

## **SINGLE-PARTY REGIMES**

### **I. The establishment and nature of single-party regimes.**

#### **1. Reasons for single-party regimes:**

i. **Modern power-seekers**, such as Mussolini in Italy, want to retain a façade of legitimacy and democracy in an age of legality and democracy. Such a façade is useful for gaining and retaining popular support.

ii. **Idealists**, such as Lenin, believe that their party alone can bring about the perfect or near-perfect society. It is felt that opposition to their party can only be by evil thinkers and enemies of the people and/or state.

iii. **An emergency**, which necessitates an end of democracy, perhaps temporarily. For example, Franco in Spain successfully united into one party many of the disparate elements, which, if left separate, would very likely have torn Spain apart.

iv. **A divided society** (linguistically; religiously; racially; socially - rich and poor, with many levels between), in which political parties follow the divisions of society and create such a large number of parties, whose members vote emotionally along partisan lines, that government becomes impossible because no single party can gain a majority. Should one group predominate numerically, then, paradoxically, a one-party system may be the only democratic possibility: this, as Julius Nyerere in Tanzania had emphasized, is especially true of Africa, where parties tended to be set up along tribal (clan) lines.

v. **The sudden, rapid transition to democracy**, which is a complicated system needing a considerable degree of political maturity. According to Erich Fromm in "Fear of Freedom", many Germans after 1918, suddenly being given democracy, felt at a loss, and in 1933 welcomed Hitler's "guided democracy", which left them with the façade of democracy while saving them the agony of deciding among a multiplicity of choices. The same is probably true of Mussolini's appeal in Italy, and possible even Stalin's in Russia. All three were in a sense "father figures",

assumed to have the interest of their "children" at heart, and to be in a position to know what was best.

**2. Single party rulers need not necessarily be or become dictatorial or tyrannical.** For example, Julius Nyerere, ruler of Tanzania from independence in 1961 until his semi-retirement in 1985, made TANU (the Tanganyika African National Union) the only legal party, but retained a democratic system, although there were inroads, such as imprisonment and punishment without trial. Jomo Kenyatta, ruler of Kenya from independence in 1963 until his death in 1978, likewise established a one-party state in 1969, with KANU (the Kenya African National Union) the only party allowed, but like Tanzania, Kenya remained basically democratic.

**Single-party rulers may start with the best of democratic intentions** but, as Lord Acton pointed out, "power tends to corrupt" and they become authoritarian, if not dictatorial.

**3. Most single-party regimes this century have been Fascist or Communist.**

II. **Some definitions**, (nb. the distinctions are now frequently blurred.)

1. **Dictator**. Originally a dictator was a Roman who had been given

absolute authority (that is, power that was not in theory limited in any way) for 6 months to cope with a specific problem or emergency. It has come to mean rule where government power is gained in a legal or constitutional way (or a semi-legal and semi-constitutional way) but is authoritarian or autocratic (see point 5 below), that is, is exercised without restraint by law or by an assembly. Technically a dictator is paternalist, ruling for some good purpose, real or imagined.

2. **Tyrant**. Originally this was a Greek absolute ruler, whose power was not derived legally or constitutionally. His rule could be either good or bad. The first known tyrant was Pheidon of Argos in the 7th century BC.

It has come to mean a ruler, or group of rulers, who have seized power, and who, in order to maintain and increase this power, exercise it arbitrarily beyond the scope permitted by the laws, standards and customs of the time and society. Tyrants generally feel insecure and unable to trust anyone, and so become increasingly autocratic. The distinction between tyrants and dictators is blurred, partly as tyrants often arrange a legal or constitutional cover-up for their seizure of power.

3. **Monarch**, from the Greek for "single ruler", is the general term for a king, queen, emperor, or empress. In early days, kings were elected absolute rulers, who could be voted out of office if they proved inadequate or someone better emerged. With time, monarch came to mean an absolute ruler (either good or bad), who gained power by inheritance; for example, all French kings from 987 until 1848, when France abolished the monarchy, were members of branches of the Capet family.

Until the late 17th century, monarchs were accepted as ruling by "Divine Right", that is, appointed by God, but the 1688 Glorious Revolution in England saw the development of the idea of an "unwritten contract" between the people and the king, who could be removed for misrule. Monarchs were generally

considered as having an obligation, often God-given, to give good government to the people.

Increasingly, the power of the monarchs was reduced by means of constitutions, and now "constitutional monarchs" have no power (although they have influence), and reign but do not rule. Admittedly, some monarchs are still not constitutional but absolute, for example, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia (1982- ).

It is possible for dictators and tyrants to assume the title of king and establish a dynasty.

4. **Despot.** This was the Greek word for "master" and was used for any ruler with absolute power, whether monarch, dictator or tyrant. "Despot" was used especially for Byzantine Emperors and 18th century European monarchs.

5. **Autocrat.** Another Greek word (meaning ruling by himself) to describe any ruler with absolute power.

III. **Dictatorships (and, to a lesser extent, tyrannies and monarchies) have sometimes been oligarchies** (the rule by the few, a group) and not individuals.

1. **Such oligarchies have tended to be military juntas** (for example, the Greek Colonels, 1967-74; the Turkish Generals 1960, 1970-73, 1980-83; the "Derge" in Ethiopia, led by Haile Mengistu, 1974-91; the Sandinistas in Nicaragua 1979-90, led by Daniel Ortega).

2. **However, there have been a number of civilian oligarchical dictatorships** (for example, the Committee of Public Safety in France 1793-94, led by Maximilian Robespierre, which in a sense was a War Cabinet; Politburos in Communist countries, such as the USSR and China; war cabinets, and governments of national emergency, such as the Coalition in Britain 1931-45, have dictatorial tendencies.)

3. **Group dictatorships are more likely in the 20th century, because of the increased complexity of government,** which makes one man unable to cope alone.

#### IV. 20th century single-party regimes and dictators.

1. **Single-party regimes and dictators have flourished in the 20th century, despite** the spread of democracy and the impossibility of one man coping with modern government on his own. Arthur Conte in "Les Dictateurs du XXe Siècle" (1984), calculated that of 169 states in the world, 131 were not democratic.

#### 2. **Modern dictators generally:-**

**assume a democratic façade** by establishing a single-party system, and use the fact that the masses, newly enfranchised, want "guided democracy", by a father-figure, because they have a "fear of freedom" (Erich Fromm). Such dictators may be widely popular, because they restore order, prosperity and glory.

**have more means to gain and increase power** (modern military equipment, police techniques, universal literacy, media control for propaganda), and to become totalitarian (see X below).

#### **"represent nothing but new wine in old bottles"**

(G. Hallgarten in "Devils or Saviours"). Modern dictators tend to have a political party (the only one allowed), comparable to the personal followers of past dictators. Modern dictators, like past ones, try to reduce or even replace the church/religion. However, modern dictators tend to rely more on propaganda and to have mass support; this is achieved very much by means of an ideology and a single party.

3. **The most widespread form of modern single-party dictatorship has been "Communism". Dictatorship is also frequent in countries that are newly independent from colonial powers** because: colonial power had been dictatorial; it is alleged that the problems faced are so great that the democratic process cannot possibly work; the new rulers lack experience; opposition to a party or leader responsible for independence seems unpatriotic.

**There were a number of Fascist dictatorships before 1945,** but Fascism was largely discredited by Hitler and Mussolini.

## **V. The acquisition of power.**

### **1. Illegal seizure of power by force.**

**By an army leader or leaders**, with or without bloodshed. This is more common in modern times, because of the existence of standing armies. December 1981, Jaruzelski in Poland became the first communist military dictator, until July 1983, when he lifted martial law.

**By civilian insurrection and revolution** (for example, Russia in November 1917) or by guerrilla forces (for example, Castro in Cuba 1959 and the Sandinistas in Nicaragua 1979). The chance of success is slim, and depends largely on help, especially from a catastrophe (for example, Russia 1917 and China 1949 were both at war, when the communists seized power). Success is more likely in a rural country.

**2. Legal/constitutional acquisition of power**, after which the position is strengthened (for example: Mussolini; Hitler; Salazar in Portugal; Eastern Europe after 1945, although the presence of Soviet troops was useful here). This method has been more common in Europe, and has been the means for civilians to become dictators.

**3. Power may be given, and even accepted reluctantly**, for example by Francisco Franco in Spain in 1936, by de Gaulle in France in 1958, by Julius Nyerere in Tanzania 1961-86, and by war cabinets (for example, in Britain in 1939)

**4. There is the tendency for dictators to try to increase their powers**, if only to remove "harmful" opposition. There is a tendency also for corruption to grow.

## VI. Reasons for:

### 1. Dictators/single-party regimes may result from:-

a desire for power.

a feeling of mission. (Robespierre, who wanted a Republic of Virtue; Lenin - Communism; Hitler - save Germany from humiliation, communism, Jews; Franco and Salazar - save their countries from disorder). Coercion and violence are likely; "During a revolution, the government must be based on virtue and terror. Virtue without terror spells defeat" (Robespierre).

### 2. Dictators/single-party regimes are very much the creation of circumstances:-

An emergency; a time of despair; widespread dissatisfaction, often the result of war; class conflict ("the two nations" - this has been a very widespread cause from Greek times; for example, Peisistratus in Athens 560-527, represented businessmen against landowners. From Sulla, Roman dictator 82-78 BC, through Napoleon to Franco, the "establishment" (that is, the leading class in a society) has generally welcomed dictators as a means to stability).

Bad government, as Alexis de Tocqueville (French historian, 1805-59) pointed out, cannot afford to be liberal and often becomes dictatorial.

The rise of the masses in the 20th century has helped the rise of single-party regimes and dictators. So also has the decline of religion and monarchy; this has left a vacuum to be filled.

**VII. There are two broad groups of dictators, the defenders of the status quo and the revolutionary reformers,** although the distinction is often blurred. Thus, Mussolini in some ways was revolutionary, for example in his efforts to establish a corporative state, although in general he wanted to preserve or restore old systems, and Lenin and Stalin, while revolutionaries, retained or restored Tsarist elements, such as the secret police, and indeed were often called "New Tsars".

Dictators often choose to rule through single-party systems. Sometimes, as in the case of Colonel Abdul Nasser in Egypt, the

creation of a one-party system is a genuine attempt to retain a democratic element during difficult times. However, more often than not the creation of a one-party system is, as in Mussolini's Italy, both a facade to disguise the lack of democracy and a means to facilitate the exercise of power.

1. **Classical, also called traditional, dictators, who are divided into conservatives and reactionaries**, although the dividing line between conservatism and reaction is unclear. These are defenders of the status quo against revolution, or the threat of revolution, against the upper or middle class and the established order; power-seekers (such as Mussolini) using the threat to the established order as a means to power; or straightforward power-seekers, who make no pretence of a cause or threat (for example, Idi Amin in Uganda 1971-1979).

### **Examples of conservative dictators:-**

Admiral Miklos Horthy ruled Hungary 1920-44, nominally as Regent in preparation for a Habsburg restoration.

Mussolini in Italy 1922-43. His Fascist Party was the only one allowed.

General Primo de Rivera exercised a personal dictatorship in Spain 1923-30 but had the support of King Alfonso XIII

General Francisco Franco, ruler of Spain 1939-75, who may possibly be classed as reactionary, allowed only the government's Falange Espanola Tradicionalista (FET) Party.

Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai Shek) in China (between 1925 and 1949 on the mainland and then between 1949 and 1973 in Taiwan) allowed only his Guomindang (GMD, or Kuomintang KMT, the Nationalist Party). (Possibly reactionary.)

Marshal Josef Pilsudski in Poland 1926-35 allowed parties, but ignored them.

King Alexander in Yugoslavia exercised a royal dictatorship 1929-34 through the National Party, the only party permitted.

King Carol in Romania 1930-31 allowed only the Front of National ReUnder Antonio Salazar 1932-68, and then Marcel Caetano 1968-1974, the government Uniao Nacional was the only party allowed in Portugal.

Adolf Hitler in Germany 1933-45. Only the NSDAP was allowed.

General Yanni (John) Metaxas 1936-41 and the Colonels 1967-74 ruled Greece.

General Sese Seko Mobutu seized power in Zaire in 1965 and ruled through the Mouvement Populaire pour la Revolution (MPR) Party, the only one allowed. (In April 1990, he promised to establish a multi-party system within a year, but failed to do so.)

General Thojib Suharto overthrew Achmed Sukarno and seized power in Indonesia 1965/6. He established an authoritarian system but opposition parties were allowed.

### **Examples of reactionary dictators:-**

**Possibly** and Jiang Jieshi in China, Salazar in Portugal, and Franco in Spain belong in this category.

#### **Africa.**

General Jean-Bedel Bokassa in the Central African Republic staged a military coup d'atat in 1966, making himself President and then

1976 Emperor. In 1979, the "Butcher of Bangui" (the capital) was overthrown in a bloodless coup.

Colonel Obiang Nguema staged a coup in Equatorial Guinea in 1968. "A modern Caligula" (World Council of Churches), in 1979 he was overthrown in a bloodless coup.

General Idi Amin seized power in Uganda in 1971. In 1979, he was overthrown by opponents supported by a Tanzanian invasion.

**America** ("the New Conquistadors").

General Fulgencio Batista in Cuba 1952-59.

General Alfredo Stroessner was President of Paraguay from 1954 until a coup overthrew him in February 1989. He ruled through the Colorado Party, although other parties were allowed.

Francois Duvalier (called "Papa Doc") in Haiti 1957-71. A medical doctor, he was elected President 1957 on a programme of popular reform, but came to rule by terror (through his Tonton Macoutes = bogeymen) and 1964 was declared president for life. His son, Jean-Claude ("Baby Doc") was overthrown in 1986.

General Augusto Pinochet in 1973 overthrew the democratically elected Marxist President Salvador Allende but agreed to elections in 1989 and retired from political office although he remained head of the armed forces.

**Asia.**

The Imam Ahmed, ruler of North Yemen from 1948 until the 1961 revolution, was considered by many to be the most reactionary ruler of the 20th century.

Ferdinand Marcos of the Nationalist Party and later the New Society Movement ruled the Philippines 1965-86, allowing a multi-party system and dominating by means of corruption and repression, including martial law. In 1973, he was declared President and Prime Minister without any time-limit.

The Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeiny, who dominated Iran from the 1979 revolution against Shah Mohammed Reza until his death in 1989. He was head of the (religious) Council of Guardians, which had the power to decide which parties should be permitted (the Islamic Republican Party was the main one) and to declare illegal unsuitable laws passed by the majlis (parliament).

**2. Revolutionary dictators.** These are also subdivided, into:- revolutionary, ultra-revolutionary and pseudo-revolutionary.

**Examples of revolutionary dictators:-**

General Mustapha Kemal "Ataturk", Turkish President 1923-1938, allowed only the government Republican People's Party.

Reza Khan Pahlavi led a military coup in Iran in 1921 and 1925 made himself Shah (Emperor) 1925-41. His son, Shah Mohammed Reza, who was forced into exile in 1979, allowed an opposition Mardom Party, but in 1975, the government Iran Novin Party (formerly the Melliyun Party) was the only one allowed.

Colonel Abdul Nasser in Egypt 1952/3 -70. The National Union was the only party permitted.

Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana 1957-66 allowed only his Convention People's Party.

Charles de Gaulle in France? In June 1958, he was given plenary powers for 6 months to cope with the emergency that the Algerian War of Independence had brought on. In December 1958, the new democratic constitution for the 5th Republic was in being.

Mohammed Ben Bella, ruler of Algeria after independence from France in 1962 until 1965, made the National Liberation Front (FLN) the only party. In July 1989, President Chadli Benjedid legalised opposition parties.

Colonel Muammar Qaddafi in Libya seized power from the King in 1969 and rules through an impotent Arab Socialist Union, the only legal party.

Hafez al-Assad seized power in Syria in 1970; no genuine opposition party is allowed to the Baath (Renaissance) Party.

President Saddam Hussein in Iraq seized power from his uncle in 1979 and rules by decree.

**Examples of ultra-revolutionary dictators:-**

Robespierre and the Jacobins in France 1793-94.

Lenin 1917-24 and Stalin 1927-53 ruled the USSR through the Communist Party.

Eastern European one-party Communist states; for example, Tito in Yugoslavia (1945-1980), Walter Ulbricht in East Germany 1945-1971, Todor Zhivkov in Bulgaria 1964-89, Nicolae Ceaucescu in Romania (1965-1989).

Mao Zedong 1949-76 in People's China permitted no opposition to his Chinese Communist Party.

Fidel Castro in Cuba 1959-?. The 26 July Movement, renamed the Cuban Communist Party in 1965, is the only party.

General Ne Win in 1962 seized power in Burma (renamed Myanmar 1989) and established a one party state ruled by the Burmese Socialist Programme Party (BSPP). In October 1986 General Saw Maung seized power and promised multiparty elections, although no date was given; September 1988, the BSPP approved multiparty elections, March 1989 an electoral law was published, and May 1989 elections were promised for May 1990, in preparation for which the BSPP was renamed the National Union Party.

### **Examples of pseudo-revolutionary dictators/regimes**

(those claiming to be revolutionary, at least initially, as a means to power):-

Colonel Juan Peron was elected President of Argentina in 1946. Parties other than the Peronista Party were allowed, but in 1946 the Chamber of Deputies gave him unlimited powers in the event of an emergency; he was helped by his wife Eva ("Evita") until her death in 1952. In 1955, a military coup forced him into exile. The elections in 1973 restored him to power, but he died the following year, and 1976, the military seized power from his widow Isabel (his third wife).

Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines 1965-86 is sometimes put in this group as he was elected president on a reform programme.

François "Papa Doc" Duvalier (President of Haiti 1957-71) also was first elected on a reform programme. (His son and successor Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" was overthrown in a military coup in 1986.)

## VIII. **General characteristics of dictators.**

1. **They tend to come from an unstable family background and to be social outsiders.** Mussolini's father was a drunken, argumentative blacksmith; Franco's father was a libertine who deserted his family; Stalin and Hitler came from unhappy backgrounds; Lenin generally had a happy childhood, but his father died early, and the family was ostracized when his brother was executed for involvement in a plot to assassinate the Tsar.
2. **They tend to be single-minded and determined/fanatical** rather than intellectually outstanding.
3. **They tend to deteriorate with time**, in line with Lord Acton's dictum: "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely". As they gain power in difficult times, there is an incentive to become tyrannical.
4. **They tend to want to extend their power**, and to make foreign conquests. Military dictators tend to be less warlike, as there is no need to pursue military glory, or control or preoccupy the armed forces, and no desire to squander the armed forces, on which their power depends.
5. **They tend to blame others for failure and claim credit for success.** Unlike monarchs, they feel the need to shine.
6. **They generally fail to arrange a successor**, instead eliminating possible successors as challengers to their power.
7. **While there were absolutist queens** (for example, Elizabeth I in England, 1558-1603; Catherine II, Empress of Russia 1762-96; the Chinese Dowager Empress, Ci xi (Tzu Hsi, 1875-1908) there have been no 20th century women dictators (except perhaps Isabel Peron, who ruled Argentina from the death of her husband Juan Peron in 1974 until 1976, when the military seized power).

## IX. **The ending of dictatorships/single-party regimes.**

1. **Dictators tend to be insecure in their power**, as is shown by the famous Greek story from the 5th century BC about Dionysius, Tyrant of Syracuse in Sicily, and the sword of Damocles. Aristotle, 384-322, noted that tyrants, in order to retain power, often impoverished the people, so that they were too poor to rebel, or kept them busy, for example building, fighting wars, or quarrelling among themselves. It has become harder in the 20th

century to overthrow a dictator as he controls government resources, including the armed forces and police.

2. **Often force has to be used and there is violence**, either bloody or bloodless. This is especially likely because, as no opposition is allowed, force is the only means to end the regime.

3. **The end comes as a result of:-**

i. **Another ambitious leader**, who becomes dictator.

ii. **Revolutionary movements**, which seize power after a guerrilla war (for example, Castro in Cuba 1959, the Sandinistas in Nicaragua 1979).

iii. **Popular demonstrations** after some catastrophe, causing the leaders to lose their nerve. For example: in 1974, the Greek Colonels surrendered power, following their abortive attempt to take over Cyprus, which the Turks had subsequently invaded; November 1983, General Galtieri in Argentina, following defeat in the Falklands War/Malvinas War against Britain, and economic disaster, arranged free democratic elections and surrendered power to Raul Alfonsin of the Radical Party; in 1986, President Marcos of the Philippines surrendered power to Mrs. Corazon Aquino after popular demonstrations and the defection of most of the military.

iv. **Foreign invasion**, possibly after causing or becoming involved in a war. (Hitler: Mussolini: Jiang Jieshi in Mainland China: in 1979, Idi Amin in Uganda was overthrown by opponents supported by the Tanzanian army.)

v. **Some (the "true dictator"?) surrender power once the emergency is over**. For example, the Turkish Generals, in power 1960, 1970-3, 1980-83. 1969 in Ghana, General Ankrah, who had overthrown Nkrumah in 1966, restored parliamentary government; then in 1979, Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings seized power from the military council (which had seized power 1972), but after three months held elections (the first since 1969) for a civilian government; admittedly, 1981, Rawlings again overthrew the government, accusing it of corruption and mismanagement and, this time, retained power. In 1979 in Nigeria, Lt. Gen. Obasanjo, who in 1976 had seized power from Brigadier Murtala, restored civilian government).

vi. **Some surrender power because of the immensity of the problems and their tiredness and failure in trying to cope**. For example, the Brazilian Generals, who in 1964 had seized

power, gradually 1981-84 surrendered power; the democratic rulers initially proved no more successful, and, according to Le Monde in 1987, Brazilians were worse off than they had been under the military.

vii. **The death of the dictator.**

4. **Results.** Chaos or a power struggle, or both, are general, as dictators designate only weak heirs, if they designate any at all, and have removed potential leaders, leaving only mediocrities.

## X. **Totalitarianism.**

1. **Examples of totalitarian states.** (These have been only Fascist or Communist.)

Fascist Italy (the term was first used by Mussolini 1925), Nazi Germany (Hitler always prefaced the word with "so-called", and preferred "authoritarian"), USSR (Soviet writers reject the application of the term to the USSR), People's China. Possibly the Inca civilization in Peru from the 13th to the 16th century, and Calvin's Geneva in the 16th century were totalitarian - but "the rule of law" survived in Geneva, and until this century, rulers lacked the means to be really totalitarian (see 3 below).

2. **The nature of totalitarian regimes.**

i. **Loosely, totalitarian means** "a total conception of life" (Giovanni Gentile), with the state striving to gain total control over the lives of its citizens.

ii. **The classic description** of totalitarianism was given by Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski in their 1956 book "Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy". They discerned 6 basic features, **"the 6 point syndrome"**:-

a. **A single mass party, typically led by one man** who dominates and generally despises - this was not true of Mao in China - the masses he leads. Leaders cannot be challenged, as they embody "the will of the people", and government is by a small elite. "The rule of law" does not apply.

b. **An official ideology**, modelled on and trying to replace religion (priests become party cadres; saints are found - Marx, Nietzsche, H.S. Chamberlain, Rosenberg: a Promised Land is offered; hymns - Horst Wessel song for the Nazis, Giovinezza for the Italian Fascists and the International for the Marxists; church services and ceremonies - Nuremberg rallies in Nazi Germany, party congresses in communist countries; religious symbols - fasces, swastika, hammer and sickle). Fascist ideology was based on the "Laws of Nature", while Marxist ideology was based on the "Laws of History", both based on revelation, rather than reason.

c. **A monopoly of communications:** control of the press, radio, TV (once introduced), cinema, religion, unions, education, youth movements, professional bodies, music, art.

d. **A terroristic police force and subjugation of the legal order** ("the law and the will of the Fôhrer are one").

e. **A centrally directed economy** (directly as in Communism and indirectly as in Fascism/Nazism).

f. **A monopoly of weeapons.**

**nb.** All 6 features have to be present.

iii. **To the "6 point syndrome", some historians would add:**

The goal of world domination, or at least territorial expansion.

A façade of mass democratic support.

Constant mobilization of the masses.

iv. **Leonard Schapiro** in "Totalitarianism" defined totalitarianism as a regime with a leader or leaders who: subjugate the legal order; base their legitimacy on mass support; continuously mobilize the masses; control private morality; all to be achieved by the "6 point syndrome".

### 3. **Factors.**

i. **Despite resemblances** to autocracies and despotisms of earlier times, totalitarianism was not possible before the 20th century and its technological improvements, the advent of "mass man", and religious decline.

ii. **Totalitarianism was made possible by** industrialization, urbanization, modern communications, modern civil services with up-to-date filing systems and bureaucratic organization, scientifically equipped police forces and armies, universal literacy and the ability of the government to reach every corner of the country.

iii. **Democracy in theory** brought power to the masses, but the masses, unlike the earlier oligarchs, are easily manipulated and tend not to reason things out. This manipulation was easier in countries where the masses were uneducated, newly enfranchised (for example, Russia, Germany, Italy) and inexperienced in democracy, which requires considerable political maturity. The masses, "fearing freedom" (Fromm) were only too often ready to accept "guided democracy" by a "father-figure", that is, a dictator keeping a façade of democracy. Furthermore, industrialization had

alienated man from society, and war (for example, the First World War and the Russian Civil War) had transformed society, making people uncertain, especially as the decline of religious belief made life meaningless for many. Totalitarian dictators offered certainty and purpose in life.

## XI. Fascism.

1. **Strictly speaking** "Fascism" is the term applied to the system gradually built up by Mussolini in Italy between 1922 and 1943, but the name is generally used to describe similar systems. Loosely (and wrongly), the term is applied to right-wing authoritarian regimes.

2. **Consequently**, there was great variety among the Fascist groups. Some, like the Spanish Falange led by Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera, were radical. Some, like Ferenc Szalasi's Arrow Cross in Hungary, insisted on gaining power legally. Some, like the Belgian, Dutch, Romanian and (in the early days) Italian parties, were not racist or anti-Semitic. There were considerable differences between Fascist parties in industrial countries (greater concentration on social reforms and more reliant on popular support) and those in agricultural countries (generally conservative, if not reactionary; and as there could be no private army of urban proletariat, generally hoping to gain power by conspiracy or co-operation with the government).

3. **Common features** (all of which must be present before the system is "Fascist").

i. **The desire in the midst of national weakness to rejuvenate the country and restore the greatness of earlier times** (for example, Dutch Fascists looked back to the late 16th and early 17th centuries, and the Spanish looked back to the 16th century) or, at least, to end the weakness. Dynamism was stressed and expansion expected: "For Fascism, the growth of an empire, that is to say, the expansion of the nation, is an essential manifestation of vitality, and its opposite a sign of decadence." "Peoples that are rising ... are always imperialist." (Mussolini)

ii. **The myth of the nation**, which is far more important than the individual. (Unlike Hitler, who believed in "race", Mussolini believed in "the nation", which could include a number of races.) Justice was the interest of the state, not of the individual.

iii. **Elitism, with no belief in democracy or equality.** The elite were headed by a leader (Duce, Führer, Caudillo, Conducator), who had been called upon to save the country, and who was regarded as having superhuman power and was venerated like a saint. Leaders tended to be of humble origin, but they generally despised the masses. A democratic façade was retained for an authoritarian system operating through a political party, the only one allowed, but the leader was above the law (or rather, was the law). They were strongly opposed to communism, which (in theory) was egalitarian, internationally minded, and in theory based on reason.

iv. **An appeal to the emotions rather than to reason.** "Believe, obey, fight" (one of the articles of the Fascist constitution written by Mussolini).

v. **An appeal to all social groups, and an attempt to unite the nation** (which was divided into rich and poor) in the "corporate state" (or "corporative"), in which elections and governments were based on economic function and not on geography. Thus the poor were offered work and reform, and the rich were offered order; all were offered national greatness.

It is debatable whether some form of corporate government system is necessary. If an attempt to unite the classes suffices, then Nazism (which, for example, ordered all people in factories, including the bosses - called "leaders" - to wear the same style of clothing, and to use the same cafeteria) can be classed as Fascist.

vi. **Glorification of violence and action** ("Fascism ... believes neither in the possibility ... nor the utility of perpetual peace." Mussolini), and the organization of para-military organizations (black uniforms in Italy, brown in Hungary, green in Flanders, blue in Ireland and Portugal).

#### 4. **Factors.**

i. **Fascism was contradictory.** It proclaimed revolutionary changes ("the revolutionary right"), but adopted rituals exuding nostalgia for the past. It proclaimed its nationalism and yet claimed to be an international system capable of replacing Western liberalism and Eastern Communism.

ii. **Fascism had pre-1918 antecedents** (for example, Charles Maurras's Action Française in France, established in 1898) and drew on 19th century thinkers for inspiration and justification, **but it was basically the result of the First World War**, although the expansion of democracy and the decline of religious belief helped to bring it about.

The First World War brought much disillusionment and dissatisfaction (above all, economically and nationally), economic crisis, and a "front generation" used to violence (and not to work?) as a means to settle disputes; individuals in the war had been sacrificed for the war effort, and the government had assumed control of life in general; and so it was necessary, or only natural, or both, to continue in these directions once peace had returned. The newly enfranchised were often easily beguiled by demagogic "men of the people" like Mussolini, who seemed to offer solutions, which religion and the governments of the day seemed unable to provide. Admittedly, urban workers tended not to vote Fascist, which had its following mainly in rural areas and among the middle classes.

iii. **Fascist acquisition of power was nevertheless the result of:-**

a. the (chance?) existence of weak, changing, and often corrupt governments after 1918, which had shown themselves incapable of solving the great problems.

b. help from sections of the ruling group (Victor Emmanuel-Mussolini; von Papen-Hitler).

iv. **Fascists drew on the work of philosophers** (who would have been appalled by Fascism):-

Georg Hegel, 1770-1831, for the attack on liberalism and the exaltation of the state.

Arthur Schopenhauer, 1788-1860, for the stress on emotion.  
Georges Sorel, 1847-1922, for the idea of a myth to rouse the emotions of the masses, the justification of force and violence, and the first outline of the corporate state.  
Herbert Spencer, 1820-1903, for the denial of equality. He advanced the idea of "social Darwinism", that is, the survival of the fittest. Joseph, Comte de Gobineau (1816-82), in his 1853 "Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races", advanced the idea of Aryan superiority. Friedrich Nietzsche (1814-1900) advanced the idea of a "Master-race". Houston Stewart Chamberlain (1855-1927), in "Foundations of the 19th Century", advanced racist, pan-German ideas.

v. **Mussolini adopted (without acknowledgement) many ideas from the poet Gabriele D'Annunzio**, who, September 1919, seized Fiume (and was driven out December 1920, by Italian forces). D'Annunzio used demobilized, black-shirted ex-soldiers as shock troops; built an alliance of nationalists, army veterans, dissident socialists, idealists, and adventurers; and sketched out the corporate state.

vi. **There was much admiration in Europe** for the early work of Mussolini and Hitler.

## 5. Fascist governments

i. **Mussolini's Italy** 1922-43/45.

ii. **Hitler's Germany 1933-45** (although there was no corporate system). **Areas under German rule:** Austria 1938-45 under Artur von Seyss-Inquart; Norway under Vidkun Quisling, 1940-45; Romania under Ion Antonescu, 1940-44; Croatia under Ante Pavelic, 1941-44; Hungary under Ferenc Szalasi, 1944-45.

iii. **Portugal under Antonio Salazar** 1932-68, and then 1968-74 under Caetano. In 1933, a new constitution (Estado Novo, the New State) established a "corporative republic", with a corporate chamber, elected every 4 years by the 12 corporations (called "economic guilds"), to advise the National Assembly, and the government, and to help in arranging elections. There was one party, the Uniao Nacional. Authoritarian control was enforced by the notorious secret police (PIDE - Internal Police of the Defence of the State). However, there was: no expansionist foreign policy; no mass party ("The Nation cannot be identified with a political party; a party is not the same as a state." Salazar), and Salazar was not a charismatic leader; the State was not all-powerful; "No one here would think of regarding the State as the source of morality and justice, without submitting its rules and decision to the decrees of a higher justice" (Salazar).

iv. **Spain under Francisco Franco** 1936/9-75. In 1942, Franco decreed the establishment of an advisory Cortes, including 150 representatives from the 22 "vertical syndicates" (trade unions) set up in 1938. His regime was certainly authoritarian and nationalist, but:-he had no belief in ruling through a party, although the Movimiento (the FET) was the one party allowed.

he was not a charismatic leader.

he did not try to expand (although he had expansionist goals) or glory in violence (although he was brutal).

v. **Austria 1934-38.** In 1934, Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss (assassinated by Nazis July 1934), a Christian Socialist, in view of the growing disorders, issued a new authoritarian constitution on Italian corporate lines. The Federal Diet was to be chosen from 4

advisory councils representing the state, cultural institutions, economic corporations, and the provinces; the councils were appointed not elected. But no one party dominated, not even Dollfuss's "Fatherland Front", a revamped Christian Socialist party, and there was no belief in unlimited power.

vi. **Greece.** The dictatorship of General Ioannis Metaxas (under King George II) 1936-41, is sometimes termed Fascist, as is the regime of the Colonels, 1967-74. But these (although in 1970 the Colonels established a consultative council, appointed by the country's mayors, major professional organizations and the Prime Minister, Papadopoulos) were authoritarian, not Fascist, regimes.

## **6. Most European countries had Fascist parties in the 1920s and 1930s.**

**Austria** - the Heimwehr, established in 1919; the Austrian Nazi Party.

**Belgium** - in 1931, Van Severen in Flanders began the Verbond van Dietsch Nationaal Solidaristen (the Dinassos): the Walloon Leon Degrelle in 1936 began the Rex Party (and collaborated with Nazis, escaping 1945 to Spain).

**Britain** - there were various groups, of which the most famous was Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists, formed in 1933 after he visited Italy.

**Finland** - in 1920 Viktori Kosola established the Lapua Movement (named after the village where, in 1929, a Communist meeting had been broken up).

**France** - Charles Maurras's Action Française 1898. and George Valois's Faisceau (Fasces) 1925.

**Hungary** - Ferenc Szalasi's Party of National Will, begun 1935, renamed 1937 as the Arrow Cross.

**Ireland** - Owen O'Duffy's Army Comrades' Association 1931, renamed the National Guard in 1933.

**Norway** - 1931 Vidkun Quisling established the Nordisk Folkereising.

**Poland** - Roman Dmowski's National Democratic Party, founded 1905.

**Portugal** - Antonio Salazar's Uniao Nacional founded in 1933.

**Romania** - Cornelius Codreanu in 1930 established the Garda de Fier (Iron Guard).

**Spain** - in 1931 Ramos and José Ortega began JONS (Junta de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista), and in 1933, José Primo de Rivera established the Falange Espanola (the Spanish Phalanx).

## X. **Communism.**

1. **Karl Marx** (1818-83) claimed, and his followers still believe, that he had proved that history showed how exploited workers in an industrial society would eventually, and spontaneously, rise up in a bloody revolution and take over the state. A socialist system, based on the principle of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs", would come about and the state would "wither away", with people arranging their own affairs and working for the good of the community (that is, anarchy). Marx considered it pointless to try to predict exactly what the eventual socialist state would be like, but he came to the conclusion eventually that there would be a transitional period of "socialism" until true "communism" was achieved. In the 1820s, when the words socialism and communism came into being, they were used interchangeably, to mean the replacement of the existing unfair social order, based on the interest of the individual, by a fairer social order, in which the interest of the community or society predominated.

2. **Marxist parties in the 19th century were usually called Social Democratic parties.** With time, most European Social Democratic Parties concluded that the changed political situation, especially the extension of the franchise, meant that the workers could gain power and a fairer social system without revolution, and with the government controlling the main (not all) means of production, exchange and distribution. Almost alone, Russian Marxists retained the old views, coming to be known as Bolsheviks and then from 1918 Communists (meaning aspiring towards Communism).

3. **Communists today are not strictly Marxists, as they believe in Marxism as modified by Lenin, Mao and others.** Instead of waiting for the spontaneous revolution, Leninists and Maoists try to seize power and impose socialism, by a temporary "dictatorship of (=by) the people". The dismantling of this self-confessed dictatorship showed no signs of coming about in "communist" countries until the sudden dramatic events of 1989, which meant the general collapse of Communism (but not necessarily the discrediting of Marxism). No progress was made to

the "withering away of the state", which, under Communism, had in fact increased in power.

**nb. Some differences between Communism and Fascism.**

Communism looks forward, is based (in theory) on reason and democracy, and is international. Fascism looks back in time, is based on emotion and inequality, and is nationalist.