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Q7

History repeats itself, first as a tragedy, second as a farce.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2021 · Essay · 125 marks · Philosophical and ethical quotes

Philosophical and ethical quotes

Core demand of the question

- **Name Marx:** history repeats, first tragedy, then farce
- **One stand:** we fail to learn; the second time we fail as a joke that still kills
- Move through politics, communal harm, policy, media. Keep one honest counter
- Close on memory as a civic duty

Revision summary

Not a full essay - a map.

- **Open with a funeral and a later meme. Stand:** reruns of power; memory as duty.
- **Headings:** politics, riot/pandemic, inquiry, media, then one counter.

Earn **Marx** once. Peg a commission that became ritual.

Close on a notebook, not fatalism.

Note

This is a map, not the full 1,000-1,200 word essay.

Anecdote

A riot's first season is a funeral. A decade later the same rumour wears a meme. The bodies can rhyme. **Marx** said the second time is farce. Farce here is not funny. It is tragedy in costume.

One stand

Repetition is a failure of institutions, not a law of nature. Write the costume (farce) as a warning: we have seen the plot. Then refuse fatalism - the play can be stopped.

Heading map**What the line is asking**

- **Tragedy:** a first collapse with a kind of dignity or shock.
- **Farce:** the copy, the parody, the strongman as a rerun.
- **Marx** on Napoleon III - one honest mention, then India.

Politics

- Emergency's shadow; a later year that rhymes in smaller type.
- Strongman theatre as farce that still jails.

Society

- Partition's tragedy; later riots as a script someone kept.
- A pandemic wave we had already been shown.

Policy

- A bridge that falls twice. An inquiry that becomes a ritual - farce as procedure.

Media

- The rumour's second life is faster. Farce at 5G speed.

The counter

Not everything that looks alike is a repeat (a protest is not a riot because a channel says so). And the oppressed repeating a demand is not farce; it is unfinished justice. Marx's joke is aimed at power's reruns, not at a hunger that still knocks.

Last paragraph

- **Close:** keep a national notebook of first tragedies so the costume does not fool us. Expand - this is only the map.

Facts & figures

Marx

History repeats itself, first as tragedy, second as farce - 18th Brumaire. Name it; then leave France.

Santayana cousin

Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it - use once if at all.

Riot inquiries

A ritual that can become farce if it never binds the next season.

Pandemic waves

A second season we had been shown - memory as public health.

Art. 21

The right the farce still owes - a life not spent as costume.

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