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## Fascism and Democracy: Tribal Politics of Afghanistan

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### ABSTRACT

*Fascism is said to be the antithesis of democracy and both are contrasted in several ways. Under a Fascist system the priorities of the state are accorded supremacy above the fundamental civil rights of the population. Fascism has its analogies in theories of democracy. The origin of fascism remains a major concern to the critics as it emerged in societies seeking democracy and has always been the reason of failed attempts at democratic transitions and weak democracies. The paper aims to reveal fascism in the socio-political region of Afghanistan which has always been an obstacle in the successful transition of the country towards democracy.*

**Keywords:** Fascism, Democracy, Tribal politics

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Democracy is said to be the most required and complex phenomenon in present political scenario. In the contemporary world almost all regimes call themselves democratic or making efforts to restore democracy. In an article entitled "Essentially Contested Concepts", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1955/56, vol. 56, particularly pp. 171 ff. Gallie considered Democracy to be a contested concept, the definition of which is a controversial one and moreover he says that the application of democracy is more contested than the definition of democracy. Now a day the quest is not about the meaning of democracy but about how much of it one can have.

David Mc Lellan a Professor in Goldsmiths' College, University of London calls the current practice of democracy a 'pseudo-democracy' in one of his paper. There is a profound dissatisfaction about the potential of democracy in present scenario. There are several challenges and obstacles in the practice of democracy like castism, tribalism, Maoism, poverty, crime, corruption and most popularly fascism in the countries seeking a democratic environment.

Fascism has been considered a political attitude and mass movement that arose during time between the first and Second World War. In fascism complete interest in economic, social, and military power is given to a race or state lead by a single dominant leader. Fascism basically discards the idea of Socialism, Capitalism, and Democracy. Fascism is said to be dictatorship characterized by terrorism and police surveillance. It focuses on ethnicity and racial difference.

The origin of fascism remains a major concern to the social critics as it emerged in most of the political societies. It has always been the reason of failed attempts at democratic transitions and for the weakness of democratic environment in a country. Fascism is said to be the antithesis of democracy and both the Democracy and Fascism are frequently contrasted by several critics. Katharine A. Mackel in one of her articles states that Fascism generally flourishes in countries with strong nationalism and weak democracies. She further defines weak democracy' having two meanings, which enable fascism to flourish. A democracy is said to be weak when it is incompetent and unresponsive. As a result of such democracy citizens become dissatisfied and willing to abandon it for another regime type. According to her other interpretation of weak democracy it is somewhat new and shakable. It enables fascism to flourish because it is easier to replace this type of democracy with another regime. There are several countries in the world that are facing the problem of fascism in their political societies. Afghanistan is one such country which is in the midst of a battle between democracy and fascism.

Afghanistan on account of its geographical and strategic position had served as a centre of power struggle in Asia. In the north, its boundary touches central Asia, towards the west it is neighbor of Iran and in the east it is bound by the low lying plains of Pakistan, drained by the Indus and other rivers. Before the inception of Pakistan, Afghanistan and India not only shared geographical boundaries but also cultural and political strains through Buddhism and Mauryan invasions etc. In contemporary times Afghanistan is not only affecting the peace of its immediate neighboring countries but also India and the international scenario due to its ties with terrorism.

Terrorism has emerged as a globally observable phenomenon that adversely affects the world peace and the attempts at Nation Building in the name of some or the other ideology. It instigates violence at physical, emotional and psychological levels affecting the peace of an individual, a society and ultimately a Nation. Terrorism not only challenges the process of nation building it also threatens with disintegration the establish national identity and problematizes the concept of citizenship. Terrorists seek to change some facet of society, from freedom of religious expression to physical and political control over a region. Differences between societies, however, may result in shifting definitions of terrorism and dramatic differences in characterizations of groups or individuals as terrorists. Terrorism led towards violence has been used to create terror that inhibits growth and realization of full potential of both individual and society thus impacting the nation. National identity may get affected at social, communal or personal level. Terrorism is closely associated with fascism which can easily be seen in Afghanistan's political scenario.

Afghanistan situated on the crossroads between Iran and India, Central Asia and South Asia, and central Asia and the Middle East has always been a gateway for invaders. It has a history over 5000 years and has gone through eras of invasion, war and conflict because of its significant geographical location. Several invaders initially came to Afghanistan under the pretence of trade and friendship and established their rules here. This country has also been intervened by the first world countries like British, Soviets and America for the struggle of power. The history of tribal violence and the intervention in Afghanistan of the first world countries has had devastating effect on this emergent nation. All of them practiced fascism in Afghan politics in one form or the other. Islamic fascism, social fascism, and Tribal fascism has always been the part of Afghan society. Fascism has not only been practiced in Afghan politics by the outsider forces but tribal conflict in Afghanistan has also played a vital role in its attempt towards the establishment of Democracy. Afghan society is said to be a complex tribal society and it seems to be very difficult to understand the ethnic and tribal complexities of Afghanistan.

Justin Raimondo says about Fascism "Today's Conservatives Are Fascists: Torture dictatorship, phony elections and endless war. It's fascism with a 'democratic face'." Afghan politics has gone through several conservative hands before and since its emergence as a nation. Its tribal leaders have always wielded great influence in its politics and had a particularly pervading influence in the economics, politics and society of Afghanistan since its establishment as a modern state by Ahamad Shah Abdali in 1747.

Afghanistan always made attempts to achieve not only peace and prosperity but also gradual democratization but ethnicities and tribal conflicts between different tribes of afghan society like Pastuns, Hazaras, Taziks, Uzbeks etc always served as an obstacle to this attempt. During civil war in Afghanistan in (1989-1992), the Mujahedeen who were the members of different tribal groups and called themselves *Holy warriors* took over. These Mujahedeen were split into seven different factions who all competed for power and led the country into a violent mass execution. Two major opposition tribes were Pastuns and Hazaras who had many tribal, ethnic and linguistic differences. After the war ended in 1989, these different factions returned to their previous divisiveness and fought each other, until the Taliban established in the country.

Firstly mujahedeen and secondly Taliban are the internal factors responsible for strife and the lawlessness in Afghanistan. Initially the Taliban pretended to avoid ethnic discrimination but in the consequences of armed confrontations with other groups, they arrested and harassed people only for ethnic reasons. Afghanistan did not have a unified government. Political parties linked to the resistance, including Sunni and Shiite, and Islamic fundamentalist, had developed during the war and they imperfectly merged in the two remaining factions—the Taliban and the Northern Alliance. Military commanders had the real leadership which is one of the features of fascism. The warlords and the Taliban played an important role in the destruction of Afghanistan as insiders but the 1st world countries are the outside forces specially which are awfully responsible for the ruin of the country under the pretention of trade and friendship.

The tribal system in Afghanistan is the single, unchanging political, social and cultural reality. They are notorious for changing the form of their social organization when they are pressured by internal conflict or external forces. And even after the establishment of Afghanistan as a democratic country in 2004 the tribal differences in Afghan society are still influencing the politics of Afghanistan.

As governments are frequently elected on and off there tends to be frequent changes in the policies of democratic countries both domestically and internationally

People of Afghanistan have been attempting towards the establishment of Democratic environment and are keen to weaken the influence of fascism in the politics of their country. Their attempts towards democratic stability have often been shaken by the lack of enough political stability. Democracy can serve as an effective panacea to fascism and could be proved successful against the fascism in Afghanistan. Peaceful Democracy in Afghanistan is highly required not only for the hapless citizens of Afghanistan but

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also for the peace in its immediate neighboring countries including India. Infect world peace largely depends upon the establishment of peace in Afghanistan due to its ties with terrorism. The incident of sep.11, 2001 is one of the examples. No serious battle against the forces of fascism in Afghanistan can be launched without building the best possible association of anti-fascist forces and mass mobilization against fascist hordes. The task of becoming the main force against fascism in Afghanistan is required for the whole world for the establishment of democracy in the country.

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