

# THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION OF 1917 (THE BOLSHEVICK REVOLUTION)

The Russian revolution of 1917 was a reaction by the Russian people against the Tsarist regime due to its conservativeness and despotism and later against the anti-reforming ideas of the provisional government which had failed to make variety of changes in the Empire. These revolutions were led and spearheaded by Russian workers, soldiers, peasant, Bolsheviks "*majority men*" since they had won the majority in the congress, Mensheviks "*minority men*" (the advocates of the looser party), October lists, elites, intellectuals and others. Therefore, the Russian revolutions were indeed mass movements of the Russian people advocating for inevitable changes in Russia.

This revolution began with an uprising against Tsar Nicholas II leading to his overthrow in march 1917 and ended with the removal of the provisional government in November 1917. The revolution was in two phases mainly the February - March, 1917 and October - November, 1917 mainly led by Lenin and Trotsky.

## CAUSES OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION OF 1917

1. **Weakness of Tsar Nicholas II** who came to power in 1894 and ruled the monarchy believing in feudalism and mythic hence, he never thought of reforming the system in Russia. He could not bend to peoples wishes, he was ill advised by the Tsarina; he failed to end despotism which was challenged by the new ideas leading to the revolution in 1917.

In relation to the above, the Tsar believed in autocratic principles and held the view that listening to liberal ideas was senseless and in this case he said "*I will preserve the principles of autocracy as firmly maintained in the old order.*" He was also influenced by Rasputin who claimed to be a holy man and a priest but advised the king against the wishes of the people. This in the end led to the Russian revolution of 1917.



- i. The Tsar failed to revise land ownership as demanded by the Russian masses which gave an opportunity to the Bolsheviks to propagate against the government.



- ii. The dictatorship of Tsar Nicholas II alienated him from majority of the Russian masses i.e. he believed in the autocracy and maintained the old order.
  - iii. His dependence on the advices of his wife who on many occasions advised him against the will of the common man. This increased opposition against Nicholas's government.
  - iv. He depended very much on the advices of the evil monk Rasputin who was disliked by majority of the Russians. The conditions worsened when the Tsar consulted him for advice through spiritualist meditations and this discredited the Tsar's government.
  - v. He failed to reform the political system and maintained his belief in feudalism and feudal dues.
  - vi. His participation in World War I which negatively affected the image of the government, exposed the weakness of the monarchy that favoured for the revolution.
  - vii. He failed to modernize the Russian army leading to Russian defeat in the numerous wars e.g. the Russo- Japanese war of 1904- 1905, World War I that even forced the army to turn against the government of Tsar Nicholas II.
  - viii. His failure to alleviate the problems of the working class i.e. the poor working condition led to increasing strikes that discredited the government.
  - ix. His absolutism was behind the bloody Sunday (dark Sunday) and this led to increased hatred against the Tsarist government.
  - x. His failure to deal with the worsening unemployment problem created a revolutionary class who were ready to do away with the Tsarist government.
  - xi. His unfair taxation policy was very much detested by majority of the Russian thus when the Lenin promised fair taxation system, he was overwhelmingly supported by majority of the Russians.
  - xii. Nicholas maintained religious intolerance in Russia in favour of the Orthodox Church which escalated religious persecution and oppression. This was opposed by the middle class hence supporting the revolution.
  - xiii. He rigidly censored the press and this limited freedom of expression and speech.
  - xiv. He promoted the Russification policy of the non Russian. This forced the non Russian to support revolutions.
  - xv. He banned political parties which become a time bomb especially when political parties secretly operated.
  - xvi. Tsar Nicholas as the top commander had a poor war policy leading to Russian massive defeat in the Second World War which led to increased agitation for change.
  - xvii. He interfered in the parliamentary affairs.
  - xviii. His failure to end corruption that was alarming in Russia discredited the government of Tsar Nicholas II.
2. **The effects of industrialization in Russia.** Industrialization in Russia came with social and economic challenges e.g. poor living conditions, low payments, poor factory conditions and this provoked numerous strikes especially from the workers. The wave of strikes was set off by the shooting of 270 strikers in 1912. In all, there were about



2000 separate strikes in 1912, 2400 in 1913 and over 4000 in 1914. This trend of events forced the Russian to rise up into a revolution in 1917.

3. **The effects of World War I on Russia.** Russia had joined the war on the side of the allied powers against German. As the war continued, increasing death was realized there were much suffering in Russia. The war was viewed as useless by majority of the Russians; however, Nicholas was not willing to withdraw from the war because he was expecting Constantinople from Turkey. The soldiers of Russia were increasingly killed because of poor and inefficient equipments, scanty provisions and lack of proper training. As a result, many deserted the government and joined the workers leading to a revolution in 1917.

Again the war made German occupy and destroy the Russian wheat producing region of Ukraine which escalated famine and starvation in Russia leading to revolution in 1917 in that:

- i. The war escalated the economic crisis especially due to heavy expenditure, massive bombings of Russia by German and the general economic decay. This increased the desire to do away with the Tsar's government.
- ii. The war led to massive death and yet the government was not willing to withdraw from the war. This inevitably forced majority of the Russians to turn against the government of Tsar Nicholas II leading to a revolution.
- iii. As a result of the disastrous effects of the war, led to the Cossack army mutiny and this increased the revolutionary stamina.
- iv. The war led to German's occupation and destruction of the Russian wheat producing area of Ukraine which worsened unemployment, famine and starvation.
- v. The dissatisfaction that the masses had as a result of the war led to increased mob activities in most Russian cities e.g. St. Peter's burg, Moscow that discredited the government of Tsar Nicholas II.
- vi. The effects of the war gave the revolutionaries an opportunity to agitate against the government leading to a revolution.
- vii. The war revealed the inherent weaknesses of Tsar Nicholas II.
- viii. The war escalated massive unemployment due to heavy bombardments, German's occupation of Ukraine etc.
- ix. The war influenced foreign powers to support the revolution e.g. German smuggled Lenin into Russia in a disguised train.
- x. The effects of the war gave the Bolsheviks an opportunity to propagate against the government leading to the spread of revolutionary propaganda.
- xi. The war led to numerous strikes in Russia leading to increased instabilities and the general desire to overthrow the Tsarist government.
- xii. The war led to the blockade of the Baltic Sea leading to shortage of essential commodities which in turn resulted into black marketing, profiteering, inflation and the general suffering of majority of the Russians.



- xiii. Led to Russian loss of Poland, Galatia, Finland, Estonia, Latvia etc. this was criticized by the Russian nationalist.
- xiv. The war exposed the weakness of the Russian army because of the massive defeat from German.
- xv. The effects of the war made the king overwhelmed and therefore could not deal with the fundamental problems of the time.
- xvi. The effects of the war increased the determination of the Bolsheviks to do away with the government of Tsar Nicholas II.

4. **The economic and administrative inefficiencies in Russia.** This generated discontent in Russia against the monarchy due to the failure of the Emperor to handle administrative challenges that confronted Russia at the time. There was massive corruption and inefficiency in the government and the Emperor could not do anything to reverse the situation. This forced the masses to rise into a revolution in 1917 against Tsar Nicholas II.

5. **The despotic and repressive Tsarist system (Romanov system).** The Tsars never allowed constitutional and parliamentary reforms, there was no freedom of speech, press, there was no equality before the law, the nobles indiscriminately killed the peasants as they wished, there was persecution of the peasants to ensure the monopoly of the Orthodox Church in spiritual line and education was discriminative. With such a kind of atmosphere, the Russians rose up to detest despotism hence a revolution.

- i. There was lack of constitutional reforms
- ii. The absence of parliamentary reforms which the masses vehemently demanded.
- iii. The absence of freedom of speech which the masses were demanding for.
- iv. Lack of equality before the law where the peasants were sidelined and the nobles enjoyed all privileges.
- v. The existence of uncontrolled killings especially by the nobles against the peasants.
- vi. Lack of religious freedom and thus the peasants were persecuted to ensure the monopoly of the Orthodox Church in spiritual and educational lines.
- vii. There was massive despotism.
- viii. There was massive extravagancy of the crown.

6. **The impact of the bloody Sunday or red Sunday.** On 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1905 when a peaceful demonstration of the workers and the socialists under the leadership of father Gapon demanded for the improved conditions of work, as they were bi- passing the winter palace, the Tsardom guards opened fire on to the demonstrators and father Gapon was seriously wounded. This increased hostility of the workers against the government of Tsar Nicholas II. Thus when a chance came in 1917, they joined to over throw the government of Tar Nicholas II.

- i. Led to massive death which discredited the government of Tsar Nicholas II.
- ii. The event exposed the shortsightedness of Tsar Nicholas II leading to increased opposition.
- iii. The event led to increased hostility against the government of Tsar Nicholas II.



- iv. It created a platform for the outbreak of the Russian revolution of 1917.
  - v. Led to increased strikes against the government.
7. **The existence of numerous violent strikes.** Since 1890, there were increasing demonstrations, increasing inflation and uncontrolled levels of unemployment, assassinations, bomb throwing, and attacks upon the nobility properties, starvation and high commodity prices. All these made the government of Tsar Nicholas II to be hated leading to a revolution in Russia in 1917.
  8. **The increasing corruption and inefficiency within the government of Tsar Nicholas II.** The ministers and senior officers of Tsardom regime were corrupt, inefficient and inconsiderate, the soldiers were badly led and poorly armed leading to military losses during the wars. As a result the masses of Russia and the nationalists hated the government of Tsar Nicholas II leading to a revolution in 1917.
  9. **The economic differences and poor economic distribution of privileges and wealth** especially land which was in the monopoly of the Tsarist autocracy and nobility. Although some reforms were made during the time of Alexander II known as the "liberator", the reforms did little to improve the conditions of the peasants. The peasants had to pay taxes on land and sometimes had to sell off part of their land to pay the taxes. Thus when Lenin came with communal ownership of land, the peasants embraced the idea thus leading to a revolution in 1917.
  10. **The impact of the increasing population.** This led to loss of land, hunger and increased opposition against conservatism, congestion etc. unfortunately, the government failed to plan for the increasing population resulting into poor living conditions, and increased unemployment which eventually created a class of people who embraced the revolution.
  11. **The policy of vigorous Russification or forced assimilation of non Russian** especially the Jews, the Fins, the Poles and others who were the minority in Russia. This later increased bitterness and annoyance within Russia by the Russian intellectuals and the non Russians resulting into increased discontent leading to a revolution in 1917.
  12. **The defeat of Russia by Japan during the Russo – Japanese war of 1904-1905** at the battle of *Mukden* and *Toshima*. This came as a result of Russian increased advance in Asia i.e. between 1891 and 1901, she built the *Trans - Siberian railway* extending to the Pacific coast port of *Vladivostok*. Russia also built a railway *the Chinese eastern railway to Vladivostok* across the Chinese province of *Manchuria* and was completed in 1903. The defeat of Russia therefore brought terrible humiliation upon the Russians as the Russian army and navy were wiped out by Japan leading to Russian loss of *Port Arthur and Manchuria by the treaty of Portsmouth of 1905* which affected the commercial shipping into Russia. This stagnated the Russian economy leading to a revolution in 1917 through:



- i. The war led to Russian loss of Port Arthur which affected the commercial shipping into Russia leading to unemployment, shortage of essential commodities, inflation and the general suffering in Russia.
- ii. As a result of the war, Russia lost Korea to Japan and this was condemned by the Russian nationalists thus damaging the government's image.
- iii. The war exposed the weakness of the Russian army and the general army command which was strongly opposed by the Russians.
- iv. The effects of the war influenced the occurrence of the Russian revolution of 1904-1905 which was suppressed by Tsar Nicholas.
- v. The war exposed the inefficiency of the Tsardom regime.
- vi. The effects of the war influenced the Russians to demand for a parliamentary system of government which grew irresistibly throughout Russia.
- vii. The war led to strikes e.g. three weeks after the loss of Port Arthur, father Gapon organized and led the masses against the government of Tsar Nicholas II.
- viii. The event influenced the occurrence of the bloody Sunday which again increased anti Tsardom campaigns.

13. **The rise of Nihilists in Russia** which meant the influence of intellectual and destructive critics against the backward reactionary policies of the Tsarist regime. The Nihilists aimed at sweeping away everything of the past by violent means and expressions so that a new society which was free and morally okay could be born. Hence the Nihilists exposed the backwardness of the Tsardom monarchy and went ahead to practice methods of terrorism which provoked dictatorship of the Tsardom leadership leading to Russian discontents hence a revolution in 1917.

14. **The influence of the evil monk Rasputin** who was a great witch doctor to the monarchy. He was uneducated, had selfish interests, became a great political adviser to the Tsar and he ill advised him on many political issues in the state and on Russian participation during world war I. consequently, Rasputin was killed in 1915. But what made matters worse was that Nicholas continued to contact the dead monk through spiritualistic senses. These increased the revolutionary spirits against the Tsar leading to a revolution in 1917.



15. **The absence of freedoms in Russia forced the masses to rise up.** In Russia especially during the time of Tsar Nicholas II, there was total lack of consciousness, publications were all censored, public meetings and associations were nonexistent. This kind of atmosphere kept the revolutionary spirit high and consequently a revolution in 1917.

16. **The mutiny of the Cossack regiment** which was a section of the Russian army that mutinied and fraternized with the Russian revolutionaries and demonstrators having



refused to take up the leadership to suppress the strikes. This increased revolutionary stamina and momentum thus making the revolution inevitable.

17. **The pressure and influence of the Russian Dumas** especially the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Dumas respectively. These were opposed to Tsar Nicholas's direction of events by suspending the Dumas because it was opposed to the Tsar. An action that forced the members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Dumas to join the revolutionaries and this gave momentum to the revolutionary spirit leading to a revolution in 1917.
18. **The role of the press** influenced the Russian revolution of 1917. This led to the spread of propaganda from abroad e.g. the revolutionary news papers e.g. *spark (Iskar)* which was Lenin's newspaper and it helped in exposing the weakness of the monarchy and spread of discontents among the Russians leading to the revolution in 1917.
19. **The destruction of the Russian wheat producing area of Ukraine** by the **German forces** especially after *the battle of Tunninburg and Mazurlian*. This was the wheat growing area of Ukraine which was the chief producer of food to the Russian population thus with its destruction, there was food shortage, starvation as bread and wheat become a rare commodity. This resulted into desperate situations forcing the Russians to turn against the government of Tsar Nicholas II hence a revolution.
20. **The impact of the democratic and liberal revolutionary movements in western Europe** which led to the spread of revolutionary ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity e.g. the 1789, 1830, and 1848 revolutions which led to the spread of the revolutionary ideas into Russia. Thus influencing the elite class to demand for reforms making the revolution inevitable.
21. **The rise of urbanization** which came as a result of accumulation of urban centers in Russia especially St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kievan and others with the features of overcrowding, slums, congestion, high rates of poverty, high crime rates and lawlessness which led to increased desperation and revolutionary emotions in Russia against the monarchy.
22. **The influence of the Russian writers, novelists and intellectuals** who produced democratic and socialist literature which changed the feelings of the Russians against the government of Tsar Nicholas II.
23. **The impact of natural disasters and calamities** which affected Russia in form of bad weather leading to poor harvests. Russia was affected by winter between 1916-1917 leading to serious shortage of food and many industries closed down. This led to food rationing and wide spread cries which gave birth to riots in cities especially in St. Petersburg by the urban dwellers and workers. The above situation was worsened by German's occupation of the wheat producing area of Ukraine during World War I.
24. **The blockade of the Baltic Sea** which isolated Russia from the rest of the world. This consequently led to scarcity of food as food and other necessities could not be imported into Russia leading to shortages, profiteering, black marketing and no check



were put in place to eradicate the evil economic practices. This resulted into starvation, inflation etc that forced the masses to rise up into a revolution.

25. **The financial embarrassments** faced by the government of Tsar Nicholas II which led to massive bankruptcy in Russia and subsequently making the Tsardom regime fail to cater for the needs of the masses hence increasing opposition against the government.
26. **The driving out of the Russian army from Galicia and Poland during World War I.** This was very much condemned by the Russian patriots who blamed the Russian loss on the inefficiency of the Tsardom government. This inevitably forced the Russian to rise up into a revolution.
27. **The influence of Tsarina.** She contributed heavily as she was neurotic, unbalanced, she influenced the Tsar to carry out frequent reshuffles on permanent leaders of deferent departments. This eventually upset the whole administrative machinery and government leading to resentments that partly led to the outbreak of the revolution in 1917.
28. **The weakness of the provisional government** which was formed in Russia after the collapse of Tsar Nicholas II. The provisional government was led by prince Lnov and Alexander Kerensky together with the members of the conservative Dumas. This failed to respond to the demands of the Bolsheviks and made another blunder of increasing Russian involvement in the war. This gave an opportunity to people like Lenin to win the support of the masses leading to a revolution in October and November. This contributed through:
  - i. The government kept a war policy which was strongly opposed by the Russians thus forcing them to rebel in October leading to a revolution.
  - ii. The government was reluctant to implement land reforms as desired by the Russian. This forced the Russians to give an overwhelming support to Lenin thus leading to a revolution.
  - iii. The government's regular postponement of the constituent assembly elections disappointed the masses thus forcing them to revolt in October leading to the revolution.
  - iv. The government granted amnesty to the Russian exiles eg Lenin and these propagated for change in Russia which was overwhelmingly supported by majority of the Russians.
  - v. The government failed to end the increasing inflationary tendencies in Russia and this disappointed the masses leading to a revolution.
  - vi. The government relaxed on the censorship of press and this gave the revolutionaries a platform to criticize the provisional government hence leading to the revolution.
  - vii. The government failed to improve on the conditions of the armed forces thus forcing the army to support the revolution.
29. **The assassination of Stolypin** who was the prime minister of Russia removed one of the dependable figures of the Tsarist regime and perhaps the only man who could have saved the monarchy. He was behind many reforms to please the peasants in order to avoid a crisis. Thus his departure created a political vacuum that could not easily be filled thus leading to a revolution in 1917.



30. **The rise of Socialism and Bolshevism.** These ideologies attracted the attention from the suffering masses in Russia because they advocated for state ownership of land and other sectors in order to reduce on the exploitation of the working class. Their ideology attracted the attention of the peasantry class and workers which inevitably made them support the socialist hence a revolution in 1917.
31. **The influence of revolutionary personalities** e.g. Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky and krensky.
32. **The role and influence of foreign powers** e.g. German, Finland etc.
33. **The increasing grievances with in the army and the general weakness of the Russian army.** This influenced the occurrence of the revolution in that:
- The weakness of the army mad Russia to be defeated in the Russo- Japanese war of 1904-1905 which negatively affected Russia.
  - The army failed to protect the Russian territory during the First World War hence Russia lost Estonia, Finland and others to German and this was a disappointment to the Russian nationalists hence damaging the reputation of the government.
  - The army was strongly involved in the bloody Sunday which exposed the immoral and inhuman character of Tsar Nicholas and his government thus forcing the masses to rise up.
  - The army ruthlessly suppressed revolts, demonstrations and this increased the dissatisfaction that the masses had against the government hence leading to a revolution.
  - The army was also poorly paid and this forced them to join the peasants hence leading to a revolution.
  - The increased dissatisfaction within the army led to the Cossack army mutiny and this undermined the survival of the Tsarist government.
  - The army also enforced the russification policy which was very much opposed by not only the non Russians but also the Russians hence leading to the revolution.
  - The failure of the Russian army during the war led to persistent famine and collapse of trade leading to unemployment, inflation, starvation especially after German's invasion of Ukraine and the blockade of the Baltic Sea.
  - The failure of the army to defend the Tsarist government and only fraternized with the revolutionaries gave the revolutionary army an upper hand thus leading to a revolution.
34. **The granting of amnesty to Russian exiles.**
35. **The absence of religious freedom in Russia and the desire by government to guarantee religious freedom.**



# THE EFFECTS OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION OF 1917

1. The revolution ended Tsardom in Russia with the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II on 16<sup>th</sup> march 1917. He was advised to give up power and accordingly he abdicated the throne in favour of Duke Michael who also refused to take the leadership thus marking the end of the Tsarist regime in Russia.
2. The revolution led to the establishment of socialism in Russia with the success of the Russian revolution of 1917. This led to nationalization of all sectors of production, the land which formally belonged to the church and land lords was transferred to the peasants leading to the establishment of the first communist state in Russia.
3. The revolution forced Russia to pull out of World War I. By the treaty of Brest-Litovsk which was signed between Russia and German. Russia agreed to pull out of World War I and because she was in a weak bargaining position, she lost Poland, Estonia etc.
4. There were the establishment of worker's councils or unions and these were to manage industries and improve on the working conditions. Private trade was abolished and all major industries were put under state control.
5. The revolution on the other hand caused problem to the peasantry because they had to produce food for town workers and town dwellers. This inevitably led to constant strikes as the peasants opposed their new role of being producers for the town dwellers leading to famine and starvation in Russia.
6. The revolution led to civil war in Russia especially between 1918 and 1920 leading to heavy losses of lives and property. This partly came as a result of constant clashes between the white army (anti-communist) and the communist army (red army). The red army gained an upper hand and thus communism remained firmly established in Russia.
7. The revolution widened the gap between the western powers and Russia because of communism. This later resulted into ideological differences between the communists and capitalists Western Europe which inevitably contributed to outbreak of cold war politics.
8. The revolution destroyed social class discrimination which had existed before. Before the revolution the nobles and the clergy dominated important positions in the government, however with the success of the revolution, men of humble background e.g. Lenin, Stalin etc were able to get to high offices in the politics of Russia.
9. The revolution paved way for some countries to secure political independence especially those that were under Russia. Countries e.g. Poland and Finland exploited the political confusion in Russia to agitate for self rule from Russia.
10. The revolution led to a new land policy where by land in Russia was re-distributed to the peasants. This led to collapse of feudalism and its associated dues, landlordism was abolished and this pleased the peasant.
11. The revolution destroyed unity that had existed in Europe. This is so because Russia was eliminated out of the League of Nations because of her communist inclination and



- other powers of Europe were determined to destroy communism. This made Russia not to be admitted into the League of Nations at the early stages.
12. The revolution in Russia and its success weakened the triple Entente powers especially after Russia had pulled out of the war in 1917. The triple Entente powers were only boosted with the entry of U S A in the war in 1917.
  13. The revolution facilitated the rise of Fascism and Nazi dictatorship in Italy and Germany respectively. This was so because the two ideologies were formed to destroy communism that was threatening their countries. E.g. Adolf Hitler was supported by the middle to come to power because he was seen as a protector of their interests from the threats of communism.
  14. The rise of communism which was a result of the Russian revolution weakened the performance of the League of Nations. In the first place one of the weaknesses of the League of Nations was the exclusion of important states like Russia from the League. Russia could not be admitted because of communism and it was admitted in 1934 after the withdrawal of Germany and it was again expelled in 1939. Therefore the League of Nations could not fully perform its duties.
  15. Communism also weakened the United Nations organization. This was due to the divisions based on ideologies of either communism or capitalism. The two super powers could not agree because of the varying interests hence failing the U N O in fulfilling its objectives.
  16. The success of the revolution in Russia conditioned the formation of military camps in Europe. In 1949, NATO was formed as a military camp for capitalist powers and in 1955, the Warsaw pact was formed by Russia and her allies. These were based on conflicting political and economic ideologies.
  17. The fear of communism which came as a result of the Russian revolution of 1917, led to the formation of economic camps e.g. the western power formed the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1960 and later the European economic cooperation.
  18. The revolution transformed Russia into a union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and Russia was declared a republic leading to the end of hereditary leadership and monarchism in Russia.
  19. The pulling of Russia out of World War I made her lose the chance of joining the allies during the making of the post war settlement and even she did not join the League of Nations. This subsequently became the starting point for suspicion and mistrust between the East and Western powers.
  20. The Russian revolution led to heavy losses of lives and destruction of property especially during the revolution and immediately after the revolution because of numerous clashes between the communist and the anti-communist army.
  21. The revolution entrenched serious dictatorship of the Bolsheviks into Russia which was so terrible in the history of Russia. They employed a secret police and the army which terrorized, carried out massive arrests, torture and other related human rights abuses. This inevitably destroyed the communist image in Europe.



22. The revolution led to the assassination of Tsar Nicholas and his family in July 1918. This created fear, hostility and panic leading to massive instabilities in Russia.
23. The revolution led to increased refugee problem in Europe e.g. by 1921, over 800,000 Russians were in exile.
24. The revolution led to rapid spread of communism in Eastern Europe especially in countries like Hungary, Poland etc.
25. Communism that came as a result of the revolution undermined European imperialism as it agitated for destruction of colonialism in Africa and in Asia.
26. The revolution led to the end of the Romanov dynasty that had dominated Russia for more than 300 years. Tsar Nicholas was forced to resign in 1917 and was later executed in 1918 leading to the end of Tsardom rule in Russia.

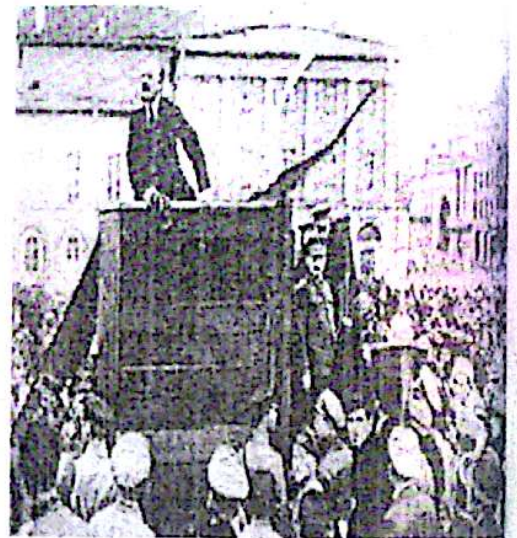
## FACTORS FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION OF 1917

1. The revolution was supported by majority of the Russians, it was spear headed by intellectuals and supported by the peasants and workers. The peasants and workers participated in demonstrations and strikes and these climaxed into a revolution making the success of the revolution a reality.
2. The unity amongst the Russians. They were united under the Bolsheviks party with affirm belief in the establishment of affirm government. The confidence they had in socialism made them to sacrifice their lives and property to uproot the Tsarist government and establish a communist government.
3. The anti- revolutionary attempts to suppress the revolution using foreign forces favoured the success of the revolution. The Bolsheviks condemned it as a move by the opponent of the revolution to impose foreign rule on Russia. This made even those masses that had been reluctant to join the revolution to do so.
4. The revolution was supported by foreign powers e.g. Finland, Switzerland and Sweden. The revolutionary leaders like Lenin, Trotsky and Kerensky mobilized funds, manpower and arms through such friendly countries. In the same circumstance some foreign powers gave live assistance to the revolutionaries e.g. German supported the revolution to cause confusion in Russia so that it withdraws her participation in world war and that is why German smuggled Lenin into Russia in a disguised train. German wanted Lenin to overthrow the provisional government and end Russian participation in the war which he did in 1917 hence the success of the revolution.
5. Personal weakness of Tsar Nicholas II contributed to the success of the revolution. By 1917, Tsar Nicholas was very unpopular amongst the workers, peasants and in his ministers. Even his men never rescued him because they were tired of the war. When the revolution began he was too confused and therefore abdicated in favour of his



grandson Duke Michael. The duke refused and the revolutionaries established a provisional government hence the success of the revolution.

6. The suffering that the Russians went through during World War I conditioned the success of the revolution. By 1917, everybody most especially the soldiers wanted unconditional end to the war yet the provisional government was determined to continue with the war. This helped Lenin who promised to end the war hence acquiring massive support from the masses.
7. The genuine grievances. By 1917, Russia was infested with a lot of problems. There was inflation; unemployment, nepotism, famine, natural calamities and the soldiers had lost the battle against German. The inability by the provisional government to address these problems made the Russians give an over whelming support for the revolution.
8. The role of the revolutionary leaders like Lenin, Stalin and Kerensky. These men were very influential in the success of the revolution. They were filled with the revolutionary zeal, they mobilized the workers, peasants and soldiers through their speeches e.g. Lenin (Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov) promised peace, land and was seen as a solution to the problems that were affecting Russia at the time.
9. The support from the army. The army was the only remaining instrument to protect the unpopular Tsarist regime. Unfortunately it had suffered a lot from World War I and this made the army to rebel against Nicholas II.
10. The government of Tsar Nicholas II was characterized by massive corruption, embezzlement and inefficiency as a result the government lacked massive support from the Russians.
11. The revolutionaries had support from the students, workers and urban dwellers in Moscow and Petrograd hence it appeared as a revolution of a massive struggle against the monarchy.
12. The refusal of the Russian Dumas or parliament to suspend its sessions indirectly supported the revolutionaries and made the revolution to succeed against Nicholas II.
13. The abdication of Tsar Nicholas II on 17<sup>th</sup> march 1917 and the refusal of Duke Michael to take over the leadership made the revolution in February and March to succeed.
14. The mistakes made by the provisional government under the premiership of prince Lvov and Kerensky of keeping a war policy against German and Austria. This robbed the government of its supporters leading to the success of the revolution.
15. The support of the German military officers given to Lenin during his return from exile in Switzerland as he was sneaked into the Russian territory in a sealed train under the conveyance of German officials. This helped Lenin to eventually announce a socialist revolution of October – November which succeeded in 1917.





16. The strength of the revolutionary army that eventually defeated the troops of the royal guard that was loyal to the provisional government. This enabled the October November revolution to succeed.
17. The mistakes made by the leaders of the provisional government of prince Lvov and Kerensky of undermining the strength and influence of the Bolsheviks. This worked in favour of the Bolsheviks hence leading to the success of the revolution.
18. The tactics used by Lenin and his supporters also account for the success of the revolution. Lenin for example, promised Land to the peasants, end land Lordism in Russia and this was supported by majority of the Russians leading to the success of the revolution.
19. The failure of Russian offensive against German which continued to discredit the Russian war policy and increased the chances of the Bolsheviks to succeed against the government. This led to increased revolutionary propaganda that swept aside the Tsarist government.
20. The formation of the new soviet council of deputies of workers and soldiers in Petrograd and in other towns calling for peace, constituent assembly and extensive nationalization which received massive support from the masses hence the success of the revolution.
21. The confusion and anarchy caused by an attempted coupe under the commander in chief *Kornilov* against the provisional government. This helped the second revolution to succeed because of the disorganization that had been created.
22. The arrest and take of the key areas and positions in Petrograd by rebel soldiers, sailors and factory red guards directed by Trotsky made the revolution to succeed. This was so because it over whelmed the provisional government thus failing to deal with the situation.

**Ref:**

### **Questions**

- i. *Account for the occurrence of the Russian revolution of 1917.*
- ii. *The Russian revolution of 1917 was inevitable. Discuss*
- iii. *To what extent was Lenin responsible for the outbreak of the Russian revolution of 1917?*
- iv. *What were the long term and short term factors that caused the Russian revolution of 1917?*
- v. *To what extent was the weakness of Tsar Nicholas II responsible for the outbreak of the Russian revolution of 1917*
- vi. *Account for the collapse of the Tsarist regime in Russia in 1917.*
- vii. *Examine the factors responsible for the success of the Russian revolution of 1917.*
- viii. *How did the Russian revolution of 1917 affect Russia and Europe?*
- ix. *Examine the effects of the Russian revolution of 1917*
- x. *Examine the impact of the spread of communism in Europe by 1970*



# THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC IN GERMANY (1919 – 1934)

As Germany drew towards her defeat in 1918, public opinion turned against Kaiser William II who fled into exile in Holland in November in 1918. After the abdication of Kaiser William, Germany was prepared for the establishment of a new republican government as the Germans were no longer interested in having another imperial government under one man.

Provisional government was formed to enable Germany pass through the war and conclude a cease fire. However the roles and activities of this government met a lot of challenges and problems in Berlin due to the communist and socialist pressure and therefore the constituent assembly debated and finally passed a republican constitution in Germany bringing into force a republican government in a small town known as Weimar. Hence the government that was announced at that very town depleted its name from the place and was called Weimar republic with Friedrich Ebert as the first president. The government thus ruled Germany up to 1934 when it was overthrown by Adolf Hitler and his Nazi party.

## FACTORS FOR THE RISE OF THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC

1. The defeat of Germany in World War I and the subsequent abdication of Kaiser William II was primarily responsible for the rise of the republic. It should be recalled that by 1918, the allied powers had destroyed Germany's economy and there was serious famine, starvation, inflation and unemployment. This situation resulted into strikes and demonstrations against Kaiser William II who fled into exile in Holland giving way for the establishment of the Weimar republic.
2. There was a strong desire to create and promote parliamentary democratic system of governance in Germany. In this the majority of the Germans reasoned that, Germany would not have been defeated if it was under a democratic government. Hence that the defeat of Germany was out of a betrayal by Kaiser William II's government which was a government of one man and therefore advocated for a broad based government necessitating for the establishment of the Weimar republic.
3. The unpopularity of the past imperial regime led by Kaiser William II. This government had driven Germany into the World War I and it had fallen into a hopeless defeat, badly overstated and humiliated. This touched the tender feelings of the German people who favoured for a democratic government resulting into the setting up of the Weimar republic in 1919.
4. The influence of the provisional government under Friedrich Ebert facilitated the emergence of the republic. Ebert organized the national constituent assembly delegates



- that debated and finally come up with a republican constitution giving way for the declaration of a republican government in German in 1919.
5. The impact of the Russian revolution of 1917 especially after its success. This caused fear and worry among the wealth middle class in German. In fact, the Russian socialists' ideas had even influenced the workers in German especially in Bavaria to support the communist outbreaks led by men like Rose Luxemburg. Hence because of this fear, the German middle class supported the provisional government which hurried the establishment of the republic in 1919.
  6. The influence of the victor powers mainly France, Britain and U S A. these favoured the setting up and establishment of a democratic government since they did not want to see another dictatorial communist regime being established in Europe. Even in Russia where communism had succeeded, the allies had tried to intervene to overthrow communism. Therefore they feared that if a communist government was established in German, it will lead to the spread of communism in Western Europe.
  7. The growth of liberalism and the desire to do away with hereditary authority in German. The desire to give the German people a chance and power to elect their leaders necessitated the formation of the republic. The Germans disregarded the dictatorship of Keizer William II and reasoned that the absence of liberalism in German could have been the cause of problems in German and therefore favoured the establishment of the republic in 1919.
  8. The inability and instabilities faced by the new communist government under Lenin in Russia. During this time the communist government was entangled in all sorts of problems e.g. there was massive clashes between the white and red army, famine, inflation, numerous strikes etc. therefore the government in Russia could not spare time and resources to aid their fellow communists in German thus giving way for the establishment of the republic.
  9. The desire by the Germans to establish a government which was more accommodative than the previous governments. The Germans demanded for equal representation of all groups of people and a reduction of Prussian influence over German affairs since the imperial constitution favoured Prussia. This was done in the Weimar constitution which was more accommodative to all Germans.
  10. The failure of the communist revolution was also another important event toward the emergence of the republic. It should be noted that the communists had started a revolution being influenced by the Russian revolution of 1917. However this was suppressed by the provisional government thus giving way for the rise of the Weimar republic in 1919.
  11. The heavy bloodshed and insecurity in Berlin were also responsible for the rise of the republic. This forced the constituent assembly delegates to shift the assembly venue from Berlin to Weimar town. It was from here that a new constitution and republic was declared leading to the rise of the republic.



12. The need for reconciliation and peaceful co-existence with other powers led to the creation of the republic. It should be noted that German's aggression had isolated her from the rest of Europe except in few countries like Austria, Turkey and Bulgaria. This in turn retarded economic growth and undermined German's position internationally. This in one way or the other facilitated the establishment of the republic.
13. The weakness of Keizer William II that led to the collapse of the monarchy in German. The monarchy had become unpopular by 1919 hence facilitating the establishment of a democratic government.
14. The resignation and abdication of Keizer William the II left power vacuum through which the republic arose. It should be noted that due to pressure from the Germans, Keizer fled into exile living behind a political vacuum. One can safely argue therefore that if Keizer William had not fled into exile, there would not have existed a political vacuum which the republic exploited leading to its establishment.
15. The weakness of the communist army that made it fail to protect the communist revolution.
16. The support the government had from the masses.

## SUCCESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC

1. The Weimar republic passed and carried out various political and constitutional reforms in German and for the first time in the history of German, there were general elections for the republican president where every German over 21 years had a right to vote. This became a turning point in the history of German.
2. The republic introduced the Reichstag to replace the former Bundesrat and this promoted liberal democracy based on proportional representation of all parties and on universal manhood suffrage. This therefore promoted people's democratic and political rights in German.
3. The republic reduced the powers of the top German leaders e.g. the chancellor and his ministers were now entirely answerable to the electorate. The president was given limited powers compared to the powers of Keizer William II by the 1871 constitution. This limited the dictatorship of the German president leading to prosperity.
4. The government abolished hereditary authority in favour of democracy. Therefore the Prussian dominance over German came to an end and as a result there was freedom of speech, right to decision making, expression etc.
5. The government carried out revaluation of the German mark backed by the value of the countries land. The government could not allow the currency to decay and hence in August 1923, the new German chancellor **Gustav Stresemann** began to stabilize the German mark or currency. By issuing the new German currency known as "*Reuten*"



- mark", the increasing level of inflation were curbed down in German and helped in the recovery of German economy.
6. The Weimar republic improved international relations between German and other powers. The relations had been tinted for many years since the downfall of Bismarck. In fact, Stresemann played a big role together with General Dawes and began the Dawes plan in which war costs were paid to the allies, German was provided with loans from the League of Nations and this boosted its economy.
  7. The Weimar republic prepared German to sign the Locarno treaty of 1925 signed at the Swiss resort between France, Britain, Belgium and Italy. This brought reconciliation and peaceful co-existence, arbitration for peace and eventually, the German Rhineland's were demilitarized and this reduced tension between German and France.
  8. The Weimar republic assisted and prepared German to join the League of Nations in 1926. In fact it was because of the arrangement at Locarno that again German become a friend to other powers of Europe and thus a member of the League of Nations. This existed until 1935 when Adolf Hitler withdrew Germans membership from the League of Nations.
  9. The republic prevented German from falling into the hands of communism especially after the success of the Bolshevik revolution of 1917. It was evident that German was to be the next country to experience a communist takeover but the republic suppressed the communist revolution thus stopping the spread of communism in central Europe.
  10. The republic ended World War I which had been disastrous not only to German but to the whole of Europe. The war took a lot of money, property, lives and although the German nationalists and the war mongers were determined to continue with the war, the Weimar republic skillfully signed the armistice that ended the war.
  11. The Weimar republic again suppressed "*Hitler's Munich Putsch of November 1923*" where Adolf Hitler had tried to overthrow the democratic government by means of a coup but was arrested and imprisoned. The government was saved from an attack and helped in the political transformation that existed in German for some time.
  12. The republic carried out rehabilitation on German's social-economic sectors that had been badly affected by the war e.g. communication networks, infrastructure were rehabilitated, schools were re-established, healthy centers and others were restored which was a sign of recovery. However, this was short lived as they were shattered by the world economic depression.
  13. The republic suppressed the "*Wolfgang uprising in 1920*" which became the first challenge of the Weimar republic. This uprising was against the government's acceptance of the Versailles settlement of 1919 and it occurred in the Baltic region of German. It caused insecurity and general instability in German for some days until the Weimar republic organized and suppressed the revolt. Thus peace and security was restored.

**NOTE:** *For the failures of the Weimar republic, refer to the factors for the downfall of the republic.*



# FACTORS FOR THE DOWNFALL OF THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC BY 1934.

The liberal government in German completely collapsed in 1934 when Adolf Hitler scrapped off the republican constitution and declared German a one party state especially after the death of President Hindenburg. The collapse of the liberal government was as a result of the following.

1. The Weimar republic was unpopular right from the beginning because of accepting the terms of the Versailles settlement of 1919 imposed on German which limited German military, reduced German's Empire and alienating German nationals. In fact by 1919, it was a general talk in German that the republic had betrayed the country and this made the republic unpopular hence accounting for its collapse.
2. The government faced internal rebellion and revolts that weakened the government completely e.g. the Wolfgang revolt that struck Berlin, Hitler's Munich patch in Bavaria and the rebellion of Karl Liebknecht and others which led to instabilities and disorganization internally thus influencing the collapse of the republic.
3. The impact of the French invasion of Ruhr in 1923 as a result of German's failure to pay the war indemnity. When this occurred the republican government was humiliated, led to collapse of the standards of living, production reduced, inflation went high and there was general suffering in German. All these were blamed on the republic for having failed to protect the integrity of German which partly accelerated discontents leading to the collapse of the republic.
4. The death of outstanding leaders of the republic who had made its survival possible. E.g. Fredrik Ebert died in 1925 prematurely, Stressman who had tried to reconcile German with other powers died in 1929. To make matters worse, in 1934 the republican president Hindenburg, a veteran general of the war also died giving Adolph Hitler an opportunity to take over power thus ending the survival of the republic.
5. The impact of the world economic depression of 1929. Although the period between 1924 and 1928 witnessed steady economic progress in German, this changed drastically when the world was hit by the world economic blizzard that started from USA with the collapse of the world's stock exchange market leading to decline in wages, poor working condition etc. this eventually undermined the government and damaged its reputation.
  - i. The depression led to increased inflation in German which Adolf Hitler used to propagate against the government.
  - ii. The depression led to high levels of unemployment which heavily damaged the reputation of the government.
  - iii. The depression led to decline of wages and this was blamed on the government hence loosening the sympathy of the masses.
  - iv. The depression led to collapse of German industries which escalated the unemployment problem in German.



- v. The impacts of the depression gave Hitler an opportunity to propagate against the government hence its failure.
  - vi. Led to increased insecurity in German as a result of massive unemployment, low income which increased opposition against the government.
  - vii. The depression led to the collapse of social services e.g. health, educational, insurance etc that severely affected the German population.
  - viii. The depression led to increased demonstration and mobs which badly affected the image of the government.
  - ix. The depression failed the work of the League of Nation in its effort to maintain peace.
  - x. The depression led to the rise of Nazism and Adolf Hitler in German.
6. The rise of Adolf Hitler and his Nazi party who undermined the republic. Through his propaganda and convincing language, he promised to end unemployment, stabilize German economy and reviving German's prestige. Eventually many Germans supported him and as a result the Nazi representatives in the German assembly increased. This created a solid foundation for Hitler's attacks on the government leading to its collapse in 1934. This was through the following:
- i. He propagated against the government's failure to end the unemployment problem in German.
  - ii. He was behind the increasing violence through his Storm troopers that discredited the government.
  - iii. He always condemned the Weimar leaders for accepting the Versailles settlement of 1919 that won him popularity.
  - iv. He challenged the republic through the famous Munich pact in Bavaria in 1923.
  - v. He declared himself the president in 1934 after the death of Hindenburg thus throwing aside the Weimar constitution.
  - vi. He formed the Nazi party that challenged the government thus leading to its collapse.
  - vii. He created a tense situation through terror that the government failed to handle.
  - viii. He used the French invasion of Ruhr in 1923 to undermine the reputation of the government.
  - ix. He promises of reviving the German glory influenced the Germans to support him against the government.
  - x. His promises of reviving the German economy made the Germans to support him.
7. The general situation in German which was characterized by social unrest. Therefore as the Germans continued to experience a collapsing economy, there was total suffering leading to mobs, discontented middle class, collapse of pension schemes, investments, insurance etc. all these exposed the weaknesses of the republic leading to its collapse.
8. Generally the Germans had no respect for democratic government, they had for long been under military rule since the time of Bismarck. Therefore they had never experienced civilian leadership and therefore had no respect to it. This tradition was facilitated by the failure of the government to live to the expectation of the masses and



- therefore preferred a totalitarian regime giving way for the rise of Adolf Hitler and the downfall of the republic.
9. The liberal Weimar faced a problem of increased violence which it failed to control and this violence was promoted by Hitler and his storm troopers. This caused massive bloodshed, insecurity leading to tension among the Germans and this discredited the Weimar republic leading to its collapse.
  10. The Weimar republic also lacked support from the German army to deal with such problems e.g. when Adolf Hitler paraded his storm troopers on streets to terrorize the opponents of the Nazi party, the German army did nothing. Even when Hitler swept the liberal constitution aside, the army did nothing to re-instate the government.
  11. The weakness of the League of Nations. The League of Nations was partly established to alleviate the social and economic crisis which was caused by World War I. However the league failed to live to its expectations leading to massive unemployment, inflation, starvation which was exploited by Adolf Hitler to propagate against the republic and causing more insecurity that led to the collapse of the republic.
  12. The Weimar republic had a weak constitution i.e. it was organized on a system of equal proportional representation where all political groups would have fair representation. Unfortunately, there existed many political groups e.g. the communists, monarchists, republicans, Nazis etc and no single party had the majority in parliament. This resulted into chaos and rivalry in parliament that undermined the performance of the republic leading to its collapse.
  13. The death of Hindenburg in 1934 ended the existence of the republic. His death created a political vacuum which was exploited by Adolf Hitler and swept away the Weimar republic hence establishing dictatorship in German.
  14. The republic was faced with popular uprisings and revolts that challenged its existence e.g. the free corps revolts of 1920s, the attempted coup by Adolf Hitler in 1923 weakened the government hence facilitating its collapse.
  15. The increased assassinations of top officials in German e.g. Walter Rathenau (German foreign minister), Gustav Eberker – the leader of the armistice delegation were assassinated by the free corps and anti – Semitic youth. Thus between 1919- 1922, there were 376 political murders and this led to increased insecurity in German.
  16. The republic was further challenged by the increasing opposition from the professional groups i.e. the legal and the teaching professionals, civil service and the German army was against the republic hence leading to its collapse.
  17. Lack of support from the German army. The army disliked the disarmament clause which the Weimar leaders had ratified thus the army could not save the government.
  18. The increasing opposition from political groups especially the social democratic party, the free corps, the conservatives, the Nazis etc. all these had divergent interests and caused a state of anarchy that undermined the survival of the republic.



## QUESTIONS:

- i. *To what extent was Adolf Hitler responsible for the collapse of the Weimar republic?*
- ii. *Account for the collapse of the Weimar republic in 1934.*
- iii. *Assess the achievements of the Weimar republic by 1934 in German.*
- iv. *How far was the Versailles settlement of 1919 responsible for the collapse of the Weimar republic in 1934?*
- v. *Evaluate the performance of the Weimar republic in German by 1934.*
- vi. *Examine the challenges confronted by the liberal government in German between 1919- 1934.*
- vii. *Discuss the factors that facilitated the rise of liberal government in German in 1919.*
- viii. *Account for the collapse of liberal democracy in German in 1934.*



# THE WORLD ECONOMIC DEPRESSION (1929- 1934)

This refers to a situation of low economic activities that took place in Europe between 1929 -1934. It characterized by inflation, unemployment, low demand, low incomes, low revenue, low standards of living, poor balance of payments, low investments, heavy debt burden etc. The crisis started on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1929 at the Wall Street stock exchange market in U.S.A. This immediately affected other powers in the world except Russia and Poland that had communist economies. The depression shuttered whatever confidence to growth in Europe after world war I. Unsold goods accumulated, production slowed down and in some cases stopped, unemployment went up and there was little money among the people and hence low purchasing power.

The depression threatened the banking institutions some of which closed down e.g. the Austrian central bank closed in 1931, political crisis developed and countries were now concerned with domestic problems and preserving internal peace, national recovery took precedent over internal security. Thus some historians regard the economic depression to be more disastrous than the two world wars.

## CAUSES OF THE WORLD ECONOMIC DEPRESSION

1. The effects of world war I. World War I left European countries in a disorganized state through heavy bombings and massive expenditure. During the war powers had incurred heavy debts with U.S.A to finance the war. Even after the war, more loans were got for recovery program. However, there was pressure to repay the loans with interest and therefore heavy amounts of money were transferred from Europe to U.S.A. It should be noted that German had borrowed money from U.S.A to pay the war reparation and in turn she could pay back to U.S.A but with interest. This reduced money in circulation in German leading to low purchasing power, low investments hence causing a depression.
  - i. The war resulted into massive unemployment which inevitably led to low incomes and hence low purchasing power.
  - ii. The war led to massive destruction of industries leading to unemployment and low productivity.
  - iii. The war undermined free trade between countries leading to accumulation of unsold industrial output thus leading to low levels of investments.
  - iv. The war undermined investment levels due to heavy debt, low consumption and balance of payment deficit.
  - v. The war forced European powers to incur heavy debts to finance the war thus after the war huge amounts of money had to be transferred to USA which reduced money in circulation leading to low incomes.



- vi. The war indemnity imposed on German affected German's economy which inevitably affected the economies of other powers of Europe.
  - vii. The war led to massive expenditure in order to finance the war. This reduced investments in other productive ventures.
  - viii. The war shuttered economic activities in Europe which resulted into low investment, low incomes, low purchasing power etc.
2. The policy of economic nationalism and isolationism. This policy by states especially U.S.A in the interwar period pursued a discriminative economic policy against other economies i.e. U.S.A intended to shelter her economy against imports from other powers. This in turn forced other countries to react in the same way not only against U.S.A but also against each other. This shuttered international trade which led to low prices as a result of flooding of goods on the market leading to unemployment, low incomes, laying off of worker etc thus leading to a depression.
    - i. The policy shuttered international trade leading to low investments.
    - ii. With the collapse of international trade, unemployment level increased leading to low consumption and thus accumulation of unsold goods.
    - iii. The policy led to increased flooding of goods on the markets and this led to reduction in production and investments.
  3. The impact of the gold standard system (gold tyranny or the dictatorship of gold). Under this system, the economy of every country in Europe was supposed to have the total amounts of money in circulation exactly equivalent to value of gold in reserves. This was pursued once again by U.S.A, the great financier of European economies after world war I. unfortunately; many countries had limited amounts of gold in reserves hence limiting the amounts of money in circulation. This reduced the levels of demand and effective market potentials that negatively affected economic flows hence leading to a depression.
    - i. This policy made powers to reduce their monies' in circulation leading to low levels of investments.
    - ii. The low levels of gold in reserves, led to reduction of money in circulation leading to low purchasing power.
    - iii. It led to unemployment due to low levels of investments.
  4. Related to the above, was that European powers had secured loans from U.S.A for reconstruction and had to pay back with interests. This was worsened when U.S.A started demanding for repayment in gold and this made countries to be left with little gold in reserves. This therefore limited money in circulation, leading to low effective demand in countries like Sweden, Netherlands, German, Austria and others because their gold reserves become dry. This gold tyranny depressed the production levels which led to laying off of workers causing acute poverty, unemployment hence leading to a depression.
  5. The worsening fall in incomes due to wide spread unemployment. Although most European countries e.g. Italy, German and Britain had reached a sound economic boom:



in agriculture and industry between 1920- 1929 little had been done to improve the social – economic welfare of the people. Unemployment remained high e.g. in Britain it was at about one (1) million, in German six (6) millions etc. This lack of income left the accumulated output unsold from industrial sector leading to laying off of worker and hence a depression.

6. The failure of the League of Nations. This failed to implement economic policies necessary for free trade and instead the league of nation was used by some states e.g. Britain and France to promote selfish interests. It therefore failed to put up a mechanism that could ensure the free flow of goods and services among states and therefore countries resorted to protectionism. As a result countries were prevented from free trade which would make them acquire profits, leading to investments, high incomes, more jobs etc.
7. The increased use of capital intensive methods of production. In most capitalist states of Europe, new technologies led to over production and laying off of workers leading to massive unemployment, low incomes leading to low purchasing power hence a depression.
8. The impact of the Versailles settlement of 1919. It should be noted that the Versailles settlement was unrealistic i.e. it did not favour fair trading among states, consequently states become selfish in safeguarding their economic interests. The reparation clause shuttered German's economy and hence leading to a depression.
  - i. The demilitarization clause led to increased unemployment in German.
  - ii. The colonial clause made German to loose a lot of revenue from her former colonies of Tanganyika, Togo land, Cameroon and Namibia.
  - iii. The territorial clause made German loose resources e.g. in Alsace and Lorraine, Melmedy, Saar region, Port of Danzig etc.
  - iv. The reparation clause forced German to borrow a lot of money to pay the reparation which badly affected her economy.
  - v. The treaty undermined free trade as countries were only concerned with protecting selfish economic interests.
  - vi. The settlement created a weak league of nation that failed to establish proper economic policies that would enhance free trade.
  - vii. The treaty undermined free trade especially in countries like German.
  - viii. Led to wide spread violence which led to low economic activities.
  - ix. Led to wide spread low incomes dues to the poor terms of the treaty.
9. The fall in the prices of agricultural products also affected those countries that majorly depended on agriculture. This reduced their foreign exchange earnings as a result their purchasing power also declined leading to dumping and increasing unemployment which worsened the crisis.
10. Lack of strong economic leadership in U.S.A and Britain led to persistent bankruptcy, fluctuation in production of agriculture and industrial sectors that deepened the crisis. It should be noted that the republican government of Hoover in U.S.A adopted a laissez-



- faire policy by encouraging free enterprise which made private individuals to control prices, production and wages yet the government increased tariff. This eventually conditioned the occurrence of the crisis.
11. Increased production due to technological advancement in terms of machines and production techniques e.g. in Canada there was over production of wheat, coffee, meat, grains and fruits and as a result of huge supplies, began to terrorize the agricultural sector yet there was no free trade. Consequently markets for such commodities become impossible to get and thus there was production at loss. This resulted into economic blizzard that negatively affected Canadian agricultural sector thus making the slump inevitable.
  12. The rumors of the Wall Street stock crash. The political and economic announcement made by prominent Politician through respected news papers plus the rumors that circulated though out Europe that the Wall Street stock exchange market was about to collapse increased panic and disorganized economic activities in the whole of Europe.
    - i. It created fear and panic among the business community leading to withdraw of money from banks.
    - ii. It disorganized the economic activities in the world.
    - iii. Led to collapse of the Wall Street exchange market and some banks which escalated the depression.
    - iv. It undermined investments due fear and tension.
    - v. Led to collapse of international trade.
    - vi. Led to increased unemployment as businessmen withdrew their money from the banks.

## **EFFECTS OF THE DEPRESSION**

1. The depression shuttered international trade i.e. economies remained incapable of importing and exporting to and from other countries. As a result of protectionism this resulted into economic decay.
2. The great financial powers of the world were greatly affected as many banks closed down and other related financial institutions become bankrupt and closed e.g. in U.S.A. Canada, Switzerland and in Austria the central bank was closed down and this eventually worsened the crisis.
3. Many factories, processing plants and other agricultural ventures collapsed due to the narrow market e.g. in Belgium, Canada, Netherlands and Italy. This worsened the economic conditions of the people.
4. The crisis led to high level of unemployment nearly in the whole world due to collapse of industries, factories, agriculture and other related sectors e.g. in 1931, there were three (3) million unemployed people in Belgium, more than three (3) millions in France, more than five (5) in U.S.A. This increased suffering of the masses in those states hence deepening the crisis.



5. The depression led to the breakdown of international relations e.g. many countries condemned and hated U.S.A for her policy of economic nationalism and isolationism. This attitude undermined the policy of ever lasting peace as advocated for by signatories at Versailles.
6. The depression led to the outbreak of political upheavals in deferent parts of the world. This was partly due to acute poverty, unemployment, starvation, low incomes leading to increased desperacy, mobs, strikes and general insecurity leading to crisis and loss of confidence in the existing governments. This led to loss of hope that dominated the interwar period e.g. in Italy, German and elsewhere, political upheavals were rampant leading to collapse of existing governments.
7. The governments in power suffered as a result of a depression e.g. in U.S.A the republican government was removed from power and democrats took over under Franklyn Roosevelt, in Britain the labour party was removed from power because of its failure to balance the budget and thus the rise of a coalition government of the liberals, in German, the Weimar republic fell from power, in Spain, Turkey and Japan dictatorial governments come into power.
8. The depression undermined the working of the League of Nations. Member states abandoned the policy of international alliance, free trade and resorted to independent decisions. European countries were therefore operating on a jungle law (survival for the fittest). Moreover countries were not willing to fund the League of Nations thus undermining the League of Nation's capacity to deal with international crisis. Again the depression made countries to withdraw their membership from the League of Nations and others resorted to aggression.
9. The depression paved way for the spread Russian communism in the whole of Europe. This was a result of wide spread poverty, unemployment and stagnation in all spheres that made the masses to think about communism as a solution to their problems. Also the spread of communism led to the rise of dictators e.g. in German, Nazism come into power partly as a result of the need to destroy communism which was threatening the middle class. In Spain, General Franco came into power after over throwing the liberal government.
10. The depression led to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. The failure of liberal governments to solve the problems of the people led to the rise of dictators in Italy and German. These dictators wanted to destroy democracy e.g. Adolf Hitler wanted all countries to accept Nazism ideology and it's not a surprise therefore that, when he come to power he revived the arms race, formed the Berlin - Rome - Tokyo axis which camp become poisonous to world peace.
11. As a result of the depression, the gold standard system was abandoned in many countries with the exception of few e.g. France, Holland, Belgium and Switzerland. This was so because powers thought that they could not continue with the system in a situation where powers had little gold in reserves.



12. Many banking institutions closed down in many countries of Europe. This was due to the fact that business men had withdrawn their savings and therefore banks had to close down because they did not have the working capital. E.g. in German, banks collapsed, the Austrian central bank and the Wall Street stock exchange market in U.S.A.
13. As a result of the depression, U.S.A carried out currency devaluation mainly to increase the purchasing power of her nationals and in turn high total sells were realized. It also advanced loans and grants to its nationals and to European states to recover from the depression.
14. The depression led to regional groupings intended to fight the crisis. The OSLO group of Scandinavian countries including Norway, Switzerland was formed. The international labour organization was formed by League of Nations and the world economic conferences were held in order to devise means of fighting the depression.

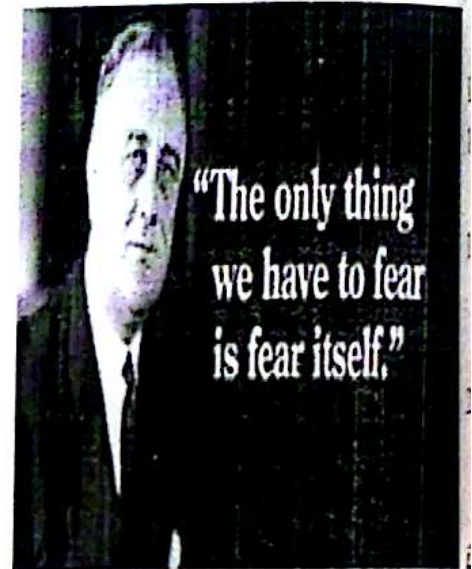
## THE WAYS THROUGH WHICH THE DEPRESSION WAS CURBED

*Discuss the reaction of European powers to stop the world economic depression.*

1. Most European states designed social – economic policies to address the slump. Its phenomenon to mention that industrial and agricultural sectors were improved upon. Trade unions in deferent countries were given autonomy and also progressive taxes were levied from the rich to subsidize the poor. This improved the general welfare of the house hold leading to increased incomes and increased purchasing power.
2. Some countries e.g. U.S.A, Britain, and France without hesitation gave unemployment reliefs to their citizens who were above 18 years for them to realize the purpose of life on this planet earth. This was a fundamental precedent which was emulated by other powers leading to increased effective demand.
3. U.S.A carried out currency devaluation mainly to increase the purchasing power of its citizens and in turn realize high total sells. It also advanced loans and grants for its nationals and European countries to recover from the depression.
4. Most European leaders resorted to dictatorship as a solution. Force was used against demonstrators and strikers. Quarter system was employed on both imports and exports and in order to safeguard the infant local industries, tariffs were enforced.
5. The affected countries resorted to formation of regional economic integration. This resulted into free trade which had been put in a limbo for some time due to economic nationalism and protectionism. The OSLO bloc was formed and the agricultural oriented nature of eastern European countries teamed up under the British common wealth. This led to free flow of goods and services leading to prosperity of trade.



6. European countries stopped the gold system which was a contributor to the depression. Regardless the amounts of gold in reserves, countries printed money through the central banks of deferent countries, it was circulated into the economy and this beefed up the purchasing power of the masses.
7. Some countries like German, under Adolf Hitler destroyed the harsh Versailles settlement of 1919 that had crippled German's economy as a solution to the slump. Hitler after coming to power discontinued the payment of the war reparation to the victor powers, the Rhineland's and the Saar coal fields which had been taken from German were re -occupied and industrialization programs were rejuvenated and as a result German's economy slowly but surely recovered.
8. In 1933, the world economic conference was convened in Geneva and it was attended by sixty six countries. The representatives' tirelessly worked out various modalities to solve the great depression e.g. the world currency stabilization, removal of trade restrictions, harmonizing imports and exports, tariffs etc.
9. Countries also restricted borrowing and lending on the argument that money borrowed was to be invested in productive ventures. U.S.A was forced to stop granting of loans and began to seriously ask for repayment especially from those countries that had borrowed from U.S.A before 1929.
10. Some powers forcefully embarked on a radical foreign policy. In this policy they hoped to get raw materials, markets for their manufactured goods and areas for investments. E.g. the Japanese invasion of china in 1931 was partly to exploit cotton and silk for her economic benefits. Italian invasion of Ethiopia and Hitler's invasion of Austria etc were as a result of the need to fight the depression.
11. Many countries began diversification policies e.g. in Canada, the government shifted from majoring in agriculture to full scale industrialization. This increased production leading to increased incomes and investments thus increased purchasing power.
12. Some countries began to restrict immigration especially people from the Balkan states. This was intended to reduce the escalating levels of unemployment e.g. in Canada, Brazil, Argentina etc.
13. The election of Franklyn Roosevelt in 1932 brought into America the politics of courage and vigor backed by determination especially with his common slogan of *"the only thing we Americans have to fear is fear its self"*. Hence by this, a positive approach restored economic hope and certainty in American economy. He later launched *"a new deal"* based on stringent federal control of credits. Indeed by 1933, he had restored confidence in the American banking sector, regulated the powers of the treasury departments and tried to counter the effects of crisis on the American economy.





14. In France the government passed decrees and laws to control wages and prices which were removed from the hands of private owners. In Russia though less affected by the depression, the first five years of Stalin led to re-organization of the Russian industrial sector, doubled the general industrial production and investment programs. the American government stopped lending abroad and even withdrew her short term loans to offset the economy at home. This was intended to stabilize American finances which were disorganized by the depression.
15. In German the president- Hindenburg, passed an emergency decree cutting expenditure and imposing new taxes. German also sought help from the League of Nations in order to stabilize her economy.
16. In Britain, the government which composed of the liberals and conservatives passed a special supplementary budget with strings attached e.g. pay cuts to the armed forces, it also took Britain out of the gold standard system and this allowed the value of the British pound to normalize.
17. Some countries raised tariffs to protect home industries from foreign competition.
18. Some countries adopted communism e.g. Yugoslavia, china, Korea etc to end the economic crisis.
19. Economic research was done i.e. JM Keynes a British economist carried out research and came up with economic solutions. Keynes advocated for reduction of taxes, increase government expenditure, subsidization to increase consumption.
20. Stalin came up with a five year plan to revive the Russian economy.

#### **Questions:**

- i. *Examine the causes and effects of the world economic depression.*
- ii. *To what extent was the American nationalism and isolationism responsible for the outbreak of the world economic depression?*
- iii. *The world economic depression of 1929- 1933 was inevitable. Discuss*
- iv. *How far was the Versailles settlement of 1919 responsible for the outbreak of the world economic depression?*



# FASCISM AND BENITTO MUSSOLINI IN ITALY (1922 – 1943)



The word Fascism simply means resting and putting all powers in hands of one person. It was developed from the Italian word “Fasces” which meant a band of rods tied around an axe that was the magistrate’s emblem of power in the historical Rome. In the years after 1919, it was a term used to describe a group of small bands used to fight socialism and communism. In actual sense, Fascist governments are usually characterized by rigid one party dictatorship, forceable suppression of opposition, centralization of power, belligent nationalism, racism and militarism.

Fascism was founded as a party in 1919 by Benito Mussolini who was an ex- socialist and journalist by then living in Milan in Lombardy. He controlled this party and helped it to capture power and government from 1922 -1943 in the middle of the Second World War. Indeed Fascism was composed of the frustrated, jobless, desperate mobs, desperate veterans and industrial capitalists who had fear against communism that was spreading from Russia.

## FACTORS FOR THE RISE OF FASCISM AND BENITTO MUSOLINI IN ITALY

1. The existence of political distress in Italy. In Italy by then, there was a constitutional monarchy in hands of victor Emmanuel III whose government was full of political distress and dissatisfaction. This is so because since the unification of Italy, little had been done to improve the social and economic conditions of the people. Thus Mussolini exploited such unpleasant economic conditions among the people to appeal to the Italians and this favoured his rise to power in 1922.
2. The impact of the appalling poverty mainly among the peasants of southern Italy, industrial workers and among the ex-soldiers. All these hated the constitutional monarchy of victor Emmanuel III who had failed to improve their welfare and this made the Italians to respond to the appeals of Mussolini positively who had promised to alleviate poverty. Consequently paving way for the rise of Benito Mussolini and fascism.



3. The failure of the government to win and capture the support of the people worked in favour of Mussolini. The government in power had done little to promote the social and political progress in Italy and even to promote the glory of Italy abroad. When Mussolini promised all this to the Italians, he was supported by the dissatisfied masses thus leading to his rise to power.
4. The political anarchy that was characterized by a multiplicity of evils e.g. bribery, negligence, corruption, embezzlement etc. proper management of affairs had been left out and intrigues had been replaced by the real concerns of social welfare of the people. This aroused great opposition of the people against the monarch that worked in favour of Mussolini and fascism hence his rise to power.
5. The impact of World War I on Italy worked in favour of Benito Mussolini and Fascism. Italian involvement in World War I had negatively affected the political Image and destroyed her economy leading to bankruptcy, economic decay, unemployment and others which were not immediately addressed by the government. This gave Mussolini an opportunity to propagate against the government which facilitated his rise to power in 1922.
6. The impact of the Versailles settlement of 1919 on Italy sowed seeds for the rise of Benito Mussolini. Although Italy had gained Trieste and Trentino, she did not gain Fiume as had been promised in the secret treaties with the allied powers. Above all she did not gain glory and respect like her allies and this brought disharmony in Italy and the constitutional government. Therefore when Mussolini emerged and promised to punish the signatories at Versailles and revive the Italian name, he received wide support hence his rise to power.
7. The existence of massive violence in Italy also favoured the rise of Mussolini. E.g. by 1919, there was too much blagage, high way robbery, instabilities, strikes and demonstrations by the unemployed masses in the south and among the workers leading to industrial revolts in the north especially in Milan. All these indicated that the government of King Emmanuel III had failed and Mussolini used this atmosphere to make appeals to the masses leading to his rise to power.
8. Related to the above was the social- economic anarchy that characterized Italy after 1920. The Italian economy was featured by hyper inflation, increasing taxes, rise of prices, decline in wages, urban congestion and other related social economic ills that were connected with the Italian stagnant economy. The failure of the liberal government to address these ills, generated discontents against the government which had a weak machinery enabling Mussolini to rise to power in 1922.
9. The influence of Mussolini's black shirted men who were organized and prepared by Mussolini especially to cause havoc and violence in Italy. They caused a situation that aroused hatred of the Italian people against the government. E.g. they secretly killed leaders of other opposition parties making the government unstable and disorganized. This influenced the masses to respond positively to Mussolini's appeals hence facilitating his rise to power.



10. The general weakness of king Victor Emmanuel III who was the constitutional head of the government. He failed to take any military action against violence; he neglected the situation hoping that he would use it to weaken his opponents. However, opposition groups progressively killed each other giving ample time to Mussolini to benefit out of the chaos and the failure of the government to deal with such situations inevitably worked in favour of Mussolini.
11. The success of the Russian revolution of 1917 which became a stimulating factor to the rise of Mussolini and fascism in Italy. The success of the Russian revolution stimulated socialist hopes in Italy and the socialists hoped to establish a purely socialist government which scared the Italian capitalists and the middle class on whom the future of the nation depended. Mussolini in this played his politics as he condemned communism and promised to protect the wealth of the Italian middle class and hence the wealthy middle class embraced Mussolini's ideology thus facilitating his rise to power.
12. The rise and personality of Benito Mussolini. He was a former soldier and had charisma and capability in politics. He had worked in many areas and had variety of job experiences and knew how to withstand hard times and challenges hence he became a good organizer and was talented with extra power of speech, he appealed to the affected people with positive promises and eventually the Italians followed him giving him great support that enabled him to rise to power.
13. The success of the fascist march on Rome on 28<sup>th</sup> October 1922. It was at the congress at Naples in 1921 when Mussolini and his party were joined by the revolutionary party of Edmondo. Mussolini had an overwhelming support of the people and therefore announced the march to Rome forcing the Prime Minister **Giulio** to resign. Therefore Mussolini moved together with his black shirted men from Milan to Rome and this scared King Victor Emmanuel III and thus appointed Mussolini as the prime minister. It was this appointment that Mussolini used to establish a fascist state in Italy.
14. The press propaganda also worked in favour of Mussolini. Through the public speeches and news papers e.g. the Mussolini's news paper "*popolo-de-Italia*" emphasized and condemned the liberal government. Mussolini organized political and military parades, in which the fascist slogans were sung, emphasized the Italian glory. Through the news papers he promised to revive the Italian glory that had collapsed since World War I. All these popularized Mussolini and favoured his rise to power.
15. The influence of various philosophies e.g. the Hegel's philosophy which stated that "*a state is the supreme manifestation of God on earth*". Implying that the supremacy of Italy in Europe was to be observed which the government had failed to establish. However, Mussolini in his propaganda promised to the people to preserve the supremacy of Italy as a state and this in many ways influenced the Italians to support Mussolini as he was seen as a man who would preserve the supremacy of Italy.
16. The role of Pope Pius XI contributed towards the rise of Mussolini. Mussolini was in support of the Catholic Church and through his statements he showed that he was willing to reconcile the church and the state and therefore normalize the relations



- between the church and the state that had remained tinted since 1870. Therefore basing on the fact that Italy was majorly a catholic state, the support of the pope won for Mussolini many Catholics hence facilitating his rise to power.
17. The failure of the liberal government to carry out land reforms in Italy which remained a big question among the poor Italians causing discontents and hatred among the Italians against the government. Above all, the masses had wanted a review of the land system which the government failed to do hence giving an opportunity to Mussolini to propagate against the government.
  18. The failure of the parliamentary system also led to the rise of Mussolini. It should be noted that, parties in Italy were weak and disorganized and these included the socialists, Catholics and liberals. These dominated the parliament which was elected in 1919. To make matters worse, they neglected the vital groups such as the industrialists, landlords, veterans, peasants etc. therefore the above situation laid fertile ground for the rise of Mussolini.
  19. The support of the army. The army also favoured Mussolini's rise to power e.g. 1921. the army and police never intervened when Mussolini's black shirted and other fascists were rigging elections and intimidating voters. Also when Mussolini organized a march from Milan to Rome, again the army never interfered and this partly explains why the march was successful.

## THE CONSOLIDATION OF FASCISM AND BENITO MUSSOLINI IN ITALY (1922 – 1943)

1. In 1922, Mussolini was appointed as the prime minister of Italy with executive powers and thus used this office to increase his powers and control over the parliament and the state. As a result of effective control of the parliament, Mussolini was in position to consolidate his rule in Italy.
2. Mussolini forced his political opponents into submission and whoever tried to criticize him was eliminated e.g. the socialist leaders were liquidated in cold blood in 1924. These socialist leaders e.g. **Matteotti** and **Amendora** were eliminated thus the would be opposition against Mussolini was silenced hence consolidating his position.
3. Mussolini developed unquestionable control over the press and destroyed press freedom. He controlled and suffocated political expressions and assemblies. all the news papers which were against Fascism were eliminated, magazines, radio stations and film theaters were strictly censored and in long run the majority of the Italians were kept ignorant about what was going on in the state. This reduced opposition against Mussolini and his government hence consolidation.
4. Mussolini also in April 1926, all trade unions were banned and were changed into a co-operate system there by weakening the possibility of socialist opposition against his



- government. The union was used as a platform by the socialist to oppose the government of Mussolini and therefore this weakened socialist opposition in Italy.
5. In 1926, Mussolini banned all political parties in Italy and only remained with the Fascist party. In this he employed the secret police to check on various political movements, political gatherings and others which would be convened anywhere in Italy. Those who refused were punished by death and this was effected and promoted by the Fascist general secretary **Farrinacci** who played a vital role in consolidating Fascism in Italy.
  6. Mussolini reduced the powers of opposition by sending suspected opponents into exile in Lipari Island in the Mediterranean Sea where many of them were openly killed and others died of starvation. This created fear and panic on the side of opposition, consequently many of them joined Fascism thus consolidating the Fascist regime in Italy.
  7. Mussolini incorporated all other political leaders into his government. In this he was able to reduce opposition through strict control and monitoring but eventually time after time, Mussolini started eliminating them through unknown killings. As a result opposition to Mussolini's leadership was eliminated.
  8. He revised the Italian legal system into an authoritarian system where all local democracies were destroyed and local governments were supervised by officials appointed by Mussolini. Thus by centralization of power in Italy, Mussolini exercised unquestionable control over the state and no wonder therefore the last article of the constitution stated that "*Mussolini is always right*".
  9. Mussolini established a grand council of the Fascists which destroyed any kind political and civil freedoms which existed in Italy. All forms of liberalism were curtailed by Mussolini's fascist and this inevitably worked in favour of Mussolini hence consolidation.
  10. Mussolini also affected the trend of public education where intellectual freedom ended and there were compulsory teachings of the origins, aims and purpose of Fascism. All professors, lecturers and teachers were supervised and were to swear an oath of allegiance and promise to teach Fascist principles and in this, young Fascists were groomed and this helped in strengthening of the Fascist rule in Italy.
  11. Mussolini also transformed the former parliamentary system into a co-operate state with 28 divisions called co-operations and these co-operations formed the Italian parliament which was a representation of co-operations. The co-operations also contained industrial capitalists and workers representatives and this was a channel through which workers grievances were settled and as a result, Mussolini eliminated situations of strikes from industrial workers consequently undermining internal instabilities hence consolidation.
  12. Mussolini's government also portrayed efficiency in administration and politics and because of this, there were technological advancements and developments, the civil service was reformed, there were schemes of construction of buildings, bridges, roads.



- railways and canals to a desirable level. This popularized Mussolini's government in the minds of Italians hence consolidation.
13. Mussolini and his government also made sure that the unproductive land of Italy was put into use. This boosted agricultural production and reduced starvation and poverty that had made many Italians miserable. In so doing, Mussolini's image was popularized hence consolidation.
  14. Mussolini suppressed communism in Italy which was spreading from Russia and had caused great danger to the Italian middle class e.g. the industrialists, businessmen etc. as a result Mussolini used repressive measure against communist activities and this won him the support of the wealth middle class who embraced his regime hence consolidation.
  15. Mussolini resolved the long standing problems and enmity between the Catholic Church and the state. This enmity had started in 1870 after the completion of the Italian unification. Thus in order to reconcile the Catholic Church and the state, Mussolini signed the Lateran treaty with pope pious XI and therefore the relations were normalized. In this the Italian clergy was pleased by Mussolini and therefore supported him and his government hence consolidation.
  16. Mussolini also expanded and equipped the Italian army which he used to strengthen his regime e.g. he enlarged the Fascist black shirted army into a disciplined, organized and strong army. He used this army to contain situations of lawlessness which had existed in Italy for a long time. This eventually created internal political stability, tranquility and order. This was embraced by the Italians who supported Mussolini.
  17. Mussolini re organized the industrialization sector in Italy e.g. old industries were renovated, the new ones were established i.e. the Pillerri rubber industry, oil refineries etc. there was improvements in hydro electricity power generation and all these improve the image of Mussolini thereby consolidating his rule in Italy.
  18. In his administration, he fought against "mafias" which were common in southern Italy to reduce on corruption that had tinted the government of victor Emanuel III. he even tried to improve on the conditions of workers in relation to the working hours, pay and their welfare. The Italian commercialists and merchants were happy with Mussolini's policy against robbery and this helped him to consolidate his position across the business community in Italy.
  19. Mussolini extended the Italian glory abroad and gained reputation from the Italian nationalists and glory seekers e.g. he invaded Ethiopia in 1935 to avert the Adowa humiliation of 1896, in 1936, he occupied Albania, in the same year he expanded the Fascist influence in Spain by supporting general Franco during the Spanish civil war of 1934- 1939.
  20. He also consolidated his position by consolidating Italian presence in North Africa. He carried out various economic developments in the protectorate e.g. agriculture, trade and industry which gave Italy a lot of benefits and many Italian settlers were resettled in Libya. Indeed this foreign achievement popularized Mussolini's government.



21. Mussolini also extended and won the friendship of other powers e.g. in 1937, he concluded an alliance with German (*the Berlin – Rome alliance*) and by 1939 he had concluded the *Berlin – Rome – Tokyo alliance* with the admission of Japan. He had also won the friendship of General Franco hence strengthening Italian influence in Europe.
22. Mussolini also pursued a successful foreign policy which gave him glory and respect e.g. he signed the Rome treaty with Yugoslavia in 1923, he received compensation of 3000 livres after the Corfu incident. In 1924, he signed the Locarno treaty which appeared to promote diplomacy in Europe and all these enabled him to consolidate his position.
23. He filled the key positions in the government with new Fascist officials e.g. in the police, army etc. he appointed them as senators in the upper house, made them top military and police officers and therefore these supported his policies and programs thus consolidation.
24. Mussolini made party membership as a yard stick of getting a government job and also encouraged youth organization to support him. The mere fact that the youth were the majority greatly helped him to consolidate his position.
25. Mussolini kept to himself powers to initiate laws and this made him to govern by decrees. He retained powers to appoint departmental officials and ministers and in this case he ended up appointing his fellow Fascists who helped him to consolidate his position.
26. He also used political education for indoctrination of the Italians into Fascism i.e. the Italians were taught to be war like and to deprive freedom, peace and democracy from others. All youth were to join youth organization for indoctrination, teachers and lecturers were to wear a uniform, children were encouraged to criticize teachers who were anti- fascists, the Italians were reminded of the great Roman Empire, they were taught to chant "*Mussolini is always right*" new books were re-written glorifying Fascism and all these helped Mussolini to consolidate his position.
27. He established an efficient navy and air force.
28. He signed diplomatic treaties with Russia, France etc.
29. Increased Italian influence when he signed the treaty of Lausanne in 1923, in which he recovered the island of Dodecanese and Rhodes from Greece.

## ACHIEVEMENTS OF MUSSOLINI

- i. He signed the Berlin – Rome – Tokyo axis that strengthened Italian position in Europe.
- ii. He signed the treaty with Yugoslavia in 1923.
- iii. He received a compensation for Italy of 3000 livres after the Corfu incident.
- iv. He promoted education.
- v. He consolidated Italian rule in North Africa.



- vi. He revived the Italian glory when he attacked Ethiopia in 1935.
- vii. He fought "mafias" in Italy hence reducing unemployment and embezzlement of funds.
- viii. He improved the industrial sector by building new industries and renovating the old one.
- ix. He strengthened the Italian army through training and re-equipping.
- x. He fought insecurity in Italy that had characterized the past regime.
- xi. He solved the long standing enmity between the Catholic Church and the state.
- xii. He suppressed communism which was spreading from Russia and this benefited the middle class.
- xiii. He boosted agriculture through putting to use the unproductive land.
- xiv. He incorporated political opponents into his government thus creating a broad based government.
- xv. He promoted trade with other countries.
- xvi. He strengthened Italian influence in Europe when he assisted General Franco during the Spanish civil war of 1934 – 1939.
- xvii. He resisted early Nazi takeover of Austria.
- xviii. He promoted diplomacy in Europe when he signed the Locarno treaty in 1924.
- xix. He recovered the island of Dodecanese and Rhodes from Greece after signing the Lausanne treaty which increased Italian influence in Europe.

## FAILURES

- i. Little was done in the strengthening of the economy through improvements in agriculture and industrial sector.
- ii. Failed to establish a foreign exchange rate e.g. in 1926, he revaluated the Italian currency making exports very expensive.
- iii. He failed to control the economic depression in Italy.
- iv. He failed to provide social services to the people e.g. health, insurance hence failing to achieve social welfare.
- v. He failed to completely stamp out corruption and embezzlement of state funds.
- vi. His aggression made Italy to be hated by other powers of Europe.
- vii. His censorship of press killed press freedom.
- viii. He destroyed parliamentary democracy by declaring Italy a one party state.
- ix. He promoted favoritism and discrimination where staunch Fascists were favoured at the expense of other people
- x. He over taxed unmarried people in order to raise funds to reward those who produced a big number of children.
- xi. His regime was characterized by bloodshed especially those who opposed him.
- xii. He was partly responsible for the outbreak of the Second World War.
- xiii. He was responsible for the failure of the league of nations



- xiv. He was responsible for the Italian defeat during the Second World War I.
- xv. His aggressive nature led to instabilities in Europe.

### Questions

- i. *Account for the rise Fascism in Italy in 1922.*
- ii. *How did Mussolini acquire and consolidate his rule in Italy.*
- iii. *Why did liberalism in Italy collapse to Fascism?*
- iv. *Account for the collapse of liberal democracy in Italy in 1922.*
- v. *It was because of economic hardships that Mussolini came to power in Italy. Discuss*
- vi. *Examine the success and failure of Fascism in Italy by 1940.*
- vii. *Examine the impact of Fascist rule on Europe.*