

# NEOFASCISM: WEAPON OF REACTION

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The concept of a comprehensive international security system put forward by the 27th CPSU Congress includes fundamental provisions on the eradication of genocide, apartheid, the propagation of fascism and any other racial, national or religious exclusiveness and discrimination of people on that basis. This establishes a direct link between the task of eradicating fascism and ensuring international security and preserving peace on Earth.

The victory of the anti-Hitler coalition in the Second World War dealt a crushing blow at fascism. In the historic confrontation with the forces of peace, democracy and social progress fascism sustained not only a military defeat. It collapsed as an ideology and a political movement. During the war not only was Hitler's military machine smashed, but the criminal misanthropic character of nazism's ideology and political programme was revealed. The trial of top Nazi officials in Nuremberg went a long way towards exposing the anti-popular essence of fascism by detailing with legal precision the monstrous Nazis' crimes against peace, their war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

The Nazis' atrocities shocked the world public by their scope and organised manner, cynical cruelty, utter disregard for international law and norms of human morality. The punishment of the major criminals and the declaration of the leadership of the National Socialist Party, Gestapo, and the SS, as criminal organisations represented a stern indictment of fascism as a whole. Fascism ought not to have place in the international community—this was the unambiguous lesson of Nuremberg.

Starting the Second World War, the Nazis and their allies sought to physically destroy communism, to eliminate democracy, to enslave numerous countries and peoples, and exterminate entire nations and ethnic groups. The fascist regimes embodied the power of the most aggressive elements of the imperialist bourgeoisie. That is why the invigorated activity of the neofascist forces in many Western countries in recent years is resolutely resisted by the militant vanguard of the working class—the Communists, as well as the Social Democrats, the trade unions, the left-wing intelligentsia, the liberal wing of bourgeois parties, some members of the clergy, and the growing masses of the people in capitalist countries, who regard fascism as the bitterest enemy of peace, democracy and social progress.

Back in 1967 the UN General Assembly passed a resolution expressing concern over the resurrection of nazism. In 1979 it called for measures against the growing neonazi activities, and since 1980 it has been annually inviting the UN member states to make their suggestions on measures to be taken against nazism, fascism, neofascism and similar phenomena.

On December 14, 1984, reminding people of the suffering, devastation and death of millions of victims of aggression, foreign occupation, nazism and fascism, the UN General Assembly in its Resolution 39/114 expressed the hope that the celebration of the 40th anniversary of victory over fascism would "mobilise efforts of the world community in its struggle against Nazi, fascist, neofascist and all other totalitarian ideologies and practices based on racial intolerance, hatred and terror." The document called on the UN member states, in keeping with their constitutional systems, to ban or otherwise restrain the activity of the said organisations, and to pass legislation against the spread of these ideologies, and the propaganda for war.<sup>1</sup>

Under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1976) the member states undertook to observe the following provisions: 1. any propaganda for war shall be prohibited; 2) any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law (Art. 20).

Honouring the commitments of states under international law and taking further legal measures against neofascism are undoubtedly necessary to promote peace and democracy.

Meanwhile certain quarters in the West, especially the Social Democrats and Liberals, have long viewed neofascism as a short-lived phenomenon: the old fascists who survived the war would die out, and the neofascist groups and organisations set up on their instigation and in their example would leave, they say, the political scene. And although part of the population would for a while be prone to relapses into the past, they predict more often than not the eventual demise of fascism in any form. It was believed that neofascism tended to appear in those countries which had outlived the rule of fascism, notably the FRG and Italy, while the democratic countries of the West, in particular the USA, and Britain, were immune to the "brown plague".

Meanwhile new shoots of fascism grew up in Western countries. The fascist-type National Democratic Party, which sprang up in the FRG in 1964, gained 4.3 per cent of the votes at the Bundestag election in 1969. The Italian Social Movement, existing in Italy since 1947, a disguised heir to the Mussolini regime, gathered 2.9 million votes (8.7 per cent of the electorate) at the 1972 parliamentary elections. Although the democratic struggles had brought down fascist dictatorships in Portugal and Greece (1974) and Spain (1975), this failed to stem the development of neofascism. Various neofascist groupings continued to spring up in the USA, Britain, France, and many other capitalist countries.

The 1980s have seen growing activity of the neofascist forces and those who support them. Thus, in France the arch-reactionary Le Pen's party gained about 10 per cent of the votes in the elections for the National Assembly in 1986. The ultra-right Civil Action Service implicated in a number of violent crimes and dissolved by the French authorities in 1982, was revived under a new front in 1986, proclaiming the struggle against Communists as its goal. Italian neofascists won 42 seats at the parliamentary elections in 1983.

Although neonazi organisations in the FRG, including the National Democratic Party, failed to get into the Bundestag, the neofascist danger

<sup>1</sup> "Measures to be taken against Nazi, fascist and neofascist activities and all other forms of totalitarian ideologies and practices based on racial intolerance, hatred and terror," UN, New York, Department of Public Information, April 1985, p. 21.

in the country exists and is growing. The document *Neofascism in the FRG*, published in 1986 by a commission of the presidium of the Association of Victims of Nazi Persecution—the Union of Anti-Fascists, rightly points out that the neofascist danger should not be measured by the number of votes neofascist parties gain in elections. Being organisationally scattered and commanding small political influence, the neofascist organisations, says the document, fulfil the political function of pushing the country towards the right, suppressing democracy, poisoning the ideological and political climate in society.

In their turn, the reactionary quarters in the FRG support and make active use of modern fascism as an instrument in achieving their goals. That is why neofascism is not only a potential future danger, but a direct threat today. In recent years these functions of neonazism in the country's political life have become more apparent than ever before.<sup>2</sup>

The blight of neofascism is spreading to other West European countries. In Austria in 1980 the neonazi candidate for President gathered more than 140,000 votes (3.2 per cent). The neonazi National Front in Austria is openly campaigning against parliamentary democracy, demanding the repeal of the 1955 State Treaty and the country's neutrality proclaimed in it, and the expulsion of all foreigners.<sup>3</sup> The neonazi leaflet *Halt* is being circulated in higher and secondary schools in Austria. This propaganda is having an effect: Austrian police have repeatedly exposed illegal neonazi groups, mainly consisting of young people practicing marksmanship and setting off home-made bombs.

In Switzerland, the right-wing extremist National Action Party scored a success in the elections to the Basel Greater Council, and right-wing extremists who advocate the "purity of the Swiss race" form the second biggest faction in the City Council of Geneva. Neofascists' nationalist propaganda is making a growing impact on the people in Holland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden.<sup>4</sup> The neofascist National Socialist Movement of Denmark set up in 1984 has proclaimed as its goal the establishment of a nazi-style dictatorship.

Neofascist activities are causing growing concern among the broad public in Western countries. The Hamburg weekly *Stern* writes of a "brown sub-culture" in many big cities in Western Europe, from Greece to Northern Ireland. Journalists single out the so-called "skin-heads" (a latter-day variant of Hitler's stormtroopers) who preach fascist ideas and resort to beatings, murder, arson, pogroms, etc. The "skin-heads" say that their enemies are people of colour, Jews, Communists, peace supporters and other democratic people. The "skin-heads" in Britain, for example, demand that the country be cleaned of all mixed-race people, and proclaim the slogan "Jews—into the gas chambers".

Their opposite numbers in France hound Arabs, and in the FRG—Turks, in Greece they attack Communists and members of left-wing organisations. *Stern* has established that the "skin-heads" have the backing of neofascist and extremist parties and organisations: in Britain, the National Front, in Sweden, the Northern State Party, in Italy, the above-mentioned Italian Social Movement, in the FRG, the National Democratic Party, and the Free German Workers' Party, in France, the National Front, and in Greece, EPEN, the party of the "black colonels".<sup>5</sup>

Neofascists are forging ties with other right-wing extremists. An article entitled "Harzburg Front in Europe?" published by the Cologne

<sup>2</sup> See *Deutsche Volkszeitung-Tat*, Apr. 11, 1986.

<sup>3</sup> See *Der Spiegel*, No. 16, 1986, p. 149.

<sup>4</sup> See *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik*, No. 4, 1986.

<sup>5</sup> *Stern*, Jun. 12, 1986.

It is not by chance that Western journalists have dubbed the European Workers' Party and other right-wing extremist organisations "Nazis without a swastika". The fact that neofascism is trying to disguise its true essence and resorts to new methods tends to increase the neofascist danger because their "new image" demagoguery, skilfully using topical political and social issues and popular demands, has a better chance of deceiving the masses.

On the whole, the increased activity of neofascism in a number of Western countries undoubtedly reflects the general shift to the right in the major capitalist countries in the context of a deepening general crisis of capitalism. Analysing the present stage in the general crisis of capitalism, the 27th CPSU Congress pointed out the following features: "The crisis of political institutions, of the entire spiritual sphere, is growing. Reaction is exerting fierce pressure all along the line—in domestic and foreign policy, economy and culture, and the use of the achievements of human genius. The traditional forms of conservatism are giving way to authoritarian tendencies."<sup>7</sup> The USA provides a vivid illustration. Chauvinism, assiduously fostered by the US ruling circles, combined with efforts to foment hostility towards the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, rampant racism, the propagation of violence and the glorification of militarism create the soil on which neofascist organisations and groups thrive. The imperial policy of the US administration, which relies heavily on military force and state terrorism, is a source of strength to the advocates of neofascism.

One should bear in mind that the realities of the nuclear age bring new aspects to the fascist and neofascist danger. The spread of any brand of fascism threatens not only democracy and the social gains of working people, but the entire human civilisation. In the past, fascist dominance spelled the enslavement of countries and peoples, wholesale terror, murder, plunder and violence. Today, there has emerged a new danger, namely, the danger of neofascists getting hold of nuclear weapons (or other mass destruction means), which would threaten to destroy humanity as a biological species. So, even a remote chance of neofascists gaining access to nuclear weapons affects the vital interests of the international community, which has the right and duty to take effective measures to forestall such a development. The interests of peace and security and the survival of the human race make it imperative that neofascism and its ideology be eradicated.

Historical experience attests that fascism was able to unleash the Second World War and perpetrate monstrous crimes against peace and humanity primarily because it used the backing of reactionary forces and monopoly capital to seize government power and make several states instruments of its misanthropic policies. Fascism of course has no chance of gaining power in any nuclear Western state today. It does not have enough political influence. But this is not to say that present-day fascism will always be in the political backyard of capitalist countries, and that it is doomed to die out. This is not a hypothetical danger, and it merits attention in the assessment of political processes in the capitalist world today.

Because the class nature of American imperialism is essentially the same as that of German imperialism which brought Hitler to power one cannot exclude the possibility that under certain conditions the most aggressive faction within the US ruling class will prevail and establish an authoritarian regime. There is no point in trying to guess what could trigger such a development. But one must remember that throughout its

<sup>7</sup> *Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 27th Party Congress*, Moscow, Novosti Press Agency Publishers, 1986, p. 17.

*Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik*, warns against the growing trend in a number of West European countries for closer association between the conservatives and ultra-right circles.<sup>6</sup> One may recall that the Harzburg Front set up in 1931 to "save the country from the chaos of Bolshevism", an alliance of Nazi and other ultra-right German groupings with bourgeois conservatives, had paved the way for Hitler's dictatorship.

Neofascist supporters on the other side of the Atlantic are also growing stronger. Along with the racist Ku Klux Klan, the fascist-leaning Liberty Lobby, the John Birch Society, and other ultra-right groupings, organisations have sprung up in the USA which seek to coordinate neofascist activities in other countries. In Nebraska, for example, the National Socialist Party of America existing for a long time has links with similar organisations in the FRG, Austria, Great Britain, Italy, Denmark, Belgium, France and South Africa. In the early 1980s a rival organisation called the World Union of National Socialists based in Arlington, Virginia, comprised over 30 organisations in 26 capitalist countries. The World Nazi Alliance is based in Washington.

An organisational centre of neofascism exists in Western Europe as well. Thus, the European Workers' Party (EWP) formed in the FRG in 1974 is described by the *Vorwärts* weekly of the Social Democratic Party as "anti-democratic, anti-Semitic, racist and anti-union". Although its membership is small, the EWP is waging a strident propaganda campaign to which end it has set up an information service and a network of organisations, including the Schiller Institute specialising in promoting the American Star Wars programme under the demagogic slogan "Peace through space weapons". It has considerable funds (coming from the CIA, according to American sources) which enabled it to stage a gathering of like-minded people from 50 countries in Virginia in 1985. In October 1985 the EWP created an Association of German Patriots advocating a stronger alliance with the USA and attacking the "red-green friends of Moscow".

The EWP chapters are active in major cities of Sweden, and in March 1986 a member of that party Victor Gunnarson was arrested by the Stockholm police in connection with the murder of Prime Minister Olof Palme. The founder of the EWP is Lyndon LaRouche, an American neofascist who took part in US presidential elections in 1976 and 1984 as candidate from the so-called Workers' Party.

Anxious to pose as an heir to the fascist movement of the past, modern neofascism preserves—albeit in a slightly modified form—all the main components and trappings of fascist ideology, the cult of Hitler, the swastika, etc. Having noted that new historical conditions force fascism to resort to camouflage, the representatives of communist and workers' parties from 21 capitalist countries meeting in Essen in 1973 came to the conclusion that "neofascism is fascism adjusting itself to the present stage in the general crisis of capitalism, to the new alignment of forces in the capitalist world, and in the world at large".

The forms and methods of neofascist activity differ depending on the political and national traditions in one or another country, which leads some Western scholars to identify such trends as "national liberals" in the USA, neonazis in the FRG, etc. In a bid to gain grassroots support, neofascists are casting about for catchy political slogans, for ways to influence various strata of the population, especially young people.

<sup>6</sup> *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik*, No. 4, 1986.

history the dominance of American imperialism has never been seriously challenged (unlike, say, in Germany), so that bourgeois democracy has been quite able to preserve its dominance. But if in the face of the forces of social progress the US ruling class dominance is shaken, one cannot rule out the possibility of American fascism breaking out. Imperialist reaction, as Lenin wrote, "is prepared to go to any length of savagery, brutality and crimes in order to uphold dying capitalist slavery."<sup>8</sup>

Many Western political scientists shun the very thought of an authoritarian regime in the USA today. They argue that the age-old traditions of bourgeois democracy make the US immune to such a danger. Without going into detail one might recall that authoritarian trends in the US have deep roots. Think of Sinclair Lewis's well-known novel *It Can't Happen Here* dramatising a hypothetical fascist takeover in the USA at the time of the 1936 presidential elections. Although it is a political fiction story, it does reflect not only the trends in the development of the American society, but concrete events of the time. The reactionary circles were plotting to overthrow President Franklin D. Roosevelt and bury the New Deal he proclaimed. Strongman Windrip was in many ways modelled after Hugh Long, the fascist-leaning governor of the State of Louisiana. Sinclair Lewis's book, published in 1935, offered a penetrating analysis of the country's life, and it has similarities with the present time.

The same can be applied to other capitalist countries, especially the nuclear powers. Western political scientists who measure neofascist danger mainly in terms of parliamentary election results should be reminded that in 1928 Hitler's German National Socialist Workers' Party (NSDAP) gained a mere 2.6 per cent of the votes at the elections to the Reichstag. The threat of fascism seemed negligible. But four and a half years later the Nazis seized power in Germany. This became possible because the Nazis, as well as most of other reactionary and ultra-reactionary parties, alliances and organisations, backed by the big concerns, had been brainwashing people in the spirit of fascist ideology over many years. And today too it is not only the neonazis who are preaching anti-communism, anti-Sovietism, social and territorial revenge, racism and nationalism in the FRG.

Seizing political power is not the only way for neofascists to gain access to nuclear weapons. The technical nature of this weapon throws a different hue on the whole matter. Today, to deliver a nuclear strike does not require the concentration of million strong armed forces. Today it is enough to press a launch button of the control panel. Another basically new circumstance is that the nuclear missile launch buttons are in the control of a limited group of people, who have certain powers for purely technical reasons.

Past experience shows that an error by a single individual could lead to a nuclear catastrophe of an unpredicted scale. This may occur due to a false alarm, negligence, the effect of alcohol, drugs, etc. The destinies of human civilisation may fall into the hands of a group of people who have access to the nuclear missile launch buttons. Documents issued by prominent American scientists, notably those at Stanford University, and by the group Computer Specialists for Social Responsibility cite numerous cases of technical malfunctions in the US early-warning system. These false alarms have repeatedly put the world on the brink of war.

So much for the danger of accidental use of nuclear weapons. But one can imagine a neofascist political maniac and not a schizophrenic

<sup>8</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1963, p. 99.

gaining access to the launch button. Neofascists might form a group within the circle of people who have access to the nuclear arsenals and might gain control over them. In this way neofascists could gain access to nuclear weapons without seizing political power. It is an unlikely situation in terms of traditional notions, but it is not as far-fetched as it might appear. While major political forces are needed to seize government power and establish an authoritarian regime, there is no need to do that in order to gain access to the nuclear missile control panel.

Today, under the parliamentary system, pro-fascist elements may and do occupy high posts in the government administration, including the army, in capitalist countries. If the shift to the right within the ruling class continues, the number of such people will grow. The Western press has repeatedly reported that neofascists invariably display interest in nuclear weapons (interest which, for understandable reasons, they carefully conceal).

Finally, one must take a close look at neofascists' terrorist activities. As in the past, modern fascism is specialising in terrorist methods and creating para-military "security services". In the USA, Britain, France, the FRG and other capitalist countries the so-called right-wing extremists stage numerous terrorist acts on political, nationalist and racial motives. The long list of neofascist criminal activities makes one wonder where the guarantee is that sooner or later they won't make a nuclear reactor their target.

After considering the causes of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee in July 1986 stressed the need for broad international cooperation to ensure nuclear safety. The safety system should include measures to prevent the destruction of nuclear power facilities through terrorist acts. "A reliable system of measures should be developed to prevent nuclear terrorism in any form,"<sup>9</sup> said the Political Bureau of the CPSU CC.

Life prompts the need for a new mode of political thinking proceeding from an awareness that the historical confrontation between the two social systems can only take the form of peaceful competition and peaceful rivalry. An essential part of the new thinking is awareness of the danger of the modern variety of fascism with its ideology of racial and national strife, suppression of democratic freedoms and human rights, and the cult of terror and violence. The spread of neofascism is increasingly resisted by the broad public in the world.

Speaking at the unveiling of a monument to Ernst Thaelmann, an outstanding leader of German and international communist and workers' movement, in Moscow, on October 3, 1986, Mikhail Gorbachev stressed that his ideas, the lesson of his life, his warnings against the danger of fascism and war are relevant today. Not only because there are people on Earth to whom the swastika remains a symbol of revenge. Far more dangerous, Gorbachev warned, are the hidden viruses of the militaristic and aggressive nature of fascism; under certain conditions they could cause a flare-up of a sinister epidemic, for which imperialist reaction constantly creates a favourable environment; "We Communists," said the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, "are obliged to do everything to erect a barrier to any manifestations of reactionary extremism and tirelessly expose those who inspire it."

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<sup>9</sup> *Правда*, July 20, 1986.