

The emergence of dictatorships/single party States in Europe after 1917

Under Lenin, Russia became a single Party state. This was part of a general process after 1917 in Europe when many countries became dictatorships. Some, like Russia were Communist dictatorships of the left, others like Italy, Germany, Spain and Portugal became fascist dictatorships of the right.

However, there was a general pattern to this process:

1. The impact of industrialisation

Industrialisation upset traditional society in central & eastern Europe
Eg in Russia:

Result: Traditional social groups look for ways to restore old stability & order

2. Political change & the opening up of the franchise

- Released from the lack of political power in the past, population were inexperienced politically and easily manipulated by politicians
Eg in Russia:

Result: political instability and desire for order to be restored by strong govt

3. Post war governments of central & eastern Europe faced many problems

- Effects of WW1 led to many difficult problems (eg in Russia)
- Lack of political experience.

Result: Democratic govts are seen to be failing and are believed to be weak compared with govts of the past = replaced by strong govt

4. Growth of Nationalism

- WW1 humiliations in Germany, Italy
- In Russia: Military defeat in 1917 removes Kerensky;
Civil War produces hatred of foreigner who helps Whites

Result: Emergence of groups to restore traditional 'order'/end humiliation & defeat: eg National Socialists in Germany wanting to tear up Treaty of Versailles (or in Russia, Oct/Nov Rev; or once Stalin is in power, closing Russia off to the West- the Cold War ultimately)

Result: democratic attempts at govt collapse

(Germany: Weimar failure; Russia: Kerensky fails, Constituent Assembly fails)

Population support/accept Revolution (Russia)
or elect/accept dictators to solve problems
(Nazi's in 1933)

= emergence of single party states