

THE GIANT EHAP REVIEW OUTLINE!

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The Rise of Fascism and Authoritarianism

The Definition of Fascism

- The twentieth century gave rise to several new forms of government. While in Russia, people turned to Communism during and following World War I, in Italy and Germany, people turned to another form of government known as *Fascism*.
- Like the Communists, the Fascists were a *misery party* (popular during times of widespread suffering or economic depression that left the mainstream parties looking inadequate). Although the Communists and Fascists were sworn enemies, they were actually pretty similar. Or at least that is how it turned out when looking at the Soviet regime.
- Fascists had no exact ideology (there was no Fascist Karl Marx to write it out) and, unlike Communism, it was not an intellectual movement (in fact it was anti-intellectual). The Fascists just ripped off the ideas of other people, like Nietzsche or Sorel's *Reflections of Violence* and used them for their own purposes.
- The Fascists tended to glorify violence, think of the welfare of the state, and ignore the rights of the individual. Fascists stressed nationalism and militarism, and the end goal of their regimes was to have a dictatorship that embodied the spirit of "the people". Fervent love for the state and not thinking (let propaganda think for you) was encouraged in Fascist regimes as well.

The Rise of Fascism in Italy

- After WWI, Italy was definitely looking for a misery party: unemployment rates were high, there was a lot of inflation, and there was talk of revolution. Peasants were stealing land, and striking workers and angry industrialists were struggling for control. The upper classes feared a Communist rebellion, social issues had not been addressed, and the peace treaty had made people mad.
- During this time the first Fascist movement was born. Led by **Benito Mussolini**, the Fascists denounced liberalism using leftist rhetoric and denounced Marxism b/c of its lack of nationalistic sentiment. They effectively used propaganda and activists (black shirts) to spread their message.
- At first the Fascists were not very successful. In 1921, during the first elections with universal male suffrage, two new parties (the *Catholic Popular*, which demanded reforms but was based on peasants and conservatives and the *Socialists*, who split off from the Communists) rose to power. The Fascists won 35 seats, and were included in the prime minister Giolitti's personal coalition.
- But instead of just operating by the rules, the Fascists used their black shirted activists to plant bombs, beat up other parties, disrupt meetings, and scare people.
- Then, when the left wing unions called a general strike in 1922, the Black Shirts started to take over town councils by force. In October, they staged a march on Rome. Parliamentary leaders woke up after a while, called for martial law, but the King (Victor Emmanuel III) refused. Mussolini reached Rome, where he was invited to form a cabinet by the King.
- So Mussolini became the prime minister, and his party won a huge victory in the elections of 1924 b/c of his techniques of intimidation and fraud. Then he began terrorizing the opposition and shooting their leaders. The opposition was unable to respond effectively b/c they were so divided.

Italy Under Mussolini

- By 1925 Mussolini had gotten rid of all his opponents and gained control of the press. He then moved to make his power official by passing a series of law that declared the Duce (leader) of Fascism the head of state w/the right to govern by decree. Opposition parties were outlawed, opponents arrested and the civil services and judiciary branches were purged of any people thought too independent.
- During this time, Mussolini's immense propaganda machine created a Cult of Personality. Italians were told to obey the leader and to fight for their country, and were filled with nationalistic pride and confidence. The single-party government reached into every aspect of Italian life. Armed with a militant secret police, the Fascist party kept tight control on the country and soon won thousands of new supporters.
- The Fascists didn't really have a consistent ideology or policy, but they did establish the *Corporate State* in Italy. In the Corporate State, each sector of production was supposed to be organized into a huge corporation. Each corporation was headed by a party member appointed by the government, and was to establish the policies for the industry and wage scales.
- By 1926, they were able to outlaw strikes and unions b/c of the corporate system. They fixed the number of corporations at 22, and the Duce was made president of each of them. He also appointed the Council of Delegates (who sat in the National Council of Corporations) for each corporation. Consequently, the corporations never achieved any real autonomy and had no power.

- Italy never became as orderly as Mussolini promised, but freedom and individual rights were destroyed. Although a quiet intellectual opposition was allowed, thousands of people were exiled or killed for opposing the government.
- In economics, the Fascists sought *autarchy* (a self-sufficient national economy) and were into industrialization and technology. The government didn't mind big business but generally favored nationalization. In 1926, they began a big campaign to increase agricultural production, which led to a doubling in grain production.
- The government attempted to keep peasants on the land and increase the birthrate, but neither campaign was effective. They were, however, able to stop the Mafia in Sicily, drain the marshes near Rome, and build railroads and superhighways. They used these public works programs to combat unemployment, and this (and the benefits of the new things built) gave people a sense of security.
- Mussolini's biggest achievement was his agreement with the Vatican, known as the *Lateran Agreement* (1929). In the agreement, Mussolini recognized Vatican City as an independent state, established religious teaching in public schools, guaranteed that marriage laws would conform to Catholic doctrine, promised to restrict the Protestants and promised to give the Church money to pay for the damage done during Italian unification. The agreement favorably disposed the Church (and many Italian Catholics) towards Mussolini.

Germany after World War I

- After World War I, Germany had a democracy known as the *Weimar Republic*. It was headed by a President (w/a 7 year term) who oversaw the country but didn't make day-to-day decisions. The President could call new elections at any time. The Chancellor (elected from the majority party in the Reichstag) ran the country. The Reichstag (Parliament) was formed through direct elections where people voted for a party (not for people) and the % of votes a party received was the % of the seats the party got.
- Since the Chancellor came from the majority party, if there was no majority party, the President was allowed to appoint a Chancellor. There were three (really two) types of Chancellor:
 1. **Parliamentary Chancellor** → the Parliamentary Chancellor could suggest laws, but the laws had to be passed by a majority vote of the Reichstag.
 2. **Presidential Chancellor** → the Presidential Chancellor could declare laws by decree unless a majority of the Reichstag vetoed them. To stop a Presidential Chancellor, there would have to be a "negative majority" in the Reichstag.
 3. **Temporary Dictator** → the Constitution also allowed for a "temporary dictator" in times of emergency if 2/3 of the Reichstag agreed.
- At first, the Weimar Republic had a really rough time. The Republic's first act on **November 11, 1918** was to agree to an armistice (which was really a surrender). This armistice was seen as the first failure of the Weimar Republic.
- After a war that had totally exhausted the country, it was really hard for Germany to bear defeat. The army consequently made up a myth about being "stabbed in the back" by people inside Germany. According to them, it was the left-wing politicians (also Jewish people) that caused their loss.
- During this time President Hindenburg and Chancellor Ebert ran the country. The democracy seemed on the right track, even though the SPD (Socialists) had made a horrid deal with the army, which led to the brutal murder of the Spartakus Band (ancestors of the KPD: Communists). After this, the KPD had no leaders (and was controlled by Moscow) and the left was forever divided.
- In 1920, there was the **Kapp Putsch**, in which the right-wing extremist army officers seized Berlin. Although the army would not fire on them, they were eventually forced to withdraw by the left-wing labor unions. This contributed to the instability of the time.
- Then in 1923 came horrible ultra-inflation! Caused by the French occupation of the Ruhr (industrial heartland) b/c when Germany fell behind in paying the reparations that French seized the German factories, the German workers went on strike, and then, when the gov't decided to pay the French, money became worthless. This was horrible for people: all their savings disappeared – and was seen as the second failure of the Weimar Republic (it wasn't their fault though).
- Then on November 8/9, 1923, the **Beer Hall Putsch** occurs, led by General Ludendorff and Hitler (unknown at the time). It fails miserably, but Hitler gets nat'l press coverage, gets out of jail after a really short time, and learns that *legality* is the way to go (working though the gov't to destroy it).
- From 1925 to 1929, though, the Republic does really well! The economy is OK, led by **Gustav Stresemann** (foreign minister) Germany gets admitted into the League of Nations and is back in the international community. Moderate parties are doing well, not the Nazis.
- But then in 1929 w/the *Great Depression* everything collapses. Since Germany is dependent on US \$, when the US economy crashes so does the German, only worse. Now the "misery parties" begin to come into their own...

The Rise of Fascism in Germany

- One party that made a spectacular rise with the onset of the depression (along with the KPD and SPD) was the **Nazi** party, led by Adolph Hitler (who took it over when he found it on a spy job and changed it from a pretty harmless “everyman” party to an insane militaristic one).
- The Nazis attacked democracy, advocated war against Germany’s enemies (Jews, Communists, other nations, etc.) and had the SA (a street army of brown-shirted storm troopers), the SS (an elite group in black uniforms who were bodyguards and special police), and propaganda to spread their message.
- With the depression and the failure of the Republic to solve the problems plaguing it (what could it do?) the Nazis, with their calls for rearmament and stopping the Communists, became more popular.
- Because of the depression, in 1930 the coalition government of Social Democrats resigned and the Center party (led by **Bruning**) took over. Hindenburg allowed the new government to enact measures by decree, but this didn’t help b/c there was a *negative majority* so nothing could get done.
- Since the 1930 election gave the Nazis more seats Hitler ran for president in 1932 (though he knew he would lose against Hindenburg). He lost, but he got lots of press coverage, etc. Hindenburg then picked a new chancellor **Franz von Papen** (the moron).
- Papen tried to gain Hitler’s support by (stupidly) lifting the bans on the SA and SS and tried to form a right-wing coalition. But it didn’t work, Hindenburg called another election, and the Nazis gained! But Hindenburg (who didn’t like Hitler) still didn’t name him chancellor, picking **Von Schleicher**.
- Now Papen (who wanted to get back into power) told Hindenburg to appoint Hitler the head of a coalition government (the only way to stop the negative majority). He did so on the terms that: there would be no other Nazis in the cabinet, and every time Hitler met w/him Papen would be there too.
- Papen thought he could use Hitler, but the joke was on him – it was the other way around. Again being underestimated is a big advantage (think Napoleon). Hitler takes the deal in 1933. Almost immediately, he called another election, and through cheating, the Nazis won an even bigger majority.
- Then (lucky for Hitler) the Reichstag building was set on fire. Hitler blamed it on the Communists, declared a state of emergency (which allowed him to issue all these special laws that ended individual freedoms) and then *after the election* outlawed the KPD so he would get a majority!
- But he still didn’t have the 2/3 majority needed to become a dictator. So he sucked up to the Center party and made all these promises to them (yea right) and was then able to pass the *Enabling Act*, which gave him, as chancellor, the right to enact all laws w/o the Reichstag for four years.

Germany Under Hitler

- First Hitler moved to consolidate his power by sending all his opponents to concentration camps or putting them in exile, etc. By July he outlawed all other parties and destroyed the opposition, and by November he had restructured the government and purged the civil service and judiciary, outlawed strikes, and controlled the press (sound familiar – think Mussolini).
- Then in June 1934 he got rid of all the other leaders of the party and any opposition leaders who were left in the *Night of the Long Knives* (also done b/c of an agreement w/the army which stated that in return for never allowing the SA to take them over, the army would swear oaths of allegiance to him and allow him to become President too). When Hindenburg died in August, he declared himself *Fuhrer* (uniting the Presidency and Chancellorship) and supported the decision through a vote.
- Then, the federal states lost their autonomy (*gleichschaltung* – coordination) and all gov’t employees were made appointees of Hitler. New courts were established, strikes were outlawed (the National Labor Front directed all concerns) and the Gestapo (secret police) infiltrated all levels of society.
- In economics, they were very successful. Public works projects lowered unemployment to a tolerable level, and the gov’t used deficit spending to restore the economy. To pay for this, a system devised by the brilliant economist **Hjalmar Schacht** required that payments for foreign trade be made w/\$ whose value changed according to the products and nations involved (pretty much barter). This increased Germany’s self-sufficiency, but in the end they paid by printing more \$.
- During this time, propaganda advertised the benefits of the new government. Women were presented as subordinate members of the family (meant for breeding more Aryans). Also, Hitler sucked up to the army by pushing rearmament and gained more direct control of different branches of the government, such as the foreign services.
- To deal w/the church, Hitler made a concordat with the Vatican in 1933, which gave the state a voice in the appointment of bishops but assured the Church of its authority over Catholic orders and schools. Protestants were given the Evangelical Church under a bishop appointed by Hitler (although many left when the bishop said he would “Aryanize” the church and formed the Confessional Church). Most clergy cooperated w/the state, the ones who resisted were arrested.
- Then there was anti-Semitism. In 1935, the gov’t codified its anti-Semitic beliefs in the Nuremberg Laws and then added many other horrible laws to oppress the Jewish people. In 1938 *Kristallnacht* occurred after a Jewish boy murdered a German diplomat: Jews were beaten and murdered and their property was destroyed. Gypsies were also attacked.

Authoritarian Regimes in Central Europe

- By 1929, in Central Europe, authoritarian regimes had taken over Hungary, Spain, Albania, Portugal, Lithuania, and Yugoslavia, and by 1936 liberties had also been suppressed in Romania, Austria, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia and Greece.
- For the most part, the new regimes were conservative, Christian and anti-communist, and are sometimes called semi-fascist. The only exception to the rule was Czechoslovakia, which was a democratic republic with free enterprise led by **Thomas Masaryk** (a brilliant statesman).