Benito Mussolini:
What is Fascism, 1932

*Benito Mussolini (1883-1945) the leadership of a new political movement called "fascism" [after "fasces", the symbol of bound sticks used a totem of power in ancient Rome].* *Mussolini came to power after the "March on Rome" in 1922, and was appointed Prime Minister by King Victor Emmanuel. In 1932 Mussolini wrote the entry for the Italian Encyclopedia on the definition of fascism.*

Fascism believes neither in the possibility nor the utility of perpetual peace. It thus repudiates the doctrine of Pacifism -- born of a renunciation of the struggle and an act of cowardice in the face of sacrifice. War alone brings up to its highest tension all human energy and puts the stamp of nobility upon the peoples who have courage to meet it. All other trials are substitutes, which never really put men into the position where they have to make the great decision -- the alternative of life or death....

...The Fascist accepts life and loves it, knowing nothing of and despising suicide: he rather conceives of life as duty and struggle and conquest, but above all for others -- those who are at hand and those who are far distant, contemporaries, and those who will come after...

...Fascism [is] the complete opposite of…Marxist Socialism. Fascism, now and always, believes in holiness and in heroism; that is to say, in actions influenced by no economic motive, direct or indirect. And if the economic conception of history be denied, according to which theory men are no more than puppets, carried to and fro by the waves of chance, while the real directing forces are quite out of their control, it follows that the existence of an unchangeable and unchanging class-war is also denied - the natural progeny of the economic conception of history. And above all Fascism denies that class-war can be the preponderant force in the transformation of society....

After Socialism, Fascism combats the whole complex system of democratic ideology, and repudiates [denies] it, whether in its theoretical premises or in its practical application. Fascism denies that the majority, by the simple fact that it is a majority, can direct human society; it denies that numbers alone can govern by means of a periodical consultation, and it affirms the immutable, beneficial, and fruitful inequality of mankind, which can never be permanently leveled through the mere operation of a mechanical process such as universal suffrage....

...Fascism denies, in democracy, the absurd conventional untruth of political equality dressed out in the garb of collective irresponsibility, and the myth of "happiness" and indefinite progress....

...Given that the nineteenth century was the century of Socialism, of Liberalism, and of Democracy, it does not necessarily follow that the twentieth century must also be a century of Socialism, Liberalism and Democracy: political doctrines pass, but humanity remains, and it may rather be expected that this will be a century of authority...a century of Fascism. For if the nineteenth century was a century of individualism it may be expected that this will be the century of collectivism and hence the century of the State....

The foundation of Fascism is the conception of the State, its character, its duty, and its aim. Fascism conceives of the State as an absolute, in comparison with which all individuals or groups are relative, only to be conceived of in their relation to the State.....

...The Fascist State organizes the nation, but leaves a sufficient margin of liberty to the individual; the latter is deprived of all useless and possibly harmful freedom, but retains what is essential; the deciding power in this question cannot be the individual, but the State alone....

...For Fascism, the growth of empire, that is to say the expansion of the nation, is an essential manifestation of vitality, and its opposite a sign of decadence. Peoples which are rising, or rising again after a period of decadence, are always imperialist; and renunciation is a sign of decay and of death. Fascism is the doctrine best adapted to represent the tendencies and the aspirations of a people, like the people of Italy, who are rising again after many centuries of abasement and foreign servitude

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| **What is Fascism?** | **What is NOT Fascism?** |
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Based on the chart above, write a new definition of fascism:

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| Country/Leader | Left? Right? | Why?  |
| Imperial Japan |  |  |
| Karl Marx, political philosopher/economist |  |  |
| Francisco Franco, Spain |  |  |
| Adolf Hitler, founder of National Socialist (Nazi Party), Germany |  |  |
| Chairman Mao, China |  |  |

