

[fascism](#)

from [A Glossary of Political Theory](#)

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One of the major ideologies and political movements of the twentieth century. The term is sometimes used exclusively to describe Mussolini's movement in Italy but its scope is wider than this.

Fascism arises in situations in which liberal [democracy](#) appears to have failed, and whereas [Marxism](#) criticises [liberalism](#) from the 'left', fascism attacks from the 'right'. It is hostile to the notion of reason and individuality as a universal attribute. It regards the Enlightenment as espousing decadence and identifies with the collectivity rather than the individual, exalting [nationalism](#) and rejecting cosmopolitanism.

Fascism embraces modern technology and sees the [state](#) as the supreme expression, along with the nation, of personal loyalty. It is strongly opposed to notions of democracy, and identifies repressive [hierarchy](#) as [natural](#) and inevitable. It is intolerant of political oppositions and favours [totalitarianism](#), and thus the rejection of all liberal freedoms.

Although German Nazism differed from Italian fascism in its hatred of Jews, fascism in general privileges a particular ethnic group. Fascism therefore always espouses some kind of racist doctrine.

Its attitude towards [capitalism](#) is ambiguous. It is hostile to liberalism and the free [market](#), but in practice fascists can come to terms with capitalist [interests](#), even though they subject the latter to nationalist and statist regulation.

Although fascism was a major movement in the inter-war period, it continues in the post-war period, rejecting immigration, and expressing visceral opposition to pluralist respect for different cultures. The British National Party and the French National Front are examples of current fascist parties.

See also: [liberalism](#), [nationalism](#), [state](#), [natural](#), [totalitarianism](#), [capitalism](#), [market](#)

Further reading:

- Nolte, E. (1969), *Three Faces of Fascism*, New York: New American Library. 



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