

Neoliberalism is not a viable option

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As is apparent from this blog, the issue of fascism has been much on my mind this week. Amongst the things that I've read has been [a fascinating blog post](#) by someone called Blair Fix.

He analysed fascism in what seems like an entirely original way, showing that its roots are, in effect, in mediaeval theocracy, because the language used by those of fascist persuasion is remarkably similar to that found in some 17th, and maybe 18th, century political mediaeval theocratic thought, after which periods the language of the enlightenment displaced that of the theocrats, although the latter is now on the rise again.

If I had time, I would comment further on that post, because I think it is well worth reading and thinking about, but the reaction which came to me that I wish to note here is not one that came directly from the piece itself, but arose as a consequence of Blair Fix's observation that the opposite to fascism is not, if it is rooted in mediaeval theocracy, communism or socialism, or anything to do with either of those ideologies, but is instead to be found in the enlightenment.

Unfortunately, we could also very easily say that enlightenment thinking has now been corrupted. Its destination might, in fact, be neoliberalism. I am not, therefore, too sure this creates an argument that is particularly useful. However, tangentially, what it suggested to me was something quite different, and that is not that the opposite of fascism is to be found in any sort of ideology, as such, but is instead to be found in action.

In his analysis of fascist writing, Blair Fix identified three common threats. One was the significant overuse of violent symbolism. Words like annihilation, bloodshed, conquer, extermination and fighting were substantially overused when compared to the body of normal writing of the periods when fascist or similar ideas were written.

The second was a significant quantity of emotion-laden judgment, typified by the use of words like betrayed, cowardice, enemies, hatred, humiliation, slander and treason.

Third, he found there was a significant use of what appear to be quasi-religious, e.g. references to the Almighty, blessings, providence and the eternal.

All of these do, of course, relate to a mythical fight against an oppressor, which only a supreme leader can deliver the true believers from. This is what the mythology of fascism is all about, after all.

In that case, though, there is no point in trying to persuade those who have submitted to fascist inclinations of the mistaken political view that they have adopted. Instead, what needs to be demonstrated is that there are better ways to overcome the oppression from which they are suffering. In other words, the opposite of fascism is not another political ideology, but is instead action to remove the causes of fear.

This is hardly surprising. William Beveridge, of course, [was right about this in the 1940s](#), as was [Nye Bevan in the 1950s](#). Freedom from fear has always been, in my opinion, the goal of the politics of care. If fear blights people's lives, and it very obviously is, then the removal of fear has to be the goal of any successful political thinking now.

The trouble is that neoliberal politics is doing everything it can to reinforce the narratives of fear.

It says that people must live in fear of markets.

They must live in fear of a wealthy elite.

They must live in fear of a government that cannot meet their need because it must impose austerity.

They must live in fear of the consequences of inequality, leaving them forever without the opportunity to fulfil their reasonable hopes of being able to live with their families in a community.

Ultimately, they must live with the idea that they are, in the neoliberal view, expendable.

Those are the fears that have driven people towards fascist thinking now.

My suggestion is, let's not spend too long trying to engage with the arguments that the fascists put forward. There is no logic to their medieval theocracy. To pretend that there is would be absurd. However, there is a way to tackle these fears, and that is by empowering the state to address the failures of neoliberal market philosophy, which dictates that they exist when that is wholly unnecessary.

We have a choice. What is clear is that neoliberalism is not amongst the viable options available to us.