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# Fascism in the Age of Global Capitalism

The new historical phase of imperialism, globalization destroys the fabric of human societies; claims to go back to roots and essences which support fascisization in various forms. The Hungarian philosopher Miklós Tamás Gáspár comments: "Hungary and the world go through the process of fascisization without the fascists taking over the power".<sup>1</sup> Fascism of the beginning of the twenty first century is the articulation and translation of racism and ethnicity into politics. Political developments in the nineteen nineties and the first years of the twenty first century demonstrate the determination to control the peripheries and the 'third world'. The specific feature of the contemporary form of fascism is that it does not overthrow forms of parliamentary democracy. It finds a convenient place within global capitalism displaying old and new forms of fascist consciousness. The new form of fascism as a political movement is different from fascism in the twenties and thirties when its main adversary was the Comintern and left social democracy.

Bloch suggests in *Heritage of our Time* that fascism was the emergence of suppressed atavistic elements of consciousness, insulated in their 'temporal' specificity. Adorno and Horkheimer claim that fascism was a product of modernity, the instrumental rationality of Enlightenment. Instrumental rationality reduces culture into genocide that fascism unleashed. Adorno and Horkheimer maintain in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* that the dichotomy of instrumental and theoretical rationality is multiplied further by the ways in which instrumental rationality controls knowledge: the way Enlightenment culture opposes nature, experience conforms to the rational and quality is subsumed by quantity. These are reified elements of consciousness, which lose the ability of self-reflection. Enlightenment in its later phase dissociated from the earlier project of human emancipation because instrumental rationality can be made subservient to anti-humanism and destruction, like war or the Holocaust. In the later part of the paper I want to emphasize that the concepts of capital, class and consciousness have gone through basic, fundamental disjunctures, which are reflected in a multiplicity of reifications. Through the recovery of these concepts in the process of political struggle, racism and ethnic nationalism can be countered.

Bloch's, Adorno's and Horkheimer's observations are important for research on fascism because it is clear that cultural phenomena are established with a certain amount of independence.

The differences between fascism between the two world wars and new forms of fascism today are in 1. in the role of capital which has now become global capital 2. the role of the nation-state and welfare state 3. the role of the underclass, immigrants 4. ethnicisation and identity 5. change in the character of the working class 6. change of politics and the political subject 7. multiculturalism, history writing, media 8. ethics.

New forms of fascism are called by different names, neo-fascism, reform-fascism, post-fascism and proto-fascism. In this paper I use the name fascism and post-fascism alternately.

The recent phase of globalization can be characterized by the deprivation of rights of immigrants in Europe, increasing racism in the form of exclusion of outsiders, and exploitation of third world labour. In the age of global structural crisis<sup>2</sup> life is exterminated in all forms, through ethnic cleansing and terrorism, child labour, starvation and toxification of the environment. Along with the transformation of the character of capital, state and class politics have also undergone changes. Terrorist attacks, the answer to terrorism and their prevention in the form of "pre-emptive military attacks" leave little scope for political resolution. Those who are engaged in military action to prevent or to reply to terrorism are in the grip of the same violent dichotomy as the terrorists.

The first wave of liberal structural change of the economy took place in the 1970s that marked the pressing back of the state in the form of privatization, deregulation and liberalization. The structural change became omnipresent in the nineties when the idea of the inevitability of free market and globalization as some sort of irreversible natural force was accepted. After the collapse of the East European bloc the claim that free market and democracy are connected gained wide acceptance. But the democracy that materialized was limited to formal procedures; like voting and decision making in parliamentary processes. As 'structural adjustment' went ahead<sup>3</sup> inequality, impoverishment, oppression and exclusion surfaced threatening a number of countries with 'structural violence'. A number of civil wars took place after the fall of the Berlin Wall, all of them in poor countries. The lack of alternative moved people to inertia in most countries, especially in East Europe where the role of trade unions has changed and they do not guaranty mass participation. In other parts of the world genuine protest emerged from various groups and the critique of globalization emerged from diverse currents of thought. Many currents of the anti-globalization movement do not want to join parties or the Parliament because they feel that party politics

and parliamentary politics would co-opt them. They also do not have a clear-cut strategy about how to contest the multinational firms and the increasing military power that is linked to them. This is also the reason that even though forces which take a stand against globalization mostly express themselves outside the Parliament. Many non-violent anti-globalization forces do not believe in alliances with parliamentary parties because they mistrust the functioning of the Parliament that reduces dissent to formalities.

The various currents of thought which can still be connected to mainstream political parties: the Christian-social-liberal that looks at the problem of globalization and poverty as the source of a moral problem which needs to be resolved through charity; the Keynesian/old social democratic critique of globalization that blames the functioning of multinational firms and considers their reform and the regularization of the flow of capital possible; the populist/romantic criticism of globalization, which idealizes the early forms of capitalism and a competitive/ non-capitalist market that functions on the basis of small enterprises; the nationalist criticism of globalization which considers the support of national capital most important and differentiates between financial and productive capital. Fascist critics of globalization ascribe ethnic characteristics to financial capital. For example, the Party of Hungarian Truth and Life speaks about "Jewish hawk capital". In Eastern Europe a number of anti-Semitic slogans, rhythms and symbols are in circulation revived from between the two World Wars. The Marxist / revolutionary current holds globalization responsible for crisis in three areas: economic, political and ecological.<sup>4</sup>

After World War I the first generation of fascists, the fascist 'plebeians' in Guérin's terminology<sup>5</sup>, attacked industrial capitalism (both Mussolini's and Hitler's rhetoric initially was directed against banks and loan capital, big industry and commerce) and the idea of the 'corporate state' was promoted; in our age similarly some conservative, nationalist and populist parties attack globalization for some time and promote the idea of return to the land, village- and home-industry but when they take over power their position changes. For example the BJP first attacked the Congress Party for opening up the country to global capital but then in 1998 it dropped resolutions against globalization. The rhetorical protest and anti-capitalism of postfascist parties may at some points overlap with the leftist/ revolutionary criticism of globalization. The range of issues and ideological groups may be different from country to country. There maybe issues where party politics, groups and alliances function on a temporary basis. The issue of the American attack on Iraq was protested against by both the leftists and the extreme right in Hungary, similarly by a number of East European countries, but the reactions to the attacks on Serbia were very different.

In 1989 the bipolar political balance in the world (US – Soviet Union) was upset and moved in a different, (unipolar and at the same time fragmented) direction. As a result the US became the sole superpower in the nineties. The fascist potential of the US is described by Michal Kalecki in *The Fascism of Our Times*<sup>6</sup> written in 1964 and by Lukács in the *Blum Theses*<sup>7</sup> written for the Hungarian Communist Party Congress in 1929. Lukács depicts the process of fascisation brought about by the interests of big capital, its unity with the state and the absence of working class traditions. Lukács' analysis of the fascist potential of the US was true even though his forecast in the 1930s that the Fascist takeover is imminent in America did not prove right at that time because the US joined the alliance with Great-Britain and the Soviet Union in World War II.

The supremacy of the US today is subject to the regional division of power, for example the internal rivalry of Japan and China in economic terms, Pakistan and India in military terms. The rivalries in Asia and in Europe and in other continents leave the door open to US intervention where military solutions are found to political, social and financial problems. The attack on the twin towers of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 11th September 2001 provided the pretext to the War on Terror first on Afghanistan and then for other US 'pre-emptive' attacks. The attack on Iraq signified a geopolitical programme, US interests in the Middle East, which could be extended to Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.<sup>8</sup>

Similarly the transformation of Europe and its place in the new world order depends on internal and external rivalries.<sup>9</sup> Early 2003 France and Germany decided to veto the use of force in Iraq in the Security Council. The letter of eight Prime Ministers of Europe supporting the decision of the Bush Administration and opposing the stand of France and Germany against the war was also a sign of internal rivalry within Europe and divided Europe into the old (core) countries of the European Union and the new countries.

The unequal distribution of wealth serves various groups of society differently. It contributes to the increasing disproportion of opportunities, supports the combination of a set of political, social, cultural and ideological changes which spawn new and revive old forms of fascism in a new context. The set of changes described below shows that the development of new forces of production, - the spreading of the IT industry - intrudes into the work-pattern of people, into their lifestyles, forces them to work in part-time jobs.<sup>10</sup> It puts an end to the meaningful functioning of the trade unions (like the right to work, fixed working hours, regulation of wages) and rights to basic human necessities, like the right to shelter, water and food. The process of enormous growth of wealth in the second half of the twentieth century which benefited great masses of population has been slowly reversed since the onset

of globalization from the nineteen seventies and the collapse of the Soviet Union. The growth of GNP in some countries does not increase opportunities, only the polarization of incomes. Health and education that the state provides show the decrease of general health and the shrinking availability of resources. Jürgen Habermas calls the unequal opportunities “a structural threat to the welfarist domestication of capitalism”.<sup>11</sup>

### Global Capital

Rosa Luxemburg and Lenin highlighted the export of capital as an internal necessity of capital in the beginning of the century. They emphasized how it was linked to annexing new territories. Their analysis showed the connection of capitalism, the need of annexation of new territories and World War I. Lenin in his analysis of the new phase, imperialism, dedicated a special role to banks and their new, widening role in the industry. Stiglitz in his book on globalization describes how financial liberalization – a condition demanded by the IMF and the World Bank created crisis in East-Asia where the economies could not take the fluctuation of the currency.<sup>12</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein describes the characteristics of economics of the 1970s period,<sup>13</sup> as the shift of capital from the productive areas to speculative finance, the flight of industries with declining profits to ‘developing’ countries where production costs can be reduced through the lowering of wages and the rise of unemployment levels. Prabhat Patnaik in his introduction to Lenin’s *Imperialism*<sup>14</sup> underlines that finance capital is neither nation-based, nor aided by the nation-state and finance operates in an atmosphere of unity between the various imperialist powers. In consonance with this Patnaik calls the present phase of capitalism “the age of global finance”. The global character of finance capital aims at quick speculative gains, and it is separate from the activities of multinational companies and from production. International finance “flows everywhere” and it is also “sucked out of everywhere”.

The attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001, important symbols of the global economy and military power showed that globalization had reached a critical juncture.

### Nation-State

The state and its various administrative bodies and earlier functions have been gradually transformed by globalization. The multinational firms use the administrative, legal powers of the state to promote their interests at the peril of social, cultural and ecological assets. Etienne Balibar elaborates the phenomenon of “the disposable human being” and forms of institutionalized liquidation as part of neo-liberal policies, which Balibar calls the “ultra-objective forms of violence, or cruelty with a human face”. These policies

dispense with large masses of people through unemployment or artificial withdrawal of medicine or aid.<sup>15</sup> A number of states practice 'ultra-objective forms of violence' in a legally approved framework on the basis of recently changed constitutions. The analysis of the transformation of the state and the so-called ultra-objective forms of violence need to be taken up jointly by anti-globalization forces.

The right to shelter was removed from the constitution of East European countries leaving lakhs of people in each country homeless. Balibar draws a parallel to these with the uninstitutionalized acts or "the ultra-subjective forms of violence". In the nineties the transition to market economy increased inequities and the unequal chances of survival and tensions led to violent attacks and civil wars. Whether it is rape, maiming or murdering individuals as terrorist acts in the name of ethnic cleansing, these are fascist acts of collective violence. Amnesty International tracks down and deplors such "subjective forms of violence".

The process of globalization almost everywhere is accompanied by the attack on the state. Max Weber defines the national state as the repository of national capitalism and the safeguard of its survival through its legislative, administrative and executive powers. The sluggish, slow and cumbersome state that is exposed to onslaughts on many fronts is presented by neo-liberals more as a liability than a resource. The tradition of historical anarchism describes the state as "organized authority, domination and power of the possessing classes".<sup>16</sup> Noam Chomsky shows in the collection of his articles *For Reasons of State* the insidious connection between government, big business and the manipulation of public consent through the media. The anarchist critics of the state differ from the neo-liberal criticism of the welfare state, which targets the welfare system and the high, progressive taxation to develop an effective network for health, pension and education subsidies. Jürgen Habermas points out in his article, "Learning from Catastrophe" that state governments have been forced into a situation where they have to cut down on their budgets and this demands great social costs.

Michael Mann in an article published<sup>17</sup> in 1999 stresses the role of liberal democracy in the foundation of the nation-state. The main feature of liberal democracy Mann stresses is its class character; the interests of propertied, educated, male members who want to establish the state as the representative of their class interests. The Parliament functions in the state as a mediator of interests and it also serves as a conciliatory institution of resolution (in Switzerland, in America, in France) In the nation state of liberal democracy class plays the most important role. The dark side of these democracies shows in their colonies where segregation, exile, physical violence, slavery and murder were employed to deal with 'their racial other' while in their home



countries political questions were resolved between political parties and conciliation was the method of resolution. They developed a theory of racial superiority and the more democratic the settlers were among themselves the more brutally they dealt with the indigenous population.

In Central- and Eastern Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries nationalism was a reply to colonization. In India nationalism had similar economic, cultural and political aspects in connection with British colonization. In Germany, in Austria, in Hungary, in Turkey and in a number of relatively new states, nationalism had its connection with the rising bourgeoisie but it was identified with the people's organic unity, which transcends class- and other interests and was mobilized against the 'foreign, alien' colonizers. Since nationalism was felt to express the organic essence of the people, outsiders, minorities with different essences were to be excluded. Towards the end of the nineteenth century it was transformed into the conservative ideology of the state. After the First World War nationalism changed function in Europe. The cruelty, which was played out by liberal democracies – with different notions of citizenship – in their colonies, was replicated by the later nation-states towards their minorities (Jews, Armenians, Serbs, Croats etc.)

The politics of global enterprises questions the economic, military and cultural monopoly of the state over its territory and its complete legislative, executive and military sovereignty. This is also assisted by the fact that after the collapse of the Soviet Union many countries in East Europe were unable to function as self-supporting units. This led to opening their economies to a wider international market and initiated the privatization of their industry and agriculture. Stiglitz describes how the austere policies of the International Monetary Fund pushed policies of privatization and restructuring, pressurized countries not to have trade barriers and higher interest rates.<sup>18</sup> The elites of the East European countries offered their markets to western capital and an official policy of no payment of tax in many countries was introduced for the first ten years of investment. The social democratic parties after their success in the second elections offered their help and expertise in the East- European region to the multinationals to ground their feet in Eastern Europe and this served the export of their influence into the new era of the multinationals.

The break-up of larger states, comprising smaller federations or units was followed by the entry of multinational companies. Globalization meets more congenial conditions in local, regional units. The fragmentation of larger states like the Soviet Union or Yugoslavia was assisted by German diplomatic action, which was first to recognize Slovenia and Croatia as independent states. These new states were established on the basis of ethnic, religious and linguistic basis.



Patnaik emphasizes the role of globalization in income inequalities<sup>19</sup>, the loss of economic sovereignty that underscores local antagonisms at the regional, religious, linguistic and caste level. The oppositions beyond a certain point can generate secessionist wars or communal riots, like the communal riots in Gujarat and the ethnic war in the former Yugoslavia. The break-up of states that leads to autonomous units is often coupled by fiscal crisis that in its turn reinforces local fascisms. Fascism in the neoliberal state encourages the growth of local fascisms. In the later part of the article the local conflicts escalating into ethnic or religious riots and their connection with the rise of ethnicity and multiculturalism will be taken up again.

Fiscal restrictions reduce the ability of the states to protect their population from the negative effects of a transnational economy. It is not clear whether the state is colluding with the multinational organizations or multinational firms and financial organizations impose conditions on nation-states. The national state supposedly hands over some of its responsibilities to global companies and it grants several benefits to multinational companies like tax-exemption, free-land etc. The new emerging states function on the basis of their understanding of their diminished function. This is further complicated by the fact that the functioning of international financial institutions (like the WTO and IMF) is impenetrable.<sup>20</sup>

## Welfare State

The onslaught on the welfare state and its function in maintaining a protective network was the first step towards the transition to the neo-liberal state. The attack was actually a reply to the class struggle of the employees. Wage demands called for by the trade unions and the expenses spent on welfare were presented by the neo-liberals as obstacles to modernization. Margaret Thatcher's policies in the 1980s represented the abandonment of the welfare state and the disavowal of its responsibilities. Neoliberals claim that Keynesianism (government interference to cut unemployment) in the conditions of a globalized economy is no longer feasible. State employment programs and the measures of the welfare state were possible in a specific historical constellation in the conditions of capitalism in a bilateral world, after World War II, at the time of the competition between the NATO and Warsaw Pact countries. In spite of the reemployment programs and continuing education aimed at the 'flexibility of the labour market' the number of unemployed is increasing.

The notion of 'security' has changed. While earlier it conveyed the meaning of security network, health, education and social security and protection; today security refers to security against theft and burglary, the kind of crimes, which are associated with the criminalization of poverty. The

task of the state is 'Law and Order', punishment and incarceration instead of the planning and execution of welfare programmes. The number of people who are in need of assistance but are punished instead, the number of incarcerated is increasing. Loic Wacquant, French sociologist, points out the enormous increase, about seven times compared to the number in the nineteen sixties and seventies. Zygmunt Bauman analyses the fact<sup>21</sup> that jail and confinement is an alternative to employment', the neo-liberal choice of dealing with the labour market. His suggestion is that prison in the age of globalization is a space of exclusion where "the techniques of space-confinement of the rejects" are tested on the waste of globalization.

### **Economic polarization**

In the age of global capital flows the pace of economy is dictated by the US.<sup>22</sup>

This means the special role of the US dollar, the military force of the US and the ability of its enterprises to win strategic positions in the global market and gain special advantages through these. The result of this position is economic polarization between countries and polarization within America and in other countries.

In Chicago slum-dwellers suffer deprivations and child poverty has grown in America and in England, like in other parts of the globe. Labour costs, salaries have been falling in the US according to John Bellamy Forster.

While global companies have increased their collective annual sales recently to four times since 1975 and the largest 500 companies account for over half of trade, the debt of the forty one poorest countries built up to US \$ 250 billion<sup>23</sup> making it difficult to tackle hunger, health and education, basic areas where the cycle of poverty could be broken. The global wealth of the poorest countries is 1.4 percent and they constitute twenty percent of the world's population.<sup>24</sup> Stiglitz speaks about 45 per cent of the world's population (2,8 billion), which lives on less than \$2 a day, and 1,2 billion on \$1 a day.<sup>25</sup>

UN Development Reports, statistics, documentaries and articles show that polarization in the economic conditions of the population has increased in the last decade of the twentieth century. Joseph Stiglitz makes a reference to the 'broken promises' in connection with 'the growing divide' between the rich and poor (that has increased in the nineties by 100 million). In Western Europe one third of the population lives far below the living standards of the rest. Margaret Thatcher's policy changed the welfare programs of the U.K. most radically and the restructured economy brought the greatest benefits to the well-to-do. Habermas mentions the 'downward mobility' of social classes that accompanies unemployment, poverty and disparities. His concern is the erosion of democratic institutions and procedures, which involve the threat of fascism.

In Eastern Europe the transformation of the economy, transition to a market economy, privatization and the entry of multinational companies led to similar results in proportions. State socialism guaranteed that starvation and poverty disappeared despite the economic levels of their countries and people had known some social and economic security. The constitution was changed and there are not enough temporary night shelters for the homeless in any of the former socialist countries. The greatest decline took place in the former Soviet Union, in Bulgaria and Romania. The Russian economy declined 34 percent between 1989 and 1991 and this process went on till 1993. One third of the Hungarians are left without work, live on some kind of aid or survive by begging, occasional work etc. After 1993 Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan live in poverty and a number of poverty related problems: the lack of health coverage (the reappearance of tuberculosis, measles, whooping cough), homelessness, poverty of children and enormous growth in crime. The process of transformation, shock therapy, involved not only the implantation of neoliberal market reforms but also the almost total privatization of state property which was sold out for less than 1,5 per cent of the real value. Privatization itself depended on personal contacts and criminal violence. Small trade organizations and enterprises remain part of the black economy because of their inability to pay taxes and satisfy the bureaucratic formalities.<sup>26</sup>

In a sociological survey put together on the basis of the research done in six former socialist countries about starvation and poverty in 1993 and in 2000, fifty seven percent of those who were asked claimed that their living conditions declined since 1988, the last year of socialism.<sup>27</sup> The main victims of the transformation in many countries are gypsies and women. This ethnicization of poverty is considered the most dangerous phenomenon of capitalist transformation.

In India globalization started full swing in the 1990s. Indian industrialists, like Rahul Bajaj<sup>28</sup> insist that

“More liberalization and deregulation of the Indian economy is needed.... Globalization is inevitable. There is no alternative.”

Even though the Narasimha Rao Government introduced the liberalization programme in 1991 the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party coincided with the vehement new entry of liberalization. Though the BJP relies to a great extent on the RSS, which promotes home industry the Party did not endorse the anti-globalization resolutions suggested till 1998. Privatization under the name of disinvestment is progressing at a great speed.

The most sensitive issue in India is agriculture, which provides livelihood to 70 per cent of the population. Opening Indian agriculture to the global market meant an increase in food prices and a decline in the purchasing

power of grain, seed, agrochemical products and food. Recently, in 2003 after the bad monsoon food grains availability dropped to the level of an all time low,<sup>29</sup> about the same as what was available during World War II, including the years of the Bengal Famine. This situation has been evolving for over a decade and starvation and suicides have been taking place at a mass level in many states because of inadequate purchasing power. In comparison to the 1980s, the growth rate of food grain output in the 1990s was almost half - 1.8 per cent against 3.54 per cent. The non-food grain economy also represents a picture of stagnation, with growth rates having fallen from a trend figure of 4 per cent in the 1980s to 3.17 percent in the last decade. Peasants in Punjab, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan have been distressed and in Andhra Pradesh in three drought hit areas alone there were 2580 peasant suicides. The desperation in other areas like the handloom industry, the second largest employer in Tamil Nadu after agriculture shows the effect of the liberalized policy regime and market instability.<sup>30</sup> In 2002 the withdrawal of orders and government apathy drove the workers many of whom are members of cooperatives to go on a hunger march to Madras. The right to food is one of the basic human rights, like the right to life, but this basic right is sacrificed to trade.

### **Globalization and ethnic polarization**

The response of individual countries to globalization is different, but ethnic revival was on the rise in the nineties everywhere. In many countries globalization underlined questions of the unjust redistribution of goods and greater impoverishment. The issue of social justice led to the idea of the "equality" of the collectivity of a 'homogeneous' nation. The new social democracy controls the government with the help of a selected elite, which supports neoliberalism and globalization, like the right. Their bureaucratic and technocratic mode of communication isolates them from the population. The state under left or right withdraws into a role of guarding security and this transforms social life, turning democracy into a hostage. Ethnicity is a form of protest against demands of neoliberalism and globalization. Ethnic nationalism emerges as a form of false consciousness in protest against injustice, but the demand of a national, ethnic state promotes the reproduction of its old, regional position in a new form, because it actually aids the process of globalization. Eric Hobsbawm speaks about the reversal of the historical process of the construction of the states from the sixteenth century onwards which centralized legal, military and economic affairs and their administration.<sup>31</sup>

Globalization created modern forms of fascism by generating new forms of apartheid through the ethnicization of impoverishment and undermining

democratic institutions. In India the anti-Muslim Gujarat riots of 2002 showed that in one of India's richest and most globalized states groups of different religions (Hindus and Muslims) can be pitted against each other. In many of the tribal areas economic deprivation and the incitement and campaigns of the VHP and the Bajrang Dal could mobilize Dalits and Adivasis against Muslims by projecting Muslims as exploiters of Adivasis.<sup>32</sup>

Ethnic nationalism emerges as a form of protest against economic and social injustice. The selection of an ethnic group for special help may increase underlying tensions and violence. The countries with transition economies in Eastern Europe had known social and economic security and frustration and anger are running much higher than in other countries without this experience. According to the Russian Statistical Institute

Thirty seven per cent of the population dropped below poverty level. 47 per cent of the children live in poverty and there was a fast increase in common infectious diseases, like tuberculosis, measles and whooping cough. Health was earlier a special area which was taken care of by the state.<sup>33</sup> The disintegration of the state and the loss of unity and legitimacy of the old elite precipitate ethnic movements and the rise of religious fundamentalism. The emergence of the ethnic principle shows the erosion of the ruling class, the reduction of resources that made development and social ascent for large sections of the society possible. Samir Amin points out<sup>34</sup> that the "re-emergence of ethnicity" is "not a kind of atavism noisily manifesting itself in a series of explosions spaced out over time" but rather "the strategies deployed by a ruling class at bay, whether the nomenclature of Eastern-Europe, or the privileged classes of such regions of the Third World as India or Africa."

The inadequacy to deal with the concrete nature of ethnic or religious conflict, the 'mindless' identification with biological origins and the rigid treatment of all issues connected to one's ethnic or religious origins goes beyond the empirical and shows the violation of humanity, the alienated nature of the individual. It satisfies the requirements of the ruling class. As Lukács describes alienation created by the division of labour in *History and Class Consciousness* "the individual, himself divided, is transformed into the automatic mechanism and crippled to abnormality". False consciousness in the age of globalization emerges in the form of eternal, ethnic identity, which establishes itself with deterministic necessity. The process of globalization is benefited by the economic and ideological crisis of the nation state and the fragmentation of the state into smaller 'ethnic' units.

Even though antagonism was inherent in the notion of class, property and exploitation in the early liberal states class conflict usually led to reconciliation of interests with the assistance of liberal institutions.<sup>35</sup> In the nineteenth century religious or ethnic groups were expected to assimilate and

the responses by various groups were different. In the multi-national empires class conflicts also involved the conflict of the imperial center with the local center, which surfaced in the form of ethnic or religious tensions.<sup>36</sup> The cause of the Balkan war is often interpreted as a result of the socialist system. But ethnic wars are not connected with the injustices of the earlier system. The Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia created autonomous or semi-autonomous republics, territories, and districts. In many of these areas scripts and a unified language were also provided<sup>37</sup>. There was also a local system of cultural institutions, academies, theatres, journals, newspapers, music orchestras, and film studios. At the time of the market reform and decentralization the regional elite, which was supposed to take care of the cultural interests of the nationality became centralized at the level of their own state. The regional elites in the former Yugoslavia used discrimination against the local Serbs availing of the current rhetoric of decentralization, democracy and autonomy. At this time the Serbian elites demanded centralization at the level of the federal state.

Those who grabbed political power in the 1990s in the CIS countries are not removable, Karimov in Uzbekistan, Akayev in Kirghizistan, and Nazarbayev in Kazakhstan. The injustices of the local ruling elite were explained away as the injustice of the system, the lack of freedom but there was no effort made to execute the democratic reform of the earlier federal state. The multinational firms have allotted a special income to the local elite from the oil export and it benefited the majority very little.<sup>38</sup> The new economic, military, cultural, linguistic boundaries of the ethnic state were defined without the actual existence of the nation. The Communist Party was the binding force above the nations in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, this center disappeared and politics along with it. The rule was taken over by the local elites whose focus was ethnicity.

The rise of ethnicity signifies the transformation of class, the transformation of the political group. In its use in connection with the 'national' the use of ethnicity refers to the non-dominant group often outside the 'national'. Ethnicity is supposed to reflect a person's self-perception and gains acceptance as a smaller unity within the nation. The notion of ethnicity is different from nationalism, which recognizes the concept of citizenship, the active membership of the political community. Nationalism with active political participation is an Enlightenment concept. Since the first use of the term 'ethnic' the term 'race' has subsumed 'ethnic'. The practical, legal and political significance of the term 'ethnicity' has become far more powerful. Ethnicity and ethnic groups have become part of the basic political vocabulary, which shows the transformation of politics itself. The fact that states increasingly recognize ethnic, religious etc. rights of smaller categories

creates the scope for the creation of the specificity of such groups also in the legislative framework.<sup>39</sup>

## Politics and the political subject

In the course of transformation of the state and the system of material distribution, hierarchical relationships have changed and the notions of citizenship were converted from citizen, the member of the engaged political community, into the direction of identity. This change reflects the change politics has undergone in the course of the recent wave of globalization. Present-day governments shrink political debate, public discussion of critical issues (like inequality, economic deprivation, legal rights), and replace politics with military solutions. The definition of the political subject also shifts in the direction of biological, ethnic, legal, ethical, criminal definition. Discussion on politics is replaced by a combination of cultural determinism and relativism and the political subject is defined on the basis of his ethnic origins.

The politics of identity in our age substitutes the subject as a member of a class or social strata with the member of an ethno-cultural group. This trend has been increasing since the 1960s when a number of 'new' ethnic groups were constructed with powerful social and economic demands.<sup>40</sup> The group's identity has some permanent, primordial characteristic, which are biologically determined and unchangeable, shared only with other members of the group. Identity is asserted as a powerful political function in the last three decades and the fact that it outweighs other political alliances, like trade unions have become increasingly evident. The relationship of ethnic group to class and nation suggests that ethnicity is the channelization of resistance in a largely apolitical society and its isolation makes its political role doubtful. The separation and impenetrability of ethnic groups was a trait of society in the colonies. The occupation by Hitler of European countries with ethnic German populations was accepted by the European powers, France and England, which gave their consent to German expansion.

The ethnicization of politics entails that competition and regional inequality is defined increasingly in terms of ethnic and cultural parameters, that the workers of a country oppose new immigrant workers and their antagonism is interpreted as a problem of cultural difference, crime and public security. In the meanwhile the concept of 'underclass' emerged with new overtones. The ethnicization and depoliticization of the nation disregarding citizenship or history (like the German ethnic groups in Romania and Kazakhstan or the Hungarian groups in Yugoslavia, Slovakia and Romania) entails that citizens who are ethnically or denominationally different are excluded from the nation, considered outsiders. The ethnic/cultural discourse accepts discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity or



religion. The attacks on the welfare state and on positive discrimination are argued on an economic, fiscal basis but rely on a racist subtext that is reinforced by ideas of the lack of productivity of outsiders, those who are not members of the homogeneous society.

The universalization of citizenship, the extension of citizenship independent of class, occupation, race, locality, denomination and sex was an ideal that was inherent in the idea of emancipation in the Enlightenment. Universal citizenship, the union of political and human conditions, enables participation and draws up a model of rationality and society that would make universal citizenship possible. Freedom as the termination of destitution, of personal and existential dependence was an ideal in direct consonance with the idea of universality and Enlightenment. Universal suffrage, education and conscription were part of solidarity in the egalitarian political community. Liberals, social democrats and other progressive thinkers identified the human and political potential as the direct continuation of the project of Enlightenment. The opposition to universal citizenship is the trait of fascism. In the Third Reich communists, Jews, Gypsies, mental patients and homosexuals were deprived of their citizenship. The absence of citizenship in those conditions meant almost certain death. The rise of ethnicities, identity politics and multiculturalism has an insidious relationship with fascism in the age of global capitalism where ethnic renaissance poses in the disguise of cultural revolution.

Events in politics are not ascribed to historical and structural reasons but they are described as a collection of symptoms, which can be analyzed by the methods of ethnography, anthropology and aesthetics. After World War I fascists demonized Jews and stigmatized them as scapegoats for the sins of capitalism, now at the time of globalization the offensive is clearly against the poor and the foreign guest workers. The line is drawn between those who live on welfare and those who are employed. After the 9/11/2001 terrorist attack on the twin towers of the WTO and the Pentagon, Arabs and Muslims are singled out.<sup>41</sup>

The conceptual apparatus of modernity, capitalism and class need to be investigated in the context of fascism. In the interpretation of fascism in Germany it was important to highlight the role of capital, its support to German fascists in exchange for the safe course of industry, the suppression of the working class movement and its effect on the middle class. Grossweiler, Kalecki, Tim Mason and Geoff Eley among others worked on this aspect. Horkheimer wrote in a piece in 1945 "they have nothing to say about fascism who do not want to mention capitalism".<sup>42</sup>

At the first onslaught of globalization as the welfare state was dismantled the social democratic ideas of redistribution were replaced by the politics of voluntary agreement, admission, consideration, tolerance and dignity.

Within social democratic thought analysis centers on group habits and traditions and as a result the legal element has become overwhelming. The role of citizenship and its interconnection with 'civil society' and with late modernity are less and less in the focus of discussion. Anti-capitalism without political dimensions and without utopia remains completely theoretical and creates a 'highbrow despair' in theoretical analysis. Politics, 'democracy in the conditions of capitalism', is a controversial topic that created an 'adversary culture' which was tolerated earlier.

The shift of the center to the right, the adoption of the language and the issues of the extreme right parties become more and more evident. The 'right wing' politics of the Government of the United States, especially after the attack on the double towers and in the Iraq War, would be considered a political coup in a normal political atmosphere. The 'War on Terror' declared by President Bush as an answer to the terrorist attacks initiated measures, which extend control on personal freedom. It also ushered in the policy of 'pre-emptive' attack, which shrunk the possibility of political debate and limited the possibility of democratic action.

The trend of fascisization in Europe is evident in the fact that the extreme right and the right of center parties frequently form some kind of alliance or electoral arrangements at the local level. One of the examples of this shift is the electoral victory of the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) of Jörg Haider.<sup>43</sup> In 1999 the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP), a center right Christian Democratic Party, asked for partnership with the FPÖ after unsuccessful consultations with its old coalition partner, the Austrian Social democratic Party. It broke one of the taboos in European politics that the bourgeois right distances itself from fascist parties at the level of the state. In France an alliance was formed with Le Pen's French National Front at the local level and in Italy Berlusconi formed a government with the support of Fini and his postfascist *Allianza Nazionale*. The difference between Haider and Fini is that before the elections Fini disowned his fascist past. This made the Italian coalition acceptable to the EU, which opposes Haider from the point of view of European moral values. European politics rests on the consensus that fascism and the Holocaust made fascist parties in government unacceptable. At the same time the European Union did not come face to face with the fact that fascist parties exist all over Europe and ethnic conflicts exist in both parts of Europe not only in the eastern part.

The FPÖ is a party with neoliberal ideals, which promotes the prototype of the bourgeois owner with racist ideals who is deeply attached to the local region. The FPÖ achieved its first electoral victory in 1994 when the party targeted immigrants from Yugoslavia fleeing from the War. The racism of the FPÖ is directed against immigrants.

The ruling party in the Hungarian Government in the 1998-2002 phase, the Party of Young Democrats, is similar to Haider in its ideological position. It did not offer any coalition position to the Party of Hungarian Truth and Life with its outright neo-nazi ideology and skinhead following but ideologically moved close to them and has taken over many of their slogans. Yet Viktor Orbán, the former Prime Minister, compares most easily to Benito Mussolini with his whipping up of nationalist feelings within Hungary and reckless assurances to the Hungarian minorities in the bordering countries. These promises cannot be fulfilled in adherence to the rules of the European Union though the self-avowed aim of the Government is to join the European Union. West European parties of the extreme right represent today neo-liberal capitalism, accept parliamentary democracy and speak about the 'modernization' of the Parliament.<sup>44</sup> All West-European postfascist parties emphasize the role of the state in the rule of 'law and order', like the Danish People's Party (Dansk Folkeparti), the Norwegian Progress Party (Fremskridtpartiet), the Swiss Democratic Centrum Union and the French National Front whose leader Jean-Marie Le Pen was able to reach the second round of elections in 2002. Most of their leaders in West Europe emphasize their simple social origins and claim to have come from simple families offering examples of modest simple life and hard work to appeal to their voters. They promise to strengthen policies and laws to limit immigration and entry of foreigners from the Third World and glorify the ethnically homogeneous country. Pia Kjaarskard of the Danish People's Party for example won 22 seats in Parliament by denouncing the 'Islamic invasion' of Denmark. Le Pen speaks about North Africans as a "foreign army camped on French soil".

In Eastern Europe, in Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the target of attacks of the fascist parties are the gypsies, Jews, guest workers from the neighbouring countries and foreign guest workers like Chinese and Arabs.<sup>45</sup> The ideal prototype of the homogeneous collective identity for these fascist parties is the village and the peasant. This trend is the strongest in Poland where the organization of Agrarian Self-Defence in the last elections got 10,2 per cent of the votes. In the Czech Republic the voters of the extreme right first served as a basis for the Republican Party and since 2000 the National-social alliance. In Slovakia the fascists support the Party of National Unity. In Slovakia the main targets of the fascists are gypsies and Hungarians, in the Czech Republic Jews and gypsies. The striking element of these fascist movements in Eastern Europe is that in spite of the fall in the number of Jews as a result of the Holocaust, the anti-Semitism of the fascist parties, their content, arguments and vocabulary have not changed. In this sense it shows continuity with their early predecessors between the two world wars. The common and central element in the fascist parties is racism, ethnic identity.

## Homogenization – heterogenization

With the collapse of the welfare state or the state being non-existent (like in many countries of the former Soviet Union) the choice left to the unemployed population is to migrate. But the current deindustrialization, modernization of services and ‘rationalization of labour’ in the developed countries means that society is divided between those who are employed and those who are unemployed, those who are integrated and those who are not. The local population and Government consider immigrants, in Frederic Jameson’s words, the “internal Third World”.<sup>46</sup> The local long-term unemployed heterogeneous group forms in the eyes of the local population the ‘underclass’. The underclass is a post-industrial phenomenon caused by the end of full-employment. The term is used by anticapitalist critics to express the multiple disadvantages of those who are forced to compete for low paid temporary wage labour or for work for food in the exploitative capitalist system. The main disadvantage, the absence of full citizenship rights, exacerbates their problems: economic and social isolation, social disorganization and the harassment of authorities in ‘law and order’ cases.

In Eastern Europe the underclass developed after large state industrial units closed down and ‘rationalization’ of labour in the service sector rendered an unknown number of people unemployed. The underclass forms a large new sociological group, perhaps the majority of the population in Eastern Europe, who in the absence of unemployment benefits do not report their status. Many of the unemployed who are trying to survive on temporary work or black labour are considered officially ‘entrepreneurs’. Gypsies, the disabled, the chronically ill, old people on pension (unable to pay their rent or electricity and water charges) also come into the category of underclass. Sociologists use the term ‘underclass’ in Eastern Europe to stress the new situation, the complete lack of resources and the heterogeneity of the members.

The neo-liberal state takes no responsibility for these groups. They can participate in the workforce for a minimal support. The government aid for the family depends on whether the concerned authority approves of their form of family and way of life. Neoliberal critics use the term ‘underclass’ to emphasize “dependency culture” and “amplified deprivation”, to describe people cut off from society by their poverty, race or drug problems and to point to the failure of the capitalist welfare state.

The real antagonism of global capitalism is in the division of ‘full citizens’ and ‘underclass’ who are excluded from the public space. The underclass is increasingly ethnicized and ethnic and race solidarity takes the place of working class solidarity that was earlier strengthened by the trade unions engaged in day-to-day economic and political struggle. The destitution of a

particular ethnic group may be a mobilizing issue but the economic exploitation of the whole underclass would be a matter of indifference. In Hungary the deprivation of the gypsies, the incarceration of drug addicts, the treatment of immigrants as criminals activates the liberal Party of Free Democrats but it is not prepared to take up issues of the underclass as a whole.<sup>47</sup> The new left has been taking up issues of human rights, cases of squatters, legal or illegal immigrants, the shelterless, gypsies etc in place of working class issues. The place of emancipation is taken by the 'privileges' doled out to the 'deserving poor'. The inherent structural logic of global capitalism is evident in the increasing production of the 'waste of humanity', which could be abolished.

Citizenship is a privilege, which in consistence with the ideas of Enlightenment ought to be a universal human right. As the state shrinks the homogeneous part of the nation is reduced and the homogeneous section is not ready to take up solidarity with the heterogeneous underclass. The underclass manifests the basic homogeneity of the capitalist system. The state becomes more and more an 'authoritarian state' for the heterogeneous part of the nation.

Heterogenization and homogenization take place additionally at another level which is connected with wide-scale migration, the various networks in which migrants function, the role of the media, and the political narrative of the nation-state. Homogenization in the form of languages, clothes, style of dressing, and advertising is utilized by globalization as an industry with large profits. The nation-state avails of this situation and articulates its difference (from other nation-states) by promoting its version of 'national', majoritarian culture and supports 'ethnic fundamentalism'.<sup>48</sup> The nation-state arms 'ethnic minorities' with the ideology of multiculturalism to suppress heterogeneity in the state, to repress liberation movements, immigration into the country or protest. 'Progressive' struggles for the rights of ethnic and religious minorities, of women, are not able to unite because of the suppression of the economic struggle. Ethnic minorities keep shifting their definition, and their politicization leaves the course of global capital undamaged. The analysis of particular entities and their shifts are associated with the abandonment of analysis of capitalism.<sup>49</sup>

### **Terrorism**

A consequence of the inefficiency of political discourse is terrorism. Terrorist movements grow out of locally based groups giving voice to various grievances. They start in distinct regions and are based on social, economic and political issues, which could be seriously dealt with. When governments close off other political avenues terrorists find violence the only possibility.

Terrorism is a choice that needs capital and investment in infrastructure, which in many ways corresponds to the financial and technical investments made by the government.<sup>50</sup> Jonathan Barker suggests that terrorism is based on effective local strategy and that often it is one of the 'career choices' young men take in the absence of other employment.<sup>51</sup> Terrorism is an answer to the absence of political discussion and it devalues politics by diverting it into military solutions and moralizing about the adversary.

Those in Eastern Europe who closely witnessed the destruction of cities, the mass murders, the starvation and the systematic break-up of Sarajevo (once an example of multicultural interchange and coexistence) since 1992 felt that the annihilation was a symbol of our age.<sup>52</sup> If destruction in Sarajevo at that level were possible this would serve as the model of destruction in many other places. Imre Kertész connects events in Yugoslavia with the absence of conclusions drawn from the lessons of the Holocaust;<sup>53</sup> here in India people might feel the same about the lessons of the Partition. The Chechen attack, the action of an independent terrorist group on a Moscow theatre in October 2002, was another example of a terrorist attack. The Chechen crisis has been going on for the last ten years.

The terrorists who destroyed the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon, understood the use of computers, the internal system of American air traffic, the political importance of the WTC and the Pentagon, the achievements of modernity, and were able to turn them against their political enemies.

Governments and populations respond differently to terrorism; those who profit out of terrorism and those who run their lives in a place hit by terror, who simply want to survive.<sup>54</sup> The Indian Government exploits the infiltration of terrorists from Pakistan in to Kashmir to divert attention from the Gujarat genocide or the gradual fascisization of the situation all over India. Terrorism in Kashmir, for example, entails

"The inchoate nexus between jihadi militants, ex-militants, foreign mercenaries, local mercenaries, underworld Mafiosi, security forces, arms dealers and criminalized politicians and officials on both sides of the border".

There are various examples of terror organizations, which have links with the governments. The Turkish Hezbollah, a terrorist group, which considered the Kurdish Workers Party its rival in the Kurd territories of Turkey, directed its attacks on them.<sup>55</sup> A fatal car accident in 1995 showed that the Hezbollah had contacts with the Government and the Government might even have sponsored its activities through one of the mafias.

The attack on the double towers in New York manifested the powerful alliance of technological advancement, sectarian belief and capital. The American Government mobilizes this alliance within and outside America. It

is a well-known fact that the CIA supported and financed terrorist groups in Afghanistan right from 1979 onwards, the year of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. After that the plantation and production of heroin started in Afghanistan and Pakistan. From the various political groups a marginal, but extreme group was selected, which won the elections in 1995. This group appealed to the ISI and CIA because their representation of Islam in shrill and aggressive ways seemed to ensure the discontinuation of secular or progressive politics. The war against the Taliban that initiated the “the War against Terror” in 2001 showed the connection between ‘the acts of objective violence’ by the state and terror. The attack and the military follow-up displayed the American President and Osama bin Laden as protagonists (doubles) with certain symmetries<sup>56</sup>. Terrorism is a symptom of globalization, the limitless and uncontrollable movement of capital. Their multiple involvements in crime and in arming each other with weapons and also with a sinister, moralizing rhetoric is clear. Only the return to a political discourse can serve as an alternative to terrorism as a difficult but viable way to solving conflict.

### Multiculturalism

The cultural turn and the rise of multiculturalism coincided with the organization and collectivization of groups or micro-groups defined by their identity. Multiculturalism ascribes specific problems to specific groups and treats and solves problems as particular.<sup>57</sup> Though culture as a wider concept includes all human activities, ‘culture’ in multiculturalism is curtailed to an isolated area, the ‘culture’, life-world, and life-styles of a specific group. Public problems and issues are reduced to particular problems, foreclosing their connection to universality.

The current trend of multicultural politics mobilizes interests and identities according to their cultural-ethnic constructs. The strategies formulated in that direction by the group combine cultural (the recognition of their specific culture) as well as political-economic issues (the specific disadvantages suffered by a group). The two aspects of the injustice, the cultural and the political-economic demands are treated separately.<sup>58</sup> The cultural demand underlines the specificity of the group and the political economic issues stress the economic injustice in consistence with the class position of the individual and attach less importance to other aspects. The political economic solution would give possibilities for building wider alliances while identity is unable to identify joint political issues and aims with other groups.

Multiculturalism is an admission of ethnicization and global capitalism



reinforces this trend. Global culture addresses groups and group-identities and it dismisses individuals and communities. This contributes to the curtailment of legal rights, procedures and practices and promotes the rights of particular groups. It also supports the idea of multinational companies taking over the responsibilities of state (in education, daycare, social network, insurance, pension) which amount to the limitations of the citizen's rights. The emerging system shows the logic of global capital that can serve as the link between ethnic groups and sub-groups.

While multinational capital is increasingly internationalized and the nation-state has a decreasing role, politically 'neutral' public discourse in the various media displays the absence of ideology; issues are discussed without questions or interpretation. Neither the nation-state nor the trade unions, where they still exist, can impose any limitations on capital, which manifests absolute power through its mobility, its ability to escape. After privatization and the celebration of multinational investment in Eastern Europe it is impossible to ask questions about working conditions or the reasons about moving a factory or closing it down. 'Universality' in the political formulation as 'common good' has disappeared from public language and instead 'the pluralism' of life-styles is celebrated in the form of multi-culturalism. In the process a particular, typical content is selected which highlights the fundamentalism of the particular minority in the face of the depoliticized 'tolerance' of the majority. Ethnic cuisines, handicrafts, dresses develop the industry connected with ethnicity. The fiction of globalization is multiculturalist tolerance, respect and protection of human rights, democracy.<sup>59</sup> These notions have historically changed, and got attached to alienated elements of institutions and the market and satisfy the rationality of global capital.

The universality of the globalized market is in direct opposition with the inadequate vision of the parts, "fragmented humanity". Ideas of agency in the era of global capitalism are supplied and multiplied by advertising organizations, which offer roles of agency in the course of consumption. In Lukács's formulation the transcendence of reification needs "the reconstitution of subject and object" for "a true relation and the succession, coherence and internal order of his role as part", as an object of the reproduction in the global system, as a consumer and additionally a producer.

The loss of historicity contributes to the deceptive perception of the relationship to the world. After World War I in Europe nationalism took a form where one group was glorified and other groups were excluded from the community of the nation. The idea of an organic nation led to Fascism and those who were different in terms of race, ethnicity or religion were excluded from the nation, considered outsiders. Multiculturalism entails that citizens

who are different in terms of race, ethnicity, language or denomination are recognized. This recognition may benefit some members of these groups in short terms. Their political rivals and critics are also denounced in ethnic and racial terms, as representatives of Russian, Asian or 'cosmopolitan' interests.

### European Integration

From the nineteen seventies onwards neo-liberalism discarded the social pact that came about with wide strata of the society in the form of the welfare state. The form of taxation, the abandonment of the social network, the discontinuation of protection of labour- demonstrated that the welfare state was one temporary phase of capitalism that was connected with the historical competition of the super-powers and the existence of the two camps. Jürgen Habermas believes that "learning from the catastrophe" of Fascism means that the responsibilities of the nation-state should be taken over by larger political entities like the European Union so that these organizations could „maintain social standards beside guiding commerce “. Habermas and Derrida in their essay "Europe - in the trace of a lost identity" in *Frankfurter Allgemeine* in May 2003 express the belief that the traditions of the welfare state, religion as part of the private sphere and politics as the search for the guaranties of freedom should be the basis of a common European identity. These should give assurance that Europe could overcome the legacy of the Holocaust, the exploitation of the colonies, national wars and conflicts.<sup>60</sup> Habermas formulates the emancipatory element of the Enlightenment in today's context in these terms. Old (core) Europe would serve as a locomotive to introduce the norms of welfare measures and limit the power of global capitalism. This way Europe would be the expression of difference from America, the difference in social concerns and not only the center of administrative power. Habermas's role in German public life for example in the course of the historians debate in Germany in the nineteen eighties and his intervention for German constitutional patriotism which emphasizes the emancipatory element and is based on the German experience of the Holocaust reflect a liberal counterpoint to neoconservative, nationalist ideology. The alternative to constitutional patriotism is national-historical identity promoted by the neoconservative interpretation, which led to self-assertion through power politics and two world wars.<sup>61</sup>

The social democrat-liberal alliances, among them the former communists support all forms of integration with the world economy: they represent integration, or the 'return' to the world market. In some countries it is additionally justified because of their sheer size and shortage of natural resources. 'Social market economy' in West Germany and in Sweden served as examples in 1989 as ideals, which could follow in Eastern Europe.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union the East- and South-East-European region was divided - very much like the divisions after World War I – but it had several new features as well. While Hungary in economic terms became part of the German belt, in the military sense it became “a buffer zone” between Russia and the United States. Entry to the NATO in 1999 just a week before the attack on Serbia was considered a prerequisite to integrate with the Western part of Europe. The active participation in the international organizations and administrative bodies of the European Union was complemented by the support of NATO though there were civil organizations and left groups which opposed the membership and the subsequent bombing of Yugoslavia.

Unemployment and the absence of labour rights make it not difficult to ‘tame’ the working class in Eastern Europe.<sup>62</sup> The role of the region as a filter to hold up masses of Asian emigrants into the central states of the European Union increases further ethnic hostility. In the war against Yugoslavia and then in the Kosovo conflict in Serbia Hungary became a military base and its role in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization became very similar to that of Poland and earlier to Turkey. They were allowed participation in the NATO but admission to the European Union has been delayed. As Tamás Krausz claims<sup>63</sup> Hungary and Eastern Europe are stepping into their old role, “the backyard of Europe”, as a backward sub-region of the continent. In May 2004 Hungary will become a member of the European Union and slow multitrack integration will follow with an unequal distribution of advantages.

The debates about the Constitution of the European Union and the proportion of votes are still going on.<sup>64</sup> It is clear that a uniform policy will be introduced that makes immigration to the countries of the EU difficult. The future member-countries in Eastern Europe hope that space will open up in the EU to participate in decisions on legal issues and they will be supported in financial matters. It is also felt that the scope of intervention in the new Europe will be limited for Eastern Europe and for Hungary and the trajectory of development has been defined and they will be in a subordinated position in the EU without an important role in the decision making process. The Hungarian writer, Péter Esterházy<sup>65</sup> expresses this in the comparison of Europe to a moving train in which ‘elite Europe’, the old members of the EU, ride with the doors left open “so that we can jump on. But the tracks have been laid.”

The arguments and support for the Christian legacy in the European Constitution make the consistent secular political direction of Europe doubtful. The opposition to globalization shows the increasing power of the European and international financial institutions, the role of the transnational firms, the diminishing role of trade unions and party politics,

and that public opinion is not able to influence the European Union. The separation of the rich regions from the poor makes the benefits of accession to the EU for the states in the periphery doubtful.

### **Ideology and the Media**

Multiculturalism takes over elements of postmodern philosophy such as the denial of universalism and theory-building. The dismissal of the Enlightenment and modernity and the particularism of postmodernism reduce it to a fragmented vision and prevent it from facing the social and political challenges, the responsibility of struggle against Fascism. The electronic media has become a factor in depoliticization and serials and soap-operas on television gain an increasingly large role in it. Stories, which can be turned into sensation, wash out important political events, like the death of Princess Diana suppressed news about Israel and Palestine.<sup>66</sup>

The postmodern idea of "truth as relative" allows commentators, reporters and journalists to treat facts and history in a haphazard way. A number of political events, strikes, protests and peace marches are misrepresented by the electronic media and media-sponsored interpretations carry weight in public opinion in response to major political events. Samir Amin refers to the challenge to neo-liberal policies, the French strikes in 1995, one of the last great events of working class solidarity in Europe<sup>67</sup>, which were referred to by some leading French postmodern intellectuals in the media as 'rabble rousing'. The political events in Yugoslavia and Kosovo were reported one-sidedly according to the 'tone' and interests of the big American channels. In the Afghanistan war, like later in the war deaths in Iraq, Afghans or Iraqis were not displayed on the screen. <sup>68</sup> In the reports of the 2003 Iraq war the capitulation of the western media was reflected in the language and imagery they chose. For example, the variation of the word 'war', 'invasion' or 'liberation' was divided according to the political stand accepted. The large protests against the war in Europe were given minimal media representation.

The media can play a subversive role as reports in the recent past have shown. At the Cancun meeting of the WTO in September, 2003 the media publishing quick reports and leaking contents of the discussion papers about disproportionate trade tariffs and taxes, about unfair excise duties facilitated the pressure on Government representatives to stop the WTO meeting without an agreement. In India the press after the post-Godhra Gujarat riots made all efforts to publicize the petition of the National Human Rights Commission and its demand to investigate the incidents by the CBI and seeking a retrial of the cases.<sup>69</sup> Some cases have gone for trial again and this reinstalled hope in the fairness of judiciary in India outside Gujarat. The activities of the media, the NHRC and the Supreme Court showed that the

liberal opposition is able to stand up for the victims and offer significant resistance to the fascists.

## History-writing

From the 1960s to the 1980s a change took place, which led to a turning point in the treatment of World War II, fascism and the experience of the Holocaust.

Partly as a result of the shift in history-writing, temporality, narrative and remembrance gained a different emphasis. H. White's essay "The Burden of History" was the point of departure in the discussion of fascism and the Holocaust. This essay calls for the self-reflection of history and rejects radical relativism both in the form of historical and aesthetic representation. The postmodern dismissal of narrative in historical writing gave birth to or reinforced different kinds of historical record, like 'oral history'. The rejection of 'great narratives' was the result of several tensions: the tension between the agent's knowledge and his narrative, the representation of the past in the present, the coherence of narrative and historical truth and the change and arbitrariness of contextual categories. The contradiction between experience and representation emerged in Holocaust literature, in the books of Primo Levi, Paul Celan, Jean Améry and Imre Kertész.

In the 1980s and 1990s World War II, Fascism, anti-fascist alliances, and the Holocaust moved into the center of discussion. The specificity of the Holocaust and the specificity of German development (the 'Sonderweg'-theory) were the chief issues of history. The specificity of German development entailed that while in Germany, the German bourgeoisie went through modernization in the nineteenth century, it was not able to appropriate political power, only economic power. As a result of this the political modernization of Germany was unlike the development in France or in England. It was specific, absolutist, pseudo-liberal and militarist. In their 1984 book *On the Peculiarities of German History* David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley rejected the idea of an existing liberal-democratic norm of bourgeois development and proved that German imperialism had similarly powerful economic and political resources as England and France. They also showed that the British strata of petty owners supported the empire's ambitions as much as the German bourgeoisie. Liberal societies had their dark sides, fascist potentials which surfaced to a lesser or greater degree in the course of history.

The Bitburg debate, connected to Reagan's and Kohl's joint visit of the Bitburg military cemetery in their official capacities in 1985 (as President of the US and Chancellor of the German Republic) and the memorial meeting held there preceded the historians debate. The presence of the visual media,

the role of the German Republic in the Cold War as a partner of the United States, the emphasis on the sacrifice of the simple Wehrmacht soldier who was a victim of the *Third Reich* showed a new political reality, which created the political framework for a new historical narrative. Immediately after World War II in public consciousness there was a general feeling about 'German evil'. Reagan's speech as well as Kohl's <sup>70</sup> showed that they found a new starting point for their mutual relationship, the suffering of small men, responsibility for the atrocities of World War II being shifted on to one person, Hitler.

The museums and memorials commemorating the Holocaust, created contradictions in the US and in Israel. In the US the plan of the Washington Holocaust Museum sparked off a number of debates. The discussions dealt with two areas: why does the Holocaust Museum represent only the memory of the six million Jews executed and why not the other five million victims: Gypsies, homosexuals, mentally retarded, political prisoners, Soviet prisoners of war. Other arguments emerged that victims of genocides in Armenia, Cambodia or victims of American history, like American Africans or Indians should be entitled to museums like the Jews. The term 'Holocaust' itself, meaning 'burning sacrifice', an 'offering to God' - is a theological term, that replaced the originally used 'extermination camps', or 'concentration camps,' and shows the shift of emphasis and interest from the historical forces to the mass execution and the interpretation of the great tragedy in European history. In Israel the Holocaust as an element of the construction of the nation, its political canonization, was questioned too. Hannah Arendt in her report on Eichmann's trial in Jerusalem highlighted the trial as an instrument in the hands of Prime Minister Ben-Gurion in building the Jewish State and strengthening Jewish consciousness.<sup>71</sup> Instead of indicting Eichmann for "crimes against mankind" Eichmann was sentenced for "crimes against Jewish people". There is criticism against the exploitation of the Holocaust, which highlights the context of its politicization, the Israel-Egypt War when Israel became America's chief ally in the Middle East.<sup>72</sup> The Holocaust brought forth a wide range of literature and film productions of various standards, including kitsch, works of sentimentality, banalization.<sup>73</sup> On the other hand the denial of the Holocaust on the part of many fascist parties, the revival of anti-Semitic slogans, symbols and rhymes along with newly invented ones is a regular phenomenon in the small fascist parties of Europe. They also maintain regular international contacts. An example of this was the visit by David Irving, the notorious Holocaust denier, to Budapest in October 2003 on the invitation of the Party of Hungarian Truth and Life.<sup>74</sup> In the case of the Holocaust the concrete political situation, its context, is important in Eastern Europe and in almost all European countries where Jews are targeted

along with gypsies and other groups. As part of their move for acceptance some of these fascist parties pay lip service to the Holocaust, but in interviews for the media, schoolbooks, manipulations of historical monuments, there are signs of anti-Semitism and self-censorship shows through.<sup>75</sup>

## Totalitarianism

In general use “totalitarianism” means a state with a single party system, which pervades all spheres of life: economic and social organizations, secret police and the media. Mussolini first used the term ‘totalitarian’ for the fascist Italian state, “which includes all human or intellectual values”. The word ‘totalitarianism’ was established in western political vocabulary during the Cold War creating an analogy between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. The ‘totalitarian’ socialist system has become a constant point of reference in connection with the history of Europe before the collapse of the Berlin Wall.

The notion of totalitarianism identifies fascism and socialism. This is part of a wider framework; it discredits social democracy along with the communists and changes history accordingly. It was invented in Hungary after World War I, following the Hungarian Workers Council of 1919 and in the USA at the time of the McCarthy era in the nineteen fifties.<sup>76</sup> The theory of totalitarianism in general was elaborated in the conditions of the Cold War and it was politically biased and directed against ‘communist totalitarianism’. The theory does not devote attention to the concrete research of the economy of fascist totalitarianism. Hannah Arendt in the final outcome of her book claims that fascism was a worse kind of totalitarianism than communism.<sup>77</sup> Many authors, who are followers of the theory of totalitarianism, like Ferenc Fehér subscribe to her final judgment.

In the nineteen nineties the first step in the overall political strategy of revision was to argue that communist totalitarianism was as bad as the fascist one. The calculation of the number of victims in the concentration camps and purges on both sides was supposed to lead to the judgment which of the two systems was worse. The step following this is to prove that socialism was actually worse than fascist totalitarianism. The revival of totalitarian theory shows that the warfare between the liberals and conservatives shifted to a new plane. The old guard of the social democratic elite is identified with the communists to discredit them and along with them their creation, the welfare system.

The new history-writing emerging in Europe is working on the revision of the history of World War II and altering the anti-fascist alliance in line with the revised history.

Totalitarianism as a structure of thought and argumentation has returned from the McCarthy times, the nineteen fifties of the United States. The



revision of history implies that the antifascist alliance of Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin led in the 'wrong' direction. The 'correct' road would have been if the Hitler, Chamberlain, Hoover coalition would have defeated Stalin. In this case Western Europe would not have had to compete with the socialist welfare system. David Irving, Ernst Nolte, John Lukács and Maria Schmidt, the recent director of the Hungarian House of Terror, follow the scheme, which is slowly accepted as the basis of general discussion and is introduced in school- books of history.

An example of the visual presentation of totalitarianism and the recently accepted approach to history is the House of Terror in Budapest. It is a historical monument and a museum at the same time, where the center office of both the fascist Arrow Cross and the police in the late forties and fifties in Hungary was located. The displays of incarceration and historical exhibitions, the absence of history leading to fascism suggest the identity of the two systems. The effect of shock on the viewers of the objects and the theatrical arrangement forecloses questions.<sup>78</sup> At the time of the onslaught on the social security network and the welfare state this revision of history discredits the socialists and the old social democrats who are supposed to be responsible for the welfare state. The 'antitotalitarian', 'anticommunist' strategy is useful to build up a rightist neoliberal state system.

In the context of wider anti-fascist politics today, in the first decades of the twenty first century it is perhaps useful to pay attention to what Balibar calls the forms of 'institutional violence' and the 'bad use of ideals', the theorization of extermination and the need to deal with these forms 'philosophically' and 'practically' and place them in concrete political and historical context.

### Ethics

Ethics has emerged as a subject affiliated with law, governance, business and advertisement. Usefulness and profit justify the connection with these areas. Emancipation, justice, selfhood and community are discussed under ethics but split into different particular dimensions ("morally correct", "economically sound") with the result of numbing moral responsibility. In the transformation of the subject of 'ethics', which is defined by Kant as the main principle of morality, postmodernity displays the abandonment of the search for universals and absolutes in philosophy and the lack of response to crucial challenges in political-social research.<sup>79</sup>

The ethical process emerges as one of the most crucial areas, which point to individual responsibility as the self-constitution of the individual and universality in the face of human suffering. The possibilities of agency surface in a depoliticized atmosphere where life-styles and life-worlds are of utmost

importance. Depoliticization is connected to globalization and the historical link is with Fascism and the Holocaust. Imre Kertész finds a link between the recent existential decline of postmodernity and indifference.<sup>80</sup> The 'banality of evil' - the acceptance of the systematized, institutionalized murder in the concentration camps in the course of the twelve years (1933-1945) of Nazi Germany on the one hand and going on with normal, everyday life with its banal happiness on the other hand has become part of the ethical make-up of man in postmodernity. Kertész suggests that this absence of individual responsibility, emotional numbness in the face of suffering, is the source of despair in our age.

There are analogies between the situation of the position and dignity of man in the concentration camp and the underclass of society under globalization: the socially created distance between the underclass and the rest of society, limitation in space to the locality, in employment possibilities, in communication (a factor in social flexibility), isolation from discussion and decision making, opacity of the human and physical surrounding, lack of participation in the public sphere. The increasing number of jails and convicts display a similar isolation of the population at a different level, jails safeguard the confinement of the population in space.<sup>81</sup>

Capitalism, as a historical formation is associated with liberalism where the accumulation of resources and wealth is linked with the neglect of the basic needs of others and the indifference to their suffering. From the point of view of capitalist reproduction the suffering of some sections of the population has no consequence on the process of reproduction. The liberal state<sup>82</sup> as a collective mode of existence leaves openings for detached bystanders in the face of suffering. It also gives a large scope for "compulsion and control" to "prevent harm" to others.<sup>83</sup> Personal responsibility of the individual is an area, which is emphasized in the context of suffering in World War II and the experience of the Holocaust.

The social distance created institutionally between the victims and the members of society forecloses the possibility of identification with the victims. The media and other sources of information create a concrete vision of the underclass, which justifies inaction. Zygmunt Bauman points out that the importance of the Holocaust is the lesson of the conflict of rationality and ethics. In the case of the Holocaust rational interest, the rationality of survival conflicted with humanity. But the rationality of self-preservation is not necessarily chosen above moral duty. Facing moral choices human beings are ambivalent and decisions have to be made between contradictory impulses. Part of the self-constitution of the individual is unconditional, non-symmetrical responsibility, which makes identification with the victims and political involvement possible.

### Conclusion

Communal antagonism and racist projects present a field where fascism can develop. The background of the rise of fascism and World War II manifest the direct dictatorship of the capital. Today the dictatorship of global capital takes place in different conditions because no political force similar to the Comintern stands in opposition. Trade unions and labour are in increasingly weak positions as capital and production shift place before any action can take place. Fascisization is taking place at many levels: the nation-state and its various institutions, the parliament and the political parties, the reduction and streamlining of social security, the change of the constitution, the introduction of shameful new labour laws and the almost total absence of labour rights, ethnicization and ethnic solidarity in the place of working class solidarity. The treatment of the underclass and the immigrants: their exclusion from public participation, denial of help, frequent incarceration, show the power of global capital which is able to install its influence everywhere. Terrorism is part of the overall process of facsisization when on behalf of an ethnic or religious group mindless, raw violence and destruction is released. Multiculturalism and ethnic identity, shifts in history-writing, manifest the transformation of politics, the shift from class based politics to identity politics. The subjects of the social sciences show increasing fragmentation and this makes intellectual self-reflection and analysis difficult.

Lukács pointed out in *History and Class Consciousness* that ethics without politics and history becomes a vacant field of study. Fascism transforms class antagonism into racial, ethnic, cultural, religious and geo-political antagonisms. The fascism of our age radicalizes the methods of liberal capitalism; 'success' and 'adaptation' stigmatizes the losers, the underclass. While liberal nationalism tried to assimilate the heterogeneous masses of people, neoliberalism deprives them of a dignified life. Fascisization can be countered with the emancipatory project of the Enlightenment, with the demand for universality and its adaptation to the concrete existing order. The assertion of universality means the rejection of the false choice between ethnic/ religious fundamentalism and multiculturalism. Ethics with politics means the suspension of the neutral space of the law showing that impartial neutrality or depoliticization is the complicity with the existing political order. Accepting the necessity of taking sides in the antagonistic political situation is ethical, it means today the identification with the immigrants and the underclass.

The history of socialism is connected with anti-fascism. The revival of democratic public life, powerful trade unions, the introduction of public health care and protection networks create a socialist subculture within capitalism, which can recognize and resist the false transformation of class

antagonisms into ethnic/racial and religious antagonisms. Raw violence of the market and terrorism can be countered by class struggle and socialist culture. A consistent anti-fascist policy can find real support in the trade unions, which can approach political issues through the questions of everyday economic survival and activities and place them in the wider context.

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