl! Kühnl is being actually criticized for reducing the class basis of fascism only to petty-bourgeoisie, rather than seeing that this base could include many sections of other classes, including the working class. According to Mazumdar and Köves, Kühnl, also critiqued left-psychological theories, while accepting their contribution, which *essentialized* the fascist potential latent in the petty-bourgeoisie and concluded that there is something in the very social psychology of the petty-bourgeoisie due to which in times of crisis it *necessarily* swerves towards fascism.*

Kühnl is completely correct on this point. However, he is not at all denying the essentially petty-bourgeois character of the fascist social movement. In fact, one can criticize Rabinbach for not comprehending the difference between *social class* and *political class* here, owing to the fact that certain sections of working class become social props of fascism, precisely because in their ideological and political articulations, they assume the positions of petty-bourgeoisie. In other words, these are sections of working class which are politically and ideologically petty-bourgeoisified. However, this much is clear: *Sukhwinder seldom understands what he is plagiarizing. The above fiasco of Sukhwinder is a prime example of this fact.*

7. Sukhwinder's Rank Opportunism on the Question of Rural Petty-bourgeoisie and Fascism

Subsequently, Sukhwinder presents a quotation of Poulantzas:

"Nicos Poulantzas very concretely identifies the participation of different sections of various classes in fascist movements. He says that, 'Fascism is basically an urban phenomenon in that the class origins and 'militant wing' of fascism are rooted essentially in the towns..... As for its relationship to other sections of the peasantry (except the large landowners – author), even where fascism got active support going beyond mere voting, the impact of the peasantry within both the fascist and national socialist parties was entirely secondary. This is a remarkable fact, if fascism is contrasted with the 'reactionary' but essentially 'peasant' mass political movements which arose at the same period in the East European countries (Hungary, Romania, etc.) or even Spain. The explanation is that fascism really represents the interests of monopoly capitalism at a step at which its interests are in very strong contradiction with those of the agricultural sector as a whole..... the big landowners gave fascism direct and active support. This is also true of the rich peasantry, though some of them, depending on the region, seemed to share the doubts of the middle peasantry about fascism. The middle peasantry, next to the agricultural workers, seem to have resisted fascism more strongly than the other peasant classes, at least for a time. Although it cannot be said that the middle peasantry and some of the rich peasantry resisted fascism in the way that middle industrial capital did, there are still some similarities in their political attitudes. Further, it was middle tenants rather than middle landowners who swung towards fascism.

"The poor peasantry, small producers and rural petty-bourgeoisie, were particularly deeply divided over fascism. They were distinguished from the middle peasants by a more open and majority support for fascism, but their case is much more complicated than that of the urban petty-bourgeoisie. The rural petty-bourgeoisie in the majority swung over to fascism, but did not work actively in the fascist movement. Even their votes were deeply divided. Where there had been agrarian reform, creating the familiar 'parcels' of peasant land, the small-holders were much more resistant to fascism than the small tenants or the tenants of feudal estates..... They were also more divided than the urban petty-bourgeoisie." (Sukhwinder. *op.cit.*, p. 21-22, author's emphasis)

Sukhwinder continues:

"There are other instances where fascists could not establish their base in the peasantry. 'Conversely, some of the smaller fascist movements owed their weakness to the country population's relative immunity to their appeals. This applied to both Norway and Sweden, where farmers kept to the established framework of agrarian-labor cooperation, and to Finland, where neither the

Lapua movement (1929-32) nor its successor, the Patriotic National Movement (Isänmaallinen Kansanliike-IKL; 1932-44), could break the hold of the Agrarian Union and Coalition Party on the smaller farmers.” (Sukhwinder. op.cit., p. 22-23, author’s emphasis)

This last quote is from Geoff Eley’s article in *Radical Perspectives on the Rise of Fascism in Germany* titled ‘What produces Fascism: Preindustrial traditions or a crisis of the capitalist state?’

Sukhwinder refrains from drawing any conclusions from what he has quoted. However, what he has quoted has *serious and conscious omissions*, in order to misrepresent Poulantzas’s as well as Eley’s position regarding the relation between the rural petty-bourgeoisie and fascism. Sukhwinder has to protect the rural petty-bourgeoisie, *in general*, because for the past couple of years, he has been trying to woo the rural petty-bourgeoisie as well as small capitalists. This is natural after his Trot-Bundist, national chauvinistic and *kulakist* turn. Let us comprehend this question of relationship between fascism and rural petty-bourgeoisie in a little more detail.

Needless to say, there has been a large consensus on fascism *originally* and *essentially* being a mainly urban phenomenon. It never takes roots in the rural petty-bourgeoisie *in the same way*, in which it takes roots in the urban petty-bourgeoisie. Moreover, it emerges *first* in the urban petty-bourgeoisie. However, from this Sukhwinder seems to draw the conclusion that fascism is *bound* to be weak in the countryside, due to the essential contradiction between the big monopoly capital and the agricultural sector as a whole in period of fascism. However, this is only one side of the story: the *economic* side. The other side of the story is the *political* side, that fascism does win over the support of various sections of the rich peasantry, the middle peasantry as well as the poor peasantry, differentially, through ideological and political misarticulation of the actual economic contradictions. The part of Poulantzas’s argument that has been omitted by Sukhwinder is this:

“On the basis of this secondary contradiction, *fascism manages to disguise the principal contradiction in the countryside, between the big landowners and the popular classes, in a quite specific way. Fascism originally appears much more as a reaction of the whole agricultural sector against the capitalization of agriculture, than as the direct expression of the reaction of the poor peasantry, i.e. the rural petty-bourgeoisie, against the big landowners.* Under fascism, this petty-bourgeois revolt is directed almost exclusively against credit (banking capital) and the ‘profiteering Jew’, against falling prices on the urban market, and against the industrial proletariat.” (Poulantzas. 1979. *op.cit.*, p. 281, *emphasis ours*)

Poulantzas argues further (this, too, has been omitted by Sukhwinder from Poulantzas’s position on the role of different classes in rural fascism):

“Because it can present itself as the protector of agriculture as a whole, fascism has from the beginning much closer political and organizational ties with big property in the countryside than in the towns, where it expresses the reaction of the urban petty-bourgeoisie to monopoly capital in a new way. *This does not of course mean that fascism has no ideological or even demagogic role among the poor peasantry. It means that, in the countryside, fascism is much more an ideological and military movement with direct ties to big property, rather than a movement that stems from the rural petty-bourgeoisie.* Fascism anyway had to pay the landed proprietors this price for the domination of monopoly capital, which it effected at their expense. Lastly, one of the basic tasks of fascism was to divide the popular classes of the towns from the popular classes in the countryside, by using the myth of peasant ‘unity.’” (*ibid.*, p. 281-82, *emphasis ours*)

Poulantzas's position on this question is best summarized in the following excerpt, which Sukhwinder has missed due to his habit of fishing around for quotations using the fly-rod of the index, rather than reading the entire book:

"Fascism, then, presented a demagogic face to the poor peasantry, making false promises of 'colonization' and land distribution. But there was more to it: *fascism thoroughly exploited both the particular forms assumed by petty-bourgeois rebel ideology in the countryside, and the ideological theme of the solidarity and community of the soil.* It was this corporatist aspect which prevailed in the ideological role of fascism in the countryside. *Like the emphasis on ties of blood and ties of the soil, on personal loyalty, etc., this aspect linked up with the survivals of feudal ideology in 'rural fascism'.*

"*This fusion of rural petty-bourgeois rebel ideology with the relics of feudal ideology is what gives rural fascism its originality.* It is to be distinguished from urban fascism, in which monopoly capitalist forms of ideology are much more pronounced." (*ibid*, p. 280, *emphasis ours*)

Please note where Sukhwinder stops quoting Poulantzas: "They (the rural petty-bourgeoisie) were also more divided than the urban petty-bourgeoisie." Why? What was the reason? Was it something inherent in the class nature of the rural petty-bourgeoisie? No! Had Sukhwinder read a little further, he would have found the reason given by Poulantzas. Poulantzas argues that there is nothing essential about this behavior of the rural petty-bourgeoisie. It was precisely the ideological articulations that determined this division within the rural petty-bourgeoisie. Poulantzas points out:

"*This (division) was not, as a whole series of 'third force' ideologists would like to have it, because of the innately 'democratic' powers of small-holding.* This idea, which led Tasca to maintain that one of the reasons for the success of fascism in Italy was the absence of agrarian reform and a significant class of peasant smallholders (*proprietari contadini*) is quite incorrect. In fact, like the urban petty-bourgeoisie, the small-holders are at once drawn towards 'democratic' radicalism, and, as Marx pointed out, especially likely, in given circumstances, to give massive support to Bonapartist forms of State. *Their division over fascism relates to its specific ideological and political features. Fascism is originally an urban phenomenon, and in the countryside it is directly tied to big property, which has feudal ideological features clashing with the ideological traits of the small-holders.*" (*ibid*, p. 282-83, *emphasis ours*)

Thus, there is nothing innate to the nature of rural petty-bourgeoisie which makes it relatively less attracted to or immune to fascism. What Poulantzas says about the ideological character of the big landed property in the then Germany or Italy, is important to note here. Does that apply to India or other capitalist countries today? Is the big property in rural areas of India thoroughly imbued with feudal ideology today? It was precisely the direct support of this class of big property (rich landlords and farmers) to fascism, which created *a plurality of response among the rural petty-bourgeoisie* to fascism, as Poulantzas points out. In other cases, it is very much possible that fascism gains much larger support among the rural petty-bourgeoisie (not as big as urban petty-bourgeoisie, due to very different *place* that it occupies, economically, politically and ideologically, in the capitalist social formation) in different ideological and political situation, where the big landed property, the big landowners, are not *particularly imbued* with feudal ideology. Sukhwinder fails to apply Marxism creatively in the concrete conditions of the present. He tries to force-fit the reality in the categories engendered by a reality that has now become past.

Secondly, Poulantzas points out that fascism as a movement does not *stem (originate)* from rural petty-bourgeoisie, whereas it does stem from the urban petty-bourgeoisie. In countryside,

its original link is with the big landed property, which in some ways is much stronger (“much closer political and organizational ties with big property in the countryside than in the towns” as Poulantzas points out). In countryside, fascism moves to win over different sections of peasantry with varying success, on the basis of ideological and political misarticulations.

Third, Poulantzas also argues that despite the real contradictions between the classes of the rich peasantry and landlords on the one hand and the poor peasantry on the other, fascism does win over sections of middle and even poor peasantry by political and ideological misarticulation of the real contradictions. That is why Poulantzas writes, “On the basis of this secondary contradiction, fascism manages to disguise the principal contradiction in the countryside, between the big landowners and the popular classes, in a quite specific way. Fascism originally appears much more as a reaction of the whole agricultural sector against the capitalization of agriculture, than as the direct expression of the reaction of the poor peasantry, i.e. the rural petty-bourgeoisie, against the big landowners.” (quoted above).

Moreover, despite the contradiction between the rural elite (the big landlords and rich farmers) who supported fascists, on the one hand, and the middle and poor peasantry, landless small tenants and agricultural workers, on the other, *a sizeable chunk of the latter did support fascism*. Why? David Abraham points out:

“...the relationship of the peasant majority to the large landowners was very different from that of the worker majority toward the factory owners. Even when organized, peasants, unlike unionized workers, did not generally adopt an adversary posture toward their putative betters. Peasants simply did not hate the big estate owners the way workers hated the Herren of industry.” (Abraham, D. 2003. ‘State and Classes in Weimer Germany’ in Dobkowski, Walliman (eds.) *Radical Perspectives on the Rise of Fascism in Germany 1919-45*, Cornerstone Publication, Kharagpur, p. 33)

Abraham points out how the support of peasantry swerved towards fascism after 1930:

“Further support for the ruling bloc (of Weimer Republic) was provided by the bulk of the peasantry. Unlike the “allies”, these “supporters” of the ruling bloc obtained little in exchange for their support. Certain half-truths propagated by ruling-bloc-ideology shored up this support: an identity of the interests shared by all agriculturalists, big and small alike, and a fear of anti-property, urban reds. Although peasant support was retained within the range of the older bourgeois parties until 1930, *it too seemed to disappear overnight (among Protestants at any rate) as soon as an uncompromising advocate presented itself. Once the republic appeared to announce itself to the peasantry only with the tax collector, the peasantry announced itself to the republic with the “Emperor.”* (ibid, p. 37, *emphasis ours*)

Moreover, Sukhwinder completely misses the point: *it was precisely because fascism was able to win over sections of rural petty-bourgeoisie (middle and poor peasantry) besides the support of the big landlords and rich peasantry in Germany and Italy that it emerged victorious in these countries, whereas in countries where it could not win over this support, it failed to rise to power.*

Geoff Eley makes precisely this point, which Sukhwinder, despite quoting him, has missed:

“*On the one hand, peasants proved especially important to a fascist party’s ultimate prospects, because the transition from ideological sect to mass movement was achieved as much in the countryside as the towns. This was true of both Italy (1920-21) and Germany (1928-32).* Conversely, some of the smaller fascist movements owed their weakness to country population’s relative immunity to their appeal.” (Eley, Geoff. 2003. ‘What Produces Fascism?’ in Dobkowski,

Walliman (eds.), *Radical Perspectives on the Rise of Fascism*, Cornerstone Publication, Kharagpur, p. 83)

This is what Eley writes in the part exactly before what Sukhwinder has quoted. This is what happens when you scavenge through books for quotations supporting your idiocy and opportunism, instead of reading books from cover to cover and trying to understand them.

So, in this particular part, what Sukhwinder fails to understand is this: *first, the historicity of divided support among peasantry for fascism in Germany and Italy; second, notwithstanding this, a sizeable chunk of rural petty-bourgeoisie did support fascism in both these countries and this became one of the reasons why fascism was able to rise to power in these countries; three, fascism can stem as a reactionary social movement from among the urban petty-bourgeoisie because the form and process of uprooting of the rural petty-bourgeoisie by the agricultural capitalist class is quite different from the form and process of uprooting of the urban petty-bourgeoisie by the industrial-financial capital; four, the above difference does not mean that the rural petty-bourgeoisie is immune to fascist demagoguery; five, fascist appeal develops in this class at a different phase in the process of rise of fascism and it assumes different ideological forms.*

Had Sukhwinder read the books from which he selectively picks quotes using 'search' tool or index, he would not have sanitized the rural petty-bourgeoisie. By the way, it seems to us that this attempt might have something to do with Sukhwinder's apologetic attitude towards the capitalist farmers' and kulaks' movement in Punjab, regarding which he is performing an intellectual break-dance, full of acrobatic and sudden jerky movements, from the question of the MSP to the question of rich farmers and *kulaks* being an ally against "centralist Delhi" in "federalist" Punjab. Be that as it may, this much is clear: again, Sukhwinder falls flat-faced into the slime of stupidity.

8. Sukhwinder on "Necessary Characteristics of Fascism": Dogmatism and Historicism at its Worst

Describing the "necessary characteristic features" of fascism, Sukhwinder writes:

"1) Fascism is inseparably linked with the economic and political crisis of capitalism. Due to capitalist development the conditions of life of petty-bourgeoisie remain uncertain and instable. They swing towards fascism in the absence of a revolutionary alternative. Fascism, in its social structure, is a reactionary social movement of petty-bourgeoisie.

"2) Party based on ideology and cadres is a necessary characteristic of fascism.

"3) Fascism considers nation to be above all class contradictions and class interests. Nationalism is an important part of its ideology.

"4) To feed militarism and to initiate wars of occupation fascism takes the support of national chauvinism. Italian communist Palmiro Togliati said, "*War has an important place in all of fascism's activities.*"

"5) To crush workers' movement fascism embarks on organised violence. For this it relies on gangs too. Extra-legal violence or violence from below is a mandatory characteristic of fascism.

"6) Racial ideology and racial massacres have central importance for fascism. In India, fascism terrorises religious minorities, particularly Muslims and Christians and uses communal ideology to execute killings. The essence of both is the same meaning enticing a section of masses to fight against the other. To

present a false enemy for a section of the people in the form of other religions, races. It erects the concept of othering.

"7) Fascism in power abolishes all bourgeois democratic liberties. It abolishes bourgeois parliament, bourgeois opposition parties and it goes to the extent of abolishing rival factions in fascist party. (Sukhwinder, *op.cit.*, 23-24)

Sukhwinder contends further:

"Ignazio Silone says that, *"fascism had to be distinguished from the two other typical forms of capitalist reaction: in developed countries by conservative parties working through parliamentary means, and in less developed countries by military dictatorship. Fascism differed from the latter, he argued, by the mobilisation of a mass movement, and from the former by its hostility to parliamentarism and constitutionality."* (*ibid*, p. 24, author's emphasis)

Again, seeking justification for his erroneous thesis from classics, Sukhwinder argues:

"Comrade Stalin too presents the fascist form of bourgeois state as opposed to its bourgeois democratic (parliamentary) form. He says, *"In this connection the victory of fascism in Germany must be regarded not only as a symptom of the weakness of the working class and a result of the betrayals of the working class by the Social-Democratic Party, which paved the way for fascism; it must also be regarded as a symptom of the weakness of the bourgeoisie, of the fact that the bourgeoisie is no longer able to rule by the old methods of parliamentarism and bourgeois democracy, and, as a consequence, is compelled in its home policy to resort to terroristic methods of rule-as a symptom of the fact that it is no longer able to find a way out of the present situation on the basis of a peaceful foreign policy, and that, as a consequence, it is compelled to resort to a policy of war."* (*ibid*, p. 24, emphasis ours)

Finally, Sukhwinder summarizes his position on the misreading of many texts and dogmatically following some of the conjunctural assessments of a certain period in case of contemporary fascism:

"On the basis of the above characteristics fascism can be thus defined, *"Fascism is a particular form of bourgeois reaction that emerges in the imperialist stage of capitalism. It is a reactionary social movement of crisis ridden petty-bourgeoisie, which is led by an ideology and cadre based party. In the times of crisis, a fraction of monopoly capital backs it. Fascism comes to power with the slogans of blind nationalism, national purification. Fascism in power serves a fraction of monopoly capital."* (*ibid*, p. 24-25, author's emphasis)

We will show the readers point by point that wherever Sukhwinder is attempting or pretending to say anything "original" or "interpret originally", he is embarrassingly incorrect in the inanest fashion. Wherever he is relatively correct he is plagiarizing from a variety of sources, including our writings. Let us begin.

A. *Fascism, 'A Response to the Revolutionary Upsurge of Proletariat', or, 'the Absence of Revolutionary Alternative' or the Presence but 'Failure of Revolutionary Alternative': Sukhwinder's Intellectual Wobbling*

In the first point itself, Sukhwinder contradicts himself again. Elsewhere in the essay, he had contended that fascism is a response to revolutionary upsurge of the proletariat under the political leadership of a proletarian party. Threatened with the prospect of revolution, the bourgeoisie resorts to fascist reaction and fascism rises to power. Here, he says that fascism

rises in “the absence of revolutionary alternative”. At yet another place, he argues that fascism emerges when the revolutionary alternative is there, but it fails to realize! *Why so many different positions?* Because Sukhwinder has quoted from variety of disparate sources without understanding the fact that their positions on this question are different! For instance, on this question he quotes Comintern, Poulantzas, Gramsci, Zetkin in line; however, Poulantzas, Zetkin and also Gramsci believe that fascism rises on the ruins of the revolutionary working-class movement, whereas, Comintern believed that fascism is a response of the reactionary bourgeoisie to the threat of proletarian revolution. It was only towards the Seventh Congress, that Comintern slowly and tacitly began to move from this erroneous idea.

Moreover, Sukhwinder also gets dense about this question because he is utterly incapable of making a distinction between the existence of a strong organized workers’ movement clinging to economic benefits already-won, under the social-democratic leadership on the one hand, and a revolutionary proletarian movement under the leadership of the communist vanguard that aims to go beyond the limits posed by capitalism, on the other. Sukhwinder gets dizzy about it and as a consequence totters like a pathetic “economist” here.

Second point is well-established among Marxists, though in different and scattered forms. There is no need to make a comment on that except that Sukhwinder has just paraphrased on this question from previous writings, including our writings, talks and lectures (for instance, my lecture at this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7vDvajbntFo>, from 24 April 2020). In our writings on fascism, we have time and again pointed to the *particularity* or *particular unity of the fascist ideology* and *cadre-based organization*, as two universal *differentia specifica* of fascism.

B. The Particularity of the Fascist Ideology: Sukhwinder’s Incurable Philistinism

The third point of Sukhwinder in the above excerpt reveals his ignorance regarding the particular unity of the fascist ideology. *Fascism does not consider nation above all, above class-contradiction and classes, as Sukhwinder believes! In fact, in his writings, it is Sukhwinder himself who has, in practice, considered ‘nation’ and ‘nationalism’ above class and class contradictions! Fascism and fascists are not that stupid.*

Thus, ideologically, what does fascism do? Fascism constructs ‘a purely ideological community’ based on race, communal identity, region, even caste, national identity, or ethnicity. *It is not nation as a historical category that fascism talks about.* For instance, Aryan race is not a nation; in fact, the German Jews were no less German than their non-Jewish German counterparts; ‘Hindu Rashtra’ based on communal identity, is not a nation; the glory of the great Roman Empire and Roman people, that Mussolini appealed to, was not based particularly on the Italian nation! Fascism is not based on nationalism as such. *It is based on a chauvinistic ideology, which constructs a ‘purely ideological community’ and calls it ‘nation’, even though it is not.* This purely ideological community for Hindutva fascists is ‘Hindu Rashtra’ which resides in the land between *Sindhu* and *Sapta-Sindhu* and the Hindu identity for them is semitized and flexible enough to incorporate everyone in it, except Muslims and in certain cases the Christians, because, as Savarkar argued, they adhere to religions that originated not in the land between *Sindhu* and *Sapta-Sindhu* and therefore their ‘fatherland’ and ‘holy land’ is not in this land. Therefore, their loyalty can never truly be with the community (‘Hindu Rashtra’) that resides in the land between *Sindhu* and *Sapta-Sindhu*. However, all other religions/sects that originated in this land, even the protestant sects, belong to the fold of Hindu Rashtra, the Hindu civilization. So, this flexible identity incorporates the Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs, etc.

Now, we know that this idea is *purely ideological and fetishistic* because it has nothing *real* about it. *Such a community, of course, does not constitute a nation. In fact, it does not constitute anything real.* That is precisely why it is ‘purely ideological’. However, a ‘purely ideological community’ is constructed by fascism by the use of chauvinistic ideology (the unit of which may be race, religion, caste, region, language, ethnicity, even a particular construct of national identity, etc.

depending on the particular historical context of a country) and this particular community based on a negative identity (based on *not* what the members of this community *are*, but on the basis of *what they are not*) is called as 'nation' by the fascists.

Thus, Sukhwinder relies on some popular writers on fascism who argue that 'jingoism' and 'nationalism' are necessary constituent elements of fascism and its ideology. No. That is only the superficial argument. In essence, the basic fascist ideology is construction of a 'purely ideological community' through the instrument of a chauvinistic ideology, precisely in order to construct an imaginary enemy, the other (a point that Sukhwinder plagiarizes from our writings) through the instrument of 'othering' (another element of our analysis that Sukhwinder plagiarizes) based on the same 'purely ideological community'. In fact, the 'purely ideological community' and 'imaginary enemy' are constructed simultaneously as a dialectical pair and this is quite natural. However, instead of understanding the basic rigorous logic that stands behind these ideological and political terms, Sukhwinder just drops them and then stupidifies them.

The point is to understand that *without qualifying what is this 'nation' of the fascists, without specifying the purely ideological character of this construct based on the chauvinistic ideology, measured in the units of race, religion, caste, region, language, ethnicity, etc., and without revealing the fact that these pathological forms of ultra-nationalism have nothing to do with the historical category of nation, as understood by Marxists, we would be accepting the claims of fascists on the face-value.* It is true that in countries where there is a nation-state, fascist chauvinistic ideology can also use the unit of a *particular construction of the national identity*; however, in any case, that will not include all the members of the *historical category of the nation*, because then the process of othering and construction of a false enemy cannot be undertaken. This chauvinistic ideology is the essence of fascism's pathological forms of ultra-nationalism. However, this does not change the essence of the problem.

Therefore, we, in our writings, while discussing the nationalist claims of fascism have always qualified what the 'nation' of the fascists consists of. Without this qualification, accepting that nationalism necessarily forms a constitutive component of fascism is a highly misleading argument, even when the ultra-nationalist and jingoist rhetoric is used by the BJP against the "threat" posed by China or Pakistan. Sukhwinder makes no such qualification and therefore his identification of fascism with nationalism reeks of journalistic descriptions of fascism.

C. Is War a "Necessary" Constitutive Element of Fascism? Sukhwinder's War Against the Marxist Concept of Fascism Continues

Fourth point of Sukhwinder is even more inane. War is not a "necessary" or universal component of fascism. It was a component of fascism in countries which were imperialist, were part of two wars with their own kind of trauma or pathology, where fascism rose to power in the early-Twentieth century for particular historical reasons. The fact is that Sukhwinder does not understand the difference between two things: the *conjunctural* and *contingent* things and the *general, systemic* and *structural* things. When fascism emerged in relatively advanced and imperialist countries or countries which historically had a colonial empire, in the general context of economic crisis, it was natural that war-mongering and foreign aggression would be an inherent element of fascism in these countries. What else can one expect when fascism would rise to power in imperialist countries and colonial powers? In fact, one of the propaganda items of the Nazis was the return of German colonies, which had been snatched away from Germany under the Versailles Treaty. Similarly, Italy emerged a victor from the First World War, but in a very fragile economic condition vis-à-vis other imperialist powers in Africa. As a consequence, the imperialist aggression of fascist Italy, too, was rooted in the particular location of this country in the history and political economy of the contemporary world.

Another problem with Sukhwinder's argument is that if war and foreign aggression is a "necessary" characteristic of fascism, then fascism cannot ever rise to power in any relatively-backward post-colonial capitalist country of the so-called "Third World", because most of them

neither need nor can afford to be in wars to annex areas, countries, regions, etc., that is, in imperialist aggression.

Sukhwinder also does not understand that fascism in the early-Twentieth century rose to power in an imperialist world whose *modus vivendi* was still colonial, semi-colonial and neo-colonial system. Therefore, any new country entering the rank of capitalist countries would immediately be embroiled in the scramble for colonies, either as aggressor or at the receiving end. *That is not the situation even for the imperialist countries today.* On this question, Sukhwinder's particularly historicist dogmatism is at full display. Togliatti's comment about a particular conjuncture, where war indeed was a component element of fascism, proves nothing about the Twenty-first century fascism, nor Togliatti had even an iota of the idea that his historical analysis of a conjuncture would be used by an intellectual Lilliput almost after a hundred years in this half-witted fashion.

Sukhwinder's fifth point, again reflects the scattered character of the understanding of the editor of 'Pratibaddh'. Sukhwinder argues that fascism uses organized violence against workers' movement and it relies on gangs, too! Well, fascists not simply "relies on gangs too", fascism *primarily* relies on its gangs, much before it rises to power and is able to use state violence. It is one of the ways in which fascism *proves its candidacy for the political leadership of the capitalist class: reactionary social movement of the petty-bourgeoisie as a counter-weight to the workers' movement!* Sukhwinder thinks in a peculiar way. He reads flaps, scavenges for quotes, notes them down at one place, while writing about any phenomenon, but fails to understand the rigorous dialectical link between different factors and forces that contribute to the emergence of that phenomenon. That is why, in this case, what is essential and basic to the *modus operandi* of fascism appears to Sukhwinder as something which "happens too" in fascist rise!

Sixth point again is so ridiculous that so many pages can be written about it. However, we will limit ourselves to those basic points which are sufficient to shed light on the particularly slow-witted character of editor *saab*. Racial ideology and racial massacres are not an inherent part of fascism, as Sukhwinder claims in this point. Chauvinistic ideology is the constitutive part of fascism, with its unit as race, religion, caste, region, language, or anything else, whichever works for fascists in a particular historical context to construct an 'imaginary enemy'. It has been noted by a number of scholars that pragmatism is one of the component parts of fascist ideology. Racism *per se* has no causal relation with fascism. It can be any chauvinistic ideology.

D. Fascism and the Form of Bourgeois Parliamentary System: The Intellectual Poverty of Sukhwinder's Dogmatic Credo

Now, we come to the last and most important recurring error of Sukhwinder. The seventh point. The contention that fascism must abolish the form of bourgeois parliamentary democracy and with it all bourgeois democratic liberties. Without this, according to Sukhwinder, fascism cannot rise to power. It must also remove all opposition within the fascist party. For this, Sukhwinder quotes Poulantzas, mostly, but others also, including Stalin, Dimitrov, etc. Let us probe the correctness or incorrectness of this claim.

First of all, let us discuss Stalin's quote and the quote that Sukhwinder *thinks* belongs to Ignazio Silone but actually belongs to Beetham.

Sukhwinder has quoted Stalin selectively and then also misunderstood him. Stalin is not making a universal judgment here. He is discussing about the particular cases of fascist rise that the world had been witnessing then and the communists had been trying to understand and theorize. Just before the excerpt that Sukhwinder has quoted, Stalin writes:

"It is not surprising that fascism has now become the most fashionable commodity among war-mongering bourgeois politicians. *I am referring not only to fascism in general, but, primarily, to fascism of the German type, which is*

wrongly called national-socialism—wrongly because the most searching examination will fail to reveal even an atom of socialism in it.”

Stalin himself is saying that he is primarily referring to the fascism of the German type. Moreover, had Stalin made any such generalization regarding fascism based on the experience of fascism in Germany and Italy, which were quite novel to the world, there is no reason for communists *today* to accept that generalization, despite the evident changes in the *modus operandi* of fascism. Moreover, Stalin never set out to present a systematic analysis of fascism and all his references to fascism are part of his fragmentary comments, while discussing other issues. That is why, even Pilsudski of Poland and even Japan are referred to as fascists, which I do not think, even Sukhwinder would agree with.

The fact is that Comintern, the contemporary communist leaders and theoreticians were striving to understand the phenomenon of fascism and there were many mistakes and mechanical interpretations involved in their theorizations. It is understandable, as they were trying to comprehend a phenomenon that was still unfolding. What they did not know is that almost a hundred years after their formulations, someone would be so dogmatic and inane to repeat their formulations *ad nauseum* to understand fascism in the Twenty-first century.

As far as Silone’s quote is concerned, Sukhwinder has again paraphrased it, and that too, not himself but taken it from David Beetham’s ‘Introduction’ to the anthology *Marxists in Face of Fascism*. Thus, he has performed a ‘paraphrasing of the paraphrased’! However, Sukhwinder lacks the basic intellectual ability, integrity and honesty and put something within quotation marks which actually does not belong to the one it has been attributed to.

With Ignazio Silone’s quote, Sukhwinder once again commits the same blunder that he commits repeatedly in anything that he ever writes. We have demonstrated this time and again and in present essay also. What has happened this time is this: Sukhwinder did not read the original writings of Silone. Instead, he read the introduction written by David Beetham to the anthology *Marxists in Face of Fascism*. *This time, too, Sukhwinder could not understand where the authorial voice began and where the quote from the original source ended. As a consequence, Sukhwinder presents the words of Beetham as the words of Ignazio Silone!*

There is another reason how we know he did not read Silone. Sukhwinder subscribes to the view of Silone, which has so many problems and weaknesses that we cannot even begin to point them out. However, if Sukhwinder had read the original two pieces by Silone included in the aforementioned anthology, he would have known that *Silone did not believe that militarism is an intrinsic tendency of fascism*. Sukhwinder has made his list of “necessary characteristics” from different book-flaps and introductions and prefaces to different anthologies edited by Beetham, Köves and Mazumdar, Dobkowski and Walliman, etc. *However, in each case, he fails at many levels. Sukhwinder fails to understand who is saying what. He also fails to understand the overall position of any author.* The same is true about Sukhwinder’s enumeration of the line of “fascism means war and militarism” (it has been copied from different statements made in the Comintern and a few revolutionary communists, who had not often been talking about universal features of fascism, but the fascism as it was unfolding before their eyes). Silone argues:

“This is not to deny that there is also a militaristic element in fascism, *but it is not its basic one.*” (Silone, I. 1983. ‘What is Fascism?’, in Beetham (ed.) *Marxists in Face of Fascism*, Manchester University Press, p. 239, *emphasis ours*)

Had Sukhwinder read the original article of Silone, he also could not have “theorized” that in economically advanced and wealthy countries fascism cannot arise, because the ruling class has sufficient economic resources at its disposal to prevent the economic crisis from “developing into” political crisis, an argument which smacks of the most vulgar breed of economism and does not understand the meaning of the relative autonomy of politics. Because Silone writes:

“Fascism originated in a few countries with *relatively* weak economies, where a unified national state was still a recent creation and lacked any rooted tradition among the masses...*German fascism proves, however, that economic advance is insufficient to render a country immune from fascist threat.*” (*ibid*, p. 241, *emphasis ours*)

We certainly do not subscribe in general to Silone’s views for a variety of reasons. His contribution was to distinguish fascism from other forms of reaction like what he called consolidation of “reactionary tendencies of old/ancient states”, military dictatorship, etc. However, the way he makes the distinction has many problems. First, he ascribed the form of military dictatorship to backward capitalist or non-capitalist countries only (Beetham, *op.cit.*, p. 239), which is certainly incorrect. It is not necessary that this form would emerge only in the backward or non-capitalist countries, as the history of the modern world shows. He also thinks that military dictatorships cannot reorganize new forms of industry for the big monopoly capital (p. 239). This, too, is incorrect, as the example of Park Chung Hee’s military dictatorship in South Korea and military dictatorship in many other countries have shown. Despite the distinctions that he makes between fascism and other forms of reaction, Silone considers Polish case of Pilsudski, the Austrian case as well as the Finnish case in the first part of the Twentieth century as examples of fascism (p. 241, 242). The same is true of his inarticulate equating of fascism with abandoning of the form of parliamentarism, even though Silone is only describing what he had been witnessing in Germany, Italy and from his own perspective in other countries like Poland, Austria, Finland, etc. Anyway, Silone’s account is not going to be very helpful for ‘Marxists in face of fascism today.’

Now that we have discussed the utter inability of Sukhwinder to understand what he reads (which is only book-flaps and introductions anyway!) and what he quotes, let us come to the crux of the matter.

What is the general relationship between bourgeois parliamentarism (one form of bourgeois dictatorship, namely, the form of bourgeois democracy) and fascism (one of the exceptional forms of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie)? Are they universally and trans-historically incompatible? Can we evaluate this relationship merely on the basis of the particular experience of fascist regimes in certain countries, like Germany and Italy in the early part of the Twentieth century? Or do we need to analyze the particular stage of capitalism and the particular phases of the different stages of capitalism? *Why did fascism do away with the shell of bourgeois democracy in the first part of the Twentieth century? How the state project of fascism took shape and why did it take shape in the way that it did? Are there structural reasons behind that? What could be the reason to argue that fascism as a form of bourgeois rule (just a bourgeois democracy, too, is a form of bourgeois rule with a particular form, that is, parliamentary system), must materialize in exactly the same fashion in which it did in its first historical examples?* Let us delve deeper on all these questions.

First of all, let us deal with the question, why it was necessary for fascism to destroy the shell of bourgeois democracy in the early-Twentieth century. The reason is simple: *bourgeois parliamentarism as a form of bourgeois rule still had not exhausted all of its bourgeois democratic potential. The same is true of the bourgeoisie as a political class.* It still retained some of this potential in the period preceding the Second World War and particularly before the end of the Great Boom. Why? Because the very political economy of capitalism after the beginning of the long recession and the neoliberal phase of the imperialist stage of capitalism, underwent profound changes. The nature of crises, too, underwent significant changes, in exactly the same way that Engels and several other Marxists of the late-Nineteenth and early-Twentieth centuries had predicted. We have quoted Engels at length above. Readers can refer to the section on Sukhwinder’s particularly ridiculous views on crisis, because he failed to plagiarize properly and correctly from us and other sources by misunderstanding what he was plagiarizing. This happens to him regularly.

In the period of long recession since the 1970s and the concurrent political offensive of the bourgeoisie worldwide, known as neoliberalism, particular versions of which took shape according to the exigencies of the particular 'national' bourgeoisies in particular capitalist countries, the prediction of Lenin that with the passage of time, the democratic and republican bourgeoisie would be completely replaced by reactionary and chauvinistic bourgeoisie in the stage of imperialism, came true. The bourgeoisie in the particular neoliberal phase of the imperialist stage since the last quarter of the Twentieth century, has lost most of its democratic potential in varying degrees in different countries. The bourgeois state in its parliamentary form, too, has become increasingly authoritarian and autocratic, losing almost all of its democratic pretensions and potentialities.

One of the principal symptoms of this is the increasing shift of political power and political weight within the apparatus of the state from the legislative to the executive. This has happened not in a *contingent* fashion (the form in which it had happened in the times of Marx, too, which Marx had clearly identified) but in a *systematic* fashion. *This authoritarian turn of the bourgeoisie and bourgeois state today is not a knee-jerk, contingent and cataclysmic reaction to a catastrophic and cataclysmic crisis. It is a systemic and structural response to a crisis which does not, in general, assume a cataclysmic/catastrophic form, but assumes a chronic and protracted form, namely the form of a long recession, peppered with serious collapses (such as the 'long depression' since 2007-08).*

The very political economy of capitalism has undergone profound changes in the period following the end of the 'long boom' by the end of the 1960s. As a consequence, the political character of the bourgeoisie also underwent significant changes in this phase of the imperialist stage. *The form of bourgeois democracy became increasingly bereft of essence. The shell that is, parliamentary system, remains but the essence, that is its bourgeois democratic content, is in perpetual decay. The interesting point to note is that this decay is perpetually incomplete, too.* These are significant changes with equally significant implications for the *modus operandi* and *modus vivendi* of the rise of exceptional bourgeois regimes, including fascist regimes.

Are we the only ones who have recognized these changes? No. After our position on fascism in the Twenty-first century had assumed a relatively more complete form, with its foundations firmly consolidated, we read the last work of Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism*. Despite several serious weaknesses, especially in terms of its political prescriptions, which stemmed from the Althusserian Marxism itself, besides the pathology of the European left that emerged due to the failure of socialist experiment in the Soviet Union and the subsequent misdeeds of social-imperialism; Poulantzas makes certain accurate observations, though in undeveloped form and in the form of allusions, which revealed the changes in the content and form of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

This work was published when a half-decade of neoliberal policies in Europe and America had lapsed. However, in the short period itself, many of the new characteristics of the authoritarian bourgeois state in the phase of neoliberalism had manifested themselves. Poulantzas was one of the first Marxists to mark these changes. Poulantzas argued that capitalism is in a long-term crisis now and this also creates a new political situation. In this new political situation, the power within the bourgeois state apparatus would shift increasingly to the executive, the form of bourgeois parliamentary democracy would be retained, but it would become increasingly empty, and this brings several qualitative changes in the way in which fascism and other exceptional forms would emerge. The process would not be completely gradual, but the ruptures inherent in the process would assume novel forms. This was the last work of Poulantzas. Let us hear from Poulantzas himself, what he has to say regarding the profound changes in the nature of the bourgeois state as well as its forms in the phase of neoliberalism.

Poulantzas points out:

"In western capitalist societies, the State is undergoing considerable modification. A new form of State is currently being imposed – we would have to be blind not to notice (and passion always blinds, even if it springs from the noblest motives). For want of a better term, I shall refer to this state form as authoritarian statism. This will perhaps indicate the general direction of change: namely, intensified state control over every sphere of socio-economic life combined with radical decline of the institutions of political democracy and with draconian and multiform curtailment of so-called 'formal' liberties, whose reality is being discovered now that they are going overboard. Although some of these changes have been operating for a long time, the present-day State marks a veritable turn in relation to previous state forms." (Poulantzas, N. 2000. *State, Power, Socialism*, Verso, London, p. 203-04)

Poulantzas opines that these changes are taking place due to the changes in the *modus operandi* of world capitalism in the present (neoliberal) phase of imperialism:

"More fundamentally, therefore, authoritarian statism is bound up with the periodization of capitalism into distinct stages and phases. It seems to correspond to the current phase of imperialism and monopoly capitalism in the dominant countries, in the way that the liberal State referred to the competitive stage of capitalism and the various forms of interventionist State to the previous phases of monopoly capitalism. Authoritarian statism is thus dependent upon those structural modifications in the relations of production and the processes and social division of labour which characterize the present phase at both the world and national levels." (*ibid*, p. 204, *emphasis ours*)

This turn to authoritarian state in the period of neoliberalism is not simply the strengthening of the state, but also at the same time reveals its increasingly fragile character:

"If this image is false, it is not only because of the structural limits that mark all capitalist States: authoritarian statism is articulated to the political crisis and the crisis of the State. It is also a response to the elements of crisis, including those of its own crisis. Thus, such statism does not designate univocal strengthening of the State but constitutes the effect of a tendency to strengthening-weakening of the State, the poles of which develop in an uneven manner. The authoritarian statism of the contemporary State is terrifyingly real. But in spite of this (or rather because of it) the State remains a clay-footed colossus, fleeing ahead on treacherous ground; it should indeed be remembered that wild animals are most dangerous when they are wounded." (*ibid*, p. 205)

Further, Poulantzas refers to the current phase of world capitalism:

"The whole of the current phase is permanently and structurally characterized by a peculiar sharpening of the generic elements of political crisis and state crisis – a sharpening which is itself articulated to the economic crisis of capitalism. Authoritarian statism appears also as the result of, and as a response to, the sharpening of these elements of crisis. But in certain European countries, we are witnessing a real political crisis which finds expression, moreover, in a crisis of the State." (*ibid*, p. 206)

Poulantzas is very careful in pointing out that this authoritarian state is *still not an exceptional state form* like fascism, but a new reality of the present phase of capitalism in which the bourgeois democratic *form* is retained, whereas the *content* is in perpetual decay:

"Thus, the emergence of authoritarian statism cannot be identified either with a new fascist order or with a tendency towards fascism. The present-day State is neither the new form of a genuine exceptional State nor, in itself, a transitional

form on the road to such a State: *it rather represents the new 'democratic' form of the bourgeois republic in the current phase of capitalism. If I may dare say so, it is both better (in maintaining a certain democratic reality) and worse (in that it is not merely the fruit of a conjuncture which need only be reversed for shrunken liberties to be restored).*" (*ibid*, p. 208-09, *emphasis ours*)

Poulantzas immediately reminds us that he is not implicating that in this stage exceptional states cannot emerge:

"I am by no means arguing that the possibility of an exceptional State is henceforth excluded in Europe – whether in the shape of fascism or in that of military dictatorship or a *strong-arm neo-Bonapartism*." (*ibid*, p. 209)

Here Poulantzas's comments need to be understood in the historical context in which they were made. It is the late-1970s. Many countries were still colonies, semi-colonies or neo-colonies. However, today these observations have a universal applicability to the bourgeois state in all *capitalist countries*, not only those of Europe. Even then, they perfectly applied to the US, too. However, Poulantzas refers only to Europe as it was his particular area of research.

Then Poulantzas alludes to the persistent and protracted nature of the present crisis, the resultant changes in the state (rise of authoritarian state and decay of the democratic potentialities of the bourgeois democratic form) and the fact that in the new conjuncture, the rise of fascism would not assume the old form:

"The present-day State exhibits a certain peculiarity which we should now note. *In a phase when the generic elements of crisis undergo structural intensification, even corresponding in some countries to a real political or state crisis, fascist elements or tendencies appear in the democratic form of State to a much more marked degree than previously.* Authoritarian statism also involves the establishment of an entire institutional structure serving to prevent a rise in popular struggles and the dangers which that holds for class hegemony. This veritable arsenal, which is not simply of a legal-constitutional character, does not always come to the fore in the exercise of power: it is revealed to the mass of the population (that is, to all except certain 'anti-social' elements) above all through sudden jolts to its functioning. *Hidden under a bushel, this arsenal is still in the republic's reserve-stock, ready to be unleashed in a fascist-type enterprise.* Probably for the first time in the history of democratic States, the present form not only contains scattered elements of totalitarianism, but crystallizes their organic disposition in a *permanent structure* running parallel to the official State. Indeed, this duplication of the State seems to be a structural feature of authoritarian statism, involving not a watertight dissociation between the official State and the structure in question, but their functional overlapping and constant symbiosis. ***As a result, any fascist-type process that may be unleashed will undoubtedly not take the form that it did in the past.***" (*ibid*, p. 209-10, *emphasis ours*)

The new forms which fascist rise will assume, would consist in the internal take-over and infiltration from within, rather than 'outside' infiltration, as happened in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy:

"Unlike the previous experiences of fascism, however, *such a process would involve not so much outside infiltration or investment of the state apparatus as a break within the State following lines that have already been traced in its present configuration.*" (*ibid*, p. 210, *emphasis ours*)

Poulantzas alludes to the reason for this change:

“In a parallel process, the sharpening of contradictions within the dominant classes has also become a permanent, structural feature of the current phase. This is true of contradictions between monopoly and non-monopoly capital stemming from the present forms and rhythms of the concentration of capital and from the transformations which these induce in the relations of production; and it is also true of the contradictions that have grown within monopoly capital itself. All these contradictions are becoming intensified in the context of economic crisis and can only be fully grasped if we take into account the present conditions of the internationalization of capital... Taken as a whole, these factors define a structural characteristic of the present phase: namely, the hidden but permanent instability of the bourgeoisie’s hegemony in the dominant countries.” (ibid, p. 211-12, emphasis ours)

Further:

“The paradox lies in the fact that authoritarian statism is not simply the means with which the State equips itself to tackle the crisis, but the response to a crisis which it itself helps to produce. This role of the State proves to be at once the accelerator of the generic elements of political crisis and the generating force of that crisis itself. The counter-tendencies to the falling rate of profit, which are brought into play by the State in order to avoid crises, become factors of a crisis that, for this very reason, goes beyond a straightforward economic crisis.” (ibid, p. 212, emphasis ours)

Subsequently, Poulantzas points to the decline of the democratic potential of the form of bourgeois democracy, with the rise of authoritarian statism in the neoliberal phase:

“The decline of parliament, the strengthening of the Executive, the political role currently assumed by the state administration – these now constitute the leitmotiv of political studies. But while they are the most evident features of change in the State, they are also the most difficult to grasp in their real dimensions.

“Now, these changes have marked the State since the end of competitive capitalism and the beginnings of monopoly capitalism. Of course, just as the State’s economic role under the latter should not make us think that the liberal State of competitive capitalism did not intervene in the economy, so the strengthening of the Executive does not imply that the liberal State rested on an all-powerful parliament and the virtual absence of an Executive. Varying from country to country, the state-bureaucracy-administration has always occupied an important place in the organization and functioning of the bourgeois State. The fact remains, however, that the strengthening of executive power has been under way since the emergence of monopoly capitalism, thereby marking the passage from the liberal to the interventionist State. Moreover, the phenomenon has now assumed quite novel forms, which to an uneven degree affect the developed capitalist countries as a whole.” (ibid, p. 217, emphasis ours)

The role of parliament (the legislative) becomes increasingly formal whereas the executive becomes all powerful:

“...because the phenomenon is much more general: the decline of parliament and the strengthening of the Executive are intimately related to the growing economic role of the State.” (ibid, p. 218)

Through the example of legislations, Poulantzas shows how the process of autocratization has progressed in the current phase of neoliberalism:

“Thus, the relative distinction between legislative and executive power is becoming less sharp: through a process correlative with changes in the nature of such regulation, the power to fix norms and enact rules is shifting towards the Executive and the state administration. That legitimacy embodied by parliament which had as its frame of reference a universal rationality is gradually passing over into a legitimacy characterized by the instrumental rationality of efficiency and embodied by the Executive-administration. *Indeed, the general and universal laws still enacted by parliament – which are, at bottom, merely framework-laws – are applied only after the Executive has passed them through a process of concretization and particularization. This is the stage of decrees, judicial interpretation and civil service adjustment, without which the norms enacted by parliament do not enter into the practice of the law. It is by now quite widely known that this allows parliamentary decisions to be not only obstructed but actually distorted.*” (*ibid*, p. 218-19, *emphasis ours*)

Poulantzas argues further that the changes in the relations between the legislative and executive have profound implications for the functioning of the bourgeois multi-party representative democracy:

“Today, however, the Executive and the administration monopolize the role of organizing and directing the State with regard to the ‘power bloc’ as a whole: *that is to say, they elaborate the bloc’s long-term political interests and ensure the reproduction of its hegemony.* They therefore concentrate the role of legitimizing the State in the eyes of the dominated classes. As a result, the place of the parties of power not only declines but undergoes complete transformation. *This change has important effects on the entire state structure, involving representative democracy in a radically new mode of political functioning.*” (*ibid*, p. 222, *emphasis ours*)

Explaining further, Poulantzas points out:

“The remarkable thing today is that the decline of parliament runs parallel to a process whereby the ties of representation between deputies and State are being broken. The state bureaucracy has shut itself up in a watertight container, almost completely blocking the access channel formerly open to deputies and political parties as legitimate representatives of the ‘national interest’...In general, deputies have access to the administration only in capacities other than that of national-popular representatives: when they express particular local interests (for example, through possessing a mayor’s mandate) or, most often, when they directly embody dominant economic interests.” (*ibid*, p. 223)

Summarizing this particular point, Poulantzas writes:

“*Real power is thus rapidly being concentrated in tighter and tighter structures, tending to move towards the pole of the governmental and administrative summits.* Always of a more or less fictitious nature, the already greatly reduced separation of legislative, executive and judicial powers in the bourgeois State is itself subject to final elimination. This process is displacing the limited distribution of power among various centres that used to characterize the configuration of the State. In the same way, the political centralism of the state apparatus is continually being strengthened.” (*ibid*, p. 227)

Poulantzas then moves on to the question of changes in the nature of various non-fascist bourgeois parties, due to which it is not necessary for an exceptional state to formally suppress all of them:

“Transformation of the parties of power, transformation of their personnel from class representatives acting in the summits of the State to state representatives and plenipotentiaries (or even *missi dominici*) among social classes, transformation of the same kind in the role of parliament and of deputies – all these developments involve an important shift away from representative democracy towards authoritarian statism... In however limited a way, and of course in combination with direct popular struggle, the representative party system was always an essential mechanism whereby citizens exerted some control over state activity and ensured a certain maintenance of democratic liberties. Within the modern State, extension or curtailment, retention or suppression of political freedoms was always a direct function of the existence and role of parties. *Fascism, military dictatorship and Bonapartism have suppressed not only working-class or revolutionary parties, but all the traditional democratic parties, including bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ones. They have done so because these parties, while discharging class functions, expressed the presence of certain popular demands of which they had to take account.* The maintenance of representative democracy and democratic liberties is strictly correlated not just with plurality of parties, but also with parties functioning in an organic manner and at a certain distance from the State’s central administrative apparatus. It is the present subversion of this mode of functioning – often disguised by a continuing plurality of parties – which determines the curtailment of democratic liberties under authoritarian statism...

“Authoritarian statism hardly leaves parties with any choice: either they must subordinate themselves to the administration, or else they must give up all access to it. Citizens are obliged to face the administration head-on, and it is not surprising that, beyond their participation in elections, they are generally disaffected with parties that are supposed to represent them in the state administration. We know only too well that, besides the considerable restriction of democratic liberties already incurred, this situation lays the ground for a possible evolution of power towards Bonapartism.” (ibid, p. 230-31)

That is precisely why, today it is not necessary for fascism, too, to either abolish the form of representative multi-party parliamentary bourgeois democracy or the various political parties of the bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeoisie. The reason is that the form of the bourgeois democracy as well as the bourgeoisie as a political class has become increasingly bereft of its democratic potential and content.

The observations of Poulantzas are very original, though under-developed. The reason is obvious: Poulantzas was trying to theorize about a change which was still unfolding. These changes in the nature of the particular form of bourgeois regime were still in their initial stages. One has to give credit to Poulantzas for at least identifying these initial trends in a highly original manner. One does not have to agree with every point that Poulantzas makes in *State, Power, Socialism*, nor one has to agree to the thoroughly incorrect political prescription that he proposes. These observations of Poulantzas hold relevance in any case.

Finally, Poulantzas points to a development which is remarkable in the study of present fascism. He points out that the concentration and centralization of power in the executive runs against certain limits repeatedly, because while retaining the form/shell of bourgeois democracy, the executive cannot directly fulfill all the functions required to sustain the fragile political hegemony of the ruling class. The role of, what Poulantzas calls, the *dominant mass party* becomes important here. Poulantzas points out that on the one hand the functionaries in bureaucracy gravitate towards this party and on the other, the party itself infiltrates into the state apparatus. Poulantzas argues:

“It can play its role only by being directly present (as a state party) at the heart of the administration. But this presence is not the main factor in politicizing the administration: it is rather the effect of the political role that has now devolved upon the state administration – an effect which, in turn, extends the scope of such politicization. Charged with the role of organizing hegemony and directly confronted with socioeconomic interests that it must itself handle politically, the state administration is less and less successful in maintaining the fictitious distinction between administrative and political decisions. Of course, it was never neutral in any real sense; but it is now being openly and massively politicized as the decision-making centres become lodged in its own circuits. *In a parallel course, the dominant party lays siege to the upper reaches of the administration: it pushes its pawns forward, monopolizes the command-posts for its members or sympathizers, expels or neutralizes persistent offenders by shunting them into side-tracks, breaks the traditional civil-service hierarchy, and bends state institutions in order to create the best conditions for action.*” (*ibid*, p. 234, *emphasis ours*)

Poulantzas explains further:

“It is a two-way trajectory: *given the direct politicization of the administration, civil servants gravitate towards the dominant party just as much as the party propels its trusted men into the administration. Now inscribed in the materiality of institutions is a veritable symbiosis of the state apparatus and the dominant party.*” (*ibid*, p. 235, *emphasis ours*)

These are extremely pertinent pointers or allusions to what was to come. Of course, Poulantzas is referring to a *generic and general possibility* in the era of authoritarian state and is not talking in particular about a fascist party, and he could not have talked in such particular sense, because that would have been engaging in pure speculation; still, these observations hold immense importance for analyzing the internal take-over of the state apparatus by the fascists.

It is noteworthy that Poulantzas died in 1979. This book was published in 1978. He had not yet seen the rise of fascism to power in the neoliberal phase of the imperialist stage, as yet. However, the changes in the *modus operandi* of the bourgeois state, the changes in the nature of bourgeoisie as a political class and therefore the nature of the bourgeois political parties themselves, the necessity and possibility of the emergence of a dominant mass party, which infiltrates the state apparatus to sustain the political hegemony of the bourgeoisie in the conditions of the rise of the authoritarian state are keenly observed by Poulantzas. Of course, he could not have predicted the particular forms that this process would assume. However, in terms of the essential character of the overall process, he makes very important observations.

Poulantzas also points out that the above factor of dominant mass party does not formally abolish the multi-party system:

“Of course, as I said earlier, present-day authoritarian statism is not a disguised form of totalitarianism, similar to regimes with a one-party system in the strict sense of the term.” (*ibid*, p. 236)

Summarizing the changes in the form of bourgeois democracy with the autocratization of the state apparatus in the neoliberal phase, Poulantzas writes:

“At any rate, we should be quite clear that *authoritarian statism corresponds to important changes in democracy*. These transformations may be summarized as follows: greater exclusion of the masses from the centres of political decision-making; widening of the distance between citizens and the state apparatus, just when the State is invading the life of society as a whole; an unprecedented degree of state centralism; increased attempts to regiment the masses through

‘participation’ schemes; in essence, therefore, a sharpening of the authoritarian character of political mechanisms.” (*ibid*, p. 238, *emphasis ours*)

Poulantzas reminds repeatedly that the authoritarian state of the neoliberal phase itself is not yet fascism:

“Authoritarian statism is thus distinct from totalitarianism and cannot be regarded as a new type of fascism or as a process of creeping fascism. *Nevertheless, it is unlike the previous democratic forms of State. It does not merely carry the seeds or certain scattered elements of fascism, but crystallizes their organic arrangement in a permanent structure running parallel to the official State.*” (*ibid*, p. 239, *emphasis ours*)

We have quoted Poulantzas’s last work in such a detailed fashion for the reasons that must already be clear and apparent to the readers. These are some of the pertinent observations regarding the significant changes in the form of bourgeois representative democracy that Poulantzas made in 1978, that is, the first phase of the neoliberal offensive. Many of these elements have become much more pronounced today and many of the tendencies identified by Poulantzas have developed further and assumed myriad forms. Despite the fact that Poulantzas’s political prescriptions during this time (that of democratic socialism) smack of his desperation and pathological response to what had happened in the Soviet Union and what was happening in China, besides his Althusserianism. However, his scattered observations pertaining to the authoritarian state in the neoliberal phase allude to a new-emerging reality of the capitalist state in the neoliberal phase.

What is this new reality? *This new reality refers to the perpetual emptying of the bourgeois democratic content of a particular form of the bourgeois state, namely, multi-party, parliamentary, representative bourgeois democracy. Precisely due the very form becoming increasingly bereft of all substance, the need to abandon or abolish it becomes superfluous.* As a consequence, Poulantzas points out that, still, in the process of the rise of fascism (as well as other forms of exceptional state), there will be some elements of rupture, but this rise will assume totally new and different forms since the beginning of the neoliberal phase and the rise of what he calls ‘the authoritarian state’.

Here a caveat is necessary. Poulantzas has used the term ‘totalitarianism’ and ‘totalitarian state’. However, his meaning and usage has nothing to do with anti-communist Arendtian usage of the term. Even in terms of nuances of political analysis, Poulantzas distances himself from all non-class Arendtian notions of totalitarianism in his earlier work *Fascism and Dictatorship* itself. In his last work, he never refers to Arendt.

Bob Jessop presents a succinct summarization of Poulantzas’s observations regarding the changes in the form of the state in the neoliberal phase:

“He (Poulantzas) identified this new form as ‘authoritarian statism’. Its basic developmental tendency is described as ‘intensified state control over every sphere of socio-economic life combined with *radical decline of the institutions of political democracy* and with draconian and multiform curtailment of so-called ‘formal’ liberties’ (SPS, pp. 203-4). More specifically, Poulantzas argued that the principal elements of ‘authoritarian statism’ and its implications for representative democracy comprise: first, a transfer of power from the legislature to the executive and the concentration of power within the latter; second, an accelerated fusion between the three branches of the state – legislature, executive, and judiciary – accompanied by a decline in the rule of law; third, the functional decline of political parties as the leading channels for political dialogue with the administration and as the major forces in organizing hegemony; and finally, the growth of parallel power networks cross-cutting the

formal organization of the state and holding a decisive share in its various activities.” (Jessop, Bob. 1985. *Nicos Poulantzas: Marxist Theory and Political Strategy*, Macmillan, p. 98)

Jessop points out further that this change is permanent and belongs to the particular neoliberal phase of the imperialist stage of the capitalist mode of production:

“These changes are a permanent, structural feature of the modern state. They correspond to a peculiar sharpening of the generic elements of political and state crisis accompanying the long-term economic crisis that is supposedly besetting the entire current phase of the CMP.” (ibid, p. 98, emphasis ours)

Jessop points out how the parliamentary system is retained but becomes increasingly bereft of real political power, whereas the organs of the executive, the real and the most important part of the state apparatus, becomes all powerful:

“There is also a strong tendency towards fusion of the legislature, executive, and judiciary – each of which enjoyed at least a formal autonomy in the liberal state... Thus the institution of parliament has become a mere electoral ‘registration chamber’ with very limited powers.” (ibid, p. 101)

Jessop directly links Poulantzas’s theory of authoritarian statism with the long recession since the 1970s:

*“Thus, Poulantzas argued that the capitalist type of state is now ‘permanently and structurally characterized by a peculiar sharpening of the generic elements of political crisis and state crisis’. This reflected the long-term structural economic crisis of contemporary capitalism that was manifest in the 1970s and its condensation in a variety of political and ideological crises that were fracturing the social bases of the interventionist state...” (Jessop, Bob. 2016. *The State: Past, Present and Future*, Polity, p. 225)*

Jessop also points out that after the death of Poulantzas, the same tendencies that the latter had identified, had become even more pronounced:

“Moreover, reflecting the much greater integration of the world market now than in the mid-1970s, crisis tendencies have become more multiform, more multiscalar, and more polycentric than Poulantzas envisaged and are motivated by many more cleavages, material and ideal interests, and identities.” (ibid, p. 225)

Jessop continues:

“The various trends that Poulantzas identified in his analysis of authoritarian statism have become more marked in response to the growing political crisis in the power bloc, the representational crisis of the political system, the legitimacy and state crises associated with the twin failures of the postwar interventionist state and the neoliberal turn, and the growing challenge to the primacy of the national territorial state in the face of globalization. We should particularly note the continued decline of parliament and rule of law, the growing autonomy of the executive, the increased importance of presidential or prime ministerial powers, the consolidation of authoritarian, plebiscitary parties that largely represent the state to the popular masses, and – something neglected by Poulantzas – the mediatization of politics as the mass media play an increasing role in shaping political imaginaries, programmes, and debates.” (ibid, p. 245-46, emphasis ours)

Poulantzas and later Jessop are only two from among a continuously growing body of Marxist scholars, political scientists and historians, who have identified these changes in the neoliberal

phase of the imperialist stage. Ugo Palheta, who has worked on the emergence of far-right and fascism in the contemporary neoliberal phase, argues:

"Fascists of our times cannot use exactly the same means to achieve their ends, neither can they express their goals clearly or refer explicitly to fascism, as this would condemn them to the electoral margins.

"But they still maintain most of fascism's objectives and their strategy largely borrows from that of the fascist leaders of the interwar years, albeit in a historical context that, unlike the 1920s and 30s, lends itself more to a "war of position" than to a "war of manoeuvre"' (<https://socialistworker.co.uk/socialist-review-archive/how-fascism-has-been-reinvented/>*)*

Despite disagreeing with Palheta on a number of points, we would concede that on this particular point, Palheta has captured a very remarkable feature of contemporary fascism: *fascism as a long 'passive revolution' through what Gramsci called a 'war of positions'*. We were pleasantly surprised to find this point in Palheta, as we, too, had pointed precisely to this feature of contemporary fascism in embryonic form in 2009 itself and in clear terms since 2016 itself. In fact, many other scholars have been able to see this particular trait of contemporary fascism, namely, *the long incubation period, molecular permeation, protracted rise through the dialectic of 'war of positions' instead of 'war of movement', even though even today, fascism resorts to 'war of movement' for short periods*. For instance, noted historian Mukul Kesavan writes:

"Nazism, in this view, is majoritarianism speeded up. Alternately, contemporary majoritarianism in south Asia, is fascism in slow motion." (Mukul Kesavan, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/article/2024/sep/08/india-slow-motion-rise-of-fascism>)

Marxists from Marx to Lenin and Mao have learnt from serious liberal and other non-Marxist as well left academicians who have done objective research on social, political and economic phenomena. Lenin using the work of Hobson or Marx using the empirical research of university academia, factory inspectors, etc. are few examples of this fact. In India, too, there are various serious and noted political economists, historians and other social scientists who are observing the changes in the form of bourgeois parliamentary democracy in the neoliberal phase of imperialist stage. Prof. Neera Chandhoke is one such political scientist. Prof. Chandhoke has keenly observed the developments in the Indian politics for a long time. She points out:

"Over the past decade, Indians have helplessly borne witness to the imprisonment of civil society activists, journalists, university students, and dissidents; institutional capture; dissemination of hate-speech and violence against Muslim and Christian minorities; and suppression of a civil society that has been wonderfully chaotic and messy but creative. The visual and print media have been brought to their knees. And universities have been stripped of their primary function: to inculcate the spirit of critical reasoning in students.

"Some have already exercised their franchise, and others will do so, in a society where democratic institutions and practices have hollowed out. The vote will be cast against the backdrop of diminished democracy.

"India is not the only country that presents the spectacle of democratic backsliding. There was a time when democracies in significant parts of the world were murdered by ceremonially decorated army generals in midnight coups. Authoritarian leaders have learnt their lessons. The take-over of governments by the use of violence propels simmering discontent at the least, if not outrage and uprising. The price countries have paid for army coups has been heavy.

...

“Today aspirant autocrats do not commit mass murder or carry out the proverbial midnight coup. These carry the risk of provoking mass uprisings. *Instead, they slowly but surely whittle away at democratic institutions and practices, until the point when only elections are left as a symbol of their democratic credentials. This process is called autocratization.*

“Less than 25 years after the political scientist Francis Fukuyama’s declaration, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, that the future belonged to liberal democracy, significant parts of the world has seen waves of autocratization. *Notably, the gradual erosion of democracy is carried out under the guise of legalism. Constitutions are not dispensed with, institutions remain in place, and rituals of democracy are observed. But they have become hollow shells.*

“The hollowing out of institutions that restrain power, the gradual chipping away at civil society activism and a free media, the weakening of the opposition through intimidation and the use of financial regulatory institutions, the attempts to control the judiciary, and the relentless concentration of power in the executive – all these marked a process of autocratization.

“*The key element of autocratization is the concentration of power in the chief executive at the expense of other institutions...*This has been observed in India, particularly in the case of the Election Commission of India (ECI), or the use of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to threaten leaders of the opposition.

“Autocratization is a process, not an end. It is a process that is designed to lead to the establishment of authoritarianism. But it is impossible to predict the end, for politics is chancy, contingent, and unpredictable.” (Chadhoke, Neera. 2024. ‘Rise of the Autocrats’, in *Frontline*, Vol. 41, No. 10, 31 May, 2024)

Prof. Chandhoke has certainly captured some salient features of the process whereby in the neoliberal phase the democratic potential of the form of bourgeois parliamentary system as well as the other democratic processes and institutions are undergoing a process of perpetual decay. She has also correctly pointed out that this process is not going to assume the shape of an event. Notwithstanding the liberal illusions, which afflict all liberal academicians, Prof. Chandhoke has certainly made some very pertinent comments and observations regarding this process.

Dave Renton has engaged with Palheta on the question of contemporary fascism and has criticized Palheta on the question of the role of non-state street violence (which the latter does not consider a necessary characteristic of fascism, whereas the former sees it as a constitutive element of fascism). However, Renton agrees to one basic point of Palheta:

“Thanks are owed to *Historical Materialism* for publishing Palheta’s piece, which is wide-ranging and compelling. I have learned from it, and I am sure other readers feel the same. His article begins from an instinct *that we have to explain the crisis of the present, rather than merely repeat models developed from the past. Like him, I despair of the tendency of the left to assume that, because some writer in the distant past said that fascism must take certain forms, so it is necessary to read those forms into the present, even where they do not exist.*” (<https://www.historicalmaterialism.org/on-violence-a-reply-to-ugo-palheta-s-fascism-fascisation-antifascism/>)

Alberto Toscano is another scholar who has worked on the present incarnations of the fascist right. His analysis is prone to a number of over-generalizations regarding the character of the imperialist racist state in the US and other North-Western countries, which are off the mark. However, he, too, has correctly identified some of the basic features of fascism in the neoliberal phase. Toscano argues:

“Ruthless hostility to a substantive, socio-economic notion of democracy, such as Polanyi’s, is not simply something that the anti-state state, as rhetoric and practice of neoliberalism, shares with the new faces of reaction. *Neoliberalism’s racialised anti-democratic animus creates the material and ideological conditions for efforts to win popular interpellations for the far right, in the electoral arena and beyond.*” (Toscano, Alberto. 2023. *Late Fascism*, Verso, p. 77, *emphasis ours*)

On this particular point of versions of fascism that appeared after the Second World War in certain countries, Toscano also refers to a point made by Adorno:

“In a famous lecture first delivered in 1959, ‘The Meaning of Working Through the Past’, Adorno declared that he considered ‘*the survival of National Socialism within democracy to be potentially more menacing than the survival of fascist tendencies against democracy.*’” (*ibid*, p. 89, *emphasis ours*)

Similarly, Enzo Traverso, too, has captured this point, despite his problematic analyses on various questions pertaining to the contemporary forms of fascism:

“In the twenty-first century, fascism will not take the face of Mussolini, Hitler, and Franco; nor (we might hope) will it take the form of totalitarian terror. *Yet it is also clear that there are many different ways to destroy democracy. Ritual references to the threats to democracy—and in particular Islamic terrorism—usually depict the enemy as external, but they forget a fundamental lesson from the history of fascism: that democracy can be destroyed from within.*” (Traverso, Enzo. 2019. *The New Faces of Fascism*, Verso, p. 12, *emphasis ours*)

Richard Saull has understood the nature of changes in the content of the bourgeois democracy in the neoliberal phase of the imperialist stage, broadly correctly. Saull writes in the ‘Introduction’ of his book on the contemporary rise of far-right and fascism:

“*The far-right’s embrace of democracy rests on the evisceration of some of the core features of democratic processes and institutions. Democracy is reduced to the role of sanctifying the sovereignty of majoritarian power, defined as representing ‘the people’.* In this framing, the substantive workings of a democratic politics – whether those of parliamentary representation and the politics of negotiation, deliberation and compromise in law-making, or of civil society as representative of social and cultural plurality in the democratic process – are all marginalized or actively undermined.” (Saull, Richard. 2023. *Capital, Race and Space: The Far Right from Bonapartism to Fascism*, Brill, p. 11, *emphasis ours*)

It is precisely the point that we have been making for more than one-and-a-half decade, that is, since 2009. Another scholar who has persuaded us to think about the changes in the content of the particular form of bourgeois democracy, in the neoliberal phase, is Gaspar Miklos Tamas. The Hungarian Marxist thinker Tamas is misguided on a lot of other political issues pertaining to Marxist theory. However, despite several shortcomings, his analysis of present fascism (which he calls as ‘post-fascism’) has encouraged us to observe several elements of novelty, even though we do not agree with his analysis in totality. Tamas points out:

“Post-fascism finds its niche easily in the new world of global capitalism *without upsetting the dominant political forms of electoral democracy and representative government.* It does what I consider to be central to all varieties of fascism, including the post-totalitarian version. *Sans Führer, sans one-party rule, sans SA or SS, post-fascism reverses the Enlightenment tendency to assimilate citizenship to the human condition.*” (<https://www.bostonreview.net/articles/g-m-tamas-post-fascism/>, *emphasis ours*)

Tamas argues further:

“We are, then, faced with a new kind of extremism of the center. This new extremism, which I call post-fascism, *does not threaten, unlike its predecessor, liberal and democratic rule within the core constituency of “homogeneous society.”*” (*ibid, emphasis ours*)

Finally, Tamas points to certain elements of what he calls “post-fascism”, which we consider an unnecessary epithet:

“Post-fascism does not need stormtroopers and dictators. *It is perfectly compatible with an anti-Enlightenment liberal democracy* that rehabilitates citizenship as a grant from the sovereign instead of a universal human right.” (*ibid, emphasis ours*)

In fact, Poulantzas in his original work on fascism itself, had pointed, rather inadvertently to something which anticipated his later analysis of new forms of fascism. Poulantzas points to a certain stage in the rise of fascism where the parliamentary form is retained, while the nature of relationship between the executive and legislative undergoes qualitative changes and the role of bourgeois parties, too, undergoes changes. The only thing that Poulantzas could not see in his early work (which is quite natural) is that fascism does not have the *necessity* to move to the stage of formal abolition of the bourgeois parliamentary form in the phase of neoliberalism. In his later work, that we have already quoted, he was beginning to realize this. However, the following excerpt from the early work *Fascism and Dictatorship*, reveals that there is a continuity in his thought process:

“To come back to the question of the breaking of representational ties, it was a progressive break, firstly affecting the relation of ‘representation’. *With the beginning of the rise of fascism, while the ‘parliamentary democratic’ form of State apparently remains intact*, the relations between the ruling classes and class fractions on the one hand, and the State apparatus on the other, are no longer mainly established through the medium of these political parties, but increasingly directly.” (Poulantzas. 1979. *op.cit.*, p. 74, *emphasis ours*)

One of the implications of the above, Poulantzas argues further, is this:

“A new growth in the role of the State apparatus itself (i.e. the army, the police, the courts, the administration) *to some extent short-circuiting the role of formal government, characteristically reversing the established juridical order, displacing the real power from the forum of the parties, now mere cliques (i.e. from Parliament) to the State machinery proper.*

“In short, by analogy with the situation of ‘dual power’ which specifies the revolutionary situation, we may call what we see here a characteristic which specifies the distortion between ‘formal’ power and ‘real’ power political crisis.” (*ibid, p. 74, emphasis ours*)

In the same work, Poulantzas had already pointed to the general theoretical foundations of determining what form a particular type of bourgeois state (normal or exceptional) would assume. *It is not given, but historically determined. It is not necessary for an exceptional bourgeois state (Bonapartist or fascist or even military rule) to formally abandon the form of bourgeois parliamentary system. Whether an exceptional state would abandon the parliamentary form or not, depends on the general relationships of the repressive state apparatus and ideological state apparatus, relationship among the various branches of the repressive as well as ideological state apparatuses, the particular conjuncture of class struggle, the relationship between the executive and the legislative, etc.* Here, Poulantzas points to something that Sukhwinder has always failed to understand as a particularly vacuous dogmatist and historicist: ***the distinction between the conjunctural and contingent elements on the one hand and the systemic and structural elements on the other.***

There are elements in the rise of any political phenomenon which are *conjunctural* and *contingent*, which are determined by the particular historical context and political situation. Then, there are general *systemic* and *structural* elements which are *immanent* and *intrinsic* to the very content of that political phenomenon. This does not change and they represent the general systemic elements, which, indeed, can assume and do assume a variety of particular historical forms in the different stages of the capitalist mode of production, because these are determined by the particular political conjuncture of the historical moment in question. Poulantzas has explained this point in *Fascism and Dictatorship* itself, which Sukhwinder has claimed to have read. If he has, indeed, read the entire book from cover to cover, then it is obvious that he is totally dense about it. See what Poulantzas has written:

“Before embarking on the concrete examination of the fascist State, a few words are required about *the relevant criteria which specify it as a form of State and a form of regime...* I would simply point out that *the factors for differentiating forms of the capitalist State are: (a) the relationship of the economic, the political and ideology at a given stage of the capitalist mode of production; (b) the general characteristics of the class struggle in the corresponding period of capitalist formations: in this instance, the general features of political crisis, leading to the exceptional State.* The factors in differentiating the forms of regime are the concrete methods of political class struggle in a determinate conjuncture: in this instance, the specific political crisis to which fascism corresponds.

“In the framework of a capitalist State, these factors are expressed according to a rigorously governed set of criteria. For the form of State these are:

“1. *The forms and modalities of State intervention in the economic and in social relations in general, and the forms and modalities of the relative autonomy of the State from the dominant classes.*

“2. *The role, forms and inter-relationship of the State apparatus proper and the ideological State apparatuses, corresponding to modifications in the law, which is precisely what governs them.*

“3. *The general relationship of the branches of the repressive State apparatus itself, corresponding, for the capitalist State, to the general relationship between executive and legislative.*

“4. *The general relationship between the ideological State apparatuses.*”
(Poulantzas. 1979. *op.cit.*, p. 311)

Let us understand what Poulantzas is arguing here.

In the above excerpt, the first point refers to *the particular mode of regulation and regime of accumulation*, if we may borrow purely terminologically from the *French Regulation School*. Neoliberalism refers to a particular regime of accumulation characterized by deregulation of labour and financial markets, privatization of the state sector and the commons, attack on the democratic rights of the labour, busting of unions and other working-class organizations, and globalization of capital to new limits. *Neoliberal capitalist state stems from a new mode of regulation characterized by direct interventionist role of the state (those who see neoliberalism as the ‘retreat of state’ suffer from political blindness) on the behalf of big capital in particular and capital in general, which expresses itself in new forms of legality, formulation and implementation of policy, and dealing with the mass resistance.*

The second point of Poulantzas refers to *the new ways of constructing the bourgeois hegemony through direct plebiscitary model, where mass media plays a dominant role in unprecedented ways, scale and forms.* We have quoted the later work of Poulantzas where he has directly

pointed to this element of novelty in the ideological state apparatus and Bob Jessop has clearly pointed out the role of mass media in this phase. The same holds true for the case of law.

The third point refers to, what we have discussed above in detail, namely, the change in the relationship of the executive and legislative, that is, a change in the relative weight of different parts of the state apparatus according to the needs of collectivization of bourgeois class interests. Finally, the role of different branches of the ISA are referred to in the fourth point, that is, family, school, religion, law, media, through which the subject is interpellated.

Have all these elements remained the same in the neoliberal phase? Of course, not. Even a politically blind novice groping in the dark, cannot say something like that. Moreover, the changes have been *qualitative*. Due to these changes, the very forms of different types of bourgeois state have undergone a profound change. With the perpetual decay of the democratic potentialities of the form of bourgeois democracy and the bourgeoisie as a political class, the exceptional bourgeois state has been liberated from the compulsion of doing away with *the form* of bourgeois parliamentary democracy and this has made the rise of fascism and other exceptional types of bourgeois state even more hegemonic. There is no *essential anti-thesis* between the various types of the exceptional state which represent, just like the bourgeois liberal democracy, the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, and, the form of bourgeois parliamentary democracy. Poulantzas makes this point clear:

“But again, distinctions have to be made, especially in the case of the fascist State, because the prevailing line of analysis sees the fascist State (or the ‘totalitarian State’) as the antithesis of the ‘liberal State’. This is quite incorrect, as the liberal State is only a State form corresponding to the stage of competitive capitalism.” (*ibid*, p. 320)

As the competitive stage of capitalism comes to an end, the imperialist stage passes through various phases, where the form of particular types itself undergoes a change. The present phase is the neoliberal phase, where the very form of bourgeois representative democracy increasingly becomes an empty container, which can be used by various exceptional bourgeois states, too. The history of the world especially since the last quarter of the Twentieth century bears witness to this fact. Poulantzas already recognized this fact with the emergence of the interventionist state in the period following the Second World War and emergence of what he calls ‘the authoritarian state’ especially since the late-1960s. However, when he was writing *Fascism and Dictatorship* he had not yet formulated many of the things that he formulated later with his notion of the ‘authoritarian state’. Poulantzas wrote in *Fascism and Dictatorship*:

“The liberal and interventionist State forms are also different in this respect: the executive prevails over the legislative in the interventionist State, ‘parliamentary democracy’ declines in importance, and so on. Going beyond the juridical level, the differences in the relationship between the ‘executive’ and the ‘legislative’ essentially coincide with modifications in the functioning of the political parties, within an overall modification of the functioning of the ideological State apparatuses. There are resulting modifications in the means of representation, because of the difficulties monopoly capitalism experiences in organizing its hegemony in Parliament; for example, corporatist forms may spring up. The fascist State therefore has points in common with the interventionist State, since they originate in the same stage.” (*ibid*, p. 327)

In the context of the experience of historical fascism in Italy, too, Poulantzas makes certain observations which are pertinent. Poulantzas points out:

“The relevant criteria for distinguishing between forms of exceptional regime show the identical nature of the two cases, though the Italian fascist regime kept up a façade of constitutionality, because of the particular compromises it had to

resort to. The king in principle still had the power to dismiss and nominate the Prime Minister (Mussolini); parliament was 'elected' on a single slate drawn up by the fascist Grand Council on the nomination of the various corporate bodies, *though it had only a decorative function*; alongside it was the Chamber of Fasci and Corporations, nominated by the fascist leadership; the Senate, appointed by the king, continued to exist, as did the State Council and the Court of Appeal. This was clearly only a façade, though it helped give Mussolini real standing in the eyes of some heroes of 'Western freedom': first among them, of course, being Churchill, the future executioner of Greece." (*ibid*, p. 354)

These are some of the allusions and pointers that Poulantzas presents in this book. It is our task to take cue from this analysis and develop its correct Marxist elements further in the light of *actual historical experience* of the rise of fascism in *our times*. Poulantzas did what he could when he made these allusions. However, the world is not standing in the same conjuncture. The political situation in different countries and internationally, in general, has drastically changed. However, as a true (though ignorant) dogmatist Sukhwinder refuses to move beyond the ambit of the historical experience and essentializes particular historical experiences by confusing the conjunctural and the contingent with the systemic and structural.

Above we have also seen from the excerpts of Toscano, Palheta, Traverso, Tamas, Neera Chandhoke and Saull, that besides this objective historical change, there has been a subjective change, as well. The fascists of the contemporary neoliberal phase have summed up the experience of their predecessors from the early-Twentieth century and have come to realize that neither is there any need to abandon the shell of the bourgeois democracy, nor is it desirable. Even the fascists perform what Walter Benjamin had termed 'redemptive activity': the act of redeeming oneself by correcting their mistakes through learning from history. It would be foolish to think that it is only communists who perform this activity.

Had Sukhwinder properly read Dimitrov (whose conception of fascism in terms of essence and appearance is highly mechanical and historically inaccurate) he would have not enumerated the abolishing of the bourgeois parliamentary form as a "necessary" pre-requisite of fascism. Dimitrov argued that fascism was more inclined to establish an open dictatorship and abandon parliamentary bourgeois democracy in countries where it was faced with a revolutionary working-class movement. Dimitrov points out:

"The development of fascism, and the fascist dictatorship itself, assume different forms in different countries, according to historical, social and economic conditions and to the national peculiarities and the international position of the given country. In certain countries, principally those in which fascism has no extensive mass basis and in which the struggle of the various groups within the camp of the fascist bourgeoisie itself is fairly acute, fascism does not immediately venture to abolish parliament, but allows the other bourgeois parties, as well as the Social-Democratic Parties, to retain a certain degree of legality. In other countries, where the ruling bourgeoisie fears an early outbreak of revolution, fascism establishes its unrestricted political monopoly, either immediately or by intensifying its reign of terror against and persecution of all competing parties and groups. *This does not prevent fascism, when its position becomes particularly acute, from trying to extend its basis and, without altering its class nature, trying to combine open terrorist dictatorship with a crude sham of parliamentarism.*" (Dimitrov, G. 2022. *The Fascist Offensive and the Tasks of the Communist International*, The November 8th Publishing House, Toronto, p. 6)

This means that Sukhwinder has not even read Dimitrov in totality. Interestingly, he cherry picks all the incorrect or mechanically articulated formulations from Dimitrov, and leaves the relatively correct ones. I am saying relatively, because fascism, in general is seldom faced with a revolutionary working-class offensive in a significant way, as Dimitrov mentions in the above

quote, because it begins *precisely* with the defeat of the latter. However, the point remains that Dimitrov, in passing, considered the possibility of retention of parliamentarism with fascism in power, and Sukhwinder has missed this in Dimitrov, because he did not read even Dimitrov properly.

Overlooking the mechanical and some incorrect formulations, we can see that Dimitrov had already seen the possibility of co-existence of a *formal* parliamentary system with fascist regime under certain conditions. For Dimitrov, the conditions in which it can happen were exceptional. In totally different historical context and political situation, it has become the rule now. We can reproduce from many other scholars, historians, political scientists, Marxists and otherwise, who have worked on the changes in the nature of capitalist crises, resultant changes in the nature of the *modus operandi* of world capitalism as well as the bourgeoisie, the decline of the bourgeois democratic potential of the capitalist state and capitalist class in the neoliberal phase of imperialist stage, the consequent changes in the *modus operandi* and *modus vivendi* of fascism and its rise to power and finally the fact that exceptional bourgeois state does not have the compulsion to abandon the shell/form of bourgeois democracy today. This has become quite obvious to the majority of communists, historians, political scientists and political economists. Then why did Sukhwinder fail so miserably and ridiculously in understanding this fact?

The problem with Sukhwinder's understanding is that he universalizes all the elements that were present in the fascist rise of the Twentieth century and bestows them with trans-historical value. He never even considers for once that since the 1940s and especially since the 1970s, with the beginning of the long recession, the world and the *modus operandi* of world capitalism have undergone many significant changes, the nature of crisis has become much more protracted and chronic, the limited kind of democratic potential that was still present in the bourgeois democracies and bourgeoisie of the Twentieth century has fundamentally decayed and degenerated, in the main, and consequentially the nature of fascist rise, too, has undergone change. Moreover, Sukhwinder has a particular talent for selectively looking for quotations from Marxist authorities to substantiate his idiotically doctrinaire and mulish, to the extent of being pigheaded, understanding and then concocts a veritable smorgasbord of quotations that often even go against one another!

Yet another problem with Sukhwinder, as is the problem with most dogmatic and obdurate breed of idealists is that he presumes that there is some kind of fixed, immutable, pre-determined and pre-given script that has to be followed in each and every instance of fascist rise. His understanding or lack thereof smacks of the assumption that there was an archetypal fascism that *a priori* existed in "idea" and the Twentieth century fascist rise perfected that idea in practice and thus followed that script to the T! And now in the Twenty-first century the same script is to be followed by the present-day fascist rise.

However, the problem with this kind of idealist thinking is that in reality things happen in exactly the opposite way. The historical materialist understanding of each and every phenomenon in society and thought reveals this to us every moment. Therefore, there was no such fixed pre-existing theory of fascism which was put into practice in Germany and Italy. Rather the concrete historical experience of fascist rise in Germany and Italy (and even in these two countries the experience was not exactly similar) made it a living, burning and urgent task for the communists and Marxists-Leninists of the day to theorize this new political phenomenon and this is precisely the reason why sometimes the views expressed in their writings are contradicting each other as they were dealing with a constantly unfolding phenomenon. The same holds true for present-day communists and Marxists-Leninists. The elements of 'new' in the present-day fascist rise need to be theorized so that real resistance can be mounted against fascist onslaught in the changing conditions of neoliberal globalization. This is what Sukhwinder utterly fails to grasp. This is why the definition of fascism that Sukhwinder tries to copy and assemble from several disparate sources is so crude and vulgar:

“Fascism is a particular form of bourgeois reaction that emerges in the imperialist stage of capitalism. It is a reactionary social movement of crisis ridden petty-bourgeoisie, which is led by an ideology and cadre based party. In the times of crisis, a fraction of monopoly capital backs it. Fascism comes to power with the slogans of blind nationalism, national purification. Fascism in power serves a fraction of monopoly capital.” (Sukhwinder, *op.cit.*, p. 24-25)

No, fascism does not serve only a “fraction of monopoly capital”. We have quoted Poulantzas and others at length above, regarding this point. No, fascism does not adhere to a “nationalist” ideology, based on the historical category of nation, but relies on a chauvinistic ideology based on the construction of a purely ideological community (the unit of which could be race, religion, ethnicity, region, language, a particularly constructed national identity, etc.), which, then, is converted into the basis of definition of ‘the nation’; and this construction is the dialectical other of the construction of a false enemy itself; both these constructions progress hand-in-hand. Why does Sukhwinder fail to understand this dialectic? Because he plagiarizes from a variety of sources that are ideologically and politically disparate and fails to see the contradiction among these sources on various points, and then puts all these paraphrased and plagiarized elements together! That is why, he comfortably quotes Dimitrov on the pre-requisites of the rise of fascism (the threat of proletarian revolution) and Poulantzas and Zetkin, on the same question (who, like most of the other Marxist scholars points out that the rise of fascism *begins* with the defeat of the revolutionary proletarian movement), in the same breath, and fails to see the difference! Why?

Because, one, he does not read anything comprehensively from the beginning till the end; two, whatever he reads is simply ‘Introductions’, ‘Prefaces’ and book-flaps; three, he sees the index to find “appropriate” quotations to support his idiocies and inanities and fails to understand the context; four, whatever scanty he reads, he does not understand it and uses it, often against himself, while being completely unaware of the fact that he is committing intellectual hara-kiri; and five, rather than interpreting and elaborating the quotations from his own standpoint, he simply creates a chaotic collage of quotations to create an impression that he has referred to so many sources. What an intellectual Lilliput!

It is amusing that Sukhwinder regularly rebukes the semifeudal-semicolonial theorist for being imprisoned in a time-capsule and a space-capsule. However, he is imprisoned in the time-capsule and space-capsule in a much more serious manner, when it comes to the analysis of fascism. This is precisely what we have termed as his incorrigible historicism and dogmatism.