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# **The Marxist Roots of Classical Fascism**

**Genuine Anti-Fascism Begins with Understanding  
Fascism**

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requires advocating for stateless and non-hierarchical social structures, recognizing the importance of class struggle in addressing social inequalities, and resisting all forms of totalitarian and authoritarian rule, regardless of their purported political orientation. In essence, a comprehensive anti-fascist stance champions both individual freedoms and social justice against all threats of oppression.

In closing, I'd like to cite M.N. Roy, a revolutionary figure who, after an early period of Marxist engagement, went on to develop the philosophy of radical humanism.

“The purpose of all rational human endeavour, individual as well as collective, is attainment of freedom, in ever increasing measure. Freedom is progressive disappearance of all restrictions on the unfolding of the potentialities of individuals, as human beings, and not as cogs in the wheels of a mechanised social organism. The position of the individual, therefore, is the measure of the progressive and liberating significance of any collective effort or social organisation.”

# Contents

Pre-Marxist Socialisms . . . . .	6
Introductory Marxism . . . . .	6
Sorelian Marxism . . . . .	7
Revolutionary Syndicalism . . . . .	8
National Syndicalism . . . . .	9
Fascist Dialectics and the Struggle for National Identity .	13
Giovanni Gentile on Marxism . . . . .	15
Mussolini & Fascism . . . . .	15
The birth of fascism as a doctrine . . . . .	18
Nature of Classical Fascism . . . . .	19
Summing up . . . . .	21

nor a socialist revolution. Instead, it is a reactionary upheaval that restructures society to uphold the palingenetic state through authoritarian control and expansionist policies.

Furthermore, historical evidence suggests that Marxism alone was insufficient in countering fascism, as fascist ideology emerged through the fusion of Marxist principles with nationalism, alongside influences from various non-Marxist socialist traditions. For that reason, according to *Why Fascism* by Marxists such as Edward Conze and Ellen Wilkinson, the Nazis and the Italian Fascists began as a left-wing party whose demands were not so very different from those of the socialist workers' parties in the revolutionary period. However, given that the ends goal of fascism and Marxism are different, Marxism and fascism are not synonymous, and it would be misguided to draw such a conclusion. However, one notable pattern in fascist movements is that behind every fascist movement, there was at least one Marxist thinker who syncretized socialism with nationalism—though traits such as militarism and authoritarianism were also present.

A truly effective approach to antifascism is to remain vigilant toward those attempting to blend nationalism with leftist values—a recurring mistake throughout the last century till now. Similar patterns persist in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with movements actively engaging in this ideological fusion. Examples include the political themes embraced by the anti-imperialist publications such as Greyzone, pro-Russia campist Marxist-Leninists, and neo-Stalinist MAGA Communists.

## Summing up

Effectively countering fascism necessitates a robust defense of core libertarian and egalitarian values. This includes upholding individual liberties, universal human rights, open immigration policies, and the principles of open societies. Furthermore, it

lens of left-wing or anti-fascist thought. As a result, nationalism in general should have been regarded as either a bourgeois characteristic or, at its most extreme, a counter-revolutionary force.

The socialism of Classical Fascist differs from Marxist and anarchist socialism, instead aligning with pre-Marxian socialist traditions that emphasize syndicates and nationalization. Pre-Marxist socialist thinkers like Saint-Simon and Louis Blanc envisioned state-led economic planning, nationalization, and social cooperation without class conflict or revolutionary upheaval.

Rather than being emancipatory, the socialism of Classical Fascism was integrative—it did not seek to overthrow capitalism but rather to replace class struggle with class collaboration in service of national unity. Thus, the mainstream Trotskyist analysis of fascism as the decay of capitalism is partially correct in the sense of capitalism being maintained as a status quo. While class structures remained intact, fascism prioritized national struggle, inevitably leading to imperialism, militarism, and exclusionary politics. Thus, socialism of fascist was not based on class struggle but rather on nationalized class collaboration, aiming to ensure harmony between social classes through syndicates or guild. Not all fascist regimes were identical, just as not all Marxist regimes followed the same path. Within this framework, class collaboration was central to state corporatism, the official doctrine of Classical Fascism in which the state—viewed as non-class-based—acted as an intermediary between employers and workers. Fascism does not align with free-market capitalism but instead resembles a form of capitalism controlled by the managerial class, somewhat akin to social democracy. It is crucial to distinguish these concepts properly. Fascist state corporatism is not simply about corporations collaborating with the state at the expense of the working class; rather, it is structured around class collaboration process led by the nation/state, with the goal of maintaining harmony between social classes through syndicates or guilds. Thus, Classical Fascism is neither a conservative attempt to preserve the existing order

Background Story: Within Burmese antifascist circles, an eye-opening event unfolded when certain self-proclaimed leftists—or individuals with a superficial attraction to leftist ideology—unknowingly worked together (including shared drinks) with members of Casa Pound within the Karen Struggle, even finding common ground with them. This situation prompts a crucial question: how did those who identify as antifascists and leftists fail to recognize the very fascists among them? This misstep highlights the necessity of comprehending fascism in depth—because genuine opposition requires a clear and precise understanding of its nature.

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The goal of this piece is to deeply explore fascism, essentially re-examining and reconstructing the understanding of its foundations—despite the potential resistance from ideological cults. By reverse-engineering fascism, the hope is to develop more effective ways to counter it. Understanding fascism requires looking at its original form, classical fascism, and the broader history of socialism.

In today's discourse, even liberals and right-libertarians are frequently labelled as fascists. However, historically, fascism has been fundamentally opposed to individualism, capitalism, and liberalism—an important but often overlooked point. So, if liberals and right-libertarians are considered fascists rhetorically, Stalinism, Maoism, and their adjacent Marxist-Leninist geopolitical anti-imperialist groups fit the definition of fascism. Liberals and capitalists are totally ineffective combating fascism and crony capitalism presents genuine risks that must be addressed. However, equating liberals and capitalists with fascism is an inaccurate and misleading approach.

## Pre-Marxist Socialisms

While modern socialism's official beginnings are often traced to the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, earlier populist movements with religious ties existed, like the 17<sup>th</sup>-century English Diggers, who advocated agrarian socialism. Similar movements occurred in China, India, and the Middle East. Guild socialism, another form of utopian socialism, differed from agrarian socialism. There were other forms of non-Marxist socialism such as Fabian socialism and others too. Frederick Engels referred to the works of the utopian socialists such as Thomas More (16<sup>th</sup> century) and Tommaso Campanella (17<sup>th</sup> century) in his work "Socialism: Utopian and scientific". Even in the communist manifesto, Marx and Engels had to talk about a fringe group among the socialists which they called "Conservative or Bourgeois Socialism". So, it's not only factually true but also important to acknowledge that there were non-Marxist socialist movements before and along. Claude Henri de Saint-Simon's vision of socialism presents a fundamentally distinct concept of class struggle and revolutionary theory compared to Marx. Therefore, it would be entirely misguided to interpret socialism exclusively through the lens of Marxism. Additionally, nationalization has been a core element in several socialist traditions.

## Introductory Marxism

Classical Marxism, based on historical materialism, employs the base and superstructure model to analyze societal structures, encompassing social, political, cultural, and economic relationships. Karl Marx argued that capitalist economic relations, characterized by profit motives and overproduction, alienate workers from their labor, its products, their fellow workers, and their own humanity. He theorized that capitalism's internal contradictions would

socialism for nationalistic reasons, it diverges significantly from Marxist principles, much like other socialist schools of thought (e.g., guild socialism, agrarian socialism, Narodism). Fascism positions itself against liberalism and capitalism, as well as against the genuine internationalist left. It explicitly identifies as a "third position," a querfront ideology opposed to both capitalism (from a left-wing perspective either as in socialism or revolutionary syndicalism) and Marxian internationalist class struggle (from a right-wing nationalist perspective).

There would have been no fascism if there were not Marxism in the first place as fascism itself came out of the Marxist tradition. The most pioneer form of fascism came into existence while syncretising revolutionary syndicalism with nationalism. The classical fascism which is also known as Mussolini's state corporatism, is the practical form of state-controlled corporatism (guild socialism) for the nationalist benefits.

Mussolini can be quoted as follow:

Fascism recognises the real needs which gave rise to socialism and trade-unionism, giving them due weight in the guild or corporative system in which diverent interests are coordinated and harmonised in the unity of the State.

## Nature of Classical Fascism

Classical Fascism wasn't strictly far-right or far-left, but rather a blend of nationalism (far-right) and anti-capitalism (far-left). Historically, classical fascism has stronger ties to left-wing (socialist) politics, originating from Sorelian syndicalism (a revisionist form of Marxism). Nationalism and irredentism—such as Mazzini's influence, Futurism, and anti-Slavic sentiments—were equally fundamental to fascism as Soralian Marxism. However, this aspect was left unexamined, since the article focused on fascism through the

Fascism the State is absolute, individuals and groups relative. Individuals and groups are admissible in so far as they come within the State. Instead of directing the game and guiding the material and moral progress of the community, the liberal State restricts its activities to recording results. The Fascist State is wide awake and has a will of its own. For this reason, it can be described as “ethical”.

Unlike the contemporary understanding of fascism, the original fascism or Italian fascism at first didn't have racism or even economic antisemitism with them. Margherita Sarfatti, Mussolini's mistress and a former art critic for the Socialist Party (PSI) newspaper *Avanti*, was also a prominent figure within the fascist party. Besides, Mussolini was quoted in “Jews in Italy Under Fascist and Nazi Rule” by Joshua D. Zimmerman as follows:

Italy knows no antisemitism and we believe that it will never know it.

## The birth of fascism as a doctrine

Although fascism emerged from socialist traditions, it transcends the traditional left-right political spectrum. As a populist movement, it synthesized far-left (anti-capitalism) and far-right (nationalism) ideologies, attracting a broad base of support. Fascism arises when a segment of the socialist movement substitutes class struggle with nationalism and pursues a state-controlled economy within a single nation. It occurs when proletarian solidarity is replaced by nationalism and a focus on palingenesis and statolatry.

Fascist ideology, while permitting the capitalist class to exist for nationalistic ends, fundamentally departs from both capitalism and liberal democracy. Similarly, while incorporating elements of

inevitably lead to crises, ultimately culminating in a proletarian revolution in which the working class overthrows the bourgeoisie and establishes the dictatorship of the proletariat. Marx identified the bourgeoisie (capitalists) and the proletariat (the working class) as the two primary classes within capitalism, with their class struggle driving historical progress. The petit bourgeoisie and lumpen-proletariat are considered secondary, or reinforcing, classes.

## Sorelian Marxism

Georges Sorel, a French revolutionary syndicalist, offered a new interpretation of Marxism. His theory of “direct action” stresses direct confrontation between workers and capitalists, bypassing elected officials and other go-betweens. The ultimate expression of this direct action, according to Sorel, is the general strike. As a result, Georges Sorel created a new revisionist Marxism with the idea of general strike. Georges Sorel and the syndicalists believed the working class could and should liberate itself without the leadership of intellectuals or the middle-class members who dominated political organizations.

In “*La Decomposition du Marxisme*”, Georges Sorel argues that Marxism is not the straightforward, cohesive, and purely empirical science it is sometimes purported to be. Instead, he posits that it comprises three distinct elements: a set of dogmas, a canon of historical interpretation, and a heroic social myth designed to cultivate working-class consciousness and power. Sorel considered the dogmas absurd, the historical interpretation canon potentially valuable, and the myth to be evaluated based on its practical efficacy rather than its factual accuracy.

Karl Korsch, one of the major figures responsible for laying the groundwork for Western Marxism in the 1920s, referred to Lenin and Georges Sorel as non-dogmatic Marxists. He labelled Sorel as the Syndicalist of the original Marxism and Lenin as the Com-

unist of the original Marxian Marxism. Amadeo Bordiga noted that Georges Sorel considered revolutionary syndicalism as a true successor tradition of Marx against social-democratic revisionism and legalitarian revisionism. José Carlos Mariátegui, a Peruvian Marxist philosopher who identified himself as a Sorelian argued that Vladimir Lenin was a Sorelian and Nietzschean hero. Antonio Gramsci was also reported to be influenced by the Sorelian views of social myth. Having such influential Marxists being influenced by him, that proves that Georges Sorel was not a fringe revisionist Marxist that could be ignored. Also, it's important to note that Georges Sorel supported Lenin and Bolshevik fraction on the question of Second International and the October Revolution. He even wrote for an official Soviet Union publication, Russian Soviet Government Bureau, calling Lenin "the greatest theoretician of socialism since Marx and a statesman whose genius recalls that of Peter the Great." However, Lenin called him "a notorious muddlehead".

Later, it was reported by Jean Variot that Georges Sorel considered Mussolini as a man who was no less extraordinary than Lenin and a political genius, of a greater reach than all the statesmen of the day, with the only exception of Lenin. Sorel's method of turning key Marxist principles into "myths," regardless of his aims, inadvertently undermined those principles' practical relevance to the revolutionary working-class struggle. This ideological shift paved the way for Mussolini's Fascism.

## Revolutionary Syndicalism

The concept of syndicalisme révolutionnaire or revolutionary syndicalism emerged in French socialist journals in 1903. The French General Confederation of Labor (Confédération générale du travail, CGT) came to use the term to describe its brand of unionism. It promotes worker control of industry and the econ-

Mussolini's interpretation of Lenin differed significantly. He viewed Lenin's implementation of the New Economic Policy (NEP) and state capitalism not as a deviation from Bolshevik communism's internationalist principles, but rather as a pragmatic step towards "socialism in one country" (a position later associated with Stalin). Consequently, Mussolini saw Gentile's fascism as a revisionist form of Marxism, abandoning internationalism, materialism, and economic determinism in favour of a class collaborationist approach focused on strengthening the state through nationalism. He termed this system "state corporatism." In 1919, Mussolini positioned fascism as an alternative left-wing revolutionary movement to internationalist Marxism. Just as Stalinism (Marxism-Leninism) diverged from orthodox Marxism, Mussolini's state corporatism charted a separate ideological course, distinct from orthodox Marxism.

Stalinism, characterized by "state capitalism," involved state (and by extension, vanguard party) ownership of all assets, eliminating the bourgeoisie within the USSR. Conversely, Mussolini's "state corporatism" permitted the survival of a "national bourgeoisie." A similar economic model, "new democracy," emerged later in Mao Zedong's thought, advocating for a united front of four national classes against Western imperialism. Essentially, Mussolini's system pitted Italian classes against foreign powers, whereas Mao's mobilized Chinese national classes against foreign powers.

Mussolini himself was clear about it in his own manifesto:

Fascism combats the abstract class conception of society, rejecting the entire notion of antithetical class interests upon which the artificialities of "class struggle" rests.

The keystone of the Fascist doctrine is its conception of the State, of its essence, its functions, and its aims. For



Mussolini, a revolutionary socialist who reportedly instilled in him an admiration for Karl Marx and his philosophy. Alessandro Mussolini advocated for government control of production, improved working conditions, and a worker-run society. However, his socialist views weren't solely derived from Marx. Alessandro Mussolini was a complex figure whose ideology blended Marxism, anarchism (influenced by Carlo Cafiero and Mikhail Bakunin), the military authoritarianism of Garibaldi, and the nationalism of Giuseppe Mazzini.

In September 1911, Mussolini was jailed for five months after participating in a socialist-led riot against Italy's war in Libya, which he strongly condemned as imperialist. Upon his release, he facilitated the expulsion of pro-war "revisionists" Ivanoe Bonomi and Leonida Bissolati from the Socialist Party. This action led to his appointment as editor of the Italian Socialist Party newspaper, *Avanti*, under whose leadership its circulation increased dramatically from 20,000 to 100,000.

In 1914, following the deaths of anti-militarist protesters and the subsequent "Red Week" general strike, the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) declared its opposition to the war. Initially, Mussolini publicly supported this stance, writing against the war and advocating neutrality. However, he later reversed his position, arguing that socialists should support the war to overthrow the Hohenzollern and Habsburg monarchies, which he claimed repressed socialism. He then criticized the PSI and socialism in general for neglecting the national issues that caused the war's outbreak. Consequently, he was expelled from the party due to his pro-intervention stance.

It was reported in "Mussolini: A New Life" by Nicholas Farrell that Lenin later would say to the following to Italian Socialists:

'Mussolini was the only one among you with the mind and temperament to make a revolution. Why did you allow him to leave?'

omy, achieved through industry-wide unions and direct action like strikes and even sabotage.

Leon Trotsky addressed "revolutionary syndicalism" as "in many respects the precursor of present-day Communism". Rudolf Rocker stated that the teachings of libertarian or anarchist socialism were taken from the movement of Revolutionary Syndicalism. The Communist International, at its Second Congress, recognized revolutionary syndicalism, as pointed out by James P. Cannon, as a progression beyond traditional parliamentary socialism. This recognition was reflected in the Congress's resolutions. Lenin argued that revolutionary syndicalism arose naturally and unavoidably as a reaction against the opportunism, reformism, and excessive focus on parliamentary politics that plagued the socialist movements at the time. Similarly, Alfred Rosmer, a political associate of Leon Trotsky and a memoirist, noted that revolutionary syndicalists and socialists of the parties of the Second International followed two different paths. Revolutionary syndicalism clearly drew from revolutionary Marxist and managed to have some influence upon the tradition of anarcho-syndicalism. It is also relevant to note that Fernand Pelloutier, a theorist of anarcho-syndicalism, was influential in the development of revolutionary syndicalism.

## National Syndicalism

By 1909, Sorel had grown disillusioned with the conciliatory approach of socialist parliamentarians, the rise of democratic socialism, and what he perceived as a decline in the proletariat, seduced by the mirage of enormous economic benefits. He felt the proletariat was failing to fulfill his expectations of revolutionary transformation, nor was it aligning with Marx's vision of a magnificent epic. This reappraisal of Marxism prompted Sorel to adopt Benedetto Croce's assertion that "Socialism is dead." This period

saw Sorel directing much of his criticism and writing toward the profound “crisis of Marxism,” which, as Antonio Labriola noted, he addressed with zeal, effectively transforming this “crisis” into one of socialism itself.

Sorel tried to reinvigorate Marxism by combining it with populism and nationalism. His brand of “Sorelian socialism” attracted many revolutionary syndicalists who, influenced by his admiration for Maurras and French integral nationalism, shifted towards radical nationalism. Maurras’s nationalist stance against bourgeois democracy, the Enlightenment’s values (like liberalism and individualism), and its fragmented view of society resonated with them. This movement continued, and by 1911, revolutionary syndicalists saw these two anti-rational political currents merging into a new nationalism and revolutionary socialism—a precursor to later fascism.

Influential theorists from the movement of revolutionary syndicalism such as Édouard Berth, Georges Valois, and other nationalist philosophers altogether co-founded a group named “the Cercle Proudhon” where they syncretise revolutionary syndicalism with nationalism. Édouard Berth sought to reconcile Marx’s focus on material conditions and Henri Bergson’s emphasis on metaphysical concepts by developing a theory of revolutionary self-organization within the working class. He insisted that “dual revolts” of syndicalism and nationalism would result in the “complete driving out of the regime of gold and the triumph of heroic values over that ignoble bourgeois materialism under which Europe was suffocating.” Georges Valois, another co-founder of “the Cercle Proudhon”, aimed to create a unifying ideology that would appeal to both nationalist and anti-democratic factions, particularly those identifying with the left wing. In 1926, he became a member of the Toulouse branch of the “Le Faisceau”, France’s first fascist party. The Cercle Proudhon could be identified as the first precursor to fascist organisation that focus on syndicalism that syncretised far-left revolutionary trade unionism with far-right

from the French, the Germans, the British, the North and South Americans, who are our bourgeoisie.”

Ultimately, the nationalist dialectical process involves a reinterpretation of Marx’s concept of class struggle, shifting its emphasis toward national renewal. It fundamentally rejects Marxist internationalism, substituting it with a nationalist perspective while incorporating anti-capitalist rhetoric and socialist principles.

## **Giovanni Gentile on Marxism**

Giovanni Gentile, the founder of “Actual Idealism,” developed a philosophical system that directly countered the Marxist interpretation of Hegel. In addition to his prolific writings on Marxism, philosophy, and history, Gentile was a key figure in the establishment of fascism.

In one of his works “Fascism and Its Opponents”, he wrote the following:

It is well known that Sorelian syndicalism, out of which the thought and the political method of fascism emerged—conceived itself the genuine interpretation of Marxist communism.

He claimed his ideology, “fascism,” stemmed from a revisionist Marxist school of thought known as “Sorelian syndicalism,” and that fascism represented the true continuation of that Marxian syndicalist tradition.

## **Mussolini & Fascism**

Benito Mussolini, born into a socialist family, served on the National Directorate of the Italian Socialist Party (PSI). His early belief in Marxism stemmed partly from his father, Alessandro

These perspectives reflect distinct critiques of capitalism's evolution, each emphasizing economic transformation within broader ideological frameworks.

Beyond **Classical Fascism**, less popular fascist thinkers with Marxist roots—Ernst Niekisch, and James Burnham—engaged with Karl Marx's critique of capitalism but developed distinct interpretations based on their nationalist ideological priorities and historical contexts.

- James Burnham replaced Marx's revolutionary proletariat with a new managerial class—bureaucrats and technocrats—who he argued were already displacing traditional capitalists. He foresaw global technocratic governance, drawing parallels with Soviet and fascist bureaucratic structures.
- Ernst Niekisch, a German Conservative Revolutionary thinker, developed *National Bolshevism*, which merged Marxist class struggle with nationalism. Unlike Marx's internationalist vision, Niekisch saw class struggle as a force for national rejuvenation, advocating Soviet-style socialism to counter capitalist decay while opposing both liberalism and fascism.

Their critiques remain relevant as capitalism adapts but continues to exhibit vulnerabilities. Niekisch's nationalist socialism echoes anti-imperialist socialist revolutions in China and Cuba. Mussolini's corporatist vision parallels modern hyper-consumerism and state-backed enterprises, while Burnham's managerialism is reflected in corporate bureaucratization and technocratic governance models.

More of such example can be seen in Enrico Corradini's usage of the term Proletarian nation. Lenin quoted Corradini, a leader of the Italian nationalists, declared at the same time: "Just as socialism was a method of freeing the proletariat from the bourgeoisie, nationalism will be for us Italians a method of freeing ourselves

nationalism. The Cercle Proudhon stated it was influenced by various thinkers, including the anarchist philosopher Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, revisionist Marxists like Georges Sorel, other socialist thinkers, and even nationalist thinkers.

Charles Péguy, who was also a revolutionary socialist at first can also be seen deserting the revolutionary politics and reverision to the religious and nationalist myths instilled in him in his childhood. Being influenced by Sorelian syndicalism, revolutionary syndicalism, national syndicalism, Péguy's own views were a unique blend of socialism, nationalism, and Catholicism. Hubert Lagardelle, a founder of Toulouse Marxist journal Socialist Youth, later founded Le Mouvement socialiste, a revolutionary syndicalist journal in France founded in 1899 along with Karl Marx's grandson Jean Longuet. This journal achieved significant popularity and garnered international readership through its analysis of Marxism and revolutionary syndicalism. It featured contributions from prominent revolutionary syndicalist thinkers, including Georges Sorel. Benito Mussolini, in his "Doctrine of Fascism", credited Lagardelle as a partial inspiration for the development of fascism as follow:

"In the great river of fascism, you will find that the veins run back to Sorel, Peguy, to the Lagardelle Socialist Movement and the Italian trade unionists, who from 1904 to 1914, carried a new note in socialist circles with Pagine libere Olivetti, La Lupa of Orano He Divenire Social E. Leone."

As quoted above, "La Lupa" magazine that also syncretised "revolutionary syndicalism" with "nationalism" can be seen endorsed by Benito Mussolini, in his "Doctrine of Fascism". Arturo Labriola, a revolutionary syndicalist and a socialist member of Italian Socialist Party, was one of the leading contributors of La Lupa. He was called "the Italian chauvinist" by Lenin. Another contributor of the "La Lupa" magazine, who was from nationalist wing of the

contributing members, can be seen declaring “just as socialism was a method of freeing the proletariat from the bourgeoisie, nationalism will be for us, Italians a method of freeing ourselves from the French, the Germans, the British, the North and South Americans, who are our bourgeoisie”. He developed the concept of Proletarian Nationalism in 1919.

Georges Valois, a revolutionary syndicalist who later participated in the French Resistance, characterized Marxism and fascism as “brother enemies”. He further asserted that fascism and socialism share a common objective.

Karl Korsch, a German Marxist theoretician and political philosopher, one of the major figures responsible for laying the groundwork for Western Marxism in the 1920s, wrote the following:

“But neither Sorel, the Syndicalist, nor Lenin, the Communist, utilized the full force and impact of the original Marxian ‘critique’. Sorel’s irrationality device by which he transformed several important Marxian doctrines into ‘myths’, despite his intentions”.

Similarly, György Lukács, a Hungarian Marxist philosopher who was also one of the founders of Western Marxism, reached to a similar conclusion. He stated

“Sorel himself never became a fascist – but rather the course of development of the ideology, which by the most diverse left and right steps leads necessarily to fascism, the affinity between this ‘extreme left’ conception and the chiefly intellectual ‘leagues’ that stand close to fascism being the most striking point.”

## Fascist Dialectics and the Struggle for National Identity

Dialectical materialism, a Marxist framework developed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, explains societal evolution through economic structures, class struggles, and historical forces. It argues that material conditions, particularly modes of production, shape history, with capitalism’s contradictions driving class conflict toward socialism. However, this study critiques its predictive limitations, such as overestimating proletarian revolution and neglecting nationalism and cultural influences for fascist thinkers.

Karl Marx outlined a sequence of historical development in works such as *The German Ideology*, *The Communist Manifesto*, and *Das Kapital*, proposing a progression from primitive communism to slavery-based agrarian societies, feudalism, capitalism, socialism, and ultimately communism.

Alternative interpretations emerged from thinkers like Benito Mussolini:

- **Benito Mussolini**, Italy’s fascist leader, presented a materialist-inspired analysis of capitalism in his 1933 speech *On The Corporate State*. Influenced by Werner Sombart, he identified three stages:
  - *Heroic Capitalism* (1830–1870): Characterized by industrialization, innovation, and laissez-faire economics.
  - *Stagnant Capitalism* (1870–1914): Marked by monopolization, corporate dominance, and increasing state intervention.
  - *Super-Capitalism* (1914–onward): A phase of mass consumption that eroded individuality, leading to cultural homogenization.