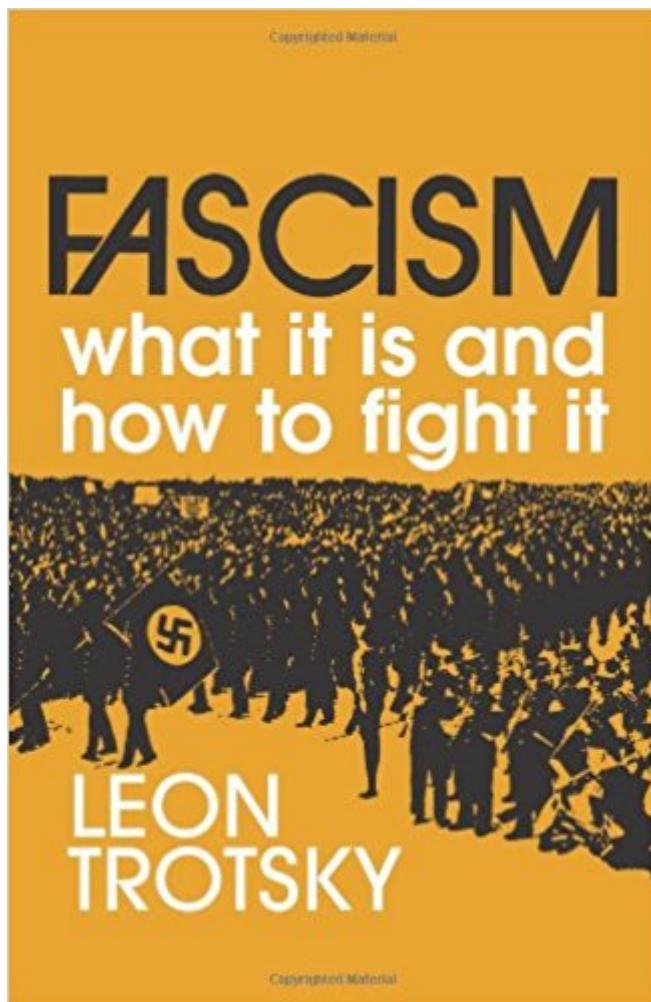


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Fascism: What It Is And How To Fight It



Synopsis

Writing in the heat of struggle against the rise of fascism in Germany, France, and Spain in the 1930s, communist leader Leon Trotsky examines the class origins and character of fascist movements. Building on foundations laid by the Communist International in Lenin's time, Trotsky advances a working-class strategy to combat and defeat this malignant danger. Also available in: French

Book Information

Paperback: 46 pages

Publisher: Pathfinder Pr (December 1, 1993)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0873481062

ISBN-13: 978-0873481069

Product Dimensions: 0.2 x 5.5 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.7 out of 5 stars 18 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #68,928 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #56 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Ideologies & Doctrines > Fascism #72 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Ideologies & Doctrines > Radicalism #976 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Political Science

Customer Reviews

This 47 page pamphlet is obviously just an introduction to Trotsky's writings on fascism, but it's a very good one. The larger collections of his writings on fascism are polemical, and difficult for anyone not already grounded in Marxist theory. Before giving them a try, I would first suggest *Fascism and Big Business*, a research work that compares Italian and German fascism, written by a French socialist who was influenced by Trotsky's theories. Then you may be ready for Trotsky's *The Struggle against Fascism in Germany* (Merit), *Leon Trotsky on France*, and on the struggle against Franco's clerical-fascism, *The Spanish Revolution (1931-39)*.* For the struggle of Trotsky's followers against fascism in the US, see *Teamster Politics* (Teamster Series). Also recommended, *The Clinton's Anti-Working-Class Record*.* Other good books on the Spanish Civil War include *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Spain* and *Homage to Catalonia: Orwell's Personal Story of the Spanish Civil War & The Communist Betrayal*. Orwell's personal account is excellent, but he unfortunately declined to investigate the differences between Stalinism and

genuine communism.

I remember buying this pamphlet, one of my first political readings, as a schoolboy in 1987. It's general analysis struck me at the time as well argued and demonstrated that Trotsky understood the danger that fascism posed to humanity before most contemporaries. I lost my copy of the pamphlet over 20 years ago and it is only with the Trump campaign in 2016 that I decided to buy several copies of this small book to use in discussion with others. Trotsky posits the main force behind fascism as being the middle class in conditions of economic crisis and the shattering of assumptions about upward mobility. In the first of eleven articles written between 1930 - 1940, Trotsky states, "The genuine basis (for fascism) is the petty bourgeoisie. In Italy it has a very large base - the petty bourgeoisie of the towns and cities, and the peasantry. In Germany likewise there is a large base for fascism." In a later article the author describes Hitler's movement as, "a broad current whose ideology is composed of all the putrid vapors of disintegrating bourgeois society." This description could certainly be used to describe the atmosphere at recent Donald Trump rallies! If the first half of the book's title implies an analysis of fascism, the latter half implies a call to action to defeat fascism. Trotsky's basic call was for all working class organizations to make agreements to confront fascism on the city streets of Germany. Specifically Trotsky advocated for a United Front of the German Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party to defend each other's resources and organizations in a mass confrontation with Hitler's brownshirts. Tragically, none of this advice was heeded and the different forces of Germany's left fought the Nazi party separately and inconsistently. History did not forgive them for this underestimation of fascism. I would recommend this book, which is really a collection of eleven articles, for all those who wish to understand fascism and also as an aid in analysing the dynamics around the Trump movement.

A brief collection of some of Trotsky's important letters and articles regarding fascism, this pamphlet offers a brief introduction to the nature of fascism, the conditions that give rise to it, and the strategy of resisting it through a "united front." Based on his observations of the growth of National Socialism (i.e. fascism) in Italy, Germany, Spain, and France, Trotsky concludes that fascism is a mass movement based primarily in petite bourgeoisie and backed by the big capitalist powers. Trotsky identifies a twofold set of conditions that allowed fascism to take hold in Europe: 1) the disorientation and desperation (primarily among the petite bourgeoisie) brought on by the abrupt end of capitalism's growth phase and 2) the absence or failure of a genuinely revolutionary workers' party that offers both the proletariat and the petite bourgeoisie the hope of escape from the grasp of

the bourgeoisie. Accordingly, Trotsky assigns a fair proportion of the blame for the rise of fascism in Europe to the leaders of the Communist parties, the Comintern, and the leaders of the social democratic parties who betrayed the workers' revolutions in Germany, France, Spain, and Italy. Trotsky links fascism to the reactionary backlash that followed these aborted revolutions, and counterpoises against the notion of the Communist Party as a form of revolutionary hope the notion of fascism, as a mass movement, as a form of revolutionary despair. In light of the social foundation upon which fascism rests, Trotsky emphasizes the need for a united front led by a revolutionary proletarian party (as the vanguard of the proletarian class) against fascism. In order for the proletariat to inspire confidence among the petite bourgeoisie, however, the revolutionary movement must first possess confidence in itself. This means that the party must be lead by genuine revolutionaries from the working class who possess the commitment and the strategic capacity to build on and encourage the workers' revolutionary initiative. Trotsky also points up the need for solidarity and for the workers to defend themselves against violence from the fascist. Given the level of violence that workers face, he proposes the development of workers' militias and then systematically dismantles the most common oppositions offered to such a proposal. The final sections of the pamphlet discuss the situation in the United States at the time, and Trotsky warns that the same conditions that gave rise to fascism in Europe have already appeared in nascent form in the US. While his prediction of the length of time that the "war economy" could be used to forestall the radicalization of the working classes proved overly optimistic (Trotsky predicted that this delay could not be of "long duration," whereas the capitalist powers in the US have managed to maintain the military economy since the build-up to World War 2), the severe crisis which capitalism has recently entered into, coupled with the rise of the "Tea Party Patriots," the mainstream media's glorification of "Minutemen" vigilante mobs along the US-Mexican border, the vitriolic backlash against even the slightest measures to alleviate the poverty of the working class, the growth of Christian fundamentalism and the demonization of Muslims, and the absence of an independent workers' party, let alone a revolutionary party, all combine to create conditions similar to those described by Trotsky as the grounds from which a fascist movement grows. As Trotsky observes, the most effective way to counter these trends is to build the revolutionary party.

Trotsky was a fascist writing about how to fight fascism? That's rich!!! Pathetic hypocrite....Communist countries are FULL of fascists!

This is an essential book to read right now.

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