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World history

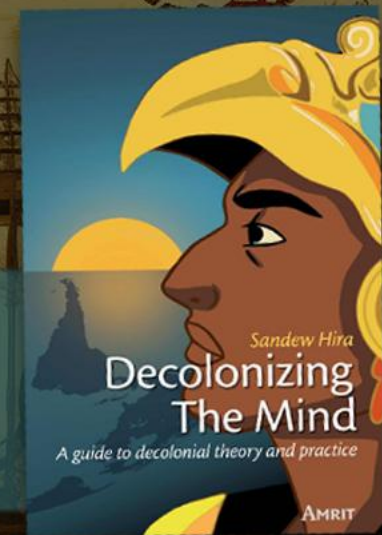
A decolonial canon of world history



Fascism, neo-fascism and similar expressions



Decolonizing The Mind,
the final frontier of colonialism
with Sandew Hira



#056

16-09-2024

Vacation and illness

- ❑ A break of four weeks
- ❑ A visit to Venezuela and Curacao

Congress in Venezuela

From 10-11 September 2024, the United Socialist Party of Venezuela organized an international conference on fascism, neo-fascism and similar expressions.

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Fascism of Hitler: characteristics

1. Strategy to crush the anti-fascist movement with the most brutal and violent means
2. Explicit use of racism to justify their policy
3. Conservative Christian foundation
4. Virulent sexism and anti-LGTB policy
5. Probably the most important: waging war to colonize Eastern Europe

1. Crush the anti-fascist movement

Whether in government or in opposition, their main goal is to physically and organizationally demolish the anti-fascist movement. They built an infrastructure of paramilitary units to achieve this end. And when they are in government they use the military apparatus.

2. The explicit use of racism

Hitler used the concept of Übermensch and Untermensch. The Übermensch is a person of a biologically superior Aryan or Germanic master race. The Untermensch is the inferior non-Aryan person. The Jews and Roma are part of the Untermensch, but the majority are the Slavs of Eastern Europe (ethnic Poles, Belarusians, Czechs, Ukrainians, Serbs, Russians etc.).

3. Conservative Christian foundation

Hitler placed his hatred for Jews in the context of his Christian beliefs. In a speech in 1922 he says: *“My feeling as a Christian points me to my lord and savior as a fighter... In boundless love as a Christian and as a man I read through the passage which tells us how the Lord at last rose in His might and seized the scourge to drive out of the Temple the brood of vipers and of adders. How terrific was His fight for the world against the Jewish poison.”* When the Nazis took power in 1933, Hitler declared that his national government *“regards Christianity as the foundation of our national morality.”*

4. Virulent sexism and anti-LGTB policy

Women's role were confined to motherhood and the household and were excluded from public life. Homosexuals were persecuted, imprisoned and killed.

5. Waging war to colonize Eastern Europe

“What India was for England, the territories of Russia will be for us,” said Adolf Hitler. Hitler did not start World War II to exterminate the Jews. He started a war to colonize Eastern Europe after the model of the British colonization of India. The first act of war was not against Western Europe, but against the East. On September 1, 1939, Hitler’s army invaded Poland as the first step in colonizing Eastern Europe.

Hitler: “It should be possible for us to control this region to the East with two hundred and fifty thousand men plus a cadre of good administrators. Let’s learn from the English, who, with two hundred and fifty thousand men in all, including fifty thousand soldiers, govern four hundred million Indians. This space in Russia must always be dominated by Germans... The Russian space is our India. Like the English, we shall rule this empire with a handful of men.”

World War II was not primarily about Jews

The idea of the Holocaust, the systematic extermination of Jews by the Nazis, came about at the end of 1941. Before 1941, Nazi policy towards the Jews was based on forcing them to emigrate from the Third Reich and not on killing them in an industrial way. This policy entailed the expropriation of Jewish property, the introduction of laws to ban marriages between Jews and non-Jews and occasionally the organization of violence as in the case of Kristallnacht on 9-10 November 1938 when a pogrom was organized during which windows of Jewish stores, buildings and synagogues were destroyed.

The decision about the Holocaust was made after the war had started

“The ‘basic decisions’ and ‘total clarity’ ... in implementing the genocide of European Jews—emerged between mid-September and late October 1941,” writes C. Browning.

The decision to start the Holocaust was made after Hitler’s army had managed to cut off Leningrad on the northern front and capture Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, in September 1941. The prospect of a final victory looked bright. The problem of what to do with the millions of Jews living in Eastern Europe – soon to be part of the Third Reich - was now on the agenda. Migration was not an option, so the idea of annihilation became a reality. Once the decision was taken, it was a matter of technicalities. The technical solution that was ultimately implemented was the gas chamber.

Fascism and capitalism

The Marxist and the socialist movement were the major targets of the fascist movement in Germany during the period of Hitler. It is understandable that they regard the fascism movement as the most reactionary and dangerous movement in world history. They regard fascism as fundamental crisis of capitalism.

Thinkers from the Global South have a different view of fascism. They link fascism to colonialism, as in fact Hitler himself did.

Aimé Césaire

Writing in 1955 Aimé Césaire reminded the Europeans that *“he has a Hitler inside him, that Hitler inhabits him, that Hitler is his demon, that if he rails against him, he is being inconsistent and that, at bottom, what he cannot forgive Hitler for is not crime in itself, the crime against man, it is not the humiliation of man as such, it is the crime against the white man, the humiliation of the white man, and the fact that he applied to Europe colonialist procedures which until then had been reserved exclusively for the Arabs of Algeria, the coolies of India, and the blacks of Africa.*

Frantz Fanon

Three years earlier Frantz Fanon had echoed the same sentiment: *“When I turn on my radio, when I hear that Negroes have been lynched in America, I say that we have been lied to: Hitler is not dead; when I turn on my radio, when I learn that Jews have been insulted, mistreated, persecuted, I say that we have been lied to: Hitler is not dead; when, finally, I turn on my radio and hear that in Africa forced labor has been inaugurated and legalized, I say that we have certainly been lied to: Hitler is not dead.”*

Césaire and Fanon refer to the crimes that Spain, Portugal, Britain, France and other European nations committed with the genocide of the indigenous people of Abya Yala, the European enslavement and the genocides committed in Africa and Asia by these powers.

Nazism and colonialism

The whole system of segregation that was set up by the Nazis for oppressing the Jews was in place and fully functioning both before and after World War II in the European colonies, in South Africa and the USA. In Germany there were signs *No dogs, No Jews* allowed. These signs were put up by European colonizers in all the other places with their own variants (No dogs, No Asians, ‘Niggers’, Africans, etc). Across Britain, in the 1950s and 1960s, private landlords often posted signs – “*No Irish, no blacks no dogs*”.

Genocide in Namibia as a model for the Holocaust

The means and methods used during the Holocaust were derived from an earlier genocide that the Germans committed against the Herero and Nama people in West Africa in the early 20th century. In the process of colonization of West Africa, the German came against resistance of the indigenous population. The German Emperor issued an extermination order (“Vernichtungsbefehl”) - similar to what the Nazis would use in World War II - to annihilate a whole ethnic group. Some 100.000 Herero and 10.000 Nama perished in a systematic campaign to hunt them down and kill them. Many also ended up in concentration camps similar to those used in World War II but without the gas chambers. German doctors even conducted medical experiments on the prisoners.

Neo-fascism in Abya Yala: type 1

Neo-fascism is the resurgence of fascism, but in many different forms. You cannot just equate these forms with the fascist movement of Hitler.

In Latin Abya Yala there are two types of neo-fascism. One type is based on the reactionary military establishment with ties to the old ruling class and especially strong ties with the American empire. The US trains, funds and support these groups in any way possible. Their immediate goals is to take state power through a coup d'état and then crush the social movements. They use paramilitary organizations to intimidate social movement and break their leadership. The history of Latin America shows many examples of this type of fascism

Neo-fascism in Abya Yala: type 2

The second type is the resurgence of extreme right movements that contest elections on the basis of popular support. Javier Milei in Argentina and Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil are examples of these movements. They thrive on ideological attacks on the program of the left and claim to do a better job in restructuring the economy and society with harsh measures. The peculiar thing about them is that they have mass support, not just from the old ruling classes and Western imperialism, but they have been able to build a social base among poor people. They send an important message to the progressive social movements in Latin Abya Yala. Why have they not been able to erode this social base of the neo-fascist? The strength of the neo-fascists is also derived from the weakness of the progressive social movements.

Neo-fascism in Europe

In Europe the neo-fascists deviate in many aspects from the classical Hitler fascism. The main resemblance is the racist narrative. It is not about Jews, but about Islam. It brings the discussion on neo-fascism to the level of civilization: Western civilization versus Islamic civilization. Jews and LGTB are part of the Western civilization. Western civilization is about progress and rationalism. Women's liberation and LGTB emancipation are high on their agenda. They support the Jewish state of Israel unconditionally. They are against perpetual wars of the NATO alliance. They have an agenda for social reforms in favor of the working class.

Neo-fascism in the USA

The USA is the leading military, political and economic force of Western imperialism. With 800 military bases across the world they have power to engage in devastating wars, as they are now doing in Ukraine and Palestine. But if we look at the political forces that are engage in fomenting war, we see that neo-fascists like Trump (who promote a racist narrative) are against endless war and Democrats and Republicans supported by the Military Industrial Complex are in favor of these wars. If you take the criterion of engaging in war, who is the fascist: Trump or Biden?

Neo-fascism in India

In India the Hindutva Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People Party) led by Narendra Modi is regarded as a neo-fascist party because of its Islamophobic policies and violent campaigns against Muslim. The ideological founder of Hindutva, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (1883-1966), connects the religion of Hinduism with the biological category of race. Savarkar: *“The Hindus are not merely the citizens of the Indian state because they are united not only by the bonds of the love they bear to a common motherland but also by the bonds of a common blood. They are not only a Nation but also a race-jati.”*

The anti-colonial neo-fascists

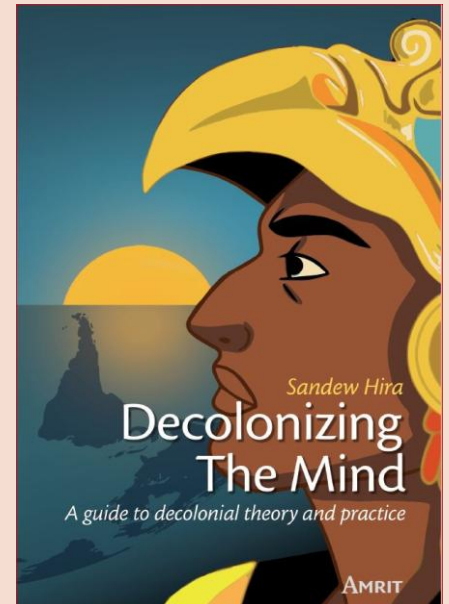
But if you study the BJP movement more closely you will find many intellectuals, journalists and political leader who are very anti-colonial. If you watch videos by India's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, you will find a sharp critique of Western colonialism. J. Sai Deepak is an author, who claims to work from a decolonial theoretical framework in his book *India that is Bharat - Coloniality, Civilisation, Constitution* and offers a Hindutva narrative of Indian history. According to Sai Deepak “(a) *Bharat’s indigenous identity must be traced to a period before the Islamic invasions (Middle Eastern colonialism) and European colonisation, and (b) ‘the Hindu religion’ was the glue that bound this civilisation.*”

Conclusion

If you link fascism only to capitalism, you are not able to understand the complexities of neo-fascism. There is a civilizational dimension in neo-fascism that is embedded in colonialism.

Source in the DTM book

- Index: Hitler
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