

WRAP Exams · wrapexams.com

Prelims PYQ, Mains model answers, and copy evaluation. Write to the desk for this paper, a doubt, or the AI waitlist.

ask@wrapexams.com · +91 85951 84903 · wrapexams.com

Q3(a)

Fascism displays an ambivalent stance towards parliamentary democracy. Explain

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2023 · PSIR GS 1 · 20 marks · Indian Nationalism

Indian Nationalism: Political Strategies of India's Freedom Struggle; Perspectives on Indian National Movement; Gandhi, Tagore, Nehru, Ambedkar, and the socialists.

Core demand of the question

- Fascism displays an ambivalent stance towards parliamentary democracy. Explain. (20 marks)

Revision summary

Fascism rejects liberal parliament as talk, class division, and weak decision.

It still uses elections, ministries, and plebiscites as a road to monopoly.

Schmitt and Gentile supply the anti-parliamentary doctrine; Mill and Dahl supply the democratic criterion that is abolished.

Enabling acts and emergency power convert a majority into a regime without removable opposition.

Post-war rights and basic-structure limits are designed against that ambivalence.

Introduction

Fascism did not treat parliamentary democracy as a partner in a mixed constitution. It used parliament, elections, and mass mobilisation to capture the state, and then emptied those forms of opposition, rights, and limited government. The stance is ambivalent because the movement both exploited democratic devices and defined itself against liberal parliament.

Body

What fascism opposed in parliament

- Liberal parliament, in **Mill** and in **Dahl**'s polyarchy, is a place of contest, publicity, and removable rulers.
- Fascist theory, in **Giovanni Gentile** and in **Mussolini**'s doctrine, treated the individual as real only inside the state, which cancels Mill's harm-limited liberty.
- **Carl Schmitt** attacked parliament as endless talk that cannot decide in an emergency, and he praised acclamation over discussion.
- Multi-party bargaining was named as weakness, class conflict, and national humiliation after war and economic crisis.
- The fascist alternative was a single movement, a leader, and a corporatist organisation of labour and capital under the state.

How fascism used democratic forms

- Italian Fascists and German National Socialists contested elections, sat in chambers, and formed ministries by constitutional appointment before they destroyed the same constitution.
- Plebiscites and managed acclamation produced a show of popular unity without an opposition that could win.
- Mass suffrage was not rejected as a number. It was recoded as the leader's identity with the people, which is the opposite of **Locke**'s trust and of **Rawls**'s public reason.
- Emergency decrees, enabling acts, and violence against rivals converted a parliamentary majority into a monopoly.
- **The ambivalence is therefore tactical and ideological at once:** parliament is useful as a ladder and illegitimate as a continuing limit.

Why the ambivalence matters for democratic theory

- A democracy that does not limit its own power, the theme of **Hobbes** versus constitutionalism, can vote in its own replacement.
- **Foucault**'s work on how bodies and populations are governed helps explain fascist spectacle, youth organisations, and racial statistics as power, not only as ideology.
- **Easton**'s support can be mobilised by propaganda so that outputs look authoritative while opposition inputs are closed.
- Post-war constitutions, including India's Part III, militant democracy in some European texts, and **Kesavananda**'s basic structure, are replies to that ambivalence: some devices of popular government are not available to abolish the regime of rights.
- The explanation is complete only if it names both the anti-parliamentary doctrine and the parliamentary road to dictatorship.

Limits of the explanation

- Not every strong executive is fascist. The test is the destruction of organised opposition, independent courts, and equal citizenship, often with a myth of national rebirth and enemies within.
- Parliamentary democracy can fail for other reasons, including colonial exclusion and caste, which **Ambedkar** named; those failures are not identical with fascism.
- Ambivalence is not sympathy. It is the combination of use and destruction.

Flow diagram

Fascism -> Uses elections and chambers
 Fascism -> Destroys opposition and rights
 Parliament -> Mill Dahl contest
 Destroys opposition and rights -> Leader-state identity
 Uses elections and chambers -> Destroys opposition and rights

Conclusion

Fascism is ambivalent toward parliamentary democracy because it uses elections and chambers to take power and then abolishes contest, rights, and limited government. Mill, Dahl, and constitutional basic structure name what is destroyed. **Schmitt** and Gentile name the doctrine that justifies the destruction.

Facts & figures

Enabling Act, 1933

German statute that allowed the cabinet to legislate, emptying the Reichstag as a limit on the executive.

Schmitt

The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy attacked discussion-parliament and preferred decision and acclamation.

Gentile and Mussolini

The Doctrine of Fascism (1932) stated that the individual is completed only in the state.

Dahl's polyarchy

Requires inclusive contestation; fascist acclamation keeps inclusion as spectacle and drops contestation.

Kesavananda, 1973

Indian basic-structure limit on amendment is one constitutional reply to self-abolition of democracy.

WRAP Exams · Write. Read. Analyse. Practice. · <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/psir-gs-1/2023/fascism-displays-an-ambivalent-stance-towards-parliamentary-democracy-explain/> · ask@wrapexams.com · wrapexams.com