

■ Totalitarian State System

- Totalitarianism is a system in which a minority group imposed its hegemony on the majority on the basis of coercive power. In one sense the basis of a totalitarian state was prepared in 19th century itself. In fact its technological basis was prepared by industrial revolution (modern transport & communication) and its ideological basis by ideologies like nationalism and socialism (dictatorship of the proletariat).
- We can underline two different models of Totalitarian States
 - i. Rightist model
 - ii. Leftist model

- Rightist model was being exemplified by Fascism and Nazism while the leftist one by soviet Russia under Stalin.

■ Fascism:

- Fascism is an established ideology, which gradually evolved from 19th century. Ideologically, it was inspired by social Darwinism as well as Freudian psychology. As we know, social Darwinism justified and idealized the conflict, likewise, Freud's psychoanalysis put a question mark to rationalism and reasoning and talks in terms of the subconscious mind and its impact on human behavior. In this way, the importance of faith in place of reasoning was promoted.
- Fascism was not any consistent philosophy rather it was a mixture of Hegelian idealism, social Darwinism, anti-intellectualism etc.
- **Characteristics of Fascism—** Fascism was having different manifestations in

different parts of the world, but still they were having some common points or certain points of similarity, such as –

1. The glorification of the power of the state.
2. The glorification of leadership and the promotion of the cult of hero-worship.
3. To promote status-quo in society and to give emphasis over customs and traditions to follow aggressive foreign policy.
4. To oppose democratic ideas like liberalism, socialism & communism.
5. To use all official machinery as well as almost all socio-cultural venues to promote this ideology.
6. To make use of mob psychology.
7. To promote class collaboration and to discourage class conflict.

■ Factors behind the rise of fascism in Europe:

1. Ideologies like social Darwinism and Freud's psychology pleaded for the primacy for an individual in society.
2. The basis of fascist ideas was prepared by the Treaty of St. Germain as well as the Treaty of Versailles which had been concluded under Paris peace conference.
3. The World Economic Depression in 1929-30 appeared to be a crisis in the capitalist model, so capitalism tried to save itself from aggressive communism through taking a formidable face.
4. The reaction of defeated soldiers to regain its lost glory e.g. General Ludendorff and General Hindenburg.
5. Fear among the capitalists and the landlords due to the increasing influence of socialism.

■ Fascism in Italy and Mussolini:

- The Fascist party which was originally known as Fascio Combattimento was formed at Milan in Italy in 1919. A 'bundle of sticks' was made the symbol of the Fascist party. Under the influence of Hegelian idealism, Mussolini glorified state power and made a declaration that "everything is within the state nothing is outside the state and nothing is against the state".

■ Factors behind the success of Mussolini and Fascist Party-

- The success of Mussolini in Italian Politics lay in his opportunist policy and organisational skill. He made a successful combine between the parliamentary politics and politics of the street.

1. He followed a thorough opportunist policy and gave false promises to the different social classes in Italy. Infact, earlier Mussolini was a socialist thinker and he was quite opposed to nationalism. But very soon same Mussolini made another declaration in 1922 but it was against Socialism. He declared—'I am starting a war against Socialism & Communism'. It amply proves that he was basically an opportunist.

- Apart from that, he gave, although true or false, some promises to every class. He satisfied the ultra-nationalists by giving them the promise that he would surely undo the wrong done to Italy in the treaty of St. Germain. Likewise he gave the promise of employment generation to intellectuals, youths & students. To the industrialist class, he made a promise of giving it safety against workers' strikes. Likewise he even gave promise to working class to make it free from the fear of lock outs. Furthermore, for the members of

the middle class there was a promise for maintaining better law & order situation.

2. When fascist party under Mussolini progressed, both liberal party and communist party could not form a joint front against it. The liberal party made this point clear that we can't fight one dictatorship in favour of another one. So it was also a factor behind the success of Fascist party in Italy.

3. In the elections of 1921 his party bagged 35 seats but fascist party did not still get majority number of seats, so it was not in a position to form its government. Thus Mussolini adopted an alternative method to get the power. He started to suppress the communists and the radical groups in Italy. Then in association with 50,000 black-shirted volunteers of Fascist party, he carried a famous march towards Rome, the capital of Italy. So Italian monarch, Victor Emmanuel III, came under the pressure and invited Mussolini to join the government. In this way Mussolini became the Prime Minister of Italy.

■ The regimentation of power by Mussolini in Italy:

1. After coming to power Mussolini played the cards of democratic politics for a short while then he started to regiment all the powers into his own hand. For example, he became the head of the army, judicial system and the education.
2. Then he dismissed Municipal Corporation from towns and cities and in their place he started to appoint an officer named "Podesta" in smaller towns while in big towns & cities commissioners were appointed. These officers were made responsible directly to the centre.
3. From 1926 onwards, he tried to put a check on the political parties. He

destroyed almost the whole election process. Above all in 1928, he made severe attack on the last vestige of democracy when he brought a legislation in which there was a provision that the members of the legislative assembly could be elected only from the 400 names shortlisted by the fascist General assembly.

4. He brought the changes in the educational curriculum whose objective was to glorify fascist ideals and Mussolini.
5. With the support of a secret police organization, Ovra, he eliminated his enemies. In this way, he proved that the guns and the educational curriculum would manufacture the complete fascist government.
6. When the World Economic Depression threatened the capitalist system and promoted class conflict in society, Mussolini tried to give a reply to it through a corporate state system. With the support of this system, Mussolini could bring the whole economy under the strict control of the state. The idea of corporatism was not new. The basic intention behind this system was to replace the old sectional interests such as Trade Unions and Employer's organisations which so often produced conflicts between labour and capital.
7. In order to generate fresh employment, he organised a public works department (PWD) and secondly he made an invasion on Ethiopia. For completing this mission, he inducted nearly 3 lakh youths into the army. In this way he encouraged the war-push employment.
8. In order to consolidate his position in Italy, he improved his relationship with Pope of Rome. Right from 1870, when Italy had captured Rome the relationship between

Vatican City and Italy got strained so Pope refused to recognise this Italy as a nation. But here Mussolini developed a new understanding with Pope and on the basis of Lateral agreement Pope gave recognition to Italy.

■ **Foreign Policy of Mussolini:**

• **Objectives:**

1. The foreign policy of Mussolini was inspired by following ideas that unification of Italy was still an unfinished agenda, so, Italy should make fresh extension in Balkan region.
2. Apart from that, his objective was to make an expansion in the region of Africa as well.
3. Furthermore, as he was against the treaty of St. Germain, so, one of his objectives was to break the clauses of the treaty of St. Germain.
4. Above all, he followed a thorough aggressive policy as he was convinced over the fact that after all Italian unification had become possible due to the aggressive policy adopted by Italy.

• **Mussolini's Initiatives—** He started to breach the provisions of Treaty of St. Germain in following manner-

- a. In Paris Peace Conference, Italy was not offered 'Fiume Port' as it was a disputed region between Italy and Yugoslavia. This region was declared to be independent. But in 1924, by concluding a Treaty with Yugoslavia, Italy captured Fiume Port.
- b. Similarly, Italy had demanded its patronage over Albania in Paris Peace Conference but Allied power had refused it. Later, on the basis of Treaty of Trianon (1927), Italy got the patronage over Albania.

- c. Mussolini invaded Corfu region in Greece and captured it. Although, under British pressure he had to vacate the region, however he got 5 crore Lira as compensation.
- Earlier there was a rivalry between Italy and France in Africa, the Mediterranean and the Balkan regions, but after the rise of Hitler, France and Italy came near to

each other and there was the conclusion of the Lothal-Mussolini Pact in 1933. But after the invasion of Ethiopia in October 1935, Mussolini was isolated. Infact, the League of Nations declared him aggressive and imposed economic sanctions on him. Then he decided to come near to Hitler. So, ultimately this phenomenon led to the formation of the Rome-Berlin axis.



■ Nazism in Germany:

• Factors behind the rise of Nazism—

1. According to some critics, the rise of Nazism was inherent in German history itself. Infact, Germany was having a long tradition of militarism. Germans always favoured a strong leadership.
2. The treaty of Versailles, in which Germany was humiliated, created a favourable situation for the rise of Nazism.
3. World economic depression also made a contribution to the rise of Hitler or the Nazi party. Infact, having been scared

about growing influence of communism both the German Junkar Class (Zamindar) and the German capitalist class strengthened the hand of Hitler or the Nazi party.

■ Factors behind the rise of Hitler:

- There was a ‘German Nationalist Workers Socialist Party’ popularly known as the ‘Nazi Party’. Hitler joined it and became its leader by 1921.
1. Hitler was an excellent demagogue. After his rise as the head of the Nazi party in 1921, Hitler started a propaganda

- campaign in favour of its party's program and consciously promoted a sense of hatred among common Germans against Jews, Jesuits as well as the Communist.
2. Like Mussolini, Hitler also gave promises to different social groups, for example, the capitalist class, the workers, the youth and unemployed, the ultra German nationalist etc.
 3. Initially, like Mussolini, he also tried to capture the power by dint of force but after the failure of Munich coup, he changed his strategy. Then he decided to seize the power through following the democratic means. But once coming to power, he started to destroy the stairs through which he himself had come to power.
 4. In spite of the best of his efforts, he could not get desired success, so, he realized that Nazi ideals would have been spread to the rural areas as well. That's why in between 1924 and 1928, he worked for creating a

base even in the countryside.

- But still in the elections of 1928 Hitler was running short of the expected number of seats. In fact, it was the world economic recession of 1929-30 which proved a game-changer as Hitler's popularity shot up during the time of this economic crisis. That's why in the elections of 1932, Nazi party emerged to be the largest party and German president Hindenburg invited him to take charge of the post of Chancellor (or P.M.). So in January, 1933 Hitler became the Chancellor of Germany.

■ Regimentation of power by Hitler:

1. After coming to power, in February, 1933 Hitler invoked Article-48 of the Weimar Republic and declared a national emergency.
2. When president Hidenberg died in 1934, Hitler, on the basis of a referendum, combined both the post of Chancellor and President into a single one and occupied the post.



3. In June 1934, He carried a purge within the party. Under this operation, he eliminated radical socialist members within the party. This incident is known as “Night of the Long Knives”. After that, he also carried the purge within the army and provided some important posts to his supporters.
4. In order to put control over the strikes, he created a working-class front and through this front, he brought the working-class under his control.
5. He continued to give some subsidies to peasants as in Nazi conception the greater value is allocated to blood & soil.
6. With the support of his secret police, Gestapo, he eliminated his enemies.
7. He brought changes in the educational curriculum and encouraged the scholars and artists to glorify the Nazi party and Hitler.
8. On the front of employment, he got unparalleled success, as he unconsciously adopted the Keynesian method for promoting employment by the state through increasing state spending.
9. Hitler and the Nazi party adopted a harsh method for women. They prescribed only Kinder (kids), Kirch (Church), Kuch (kitchen) to women.
10. Above all, he adopted a very harsh approach to Jews on the basis of Nuremberg law. Jews were deprived of their citizenship and from 1938 onwards, riots started against them.
- **Foreign Policy of Hitler:**
- **Objectives:-**
 - 1. The first objective of Hitler's foreign policy was to break the unjust clauses of the treaty of Versailles.
 - 2. His foreign policy was guided even by racism. For example, in his text “The secret book”, he mentioned that Germans were the pure Aryans so they deserve to possess a larger chunk of the land they had been allocated in Europe. On the other hand, Slavs (Russia) belonged to an inferior race but they had possessed a larger chunk of land than they deserved. So, the Slav population should have been dispossessed from the extra possession.
 - 3. Hitler gave emphasis to the policy of Lebensraum i.e. expansion in east up to the Ural mountain.
 - 4. Hitler differed from the policy of neo-Bismarckian. Neo-Bismarckians believed that Germany had a definite boundary but according to Hitler German boundary was beyond limit. In other words, Hitler's approach was continental.
- **Different stages of Hitler's foreign policy:**
- We can divide the foreign policy of Hitler in different stages, on the basis of its specific trends–
 - **First Stage (1933-36)-** In this stage the objective of the foreign policy of Hitler was to break or contravene the provisions of the treaty of Versailles. But he was much calculative in his approach and he was trying to convince the allied powers simultaneously that he was not having any malafide intentions. For example–
 - 1. In April 1933 he formed German Security Council and started rearmament programme. Furthermore, in October 1933, Germany withdrew itself from disarmament commission of the League of Nations. But still he tried to convince European powers that he was still committed to peace and harmony in Europe.
 - 2. In 1934, Hitler concluded a no-aggression pact with Poland. So European powers

were more convinced about his good intentions.

3. Furthermore, in 1935, he became ready to limit German Navy in relation to Britain. In this way, he successfully dispelled British fear about Germany. But it was during this period that he sent German army to demilitarized region of Rhine in March 1936.

- **The Second Stage (1936-38)-**

1. In this stage the first target of Germany was Austria. In Austria there was German population but the treaty of Versailles made a restriction over the unification between Germany and Austria. Later, Hitler decided to annex Austria in German empire. In 1934 itself a Nazi party had already been formed in Austria and in 1938 with the support from Nazi party of Austria, Hitler annexed Austria. Now Austria became the part of Germany.
2. Then Hitler made a declaration that our next target is Sudetenland. Infact, it was a part of Czechoslovakia and three million Germans were settled there. At this declaration the allied powers got alarmed. They tried to resolve the problem through negotiation.

- Infact, the British Prime Minister Chamberlain was working under a wrong perception. He believed that it was the grieved nationalism of Germany that got ventilated to the foreign policy of Hitler. So, if Hitler & Nazi party were given the chance to ventilate their dissatisfaction and wrath then Germany could emerge to be a satisfied nation. Secondly, Britain & France both learnt a lesson from the First World War. The lesson was that in war both the parties are equally looser. So no nation could emerge victorious in true sense. That's why upto the last Britain &

France were trying continuously to avert the war. But the subsequent events proved that the policy of appeasement did not work in averting the war.

- For example, four important nations in Europe Germany, Italy, Britain and France gathered at Munich in September, 1938 and Munich pact was concluded between the two parties. It was the virtual sale out of Czechoslovakia to Germany. In other words, we can say Sudetenland was separated from Czechoslovakia and it was given to Germany. From his behalf Hitler tried to satisfy the allied powers on the basis of the assurance that it was his last territorial claim in Europe.

- **The Last Stage (After 1938)-**

- In March 1939 Hitler almost captured whole of Czechoslovakia. Such step by Hitler exposed true character of Nazism while throwing light on following factors
 - Firstly, it was not the grieved nationalism of Germany but rather it was German imperialism. Secondly, the target of Hitler was not simply German population in Europe but any other race. Thirdly, it became clear that the policy of appeasement was not the actual solution to the problem.

- Now it was supposed that next target of Hitler was Poland. That's why Britain and France gave a guarantee of the safeguard to Poland but it was prevailing notions that 'a strong guarantee a day keeps Hitler away'. But on 1st September, 1939 German army entered into Poland. On 3rd September Britain and France declared war against Hitler. So, the Second World War started.

- **Which was responsible for war?**

- One important question is that who was responsible for the Second World War?

Definitely Hitler played a major role in it as he followed a very aggressive foreign policy. From the very beginning, he was inclined to break the provisions of the treaty of Versailles. His desire was insatiable. He continued from one demand to another till it resulted into an open conflict. So, Hitler was definitely responsible, but we cannot even make the allied powers free from the responsibility. In this war as initially they followed a policy of appeasement till Munich but on the issue of Poland they adopted an excessive tough posture, so Hitler was caught unawares. War might have possibly been avoided by greater firmness or greater conciliation.



■ Origin of the Second World War

- Two World wars should not be treated as a separate phenomenon but rather they should have been viewed in continuation. According to Eric Hobsbawm, it was a war of 31 years which had ended on 15th August 1945. A number of factors were accountable for those wars.

1. **Treaty of Versailles**— It was a dictated treaty. After this treaty Germany was humiliated so much so that it could never digest it. Grieved nationalism of Germany

promoted aggressive nationalism which personified itself in Hitler.

2. Lack of cooperation between Britain and France in implementation of treaty—

Although treaty of Versailles is a factor behind the Second World War, but we can't ignore the fact that there was a gap of nearly 20 years. It shows that some other factors also made a contribution to it. While Britain and France cooperated with each other in deciding tough terms of the treaty, but they did not exhibit the same level of cooperation in the implementation of the treaty. It emboldened Nazi government to work against the clauses of the treaty.

3. **World Economic Depression**— Economic depression of 1929-30 gave a serious jolt to liberal and democratic party while it strengthened the position ultra-right wing party like Fascism and Nazism. In spite of all odds, Weimar Republic of Germany was any how managing the situation while severe economic crisis caused by depression made its failure inevitable, it was after this depression that Hitler got larger audience and followers. So, it is aptly remarked that if there were no economic depression Hitler might have been lost in the pages of history.

4. **Ultra-right wing politics**— Aggressive foreign policy and war are inherent in right wing politics. The popularity of such party depended over its aggressive posture on foreign front. Mussolini and Hitler assured their audiences to alter the existing boundary of the nation.

5. **Failure of League of Nations**— League of Nations came into existence with the promise of establishing collective peace. But it proved a toothless organization which persistently failed to check

aggressive policy of recalcitrant countries. Manchurian crisis and Ethiopian crisis put a question mark to its peace-keeping ability.

6. Formation of Rome-Berlin-Tokyo axis-

After Abyssinian crisis, Mussolini came near to Hitler so there was the formation of Rome-Berlin axis in 1936. Then even Japan joined it so developed Rome-Berlin-Tokyo axis. It was the polarization of three big evil forces which proved a big challenge to world order.

Ques: - To what extent can Germany be held responsibility for causing two world wars? Discuss critically. (UPSC- 2015)

Ans: - Germany has been projected as harbinger of world wars and William Kaiser as well as Hitler are believed to be the main protagonists of the First World War and the Second World War respectively. After the First World War in the treaty of Versailles war guilt was placed on the head of Germany on the basis of the article 231 of the treaty. On the other hand Second World War was declared to be Hitler's war while allied powers were presented merely as victims of the situation. But the situation before the world wars was so complex that it is not possible to draw a line of demarcation between the guilty and the innocent.

Behind the First World War Germany was definitely accountable as it gave to Austria unconditional support on the issue of Serbia. In this way German ruler, William Kaiser, brought Europe on the brink of war. But even other European powers made their contribution to it. Russia through giving open support to Serbia and France further added fuel to the fire. On the other hand Britain did not make any serious effort to avert the war.

Even during the Second World War, more or less same condition is visible. It is true that

Hitler started unrestricted expansion by challenging the European order. He combined naked militarism, diplomacy and opportunism all together and left no opportunity to annex the new region. But even allied powers should not be made free from their accountability. They did not follow a balanced policy towards Hitler. Up to the Munich issue they followed a policy of undiluted appeasement while suddenly on the issue of Poland they declared war against Germany. So, even Hitler was caught unawares.

In this way for world wars a single person or a single country can't be held responsible.

Question: State the causes for the emergence of Fascism. (UPSC-2013)

Answer: Fascism was a right-wing ultra-nationalist ideology, which was not systematic and consistent. There was a mixture of different and contradictions ideas, for example, anti-intellectualism, Hegel's idealism, radical nationalism, opportunism, anti-socialist, anti-democratic rule etc. The conditions after the First World War had prepared fertile ground for the emergence of Fascism in Europe.

After the World War I, Italy was dissatisfied with the Treaty of Saint Germain at the Paris Peace Conference, while Germany felt a national humiliation by the Treaty of Versailles. Naturally, the most extreme manifestations of fascism were seen in Italy and Germany. Class interest was also joined with the spirit of ultra-nationalism with the rise of fascism. As we know, the Russian Revolution took place in the middle of the First World War and with it the world's first communist government was established. It created a grave challenge to the capitalist countries. Above all, after the economic recession of 1929-30, the socialist ideology

spread rapidly. Due to this, the bourgeoisie spread in different regions of Europe became frightened and they started supporting political party inspired by right wing and radical nationalist ideas. In Italy, Mussolini had the support of the capitalists and landlords. Similarly, the German Junker class (landlord class) and the capitalist class started supporting Hitler's ideology. Although the Fascist government was established apparently in only three countries, namely Italy, Germany and Spain, but it made its presence in 16 of the 28 countries of Europe. Now as far as the ideological basis of Fascism is concerned, we can say that source of its inspiration were thinkers of the 19th century like Nietzsche and Freud. While Nietzsche attacked rationalism, Freud emphasized the importance of the subconscious mind. Naturally the importance of 'faith' increased. Fascism also rejected rationalism and made 'faith' its basis. Fascism was thus a product of complex circumstances.

Question: For the Second World War, as much as Hitler's aggressive policy was responsible so was the policy of appeasement of the Allies. Examine it.

(**Question-Analysis:-** This question is 'Hypothetical' in its external form, but 'Argumentative' in the internal structure. In the first part of this question, Hitler's aggressive foreign policy has to be discussed, while in the second part the mistakes committed by the Allies.)

Answer: Hitler is considered to have played a major role in the occurrence of World War II. It is called Hitler's war, but on the other hand some strategic blunders of the Allies made it inevitable.

Hitler adopted aggressive policy one after the other-

- He openly violated the Treaty of Versailles by sending German army to the Rhine region in 1936.
- He annexed Austria in 1938.
- Hitler annexed whole of Czechoslovakia even after getting German territory, Sudetenland, from Czechoslovakia in the Treaty of Munich in September, 1938.
- At last, he invaded Poland and created a situation of war.

But on the other hand there was a lack of balance in the policy of the Allies. Initially, Britain and France adopted a soft policy towards Hitler. Till the Treaty of Munich, they kept trying to appease him, but on the issue of Poland they started open conflict. Hitler probably did not think to that extent.

Therefore, we cannot make the allied powers free from the responsibility of the war.

Question:- The First World War was not a war of four years, but of 31 years which started in July, 1914 and ended in August, 1945. Examine it.

(**Question-Analysis:-** This question appears to be a 'Hypothetical' in its expression, but it expects critical thinking from the candidate. Hence, in practice it becomes 'Argumentative'.)

Answer: A group of historians does not consider the two world wars as a separate phenomenon rather considers it as a total war and views it in continuity. The First World War created more issues than that of it resolved, which led to the Second World War. Therefore, it is considered to be just a truce of 20 years.

This can be proved as follows-

- The enmity between Germany and France had been an important cause for the First World War, but after this war the enmity increased further due to the harsh

- punishment given to Germany in Paris Peace Conference.
- Wilson's 14-Point Programme had claimed to end the tension by giving self-determination rights to the minority groups of Central and Eastern Europe, but instead of solving the problem, the formation of the new nations increased it even more.
 - The League of Nations, an international organization, was established for the purpose of collective peace as well as to suppress ultra-nationalism, but it itself became a victim of ultra-nationalism. Thus, the First World War proved to be a war of 31 years.

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