

Q.1) What are the most striking features of fascist ideology? Why did fascism spread in Europe in the first half of the 20th century? Examine.

Introduction

Fascism is a political ideology that developed after World War I in Italy and Germany. It is characterized by strong nationalism, an extreme level of authoritarianism, corporatism, militarization and hostility towards both liberalism and Marxism.

Body

Features of fascist ideology:

- **Nationalism**- A strong feeling of patriotism to your state and its people. In fact, the nationalism of fascism is so strong that it often involves feelings of national and racial superiority over others. The darkest example of this is the Jewish Holocaust brought about by Nazi fascism during World War II.
- **Authoritarianism**- power concentrated in one small group of people or even one person. Citizens often are not permitted to form opposition parties, and free elections are often not held. Authoritarian leaders usually are not subject to the rule of law - the laws don't apply to them.
- **Militarism**- It involves the participation of military officers in the civilian government, foreign policy based on projection of power, military values and norms are persuasive within the society's culture and there is focus on war preparation in cultural, political and economic institutions.
- **Corporatism**- Government brings certain privileged business, labour and social groups into government to directly participate in policy formulation.
- **One party system**- There is a single party to decide the political, economic and social policies for a nation. Democracy has no role to play.
- **Autarchy**- Having economic independence as a national policy to eliminate unemployment and make country economically self-sufficient.
- **Anti-communist, anti-capitalist**- By its basic tenets, it strongly opposed communism and even capitalism.

The rise of fascism in Europe began during World War I in Italy, when Benito Mussolini and other radicals formed a political group (called a *fasci*) supporting the war against Germany and Austria-Hungary. Adolf Hitler in Germany, Benito Mussolini in Italy, Francisco Franco in Spain and Juan Perón in Argentina were well-known fascist leaders of the 20th century.

Rise and spread:

- **Discontentment with the peace treaties:** Italy joined the Allies in the First World War to gain territories of Turkey and Germany. But she received nothing from the Paris peace treaties. Germany suffered due to Treaty of Versailles.
- **Economic Crisis:** Italy suffered heavy losses in terms of life and property in the First World War. After the War, many soldiers became unemployed. Trade and commerce were ruined leading to large – scale unemployment. There was a shortage of food grains.
- **Political Instability:** Italy was governed by a series of coalition governments and there was no continuity in their policies. Governments were unable to deal with problems of unemployment, strikes and riots.
- **Class Conflicts:** The common man had been promised, during the war, that he would be rewarded greater attention to his economic needs, these promises were ignored and the common man was embittered. Thus, people wanted the control of the government to be in the hands of the common man.
- **Rise of middle class-** Rise of salaried middle class as the largest segment of the population, who felt unrepresented by traditional liberal parties and longed for a new way between organized big business and organized labor. Economic insecurity and cultural uneasiness with the feeling of decadence.
- **Threat of Socialism or Communism:** Inspired by Communism, the peasants took away the land from the landlords and workmen organized strikes and took hold of factories. The industrialists were worried about the strength of the labour unions and wanted a powerful government who could establish peace they therefore provided financial support for fascism.
- **Failure of the League of Nations:** The League of Nations proved to be weak and failed to check the rise of dictatorship.
- **Leadership:** Mussolini and Hitler had a charismatic personality. Their speeches praised the past glories of their respective nations and won the faith of their countrymen.

Conclusion

Several factors together worked towards the rise and spread of Fascism in Europe, which ultimately resulted in laying the foundation for World War II.

Q.2) What is 'Fabian Socialism'? What are its characteristics? Discuss.

Introduction:

Fabian socialism, founded in 1884, is a form of socialism that advances the principles of democratic framework to achieve gradual conversion to socialism rather than by revolutionary overthrow. This originated from the movement for the Utopian socialism.

Body:

The characteristics of Fabian socialism are:

- Fabian socialism is gradual in nature, a slow and steady process. There is no place for abruptness. The socialism proceeds step by step with people participation and extension of democratic rights.
- It feels the necessity of 'State' as an ultimate arbiter of all disputes. Though power shall be rested in the hands of the state, there shall be no opportunity to exercise it arbitrarily.
- It advocates nationalization of key industries in the economic structure of the society, but did not support management of entire economy by state.
- State has to improve the conditions and make way for socialism without curbing freedom.
- Control of state or parliament over the economy to stop development of aberration.
- It includes parliamentary processes like Universal Adult Franchise, periodic elections; enact laws by representatives etc. for the functioning of society.
- It is against complete revolution or armed struggle as it believes that it can ensure only temporary relief but in the long run may cause disastrous results.
- Permeation or privileged membership: This form of socialism was also exclusively membered by intellectuals or the higher class. They were believed to directly influence or actively ensure the spread of Fabians.
- Emphasis on the possibility of reasonable reconstruction of government and society on what they perceived as a scientific basis.

Famous Fabian socialists:

- George Bernard Shaw, Beatrice Webb, Sidney Webb, Annie Besant etc. The Britain Labor Party was believed to be completely Fabian in ideology.
- India: PM Jawaharlal Nehru was inspired by Fabian views and socialism. The Mahalanobis model, rationing and control of public choices were his ways of implementing Fabian thought.

Conclusion:

Working of the history of world economics and a look at the challenges for the future, the socialistic economics with Fabianism and a mix of capitalism seem to give an ideal economic fabric as a way ahead.

Q.3) Compare and contrast the history of socialism in Sweden with that of Venezuela.

Introduction:

Socialism is a political and economic theory of social organization which advocates that the means of production, distribution, and exchange should be owned or regulated by the community as a whole. It could have different effects on a different political and economic system based on its implementation

Body:

Both Sweden and Venezuela have Democratic socialism with major differences in their social, economic and political systems.

Aspects of Socialism	Sweden	Venezuela
Orientation	Democratic Socialism: This means that the production sector remained predominantly (90%) private but the government through regulation, taxes, price controls, and social programs determines what is produced and whom it goes to.	Marxist socialism: Advocates for more nationalization of resources and industries.
Historical Influence	More influence of the USA which is evident from a more privatized economy. Marshall plan and sponsorship of USA to Sweden after World War-II is also the reason for the same.	More influence of Russia and Cuba, which focuses more on nationalization of industries.

Free Market	Sweden is a comprehensive welfare state and collective bargaining at the national level with a high percentage of the workforce unionized while being based on the economic foundations of free market capitalism	Venezuela when in dictatorship had a free market but curbed the free market once it became democratic.
Source of Funding for Social Welfare	The weakness of Sweden's Social Welfare State is that a large share of people's income must be taken in taxes to pay for the social services the state provides.	Social services in Venezuela are funded by the revenue generated from the Petroleum industry and natural resources.
Area Of Expenditure	Expenditures of Sweden are more on capital investments, i.e. On infrastructures like schools and roads.	Whereas Venezuela's expenditure is mostly for direct welfare. Ex. PDS system is very strong in Venezuela which gives freebies to the masses.
Tax Rate	Tax rates in Sweden were high earlier but later in the 1990s reduced and the country experienced high economic growth.	Contrarily was with Venezuela where the Tax rate was low during the 1920s but then increased gradually.

The Same socialism which proved to be a tool of tremendous and remarkable growth in Sweden has failed miserably in Venezuela.

The success of Socialism in Sweden Caused:

- High rank on the Inequality-adjusted HDI
- High rank on Global Peace Index
- And placed Sweden in the top 10 on the World Happiness Report.

- Swedish industry has successfully competed despite the rise in wage rates, the shorter workday and increasing vacation time mandated for Swedish labour.
- The unemployment rate has been kept low.

Failure of Socialism in Venezuela:

There was a time when this country was quite prosperous and wealthy, and for a time Venezuela was even referred to as an “economic miracle”. But the present is very different and socialism failed miserably here.

There are three main policies implemented since 1999 that produced the current crisis:

- Widespread nationalization of private industry,
- currency and price controls, and
- The fiscally irresponsible expansion of welfare programs.

Nationalization destroyed production in affected industries because no government has the capacity to run thousands of businesses or the profit motive to run them efficiently. Instead, government officials face incentives to please voters by selling products at low prices and hiring more employees than necessary, even when that’s the wrong industry decision.

In 2003, the country implemented a foreign currency control scheme where the government set an overvalued exchange rate between the Venezuelan currency and the U.S. dollar.

The socialist regime also implemented price ceilings on hundreds of basic products such as beef, milk and toilet paper. Instead of benefiting the poor, price ceilings predictably resulted in shortages.

Welfare programs that were supposed to help the poor actually increased the cost of living. A foreign currency control that aimed to reduce inflation only caused hyperinflation increased and allowed for massive corruption. And nationalizations that should have given “power” to workers only left them unemployed and hungry. Moreover, Bad and Haphazard implementation of the ideal of socialism and mismanagement are the cause of the resulting crises.

Conclusion:

- The Swedish system might be a suitable model for industrialized countries it is probably not affordable as a system for developing countries.

- Socialism is the cause of the Venezuelan misery and is not the route to paradise for countries like Venezuela.
- There is a lot to learn for India from the success of Sweden and the failure of Venezuela to strengthen its ethos of socialism.

Q.4) What led to the large scale decolonisation post World War II? Analyse.

Introduction:

Decolonization is the action or process of a state withdrawing from a former colony, leaving it independent. After 1945 many states in Europe and Asia were decolonized. Mainly decolonization started in Asia, Africa and Middle East.

Body:

Factors led to decolonization post world war II:

- Lack of resources: After World War II many nations had financial crunch, ran out of financial resources, and bad administration which no longer could help them maintain colonies.
- Freedom movements: Many independence movements started in colonial states. Many countries took the advantage of that.
- Education and literature: Education and western literatures gave room for rational thinking and independence thoughts.
- Third world: Many exploited and ignored states came together to oppose Imperialism.
- Non-aligned movement: Nehru from India, Tito the communist leader from Yugoslavia, Nasser from Egypt successfully opposed French and British imperial powers.
- Establishment of United Nations: United nations put pressure on imperial countries like UK, France to provide independence to colonies. Nation-state has been accepted as ideal form of political organization.
- New international economic order: In 1961, non-aligned movement was followed by formation of United Nations conference on trade and development (UNCTD) which tried to promote new international economic order. It emphasized the importance of under developed countries.
- Cold war: United States and USSR pressurized European allies to give independence and free them.
- Atlantic charter (1941): it stated that people should have the right to choose their own government.

- Influence from newly decolonized countries: Many states were influenced from the neighbouring countries for decolonization and they had mutual support.
- Social causes: various films, books, museum displayed the impact of colonization which rose national feeling and patriotism among colonies.
- Neo-colonialism started: practice of using capitalism and globalization by their power and administration.

Conclusion:

It can be inferred that post World War II, European nation were unable to have control on their colonies due to strong and persistent opposition by the colonies along with pressure from new super powers i.e. USA and USSR. However, decolonization prolonged for decades in Asia and Africa and many were freed after huge struggle.

Q.5) What do you understand by the term 'Neo-colonialism' ? How is it effecting the world today? Examine.

Introduction:

Neo-colonialism is the term used to define the economic sabotage of underdeveloped countries propagated by developed countries and large multinational corporations. It was first observed by Kwame Nkrumah the former president of Ghana in the 1960s at the time when African countries were getting out of colonization.

Body:**Effects of neo colonialism in the world today:**

- **Economic exploitation:** It has economically exploited the underdeveloped/developing nations. Although the factories and other establishments are setup in the developing countries, the profits and other benefits are appropriated by the developed countries. Foreign capital is used for the exploitation rather than for the development of the less developed parts of the world. Ex: Minerals and other raw materials are sourced from Africa but profits are accrued by the west.
- **Dependency:** It has made the developing nations dependent on foreign aid by the developed nations. According to Dependency Theory, the developed nations

are at the center and the developing nations at the periphery. Those in the periphery are dependent on the centre for their existence. Ex: Some African and Asian countries are dependent on the aid from west.

- **Growing inequality:** Investment under neo-colonialism increases the gap between the rich and the poor countries of the world rather than decreases it.
- **Environmental effect:** Due to unsustainable business practices, the ecological and environmental resources are being exploited leading to global climate change. Also these colonies have become dumping grounds for industrial and nuclear wastes.
- **Humanitarian crisis:** Often the most vulnerable sections of the society like children and women are employed under unsafe conditions in many colonies. Ex: Sierra Leone.
- **Military bases:** Often the developed nations have their military bases in small nations as a portrayal of their military might, which is against the ideology of freedom and sovereignty. Ex: UK base in Diego Garcia, French military base in Djibouti.

The forty-six-year-old U.S. economic embargo against Cuba, the concerted move of the U.S. to destabilize Venezuela, Syria and Iran and violence against the success of democracy in Palestine and Latin America as a whole, are by and large parts of further neo-colonial offensives against the Third World countries.

However there is a counter view that the investments made by the developed nations has led to economic growth and prosperity of many developing nations.

Conclusion:

- The only possible solution to counter neo colonialism is a humane and fair globalization, a globalization which is beneficial for the marginalized and the poor people of the world too.
- For, as Fidel Castro observes, "Globalization is an irreversible process, and what we have to decide to choose is the kind of globalization which will be instrumental for the overall welfare of humanity as such and not the welfare of a few at the expense of the majority of people of the world."