



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on January 21, 2013

## Is President Obama More Socialist or Fascist?

President Obama has just begun his second term, and a couple of questions that plagued his first term remain unanswered. Is he a socialist? Is he a fascist? Is there a difference?

This was the theme of [a recent article in \*American Spectator\*](#) where the author asked whether ObamaCare was more socialist or fascist.

In that article David Catron recounts that in a [National Public Radio \(NPR\) interview](#), the CEO of Whole Foods, John Mackey, was asked whether his opinion of the president's health care legislation had changed since he wrote in the *Wall Street Journal*, "All countries with socialized medicine ration health care by forcing their citizens to wait in lines to receive scarce treatments."

Mackey's answer, as reported by Catron, reveals that the grocery store giant has gained a bit of insight into the distinction between those two forms of government since penning [the \*Wall Street Journal\* piece](#).

"Technically speaking, it's more like fascism. Socialism is where the government owns the means of production. In fascism, the government doesn't own the means of production, but they do control it — and that's what's happening with our health care programs and these reforms," Mackey told NPR.

Although Mackey relented and repented of having spoken ill of President Obama after enduring a full-on flogging by the state-run media (aka the mainstream media), his description of the Obama administration's policies is apt.

In his brief but brilliant article, Catron recounts one of the stops on Mackey's forgiveness tour where he told Norah O'Donnell of CBS, "That word [fascism] has an association with dictatorships in the 20th century, like Germany and Spain and Italy." Catron then pointed out a few other associations:

He might have added that an important feature of these regimes was "government-controlled health care," as he has now decided to call it. Another distinctive feature that they shared was a conspicuous dearth of free expression, particularly where unpopular government programs were concerned.

In fact, there is sufficient evidence to indict President Obama on charges of fascism.

The question remains, however, what does fascism mean, and does it have legitimate historical application to today's political situation?

Fascism is a political system defined by the Random House Dictionary as "a governmental system led by a dictator having complete power, forcibly suppressing opposition and criticism, regimenting all industry, commerce, etc., and emphasizing an aggressive nationalism and often racism."





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If one breaks that definition down into its component phrases, the definition becomes a frighteningly accurate description of the Age of Obama. A quick glance at headlines since January 2009 reveals the dictatorial bent of this administration: legislating by way of executive order, the nearly absolute denial of due process and habeas corpus to those branded by the president as “enemy combatants,” the frightening scope and sophistication of the surveillance state, and the assumption of control over some of the largest segments of industry (auto manufacturers, banks, insurance, health care). All there. All the parts present and contributing to the whole of American fascism in the making.

The word “fascism” has etymological roots in the political/social system of ancient Rome. In Rome, the fasces consisted of a bundle of rods about five feet long made of elm or birch wood together with a single-headed axe. The fasces were bound together by red strips of leather and were carried by the bodyguards of the magistrates, known as lictors.

The purpose of the fasces was to be the outward manifestation of the magisterial authority and therefore symbolic of the legitimacy of the magistrate’s power and the unifying role he was meant to play in the complex Roman government. As the leather strips bound the rods and axe together, so the magistrate (consul, proconsul, praetor, etc.) was to wield his power in the binding together of the citizens, subjects, and leaders of Rome.

The analogy to today’s political leaders is imprecise, perhaps, but illuminating. Many of those on the right side of the political spectrum have taken to referring to those on the other end as “progressives.” This preference seems to have been initiated by talk-show host Glenn Beck and spread virally by his followers.

In truth, those so denominated by Beck are not progressive, but are regressive. That is to say, their opinions and worldview are so dated and have been so often proven ineffectual to the government of a free people, that to call them progressive is to endow them with vision they don’t possess.

These regressives fancy themselves the gnostics of our day. They claim to have special access to a knowledge of the higher purpose of government that is unattainable by masses over whom they are duty-bound to rule.

The principal plank of the regressives’ absolutist platform is what renowned Austrian economist Friedrich Hayek called the “fatal conceit.” This brand of hubris occurs when a person assumes that if the boundaries of his power were extended indefinitely then he could make perfect order of his dominion. He issues fiats and executive orders that haughtily and purposely bypass other elected officials in order that accomplishment of his perfect plan of government might progress unimpeded.

While the tedious work of carrying out this leader’s vision will be left to the nameless bureaucrats who toil in the myriad agencies created to facilitate the rapid expansion of his control, the regressives of today prefer an attractive, often boyish face to represent the glory that comes with adherence to his often radical policies. This leader will draw thousands and millions to his side through words, gestures, and photos all artfully manipulated to disguise the egotism and servitude that underly the peaceful surface.

Under this version of fascism, the formerly free society is divided into rods (black, white, workers, managers, young, old, etc.). These several sticks are then bound together by the confining (unifying) strap of governmental control. Left to their own devices, so the saying goes, these various factions would destroy one another and cause their own mutual destruction. Thanks to the bureaucracy, they are held peacefully in check and all are thus able to contribute to the stability and growth of the state.



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The axe, of course, is, as it was in the Roman Republic, the symbol of the punishment meted out to all who work against the unity of the state. The axe in today's America is generally some form of social marginalization followed by economic enslavement. The politically ostracized are then easily watched by [ubiquitous cameras linked together by software](#) owned by the federal domestic spying apparatus. Add to that the [warrantless wiretaps](#) that listen and record the electronic communications of all Americans, and you have a government that can immediately detect and destroy all pockets of resistance, no matter how small or how far-flung from the centers of power.

Although Mackey (and Catron, for that matter) speak only of ObamaCare, that unconstitutional act is just one component of a larger, well-organized plot to consolidate all power in Washington in a few hands. As Catron writes, "It is part of a larger and far more insidious project that seeks to stamp out free expression as well as free enterprise."

If we are to avoid the fate of the fascist regimes of the recent past, we Americans must assert our natural dominion and resist tyranny in all its forms. If we fail, we, like the rods of Rome, may be bound together with unbreakable straps of statism and tossed one and all into the furnace of fascism.

*Photo of President Barack Obama: AP Images*

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