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# Defining Fascism: Dimitrov versus Eco

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**By James Tweedie for the Saker Blog**



Georgi Dimitrov (1882-1949) and Umberto Eco (1932-2016)

What is fascism? With the Russian ‘de-Nazification operation’ in the Ukraine entering its fourth week and “Black Lives Matter” replaced with “I Stand With Ukraine” as the virtue-signal *de jour*, now seems like a good time to define it.

While I’m a big fan of the Iranian journalist Ramin Mazaheri, I have to disagree with his [latest article](#) on The Vineyard of the Saker. Mazaheri says Russia misinterprets Nazism as simply Russophobia. I fear he underestimates the intellect of the nation which did three-quarters of the fighting and dying to defeat fascism 77 years ago.

Rather than trying to suck the meaning of the word ‘fascism’ out of

our thumbs, let us instead compare two well-known definitions by Georgi Dimitrov and Umberto Eco, a Marxist and a Liberal.

Eco, the Italian author of the historical whodunnit *The Name Of the Rose*, listed 14 different features in his 1995 essay [Eternal Fascism](#). The problem is, none of them individually are proof that we're living in a fascist state.

Eco admits at the start: "These features cannot be organized into a system; many of them contradict each other, and are also typical of other kinds of despotism or fanaticism."

But he claims: "it is enough that one of them be present to allow fascism to coagulate around it."

The first item on Eco's list, 'the cult of tradition', is common to most 'small-c' social conservatives. The syncretism that Eco speaks of here is found in his own eclectic list.

Points three to five, 'action for action's sake', 'disagreement is treason' and 'fear of difference' are true of the dozens of Trotskyite and anarchist sects jumping on the Ukraine bandwagon.

Points six to eight, 'appeal to a frustrated middle class', an 'obsession with a plot' and the belief that their 'enemies are at the same time too strong and too weak' describe the US 'Never Trumpers' and British liberals still desperate to rejoin the European Union (EU).

Nine and 11, 'life is lived for struggle' and 'everybody is educated to become a hero' apply to the 'woke' millennials obsessed with their own perceived victimhood.

Dimitrov, the Bulgarian general secretary of the Communist (Third) International, characterised fascism in a [speech to the 7<sup>th</sup>](#)

Comintern congress in 1935 as: “the open, terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic, and most imperialist elements of finance capital.”

“Fascism is not a power standing above class, nor government of the petty bourgeoisie or the lumpen-proletariat over finance capital,” he elaborated.

“Fascism is the power of finance capital itself. It is the organization of terrorist vengeance against the working class and the revolutionary section of the peasantry and intelligentsia.”

Thus, fascism is the form of government which the capitalist class resorts to when revolt by the toiling classes means it can no longer rule by consent under democracy, as it prefers to.

“The development of fascism, and the fascist dictatorship itself, assume different forms in different countries,” Dimitrov stressed. His clear implication is that fascism could take a new form without the open racism, sexism, anti-Semitism and homophobia of the German Nazi regime. Fascism could come waving the rainbow flag and preaching “human rights”. I think it already has.

And Dimitrov highlights the fascists’ imperative for violent and oppressive anti-communism, something which Eco, who grew up in Mussolini’s Italy, fails to mention at all in his glib listicle.

My mother was born a year before the Second World War. Her parents were communists. At a very young age she was aware that a Nazi invasion would mean she and her family would be murdered, just as communists in the fascist-ruled and occupied countries had already been.

Eco has no excuse for ignoring or forgetting this, just as Western

pseudo-leftists have no excuse for overlooking how the regime that took over in Kiev after the 2014 Maidan Square coup banned the Communist Party of Ukraine and others, or how its thugs burnt down the Odessa Trade Union House while the police looked on, murdering some 50 working people.

Modern Russia is not the USSR, but it never ceased to be the target of imperialism despite embracing the so-called 'free market'. Ordinary Russians know that, and their leaders have in the past few weeks denounced the "Empire of Lies" with a clarity that Lenin — who literally wrote the book on it — would applaud.

To answer those who equate fascism with nationalism: If Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo had been nationalists, their armies would never have set foot outside their countries' borders and 50 million lives would not have been needlessly lost. Fascism is imperialist, and imperialism is the antithesis of nationalism.

It's easy to see why some prefer Eco's definition to Dimitrov's. Dimitrov avoids the easy path of condemning historical fascism for its bigotry and para-militarism, but instead marks out the common ground between Nazis and liberals: anti-communism. Eco explicitly panders to those who think the holocaust was what happens when we stray from the modern liberal path.

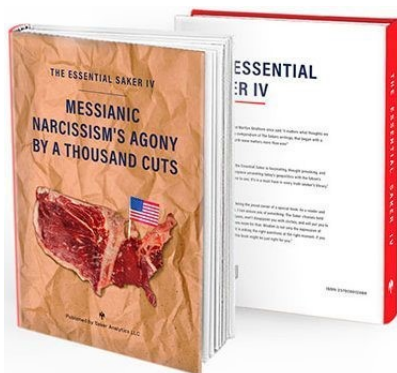
But if one believes, as a majority of British voters did in 2016, that the EU is an undemocratic, corporatist supra-national state which rules the continent on behalf of finance capital, It follows that the burnished liberal utopia is fascism here and now.

The stated goal of the US antifa rioters in 2020 was to bring down President Donald Trump and ensure victory for Joe Biden, who helped bring the genuine fascist government to power in Kiev in

2014. Biden has now prodded the Ukraine into a disastrous showdown with Russia that threatens to escalate to nuclear Armageddon.

There was no revolution in the US in 2020, just as there was none in Ukraine in 2014. The Never-Trumpers posed no alternative but business as usual under the Democratic Party, which came bundled with a neo-McCarthyite witch-hunt. That has torn down the façade of liberal democracy and left only the naked tyranny of big business, pushing the world inexorably towards war. Nice work, anarchists.

Russia is taking a stand against fascism, and imperialism. What are you going to do about it?



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