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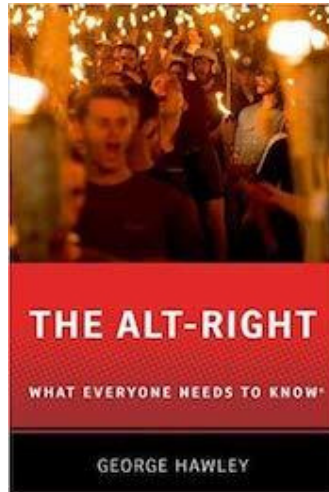
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The Alt-Right and US Capitalism in Decay

In late 1934, the second edition of R. Palme Dutt's book titled Fascism and the Social Revolution was published. This book is an examination of the economic and political causes and nature of fascism. One of the most important sentences in the text appears in the introduction to this edition. It reads in part, "...Fascism is not merely the expression of a particular movement, of a particular party within modern society, but it is the most complete expression of the whole tendency of modern capitalism in decay...." In the past three or four years, the world has seen an exponential increase in political demonstrations and actions organized and attended by people who proudly call themselves fascist. It seems reasonable to assume from this increase that fascism is once again on the rise as a worldwide movement. Of course, the trappings and foci of the various individuals and organizations in this movement appear different in different nations and regions, but their essentially fascist nature is universal, just like the nature of worldwide capitalist decay. In the United States and Canada, one of the dominant strains of fascism to grab headlines is known, rather euphemistically, as the alt-right.

In most cases, members of the alt right are young and come from middle class backgrounds. Many are college



educated and are technically savvy when it comes to computer and internet use. Historically, it is this strata which have turned towards fascist and other reactionary movements when the capitalist economy they exist in experiences a cataclysmic crisis like that epitomized by the crash of 2007-2008. Unable to earn enough to end their debt and own property and in a world where no substantial left revolutionary organization exists, they turn to the politics of the fascists. Angry and brash, the fascist rhetoric of economic and political nationalism seems revolutionary. However, as history makes clear, that revolution ultimately ends up strengthening the very capitalist forces that have made these folks seek such radical solutions in the first place.

As the public profile of these alt-right groups has risen, so has intensity of the scrutiny of them. Let there be no doubt that this is a good thing. Part of this greater examination are the number of books published in the past few years discussing the new fascism and the forces fighting it. A recent addition to this growing library is George Hawley's January 2019 publication titled [The Alt-Right: What Everyone Needs to Know](#). Hawley, who teaches Political Science at the University of Alabama, has composed a comprehensive discussion of the alt-right movement as it stood in mid-2018. The format employed is a question-and-answer style that lays out the issue being addressed with a one sentence question and then responds with a concise but detailed answer. Unlike many other recent books on the subject of the new fascist movements written from an anarchist or Marxist viewpoint, Hawley's text is decidedly left-liberal. These particular politics do not deprive the reader of the knowledge Hawley hopes to provide, but they do tend to leave the reader with a sense of futility in terms of how one is to fight the fascist phenomenon. Indeed, there are passages in the book that suggest the alt-right movement has peaked and the new

fascism is on its way to defeat. Remembering these passages, I cannot help but recall Antonio Gramsci's words:

“We Communists were among the few who took fascism seriously even when it seemed only a bloody farce... and when all the other parties tried to put the working class population to sleep by presenting fascism as a superficial phenomenon of very brief duration.”

Despite this shortcoming (and to be fair, this is not the intention of the text), *The Alt-Right: What Everyone Needs to Know* should be read by anyone curious about the genesis and growth of the movement it examines. Comprehensive and approachable, it provides the reader opposed to fascism but uncertain as to why with information and knowledge certain to enhance one's understanding of the movement and, importantly, why it must be fought. After all, as R. Palme Dutt, the author mentioned at the beginning of this review states in his text, “No illusion could be more dangerous than the illusion that fascism can be in retreat without a decisive struggle....” This warning must continue to be heeded, from Trump's White House to the streets we walk every day.