From Social-Democracy to Social-Fascism[*]

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Once, in the founding years of the Second International, (social-democracy) was dedicated to the overthrow of capitalism. Then, it pursued partial reforms as gradual steps towards socialism. Finally, it settled for welfare and full employment within capitalism. If it now accepts a scaling down of one and giving up of the other, what kind of movement will it change into?[1]

The answer to the above crucial question, raised about ten years ago by a distinguished member of the ex-"New Left", has been given in practice by the policies of the social democratic parties that have been in power since then, and which —following in the footsteps of the British Labour party— everywhere, from Sweden to Germany, have been transformed into social-liberal parties. It seems, however, that their descent from social-democracy did not (and could not) end with social-liberalism. Today, the same Labour party pioneers a new route, this time towards social fascism. This development should not surprise anyone, given that the intensification of domestic and foreign economic suppression implied by neoliberal globalisation (of which the "new" Labour party is a fervent supporter)—has inevitably been leading to a corresponding political suppression, both in Britain and abroad.

Thus, on the pretext of the London bombings, this ex-socialdemocratic party has intensified its anti-terror campaign (although the Labour government had initiated a series of Draconian "anti-terror" measures long before the bombings), introducing several semi-fascist arrangements that would allow the arbitrary arrest and detention of any suspect for a period that could extend to three months —if the security services' proposal is finally accepted, as seems likely at the moment. This, as Tim Owen[2] wrote, "is calculated to destroy 800 years of respect for freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention". At the same time, the electronic policing of everything that moves has reached new heights, while the security services have been given the right to 'shoot-to-kill' any suspected bomber – the first victim having already been mourned in the shanty towns of Brazil. No wonder that even the ex-head of Scotland Yard's anti-terrorist squad during the anti-IRA campaign feels that Britain is "sinking into a police state"![3] Still, as if all this was not enough, the same "Labour" government has now surpassed itself by introducing new arrangements that penalise thought itself, completing the conversion of the birthplace of liberalism into a semi-fascist state similar to the regimes established by the Americans in post civil-war Greece and South Korea!

Specifically, the Home Office Secretary announced a broadening of his anti-terror powers on July 20th, which included the introduction of a list of "unacceptable behaviours". This list "covers any non-UK citizen whether in the UK or abroad who uses any means or medium including writing, producing, publishing or distributing material, public speaking including preaching, running a website, using a position of responsibility such as teacher, community or youth leader", in order to express views which the Government (i.e. Big Brother) considers to (among other things):

- Foment terrorism (as defined by Big Brother again) or seek to provoke others to commit terrorist acts
- Justify or glorify terrorism
- Foment other serious criminal activity or seek to provoke others to commit serious criminal acts
- Advocate violence in furtherance of particular beliefs

Thus, as 'New" Labour Government members have explicitly stated, the justification of "terrorist" violence (read resistance against occupying powers and their collaborators) in Iraq or even Palestine (the latter was added to the list of countries in which 'terrorist' acts take place after 9/11, as a result of pressure from the Zionist faction of the transnational elite), constitutes a crime. This makes all those of us who have failed in the past to condemn the legitimate right of resistance to military occupation guilty! By analogy, according to these purely fascist arrangements similar to the ones introduced by the Nazi occupying authorities against those resisting them (whom, by coincidence, they also used to call 'terrorists'!), one would have to classify as terrorists all those fighting colonialism by every means available to them, from Algeria to South Africa, and as collaborators all those writers who have failed to condemn them. Thus, the 'communist miasmas' and their 'fellow-travellers' of the recent past have been replaced by the 'Islamofascist miasmas' and their 'fellow-travellers' today.

Of course, the above arrangements are far from adequate for the reproduction of a semi-fascist regime. As in the pure fascist regimes of the past, mass popular support is needed — something that necessitates a perfected system of mind control. In other words, a system that will not only create a 'truth' that happens to coincide with what the system considers as such, but that will also cultivate fear and suspicion of one's own neighbour or fellow passenger (particularly if s/he is not of the right skin colour!) as a potential 'traitor' collaborating with the external 'enemy' —Orwell's "1984" was prophetic in describing this mechanism, despite the fact that it missed the correct date. The BBC, for instance, which has always regarded itself as the flagship of 'objective' journalism (although it never failed, of course, to support the essential aims of the system itself) now plays a leading role in today's witch-hunt[4]. This is a witch-hunt in which a good Muslim is only seen as one who peacefully accepts the occupation of Iraq, Afghanistan or Palestine and who accepts the 'peace' procedures offered by the occupying force and its collaborators, in the hope of grabbing as many 'concessions' as the oppressor may be willing to offer. No wonder that in this climate of fear and suspicion cultivated by the mass media, almost three quarters of Britons are ready to sacrifice their civil liberties for the sake of 'security' (i.e. for the sake of being protected by Big Brother, who created the problem of security in the first instance!). Neither is it surprising, of course, that the meaning of 'enemy' is gradually being extended to include everybody whom the same Big Brother classifies as being a 'terrorist'.

Thus, today, even activists of the Animal Liberation Front, who damage laboratories, farms,

and research institutions in which animals are maltreated or even killed, often with no pure medical objective that could not be met with alternative means, are characterised as terrorists and are subjected to the corresponding treatment. The same applies to academics who "justify" this sort of "terrorism". For instance, the entry to Britain of Steven Best,[5] (a distinguished American academic, writer of several significant books on postmodernism and long-standing member of the Advisory Board *of Democracy & Nature* and *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*) was recently banned by the Home Office. This was on the grounds that he publicly expressed the view that , "we don't want to reform them [vivisectors], we want to wipe them off the face of the earth" —making one wonder what the fate of Marx or Bakunin (who adopted the view that capitalists and their collaborators should also be wiped off the face of the earth) would have been at the hands of today's social-fascists! Another charge raised against Best was that he did not regard attacks against inanimate objects in the form of vandalism, sabotage etc as violence. This means that, in today's 'democracy', supporters of attacks against the assets of multinationals, including perhaps supporters of activists' attacks in anti-globalisation demos against McDonalds and similar establishments, could be banned from Britain today and from the entire European Union tomorrow, if the present UK presidency has its way in passing similar semi-fascist legislation at the pan-European level!

In conclusion, it is becoming increasingly clear that the only way forward is for people to realise that it is not simply some 'bad' neo-cons under Bush Jnr et al who are creating the present semi-fascist barbarity, which passes as democracy all over the world. It is the entire system of the market economy and representative 'democracy' in its present neoliberal form —which is adopted with or without some variations by neoliberals, ex-social democrats, social-liberals and the reformist Left alike— that is to be blamed for the present multi-dimensional, constantly deteriorating crisis. This is the first critical step towards the development of a new mass anti-systemic movement aimed at creating a genuine comprehensive democracy, an Inclusive Democracy, not just as a kind of utopia but also as, perhaps, the only way out of the present deep crisis.

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[1] "Introduction", in P. Anderson and P. Camiller, eds, *Mapping the West European Left*, (London: Verso, 1994), pp. 15-16.

[2] Tim Owen, "Clarke's folly", *The Guardian* (8/3/2005).

[3] Alan Travis, "Britain 'sliding into police state'", *The Guardian* (28/1/2005).

[4] see, for example, Martin Bright, "Muslim leaders in feud with the BBC", *Observer,* 14/8/05, και Faisal Bodi, «'Panorama' was a hatchet job on Muslims», *The Independent* (23/8/2005).

[5] Donald MacLeod, "Britain uses hate law to ban animal rights campaigner", *The Guardian* (31/8/2005).