

Fascism: Castrismo, Chavismo, Madurismo

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Nicolas Maduro salutes with his fist a picture of Hugo Chavez.

HAVANA TIMES – Some Cubans have been aware of the similarities between Italian fascism and the Cuban government, for decades already. They aren't just pure coincidence. Venezuelans have also been under the same yoke for years, and have said so. A disaster that doesn't recognize language or borders, is spreading without a solution in sight.

The government under Fidel Castro's command was always deeply fascist, but he came to power late, at a time when that denomination had already been dishonored. Raul Castro laid out some superficial economic reforms with the sole intention of keeping the system afloat, and this is the same path that current president Miguel Diaz-Canel is walking down. Reforms in dribs and drabs, allowing small shops and

attempts to seduce big capital, but politically-speaking, there has been absolute (or almost absolute) continuity.

Umberto Eco lists the 14 common features of Fascist ideology in his article *Ur-Fascismo*. Eco says that it is enough for one of them to be present to allow fascism to coagulate around it. For a long time now, the political system imposed in Cuba has met and exceeds this minimum.

According to the Italian essayist and novelist, there is no struggle for life in a Fascist system but, rather, life is lived for struggle. With this view in mind, everybody is trained to become a hero. In mythology across the world, a hero is an exceptional figure, but in absolute Fascist ideology, heroism is the norm. This cult of heroism is directly linked to the cult of death.

There are common denominators that can be found in fascist or “ur-fascist” systems, which go beyond a simple ideological distinction between the Right and Left, and have more to do with its rejection of parliamentary democracy; attack on liberal and open society[1]; its fascination with violence, autocratic leadership and the vital need to have a “leader”.

Octavio Paz already warned about the relativity of certain categories in use, in an article he wrote for the 168th edition of the magazine “Vuelta”, in November 1990, and pointed out that while “the terms “Left”, “Right” and other non-trustworthy alternatives, they are in fact attitudes, ideas and opinions.” He goes on to add: “Left or Right? It’s not the label that counts, but attitudes.”

You just need some references of what Mussolini was to Italy and the world, to see how the Venezuelan government is repeating this, continuing down the path laid out by Cuba. What began in Venezuela during Hugo Chavez’s time in office, has taken on greater dimensions under Maduro’s government, with a regime which citizens are reporting more and more for its everyday use of torture.

“Political rights are on the line in Venezuela, anyone who doesn’t agree with what Maduro does, is marked as the enemy,” Christopher Figuera, the former head of the Bolivarian Intelligence Service (SEBIN), tells us during an interview in Miami with a Spanish newspaper.

Italian Fascism

Mussolini’s Fascist Party was born under the flag destined to establish a new social order, funded by landowners and highly conservative groups in Italian society.

In the beginning, Fascism was a Republican urban movement, that was widely accepted by the middle class and spread to farming areas. Mussolini’s first government included both liberal ministers as well as populists, until it was strong enough to establish a totalitarian regime, which endured for 20 years, proclaiming

its loyalty to King Victor Manuel III and the royal family. However, when the King removed Mussolini and put him behind bars, the latter reappeared with Nazi support, declaring a new republic.

Mussolini was an atheist and military man in the beginning, who even challenged God to destroy him as proof of his existence, but he not only came to an agreement with the Catholic Church and recognized the sovereignty of the Vatican State, but he also went on to rule with Pope Pius XI's blessing, as well as from priests and the Roman Curia.

Unlike Nazism and Soviet Communism, which didn't allow the slightest display of dissidence in the fields of art and culture, Italian Fascism tolerated artistic and literary displays that diverged from the official grandiose style.

Does this mean to say that there was greater tolerance in Italy, than in Russia or Germany? Not at all... Communist leader Antonio Gramsci died in jail, opposition congressman Giacomo Matteotti was killed by a group of fascist hoodlums, Mussolini taking credit for the murder.

When he came back into power, during the government founded in Salo with German support, the *Duce* promised to shoot members of the Great council who had voted against him, including his son-in-law, Count Galeazzo, who was shot in the back. Whenever anything came close to threatening his power, the Italian dictator knew that the best way to deal with this was to find a quick fix: wipe out his opponent.

Venezuelan Fascism

Post-Chavism soon fell flat in a violent manner, becoming a Red Fascism. The people currently ruling Venezuela today, are hellbent on wiping out the opposition by crushing dissident opinions. From the very beginning, they have threatened to lock up anyone who peacefully expressed their discontent with an "heir", who lost any democratic guise soon after taking power, and they have done this often and energetically.

Nicolas Maduro's government didn't start where Chavez left off, but where Fidel Castro started in Cuba: with the threat of arresting anyone who opposed him (which he did immediately) and a misinformation campaign so as to discredit anyone who was considered an enemy.

Maduro and Diosdado Cabello didn't waste a single second before making it clear that there wouldn't be any dialogue or negotiation possible with them: comply with their rules or suffer the consequences. Any simulation of a dialogue in recent years has been nothing more than subterfuge to win some more time.

Of course, they have resorted to the old tactic of talking about a coup d'etat, inciting chaos and disorder by the opposition, just like they didn't lose a second to hurl accusations at peaceful opposition members, saying that they are responsible for the deaths that have taken place during different protests in recent years.

In the early years of Maduro's government, he held up his presence in part with everyday lies, making statements about alleged attacks, conspiracies and coup attempts were repeated daily as well as crazy speeches such as the "appearance" of Chavez as a bird or any other nonsense, where ignorance and confusion about the meaning of his words went hand-in-hand with his Spanglish and hurling threats. However, the repressor has imposed himself more and more, because the clown hasn't been able to replace the tyrant.

[1] In the classical definition of the term liberalism as a political and economic doctrine, as it was formulated by John Stuart Mill and is used in Europe.