

Q: Critically examine relevance of fascism to contemporary politics with examples.

Explicating Fasism

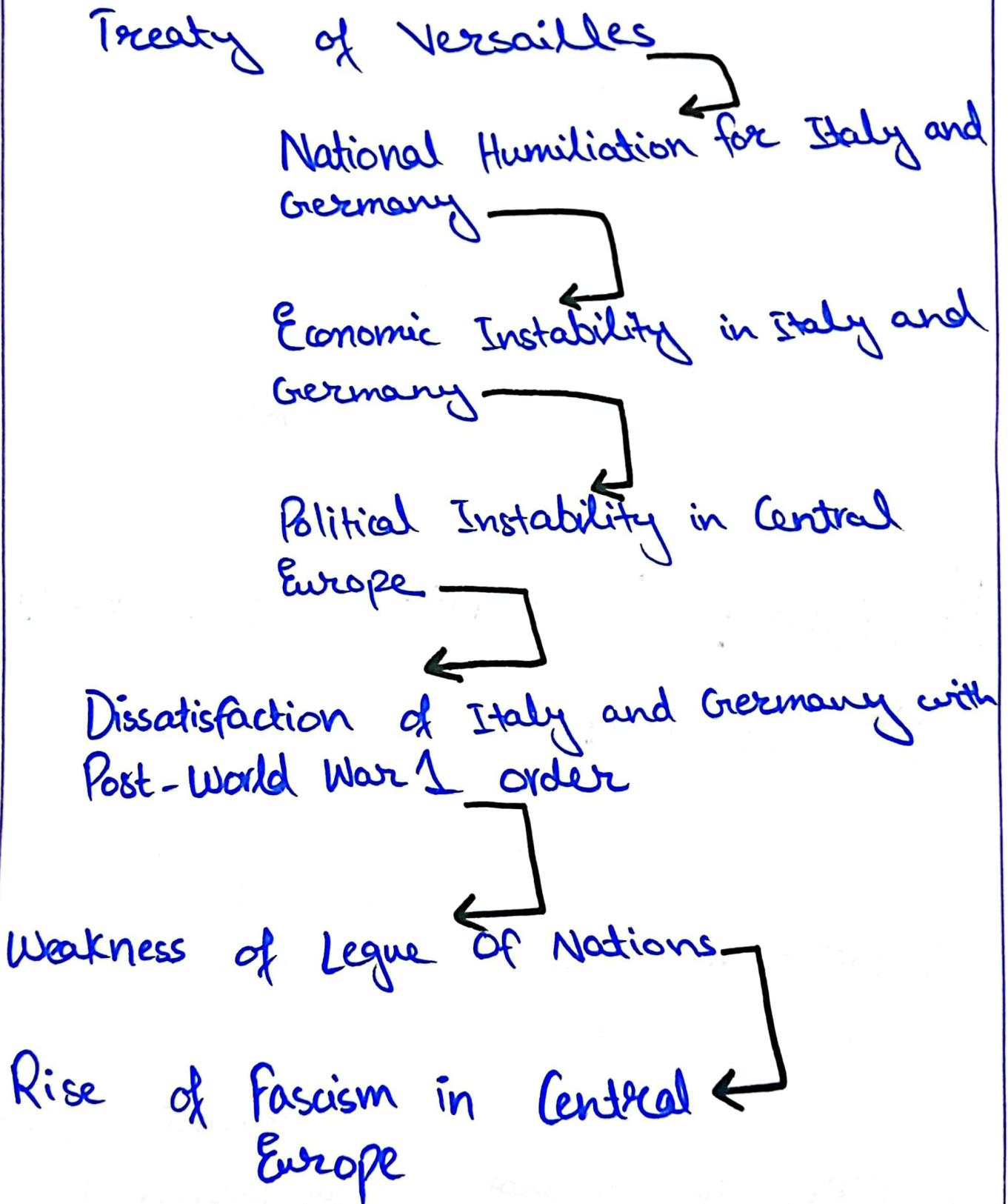
Fascism is a right wing political ideology that is characterized by totalitarianism, anti-democratic principles, extreme nationalism, state controlled capitalism, ^{pa} propaganda and control on media. It is a creation of early 20th century. The worst form of fascism was Nazism, practised in Germany by Hitler. Some of the principles of fascism are still reflected in contemporary politics.

1. Fascism : A Creation of Early 20th Century

Fascism came into being as a result of post world war 1 order established through Treaty of Versailles ^{signed} in 1919. The national humiliation, economic and political crises resulted from this treaty gave rise to Mussolini in Italy and Hitler in Germany who promoted

extreme nationalism and authoritarianism in Central Europe. In this way, fascism is a creation of early 20th century.

Figure:- Fascism: A Creation of Early 20th century



2. Principles of Fascism

Following are the principles of fascism.

- i- **Totalitarianism**: Fascism promoted a totalitarian state where a single leader would control all affairs of state. For instance, in Italy Mussolini controlled education, economy, media and culture. Individual freedom is strictly restricted under fascist rule.
- ii- **Extreme Nationalism**: A core tenet of fascism is extreme nationalism. The fascist leader promotes the belief among all members of state that all people belonging to same race, culture, territory must unify for expanding their territories. For instance, Mussolini promoted ^{a desire} among Italians to expand Italian territory for forming Great Italian empire through unification of all Italian speaking people.
- iii- **Propaganda and Control On Media**: Fascism is characterized by propaganda and control on media. The fascist party uses propaganda to shape public opinion and suppress political dissent. The government exercises supreme control over media. For

instance; in Germany, the Ministry of Propaganda, led by Joseph Goebbels controlled media for preventing any threat to extremist ideology of Hitler.

iv. State Controlled Capitalism: Fascism emphasizes on control of state on economy. It advocates for state intervention into market mechanisms. This ideology works on collaboration between state and big businesses. It recognizes the private ownership of means of production, while ensuring the alignment of these enterprises with state goals. For instance, in Germany and Italy both Hitler and Mussolini exercised control on economy.

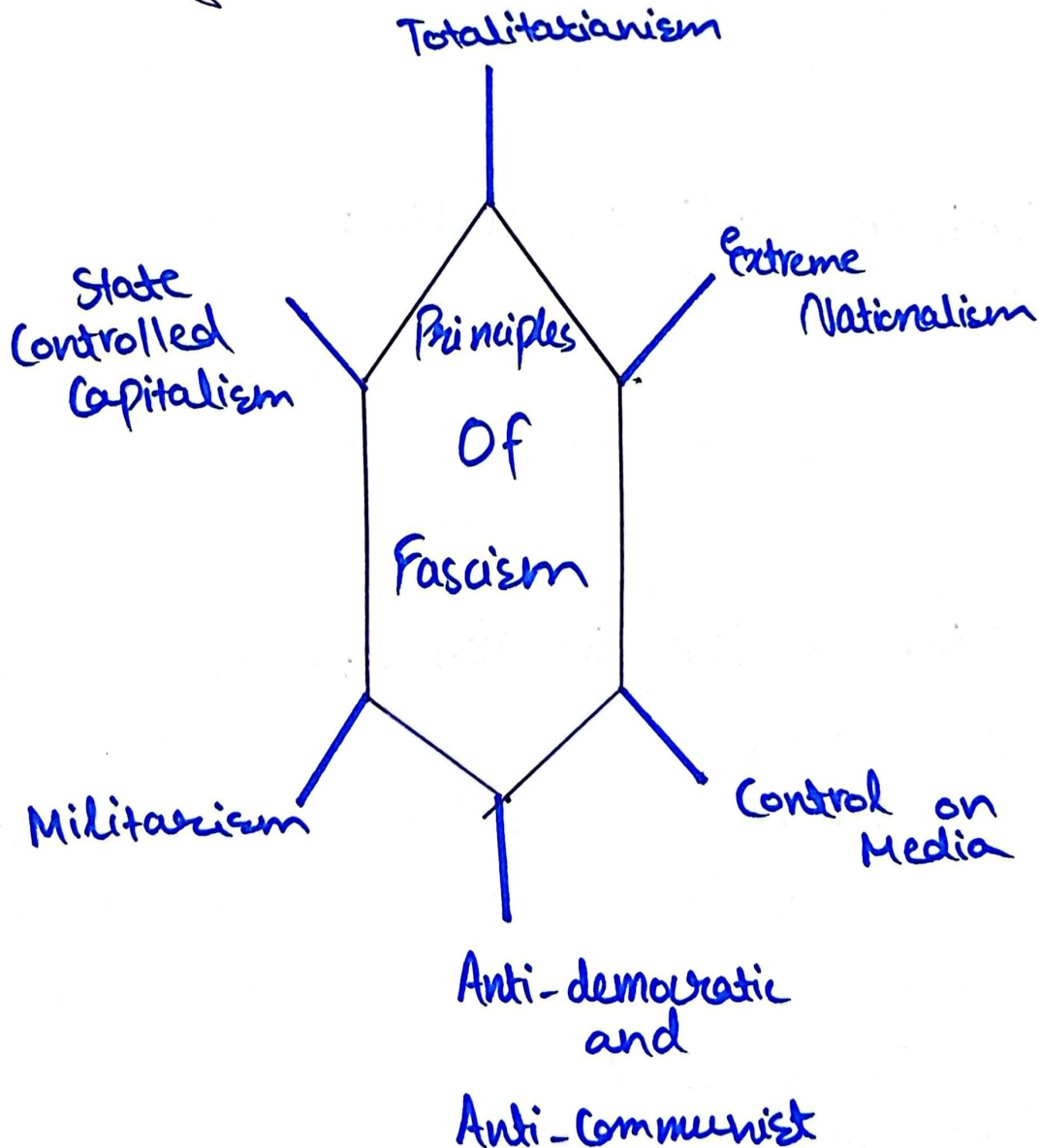
v. Militarism:

Fascism emphasizes on organizing state on military footing. It promotes military values among all the citizens of the state such as discipline, obedience and sacrifice. These principles are inculcated for ensuring prioritization of state over individual freedom. Fascism advocates for aggressive expansionist and military policies.

For instance, in Germany and Italy there was strong emphasis on military

Values under rule of Hitler and Mussolini respectively.

vi- **Anti-Democratic and Anti-Communist:** Fascism is anti-democratic and anti-communist. Fascism perceives democracy and socialism or communism a threat to dictatorship. For instance, in Italy fascism came into being as a result of fear of communism ignited by Treaty of Versailles. Mussolini presented himself as a bulwark against communism; this gave rise to fascism in Italy.



3. Contemporary Examples of Fascism

Following are the contemporary examples of fascism.

- i. **Viktor Orban in Hungary:** Viktor Orban in Hungary is often criticized as a fascist leader. He leads Fidesz Party which espouses nationalist rhetoric and implements policies that critics argue they undermine democracy.
- ii. **Narinder Modi in India:** Narinder Modi, who leads BJP in India, is also mocked as a fascist leader because he is promoting extreme Hindu nationalism & using Hindutva policy. This extreme nationalism is targeting minorities of India.
- iii. **Marine Le Pen in France:** Another contemporary example of fascism is Marine Le Pen's National Rally which is a far right wing party. This party promotes French nationalism, anti-immigration policies that critics argue they link the party to neo-fascism.

- iv. **Donald Trump in the United States:** Donald Trump in the United States is also marked as a fascist leader for controlling media, crushing political dissent and promoting anti-democratic policies.
- v. **Putin in Russia:** Putin, the current President of Russia, is also criticized as a fascist leader for his authoritarian policies, state controlled capitalism and expansionist policies.
- vi. **Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey:** Tayyip Erdogan is also criticized as a fascist leader for promoting Turkish nationalism, using media and propaganda for shaping public opinion.

4. Critical Analysis of Negative Outcomes of Fascism

Following are the negative outcomes which resulted as a repercussion of adopting fascist principles.

- i. **Deterioration of democratic Principles:** Fascism deteriorates democratic principles. For instance, in the US during rule of Donald Trump, he used state institutions for ^{pa} propaganda.

He politicized the Department of Justice for suppressing political opponents like Hillary Clinton which is strictly anti-democratic (Bithi) (The Guardian, Politicization of Department of Justice, Dec 2020).

ii- Increased Dependency on Personality Cults:

Fascism causes increased dependency on personality cults. For instance, in Pakistan the most prominent and popular leader of 2023 was accused of fascism. The increased dependency on his personality cult led toward chaotic events of 9th May²⁰²³ (BBC, Personality Cults in Pakistan, July 2023).

iii- Ethnic Tensions in the State: Fascism

causes ethnic tensions. For instance, in Pakistan many political leaders of KP ^{during 2024} are accused of fascism who are promoting extreme nationalism in KP. This has led toward ethnic conflicts in which there ^{were} ~~are~~ approximately 343 casualties and more than 227 injured (Iribane, ethnic conflicts in KP, Sept 2024).

Conclusion

Fascism is an extreme ideology that promotes extreme nationalism, dictatorship, lack of freedom of speech and anti-democratic principles. All the states, where fascist principles are still reflected, have been suffering from ethnic tensions, dictatorship and suppression of media and ^{political} dissent.