

Totalitarianism: c. 1920-1940

Definition: government controls all aspects of the lives of the people.

Use space below for notes

I. Totalitarianism

A. Totalitarianism vs. conservative authoritarianism: a contrast

1. **Conservative authoritarianism:** traditional form of anti-democratic government in Europe (**absolutism**)

a. e.g., Louis XIV, Peter the Great, Frederick the Great, Catherine the Great, Metternich

b. Regimes sought to prevent major changes from undermining the existing social order

- Most people went about their lives and were more concerned with local affairs that directly affected them rather than national affairs

c. Popular participation in government was forbidden or severely limited

- This is a stark contrast to 20th century totalitarianism where people were expected to *participate* in the system and actively support the regime

- Stalin's 5-Year Plans in Russia
- Hitler Youth in Germany

d. Limited in power and in objectives (usually sought the status quo)

- Lacked modern technology and communications and could not control many aspects of their subjects' lives.
- Usually limited demands to taxes, army recruits, and passive acceptance of the regime

e. Conservative authoritarianism revived after WWI, especially in less-developed eastern Europe and in Spain and Portugal

- Only Czechoslovakia remained democratic.

f. Great Depression in the 1930s ended various levels of democracy in Austria, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Estonia, and Latvia

2. **Totalitarianism**

- a. New technology made this possible: radio, automobile, telephone
 - Governments could wiretap telephone lines to spy on suspected dissenters.
 - Improved communication enabled regimes to coordinate quickly with local officials
 - Radio was a new tool used for propaganda (in addition to the traditional printed media)
 - Automobiles and trucks gave regimes increased mobility
 - b. Tools of totalitarianism: censorship, indoctrination, terror
 - Virtually no freedom of the press; the press became an organ of the government
 - Education was geared to creating loyal citizens of the state while demonizing potential enemies
 - Failure to support or comply with government policy often resulted in physical punishment, imprisonment or death
- B. Totalitarian regimes were either fascist or communist (see table below)
1. Communist in Russia (Soviet Union)
 2. Fascist in Italy and Germany

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| FASCISM | COMMUNISM* |
|--|---|
| Glorification of the state | World wide "dictatorship of the proletariat" (classless society) |
| Single party; single ruler (dictator) | One party (communist) under the control of the Politburo. Dictatorship is not the final goal. |
| Condemns democracy: rival parties destroy unity. Man is unable to successfully govern collectively. | Condemns capitalism for exploiting workers ("haves" vs. "have nots") |
| Supports the idea of capitalism & owning of private property so long as it serves the needs of the state | Government controls all means of production (industrial & agricultural). No private ownership. |
| Corporate State: captains of industry become state economic deputies | Economy is centralized under the communist party |
| Aggressive nationalism | Spread of communism for the benefit of the world's working class (Comintern) |
| Advocates Social Darwinism (powerful states control weaker ones) | Condemns imperialism: advocates a world without nationalism with the workers united |
| Believes desire for peace shows weakness of gov't | Peace is the ultimate goal |
| Glorification of war (military sacrifice is glorified) | Violent revolution to bring about the "dictatorship of the proletariat." War is not the end but merely the means. |
| Emphasizes the inequalities among humans | Emphasizes the perfectibility of society. Mankind is basically good. |

Use space below for notes:

* While Marxist views may appear more benevolent and utopian in theory, 20th century communism in reality became as brutal a system as fascism, perhaps more so considering the massive deaths in the USSR at the hands of the government

II. Soviet Union (USSR)

A. Under **Vladimir I. Lenin**

1. **Marxist-Leninist** philosophy

- a. Theory of imperialism: imperialism is the highest form of capitalism as the search for new markets and raw materials feeds the bourgeois hunger for more profits
 - Conquered peoples are ruthlessly exploited
- b. "New type of party": cadre of educated professional revolutionaries to serve development of political class consciousness & guidance of the "Dictatorship of Proletariat"
 - Lenin's view stood in stark contrast to Marx who did not envision a totalitarian dictatorship from above (by elites) but rather from below (by the workers)
- c. Like Marx, Lenin sought a world-wide communist movement
 - 1919, **Comintern** created (Third Communists International)
 - Was to serve as the preliminary step of the International Republic of Soviets towards the world wide victory of Communism

2. **War Communism**

- a. Purpose was to win the Russian Civil War (1918-1920)
- b. First mass communist society in world history
- c. Socialization (nationalization) of all means of production & central planning of the economy
- d. In reality, the Bolsheviks destroyed the economy: mass starvation from crop failures, decrease in industrial output
- e. Secret police (**Cheka**) liquidated about 250,000 opponents

3. **Kronstadt Rebellion** (1921)

- a. Mutiny by previously pro-Bolshevik sailors in March at Kronstadt naval base had to be crushed with machine gun fire.
- b. Caused by the economic disaster and social upheaval of the Russian Civil War.
- c. Major cause for Lenin instituting the NEP

4. **NEP – New Economic Policy, 1921-28**
 - a. Sought to eliminate harsh aspects of War Communism
 - b. Lenin's response to peasant revolts, military mutiny, and economic ruin
 - c. Some Capitalist measures allowed (Lenin: "necessary step backwards")
 - Gov't would not seize surplus grain; peasants could sell grain on the open market
 - Small manufacturers allowed to run their own businesses
 - d. Gov't was still in control of heavy industry, banks and railroads.
 - e. Results of the NEP: the Russian economy improved
 - Industry and agricultural output back to pre-WWI levels
 - Workers shorter hours/better conditions
 - Temporary relaxing of terror and censorship
5. Lenin's impact on Russian society
 - a. "Russia" renamed to **Soviet Union** in 1922 (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics – **USSR**)
 - b. Old social structure abolished – titles for nobility ended
 - c. Loss of influence for the Greek Orthodox Church
 - d. Women gained equality (in theory)
 - e. Russians had greater expectation of freedom than they had during the Czar's regime (although expectations were later crushed by Stalin)
- B. A power struggle ensued after Lenin's death in 1924
 1. Lenin left no chosen successor
 2. **Joseph Stalin** was more a realist and believed in "**Socialism in one Country**"
 - f. First, Russia had to be strong internally and should defer efforts for an international communist revolution
 - g. Sought establishment of a Socialist economy without the aid of the West
 3. **Leon Trotsky** was more the Marxist ideologue and believed in "permanent revolution"—a continuation of a world communist revolution
 - Party leaders believed Trotsky was too idealistic; Russia first had to survive

4. Stalin gained effective control in 1927 and had total control by 1929
 - Trotsky was exiled and eventually assassinated by Stalin's agents in Mexico City (1940)

C. **Soviet Union under Stalin**

1. Entire Politburo from Lenin's time was eventually purged leaving Stalin in absolute control.
2. **The 5-year plans**
 - a. **"Revolution from above"** (1st Five-Year Plan), 1928; marked the end of Lenin's NEP
 - b. Objectives:
 - Increase industrial output by 250%; steel by 300%; agriculture by 150%
 - 20% of peasants were scheduled to give up their private plots and join collective farms
 - "We are 50 or 100 years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this distance in 10 years. Either we do it or we shall go under."
 - c. Results:
 - Steel up 400% (USSR now 2nd largest steel producer in Europe)
 - Oil production up 300%
 - Massive urbanization: 25 million people moved to cities
 - Yet, quality of goods was substandard and the standard of living did not rise
3. **Collectivization** was the greatest of all costs under the Five-year Plans
 - a. Purpose: bring peasantry under absolute control of the communist state
 - Use of machines in farm production, to free more people to work in industry
 - Gov't control over production
 - Extend socialism to countryside
 - b. Resulted in consolidation of individual peasant farms into large, state-controlled enterprises.
 - c. Farmers were paid according to the amount of work they did
 - A portion of their harvest was taken by the gov't
 - Eventually, the state was assured of grain for urban workers who were more important politically to Stalin than the peasants.
 - Collective farmers first had to meet grain quotas before feeding themselves.

- d. Results:
 - Significantly opposed by farmers as it placed them in a bound situation (like the *mirs*).
 - **Kulaks**, wealthiest peasants, offered greatest resistance to collectivization
 - Stalin ordered party workers to "liquidate them as a class."
 - 10 million peasants died due to collectivization (7 million in forced starvation in Ukraine)
 - Agricultural output no greater than in 1913
 - By 1933, 60% of peasant families were on collective farms; 93% by 1938
4. Structure of gov't
 - a. **Central Committee** was the apex of Soviet power (about 70 people in 1930s)
 - b. **Politburo**: About a dozen members; dominated discussions of policy and personnel
 - c. **General Secretary**: highest position of power; created by Stalin
5. Stalin's propaganda campaign
 - a. Purpose: glorify work to the Soviet people and encourage worker productivity
 - b. Used technology for propaganda
 - Newspapers like *Pravda* ("The Truth"), films, and radio broadcasts emphasized socialist achievements and capitalist plots.
 - Sergei Eisenstein (1898-1914): quintessential patriotic filmmaker under Stalin
 - Writers & artists expected to glorify Stalin and the state; their work was closely monitored
 - c. Religion was persecuted: Stalin hoped to turn churches into "museums of atheism"
6. Benefits for workers:
 - a. Old-age pensions, free medical services, free education, and day-care centers for children
 - b. Education was key to improving one's position: specialized skills and technical education.
 - c. Many Russians saw themselves building the world's first socialist society while capitalism crumbled during the Great Depression
 - USSR attracted many disillusioned Westerners to communism in the 1930s.

7. Women
 - a. The Russian Revolution immediately proclaimed complete equality of rights for women
 - b. In 1920s divorce and abortion made easily available
 - c. Women were urged by the state to work outside the home and liberate themselves sexually.
 - Many women worked as professionals and in universities.
 - Women still expected to do household chores in off hours as Soviet men considered home and children women's responsibility.
 - Men continued to monopolize the best jobs.
 - Rapid change and economic hardship led to many broken families.

8. **The "Great Terror"** (1934-38)
 - a. First directed against peasants after 1929, terror was used increasingly on leading Communists, powerful administrators, and ordinary people, often for no apparent reason.
 - b. The "Great Terror" resulted in 8 million arrests
 - c. **Show trials** were used to eradicate "enemies of the people" (usually ex-party members)
 - d. Late 1930s, dozens of **Old Bolsheviks** (had been Lenin's closest followers) were tried and executed
 - e. **Purges:** 40,000 army officers were expelled or liquidated (weakened USSR in WWII)
 - f. Millions of citizens were killed, died in **gulags** (forced labor camps), or simply disappeared

III. **Fascist Italy**

- A. Causes for the rise of fascism in Italy
 1. In the early 20th century, Italy was a liberal state with civil rights and a constitutional monarchy.
 2. Versailles Treaty (1919): Italian nationalists were angry that Italy did not receive any Austrian or Ottoman territory, (*Italia Irredenta*) or Germany's African colonies as promised.
 - Prime minister Vittorio Orlando angrily left the Paris Peace Conference before it was completed
 3. Depression in 1919 caused nationwide strikes and class tension
 4. Wealthy classes fearful of communist revolution looked to a strong anti-communist leader
 5. By 1921 revolutionary socialists, conservatives and property owners were all opposed to liberal parliamentary government.

6. Fascism in Italy eventually was a combination of conservative authoritarianism and modern totalitarianism (although not as extreme as Russia or Germany)
- B. **Benito Mussolini** (1883-1945) rises to power ("**Il Duce**")
1. Although he was the editor of a socialist newspaper, he was, at heart, a nationalist.
 2. Organized the **Fascist party**
 - a. Combined socialism and nationalism: territorial expansion, benefits for workers, and land reform for peasants.
 - b. Party was named after *fasces*: the rods carried by Imperial Roman officials as symbols of power.
 - c. Initially, his party failed to prevail because of competition from the well-organized Socialists.
 3. 1920, Mussolini gained support of the conservative classes and frightened middle class for anti-Socialist rhetoric; abandoned his socialist programs.
 4. **Blackshirts** (*squadristi*): Paramilitary forces attacked Communists, Socialists, and other enemies of the fascist program (later, Hitler's "Brown Shirts" followed this example)
 5. **March on Rome**, October 1922: led to Mussolini taking power
 - a. Mussolini demanded resignation of existing gov't and his own appointment by the king.
 - b. Large group of Fascists marched on Rome to threaten the king to accept Mussolini's demands.
 - c. Government collapsed; Mussolini received right to organize a new cabinet (government).
 - d. King Victor Emmanuel III gave him dictatorial powers for 1 year to end nation's social unrest.
- C. **Corporate State (syndicalist-corporate system)** was the economic basis for Italian fascism.
1. **"Everything in the state, nothing outside the state, nothing against the state."**
 2. By 1928, all independent labor unions were organized into government-controlled syndicates
 - a. Established organizations of workers and employers; outlawed strikes and walkouts.
 - b. Created corporations which coordinated activities between worker-employer syndicates.
 - c. Authority from the top, unlike socialist corporate states where workers made decisions.

- D. Mussolini created a dictatorship
1. Right to vote was severely limited.
 2. All candidates for the Italian parliament were selected by the Fascist party.
 3. Gov't ruled by decree.
 4. Dedicated fascists put in control of schools.
 5. Gov't sought to regulate leisure time of the people.
 - Fascist youth movement (*Balilla*)
 - Labor unions
 - The *Dopolavoro* ("After Work"): social activities for the working class
 6. Italy never truly became a totalitarian regime
 - a. Mussolini never became all-powerful
 - b. Failed in attempt to "Fascistize" Italian society by controlling leisure time
 - c. Old power structure of conservatives, military, and church remained intact.
 - Mussolini never attempted to purge conservative classes.
 - He propagandized and controlled labor but left big business to regulate itself.
 - No land reform occurred
 - d. Did not establish ruthless police state (only 23 political prisoners executed between 1926-1944)
 - e. Racial laws not passed until 1938 and savage persecution of Jews did not occur until late in WWII when Italy was under German Nazi control.
 7. Women
 - a. Unlike Russia's more modern approach to gender issues, Italy's social structure emphasized a traditional role for women
 - This also became the case in Nazi Germany
 - b. Divorce was abolished and women told to stay home and procreate.
 - c. In an attempt to promote marriage, Mussolini decreed a special tax on bachelors in 1934.
 - d. By 1938, women were limited by law to a maximum of 10% of better-paying jobs in industry & gov't

E. Accomplishments under Mussolini

1. Internal improvements made such as electrification and road building.
2. More efficient government at the municipal (city) level.
3. Suppression of the Mafia (which was especially strong in southern Italy and Sicily)
4. Improvement of the justice system (except for "enemies of the state")
5. **Lateran Pact, 1929, resulted in reconciliation with the papacy**
 - a. **Vatican** recognized as a tiny independent state; received \$92 mil for seized church lands
 - b. **In return, Pope Pius XII recognized legitimacy of the Italian state.**

F. Fascist legacy

1. Italian democracy destroyed
2. Terrorism became a state policy.
3. Poor industrial growth due to militarism and colonialism.
4. Disastrous wars resulted (from attempt to recapture imperialistic glories of Ancient Rome).

IV. **Nazi Germany**

A. Roots of Nazism: Extreme nationalism + racism = Nazism

1. Hyper-nationalism fed the impulse to conquer other nations
 - The alleged "stab in the back"—the Weimar Republic's signing of the Versailles Treaty—fed the nation's frustration
2. Racist ideas
 - a. Racial superiority of the **Aryan Race**—Germanic peoples
 - b. Inferiority of Jews and Slavs

B. Rise of **Adolf Hitler**

1. Became leader of **National Socialist German Workers Party (NAZI)** after WWI
 - Tiny group of only 7 members that grew dramatically within just a few years
2. **S.A. ("Brown Shirts")**: Nazi paramilitary group that terrorized political opponents on the streets.
 - In effect, the private army of the Nazis and very loyal to Hitler

3. **Beer Hall Putsch, 1923:** Hitler failed in his attempt to overthrow the state of Bavaria (and ultimately, Germany) and was sentenced to a 1-year jail term
 - a. The issue gave Hitler national attention
 - b. Hitler realized in the future he'd have to take control of Germany legally, not through revolution

4. **Mein Kampf** (1923) written while in jail: became the blueprint for Hitler's future plans
 - a. **Lebensraum** ("living space"): Germans should expand east, remove the Jews and turn the Slavs into slave labor
 - b. **Anti-Semitism:** Hitler blamed the Jews for Germany's political and economic problems
 - c. **Leader-dictator, Führer,** would have unlimited arbitrary power

5. **Fall of Weimar Republic was a result of the Great Depression**
 - a. Unemployment reached 43% by end of 1932
 - b. **Economic chaos and political impotence played into Hitler's hands**
 - Hitler began promising German voters economic, political, and military salvation.
 - Hitler promised big business leaders he would restore the economy by breaking Germany's strong labor movement and reducing workers' wages if necessary.
 - Hitler assured top army leaders that the Nazis would reject the Versailles Treaty and rearm Germany.
 - Nazis also appealed to the German youth:
 - 40% of party under age 30 in 1931; 67% under 40
 - c. 1930, Chancellor gained permission from President Hindenburg for emergency rule by decree
 - Struggle between Social Democrats & Communists contributed to the breakdown of the Weimar gov't.
 - d. The Nazis won the largest percentage of votes in the Reichstag in 1933 elections (though not a majority)
 - Demanded that Hitler play a leadership role in the government
 - e. **Hitler became Chancellor on January 30, 1933; appointed by President Paul von Hindenburg.**

- C. The **Third Reich** (1933-1945)
1. Hitler quickly consolidated power
 - a. **Reichstag fire** occurred during violent electoral campaign in 1933
 - Incident used by the Nazis to crack down on the communists
 - b. The S.A. stepped up its terrorism of political opponents
 - c. **Enabling Act** (March 1933) passed by Reichstag
 - Gave Hitler absolute dictatorial power for four years
 - Only the Nazi party was legal
 - d. Hitler outlawed strikes and abolished independent labor unions.
 - e. Publishers, universities, and writers brought into line
 - Democratic, socialist, and Jewish literature put on blacklists.
 - Students and professors burned forbidden books in public squares.
 - Modern art and architecture were prohibited (dubbed "degenerate art" by the Nazis)
 2. **Joseph Goebbles**: minister of propaganda effectively glorified Hitler and the Nazi state
 - **Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*** (a documentary of the Nuremberg rally of 1934) was used by the regime as propaganda to make Hitler look larger than life and glorify the Nazi regime.
 3. **"Night of Long Knives"** (June 1934)
 - a. Hitler was warned that the army and big business were suspicious of the **S.A.**
 - b. To please conservatives, Hitler's elite personal guard—the **S.S.**—arrested and shot without trial about 1,000 SA leaders and other political enemies.
 - c. The **S.S.** grew dramatically in influence as Hitler's private army and secret police
 - Led by **Heinrich Himmler**
 4. The S.S. joined with the political police, the **Gestapo**, to expand its network of special courts and concentration camps.

5. **Hitler Youth:** Nazis indoctrinated German youths with views of German racial superiority and Jews as the source of Germany's problems
 - a. Eventually, membership in the Hitler Youth effectively became mandatory
 - This is an example of how totalitarian regimes demanded *participation* by the masses (in contrast to 17th century absolutism where regimes merely sought obedience)
 - b. Children were encouraged to turn in their teachers or even their parents if they seemed disloyal to the Reich
 6. Persecution of Jews
 - a. By the end of 1934, most Jewish lawyers, doctors, professors, civil servants, and musicians had lost their jobs and the right to practice their professions.
 - b. **Nuremberg Laws** of 1935 deprived Jews of all rights of citizenship.
 - c. By 1938, 25% of German Jews had emigrated (many were the "cream of the crop")
 - d. **Kristallnacht** ("The Night of Broken Glass") -- 1938
 - Hitler ordered an attack on Jewish communities (using the assassination of a German diplomat in Paris by young Jewish boy as pretense)
 - Well-organized wave of violence destroyed homes, synagogues, and businesses.
 - Thousands of Jews were arrested and made to pay for the damage.
 - e. **Holocaust:** 6 million European Jews were eventually killed during WWII ("**Final Solution**") (See chapter 24)
 7. Other victims of Nazi persecution included Slavs, Gypsies, Jehovah's Witnesses, communists, homosexuals, mentally handicapped, and political opponents (totaled 6 million by 1945)
- D. German economic recovery
1. Major reason for Hitler's soaring popularity
 - Hitler delivered on his economic promise of "work and bread."
 2. Large public works program started to get Germany out of the depression.
 - Included superhighways (autobahn), offices, gigantic sports stadiums, and public housing.

3. 1936 Olympics were held in Berlin, signaling Germany's legitimacy by the international community
 4. 1936, Germany began rearmament and government spending began to focus on the military.
 5. Results of Nazi economic policies
 - a. Unemployment dropped from 6 million in January 1933, to about one million in late 1936.
 - b. By 1938, shortage of workers existed; women took many jobs earlier denied by antifeminist Nazis.
 - c. By 1938 standard of living for the average employed worker increased moderately.
 - d. Profits of business rose sharply.
- E. Nazi society: was there really a social revolution?
1. Well-educated classes held on to most of the advantages they possessed prior to the rise of Hitler
 2. Only a modest social leveling occurred.
 3. Like fascist Italy, women were viewed as housewives and mothers.
 - a. Hitler implored German women to "make babies for the Reich"
 - b. Women were denied most meaningful occupations outside the home
 - c. Only in wartime were large numbers of women mobilized for work in offices & factories.

Terms to Know

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| totalitarianism | "Black Shirts" |
| conservative authoritarianism | March on Rome |
| communism | corporate state |
| fascism | Lateran Pact |
| Vladimir Lenin | Vatican |
| Marxist-Leninist philosophy | Weimar Republic |
| Comintern | Nazism |
| war communism | Aryan race |
| Cheka | National Socialist German Workers Party (NAZI) |
| Kronstadt Rebellion | S.A. ("Brown Shirts") |
| New Economic Policy (NEP) | Beer Hall Putsch |
| USSR | <i>Mein Kampf</i> , 1923 |
| Joseph Stalin | "lebensraum" |
| "socialism in one country" | Führer |
| Leon Trotsky | Great Depression |
| Five-Year Plans | Third Reich |
| Collectivization | Reichstag fire |
| kulaks | Joseph Goebbels |
| Central Committee | Leni Riefenstahl, <i>Triumph of the Will</i> |
| Politburo | "Night of Long Knives" |
| General Secretary | S.S. |
| "Great Terror" | Heinrich Himmler |
| show trials | Gestapo |
| "Old Bolsheviks" | Hitler Youth |
| purges | Nuremberg Laws |
| gulag | Kristallnacht |
| Benito Mussolini, <i>Il Duce</i> | Holocaust, "Final Solution" |
| Fascist party | |

Essay Questions

Note: This sub-unit is a very-high probability area for the AP exam. In the past 10 years, 13 questions have come wholly or in part from the material in this chapter. Below are some practice questions that will help you study the topics that have appeared on previous exams or may appear on future exams.

1. Compare and contrast conservative authoritarianism in Fascist Italy with totalitarianism in the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany.
2. To what extent did Lenin and Stalin adhere to the ideas of Karl Marx in governing the USSR between 1918 and 1940?
3. Compare and contrast totalitarianism in the USSR and Nazi Germany.

4. Compare and contrast totalitarianism in the 1920s and 1930s with absolutism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.
5. To what extent did the rise of fascism in Italy and Germany constitute a social revolution in each of those two countries?
6. Analyze the extent to which women's roles changed in the USSR, Italy and Germany in the years 1917 to 1940.

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