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Tuesday

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## Political Science

Q. What is Fascism and why is it considered to be the child of first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century events to place in Europe? -

### Introduction:

Fascism is a far-right, authoritarian ideology that promotes nationalism, often emphasizing militarism, dictatorial leadership, and a suppression of opposition. Fascists aim to create a unified, homogenous society by enforcing strict societal hierarchies, often accompanied by a focus on ethnic or racial purity. Characterized by its anti-democratic, anti-socialist and anti-liberal stance, fascism typically elevates the state above the individual and promotes an aggressive form of nationalism.

"Fascism is not defined by the number of its victims, but by the way it kills them"

(Jean-Paul Sartre)

## I. Rise of Fascism in the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century:

Fascism emerged in response to the political, economic and social factors of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly following the devastation of **World War I (1914-1918)**. In post-war Europe, several factors contributed to the rise of fascist ideologies.

### 1. Economic Instability and Hyperinflation:

In the First World War (1914-1918), many European nations, especially Germany, faced economic hardship, widespread poverty and hyperinflation. This economic instability created a fertile ground for radical ideologies promising restoration and stability.

"Fascism is a religion. The Twentieth Century will be known in history as the century of fascism"  
(Benito Mussolini)

## 2. Treaty of Versailles and National Humiliation:

The harsh terms of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 which imposed severe reparations and territorial losses on Germany, fueled widespread resentment. This feeling of national humiliation made citizens susceptible to the fascist promise of restoring national pride and strength.

"We will never stop until we win back what we deserve!"  
(Adolf Hitler)

## 3. Fear of Communism:

The Bolshevik Revolution in Russia (1917) and the spread of socialist movements across Europe generated a strong fear of Communism among the upper and middle classes. Fascist parties capitalized on this fear, positioning themselves as protectors against the threat of socialist revolution.

#### 4. Weakness of Liberal Democracies:

Liberal democratic governments, struggling to manage the post-war crises, often appeared ineffective and weak. This instability and perceived ineffectiveness pushed citizens toward authoritarian figures who promised decisive action.

"The best argument against democracy is a five-minute conversation with the average voter."

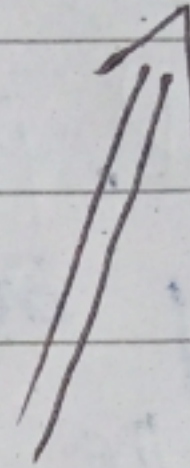
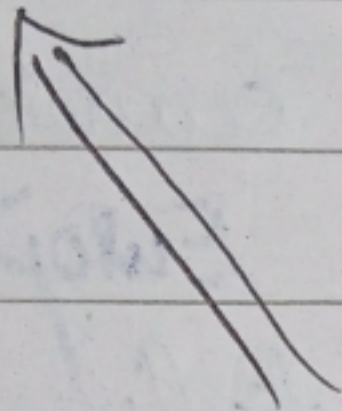
(Winston Churchill)

#### 5. Charismatic Leadership:

Fascist movements often gained momentum through charismatic leaders like Benito Mussolini in Italy and Adolf Hitler in Germany. These leaders used persuasive rhetoric, propaganda, and public appearances to rally support, promising both strong leadership and a revitalized national identity.

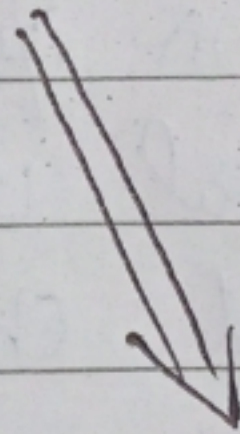
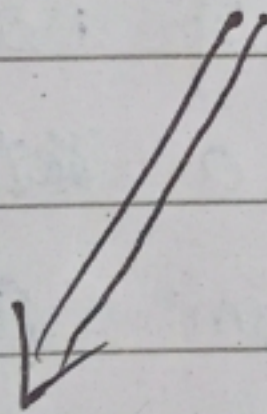
Authoritarianism

Nationalism



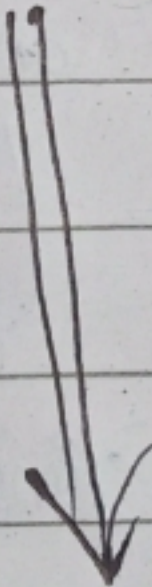
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Key Characteristics of Fascism



Militarism

Anti-Liberalism



Suppression of Opposition

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### III. Why Fascism is Considered the Child of Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Events?

The social, political and economic crises of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Europe, alongside the widespread disillusionment following World War I (1914-1918), provided the perfect environment for fascism to flourish. This ideology's appeal lay in its promises of national revival, social unity and a return to order amid chaos. Fascism's rise was a reactionary response to the volatile conditions of the time, making it a distinctly 20<sup>th</sup> century phenomenon deeply intertwined with the events that reshaped Europe in the wake of the Great War.

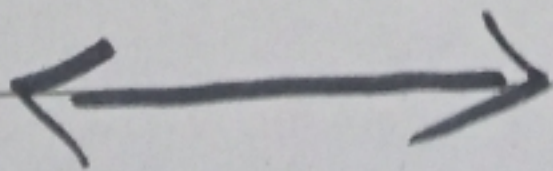
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## Conclusion:

Fascism's rise in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century reflected the anxieties, discontents and aspirations of societies grappling with unprecedented turmoil. By offering authoritarian answers to democratic failures and nationalist solutions to economic and social distress, fascism left an indelible mark on European history, leading to catastrophic consequences in world war II and shaping the future political landscape of the continent.



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