

Bibliography

Other works by Farias Brito are *Verdade como regra das ações* (Truth as the rule of action; Rio de Janeiro, 1905), *Base física do espírito* (Physical base of truth; Rio de Janeiro, 1912), and *Mundo interior* (Inner world; Rio de Janeiro, 1912).

For a study on Farias Brito, see Fred Gillette Sturm, "Farias Brito: Brazilian Philosopher of the Spirit," in *Revista interamericana de bibliografía* 13 (1963): 176–204.

Fred Gillette Sturm (1967)

FASCISM

"Fascism" was the ideology of the movement that, under the leadership of Benito Mussolini, seized power in Italy in 1922 and held power until the Allied invasion of Italy in World War II. Mussolini was a socialist until 1915, and fascism is a paradoxical but potent mixture of extreme socialist, or syndicalist, notions with a Hegelian or idealist theory of the state.

An attempt to provide fascism with a fully articulated theory was made by an Italian neo-Hegelian philosopher of some distinction, Giovanni Gentile, who was converted to fascism after Mussolini's coup. But as a former liberal and collaborator of Benedetto Croce, Gentile was opposed by the anti-intellectual wing of the Fascist Party, and his draft for a manifesto of fascist ideology was rewritten by Mussolini himself and published in 1932 in the *Enciclopedia italiana* as *La dottrina del fascismo*. However, no adequate conception of fascism could be derived from these theoretical sources alone; the actual behavior of the Italian fascists during their twenty years of power must also be taken into account.

The word *fascism* is often used, especially by left-wing writers, not only for the Italian doctrine but also for the similar, if more fanatic, national socialism of Adolf Hitler and for the altogether less coherent ideologies of Francisco Franco, Juan Perón, Ion Antonescu, and other such dictators. But however justifiable the wider and looser use of the word, the present article is confined to the system and ideology that called itself *Fascismo* and that flourished in Italy under Mussolini.

Gentile in his two books *Che cosa è il fascismo* (1925) and *Origini e dottrina del fascismo* (1929) stressed, as one might expect, the Hegelian elements in fascism. He argued that fascism was essentially idealistic and spiritual. Whereas liberalism, socialism, democracy, and the other progressive movements of the nineteenth century had asserted the rights of man, the selfish claims of the individual, fascism sought, instead, to uphold the moral integrity and higher collective purpose of the nation. And

whereas liberalism saw the state simply as an institution created to protect men's rights, fascism looked on the state as an organic entity that embodied in itself all the noblest spiritual reality of the people as a whole. Fascism opposed the laissez-faire economics of capitalism and the bourgeois ethos that went with it. But fascism equally opposed socialism, which preached class war and trade unionism and thus served only to divide the nation. Fascism could tolerate no organized sectional groups that stood outside the state, for such groups pressed the supposed interests of some against the true interests of all. Hence, in place of trade unions, employers' federations, and similar organizations, fascism set up corporations that were designed to integrate the interests of particular trades, industries, professions, and the like into the wider harmony of the state.

Fascism, said Gentile, understood all the defects of bourgeois capitalism that had led to the rise of socialism, but fascism revolutionized society in such a way that the socialist critique was no longer relevant. For fascism replaced the old, competitive, hedonistic ethos of liberalism with an austere, stern, rigorous patriotic morality in which "the heroic values of service, sacrifice, indeed death itself were once more respected." Fascism did not deny liberty, but the liberty it upheld was not the right of each man to do what he pleased but "the liberty of a whole people freely accepting the rule of a state which they had interiorised, and made the guiding principle of all their conduct."

Fascism was proud of its comprehensive nature, of its totalitarian scope. For fascism, Gentile argued, was not just a method of government; it was a philosophy that permeated the whole will, thought, and feeling of the nation. "The authority of the state," Gentile wrote, "is absolute. It does not compromise, it does not bargain, it does not surrender any portion of its field to other moral or religious principles which may interfere with the individual conscience. But, on the other hand the state becomes a reality only in the consciousness of individuals." The state was "an idea made actual."

When Mussolini revised Gentile's draft for his *La dottrina del fascismo*, he retained most of the neo-Hegelian idealistic talk about the ideal nature of the state, but he had more to say about fascism's debts to the more extreme and fanatic elements of the nineteenth-century left wing. Mussolini named Georges Sorel, Charles Péguy, and Hubert Lagardelle as "sources of the river of Fascism." From these theorists, especially from Sorel, Mussolini derived the idea that "action is more important than thought"; by "action" he meant, as Sorel meant, vio-

lence. The extremists of the anarchist movement in the nineteenth century were obsessed by what they called *la propagande par le fait* (propaganda by deed); this “deed” tended to take the form of indiscriminating acts of revolutionary violence, such as throwing bombs into crowded cafés. The exhilaration of this policy soon blinded several of its champions to the end they were supposed to be pursuing—overthrowing the state—so that anarchism produced a movement of revolutionary disciplinarianism that Mussolini recognized as the source of his own inspiration.

Fascism was thus a movement that not only accepted, but also rejoiced in, violence. It had no patience with parliamentary or democratic methods of changing society. Indeed, Mussolini believed that the violent seizure of power, such as his own movement accomplished when it marched on Rome in 1922, was a necessary part of the moral rejuvenation of the nation; it was needed in order to create that “epic state of mind” (a phrase of Sorel’s) that fascism prized so highly. Thus rejoicing in violence, fascism was, as Mussolini explained, hostile to all forms of pacifism, universalism, and disarmament. Fascism frankly acknowledged that “war alone keys up all human energies to their maximum tension, and sets a seal of nobility on those persons who have the courage to fight and die.” The fascist state would have nothing to do with “universal embraces”; it “looked its neighbour proudly in the face, always armed, always vigilant, always ready to defend its integrity.” Schemes such as that of the League of Nations were anathema to fascism.

With some reason Mussolini also claimed that fascism derived historically from the nationalistic movement of the nineteenth century. Nationalism, he insisted, owed nothing to the left. The German nation was not unified by liberals but by a man of iron, Otto von Bismarck. The nation of Italy, too, had been created by such men as Giuseppe Garibaldi, a man of revolutionary violence; the first great prophet of Italian unity was Niccolò Machiavelli, the archenemy of liberal, pacifist scruples. Mussolini had the highest regard for the author of *The Prince*. Machiavelli’s desire to rekindle in modern Italy all the military virtues and military glory of ancient Rome was also Mussolini’s ambition, but Mussolini’s version of Machiavelli’s dream was a much more vulgar one, and his achievements would have struck Machiavelli as tawdry, shabby, and corrupt.

Mussolini argued that it was the Italian state that had created the Italian nation. Indeed, it was the state, as the expression of a universal ethical will, which created the

right to national existence and independence. Mussolini rejected the racism that was so central a feature of Nazi teaching in Germany. “The people,” he wrote, “is not a race, but a people historically perpetuating itself; a multitude united by an idea.” It must be recorded in favor of fascism that it never taught race hatred, and even when Mussolini entered the war on Hitler’s side and introduced anti-Semitic legislation to please his ally, the Italian fascists were far from zealous in the enforcement of the laws against Jews.

Indeed, Mussolini’s glorification of war and violence had never more than a limited success with the Italian people. Accustomed to rhetoric and appreciative of any kind of display, the Italians accepted the showier side of fascism more readily than the “austere, heroic way of life” that it demanded. Slow to conquer the backward Ethiopians in Mussolini’s colonialist war against Abyssinia in 1935, the average Italian conscript soldier was even less eager to meet the Allied forces in World War II. Likewise, despite the cruelty of Mussolini’s henchmen to his numerous political prisoners, there was never in Italy anything approaching the genocide that was faithfully enacted by Hitler’s followers in Germany; even at its worst fascism never robbed the Italians of their humanity.

Mussolini earned a reputation, even among critical foreign observers, for the “efficiency” of his administration; he was popularly supposed abroad “to have made the Italian trains run on time.” This achievement was largely mythical, for economic growth was minimal, but Mussolini was able, by forbidding strikes and subordinating industries to his state corporations, to prevent any of the more easily discernible manifestations of economic disorder. In any case his rule was never a mere personal dictatorship. He built up a powerful party with an elaborate hierarchy of command that served him much as the Soviet Communist Party served Joseph Stalin. Fascism was in a very real sense the dictatorship of a party, and the effectiveness of the party organization in a country by no means notable for good organization was one secret of fascism’s twenty years of success.

See also Anarchism; Croce, Benedetto; Democracy; Gentile, Giovanni; Machiavelli, Niccolò; Marxist Philosophy; Nationalism; Political Philosophy, History of; Socialism; Sorel, Georges; Violence.

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Maurice Cranston (1967)

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FATHERS OF THE CHURCH

See *Patristic Philosophy*

FECHNER, GUSTAV THEODOR (1801–1887)

Gustav Theodor Fechner, the German philosopher, was the founder of psychophysics, and a pioneer in experi-

mental psychology. He was born in Gross-Saerchen, Prussia, and studied medicine at the University of Leipzig, where he passed his examinations at the age of twenty-one. His interests, however, led him into physics, and by 1830 he had published more than forty papers in this field. He also wrote a number of poems and satirical works under the pseudonym of "Dr. Mises," which he also used for some of his later metaphysical speculations. A paper on the quantitative measurement of electrical currents (1831) led to his appointment as professor of physics at Leipzig. Fechner's incipient interest in psychology is shown in papers of 1838 and 1840 on the perception of complementary colors and on subjective afterimages. His experiments on afterimages, however, had tragic consequences. As a result of gazing at the sun he sustained an eye injury, and his subsequent blindness led to a serious emotional crisis. Fechner resigned his professorship in 1839 and virtually retired from the world.

A seemingly miraculous recovery, three years later, stimulated Fechner's interest in philosophy, particularly in regard to the question of the soul and the possibility of refuting materialistic metaphysics. In a work titled *Nanna oder das Seelenleben der Pflanzen* (Nanna, or the soul-life of plants; Leipzig, 1848) he defended the idea that even plants have a mental life. This book is indicative of the panpsychistic bent of Fechner's thought, which was the major cause of the direction taken by his further work.

PSYCHOPHYSICS

In 1848 Fechner returned to the University of Leipzig as professor of philosophy. His desire to substantiate empirically the metaphysical thesis that mind and matter are simply alternative ways of construing one and the same reality was the main motivation for his pioneering work in experimental psychology. His *Elemente der Psychophysik* (Leipzig, 1860) was intended to be an outline of an exact science of the functional relations between bodily and mental phenomena, with a view to showing that one and the same phenomenon could be characterized in two ways. Fechner divided his new science of psychophysics into two disciplines: inner psychophysics, which studies the relation between sensation and nerve excitation; and outer psychophysics, to which Fechner's own experimental work was devoted and which studies the relation between sensation and physical stimulus. Psychophysics became one of the dominant fields within experimental psychology.

Fechner's work on the relation between physical stimuli and sensations led to a mathematical formulation