

Authoritarian Forms of Government

Vocabulary

Define each of the following:

- authoritarian government
- political inequality
- dictatorships
- oligarchy
- junta
- totalitarian
- crisis theory
- charismatic leadership (charisma)
- authoritarian personality
- fascism
- neo-fascist
- autocrat
- "divine right" of kings
- coup d'etat
- "Great Man" theory
- civil liberties
- Thomas Carlyle
- Friedrich Nietzsche



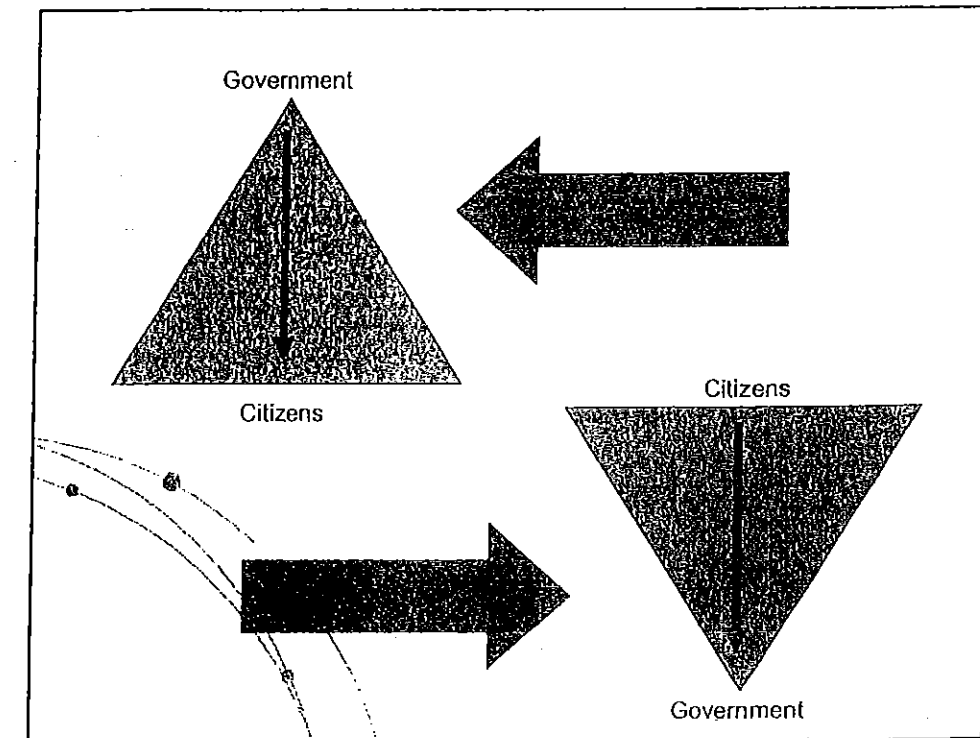
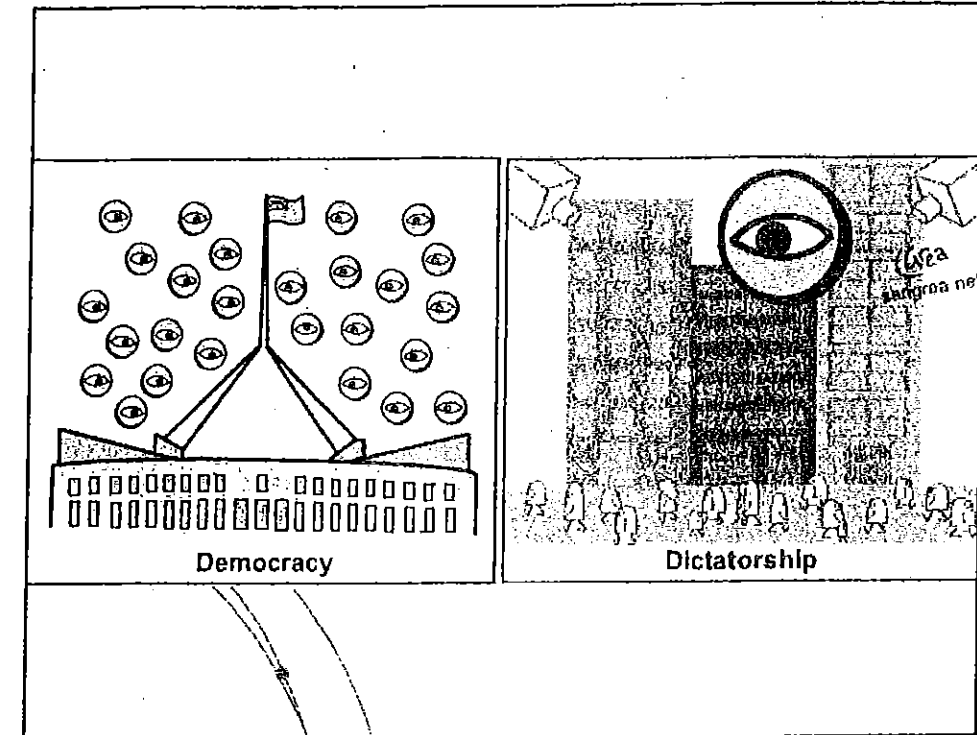
Will be checked on: _____

Types of Government

Democracy

Dictatorship

- requirement that people follow laws established by the government
- no freedom of religion
- no freedom to gather in large groups
- right to vote for candidates selected by the leaders
- laws to serve the needs of the leaders
- no right to criticize the actions of the government
- liability to arrest for any reason, real or imagined
- no protection of the rights of minorities
- no guarantee that leaders will follow the constitution
- no consultation with citizens in decision making



1. Close a television station or newspaper.
2. Refuse to pay the bills.
3. Forget to apply for planning permission.
4. Have their profile on a postage stamp.
5. Change yesterday's weather.
6. Write a guaranteed bestseller.
7. Leave a car double-parked (although BMW drivers may also do this).
8. Make the trains run on time.
9. Get a taxi after 3AM.
10. Actually change the government.

Calgary Herald, Feb 16/05.

Swazi king buys wives 10 BMWs

THE TELEGRAPH
JOHANNESBURG

King Mswati III of Swaziland, one of the world's poorest countries, spent more than a million dollars on 10 new BMWs for his 11 wives and three teenage fiancées.

His latest extravagance is equivalent to almost half the \$2.3 million of British aid that Swaziland received last year.

The cost of the BMWs is equal to 15 per cent of Swaziland's health budget of \$70 million.

Seventy per cent of Swaziland's one million people live in absolute poverty. About 39 per cent of all adult Swazis are infected with HIV or AIDS.

And the government is so strapped for cash that its ministries cannot buy any new furniture this year.

Swaziland is kept afloat by more than \$33 million of international aid.

Yet, last year, the king spent almost \$21 million on palaces, parties and cars.

His 36th birthday party, which was celebrated in the national stadium with 10,000 guests, cost \$770,000.

Former dictator now lives with mom

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE

Losing your job, quitting school, going broke and moving back home with your mother after living abroad for years would be tough on anyone.

It's even tougher when you're a former military dictator who once had the power to execute opponents at will.

Valentine Strasser became the world's youngest head of state when he seized power in 1992 at the age of 25. But the limelight didn't last. Four years later, he was ousted in another coup.

"I'm basically living off my mother now. She's been very supportive," the 35-year-old said at a neighbourhood bar on the outskirts of Freetown, Sierra Leone's capital. "It's been tough. I'm unemployed, but I'm coping."

It was well before noon and the former president was doing what he often does on weekdays: joking around with friends, playing checkers and sipping diligently on a plastic cup of palm wine, a cheap and highly potent alcoholic brew.

In contrast to the days when he commanded an army and courted the favour of foreign presidents, Strasser today seems to have reverted simply to being just another neighbourhood kid.

Gone are the crisp military fatigues, new suits and wraparound sunglasses. In their place: a baseball hat worn backward, a Bob Marley T-shirt, dark green shorts and a pair of Nike sneakers.

Asked how he spends his time now that he doesn't have to rule the country, Strasser took a drag of his cigarette and thought for a moment.

"I've been drinking palm wine," he said. "You shouldn't say that. But this is a democracy now. So go ahead."

Things were very different a decade ago when Strasser, then a captain known for winning disco contests, headed a group of young officers demanding unpaid salaries.

The protests snowballed into a popular coup that ousted dictator Maj-Gen. Joseph Momoh in April 1992.

Strasser was hailed as a saviour by many. Even today, Freetown residents say he changed things for the better, drastically cutting inflation, cleaning up the capital and putting the long defunct national TV station back on air.

He and his junta — known as "the boys" because most were only in their 20s — scored points by waging war, if unsuccessfully, on the country's hated rebels.

But Strasser was no angel. The young ruler was widely criticized when his government executed two dozen alleged coup plotters without trial on a Freetown beach.

Strasser promised to hand over power in democratic elections in 1996, but he was beaten to the punch by his No. 2 man, Brig. Julius Maada Bio, who overthrew him in a bloodless coup in January that year.



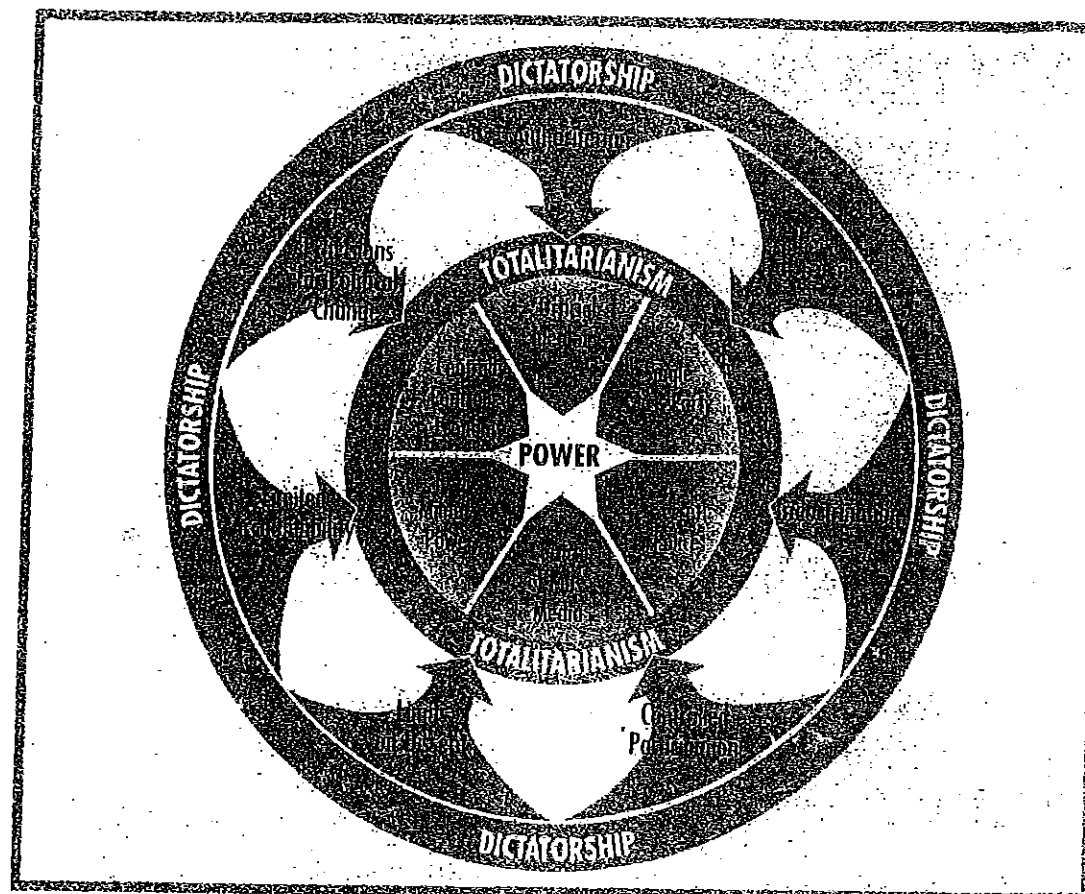
Herald Archive, Associated Press
Former Sierra Leonean dictator Valentine Strasser as he appeared in 1993, at the height of his power.

QUEEN ELIZABETH I (1533-1603) - VIRGIN QUEEN



- She was bastardised before she was three years old after the annulment of her mother's marriage to Henry VIII in 1536.
- Well educated and fluent in six languages, she inherited intelligence, determination, and shrewdness from both parents.
- When angry she would swear relentlessly and once spat on the clothes of a courtier who had not dressed to her liking.
- She saw the value of being in touch with the people and offered her carriage to be taken where the crowd seemed thickest and stood up and thanked the people.
- She wanted to erect a lasting monument to record "...that this Queen having lived such and such a time, lived and died a virgin."
- In the last decade of her reign, the standard of living reached the lowest level in the whole of recorded English history.

All totalitarian regimes are dictatorships but not all dictatorships are totalitarian.



For more information see Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski. *Totalitarianism and Dictatorship*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956.

Table 4.1: Communism Versus Fascism in Practice

	Communism	Fascism
Method of gaining power	• violent revolution	• abuse of the electoral system and terror (coup)
Method of rule	• single-party dictatorship	• single-party dictatorship
Source of beliefs	• writings of Marx, Lenin, Mao	• writings of Mussolini, Rocco, Sorel
Goals	• triumph of the working classes, world revolution, the overthrow of capitalism	• national greatness, constant expansion
Economy	• state-controlled, no private property, favours proletariat, emphasis on equality	• state regulation of private enterprise, favours capitalists, natural inequalities
Appeal	• working class, peasants, intelligentsia	• lower middle class, some upper class and clergy
Scope	• a worldwide movement, opposed to nationalism	• a series of national movements, stresses nationalism
Belief in reason	• humans are basically rational	• humans are basically irrational

Critique of Non-Democratic Systems

Contemporary non-democratic systems have their defenders and critics. Defenders argue that non-democratic systems can provide decisive leadership, political stability and social order, rapid mobilization of society's resources to accomplish national goals, and strong national defence. Defenders also contend that these strengths permit non-democratic systems to cope more easily with unrest and conflict than democratic systems.

Defenders of non-democratic systems have also argued that democracy can lead to considerable political instability, corruption, crime, and social chaos in societies that do not have strong democratic traditions. Since the collapse of Communist rule in Russia, many older Russians feel lost and confused about the change in their country. They long for the stability, control, and order that existed under communism, as the following quotes indicate:

"Under the Communists life was peaceful. There was law and order. There were few sudden changes, one knew what to expect."

"Our Communist leaders made decisions for the country without endless debate. They knew what the country needed and set about achieving it. They planned for the future development of the country. Now, our leaders think only about the present and themselves."

Critics of non-democratic systems cite some of the following weaknesses:

Lack of legitimacy. The political authority of the leader in most non-democratic systems rests largely on the threat or actual use of force to ensure continuation of the regime and obedience of the people.

Inefficiency and bureaucracy. Besides the military and public security agencies (secret police), most non-democratic systems rely on a bureaucracy to implement policies of top leadership. The bureaucracy is a source of employment and patronage for supporters of the system. Consequently, the bureaucracy becomes unwieldy and bloated

with many meaningless positions. Often, it leads to competition and conflicts in the bureaucracy that can only be controlled by the top leaders. These conflicts can lead to a lack of direction for the system.

Unchecked corruption. The lack of accountability of the government to the people often results in unchecked corruption by political leaders. Because the legislature and judiciary are controlled by the government, political leaders and government officials have free rein to enrich themselves at the expense of the public treasury, knowing that their corrupt activities will not be exposed and punished.

Widespread apathy and cynicism. The suppression of dissent and government control of people's participation in the political process often lead to widespread apathy and cynicism among the people. People become passive toward the government and leaders and may believe that all policies of government exist to further the interests of the leaders. More important, this apathy and cynicism lead to a lack of critical thinking about the actions of the government. Intolerance to different ideas may develop.

Power struggles over succession. Because political authority rests in the hands of one person or a small group, little or no provision for succession of leadership is generally made. Following the death of the leader, power struggles among groups within the government often occur until one group is successful in consolidating its power over the others.

Elitism. While many non-democratic systems claim to rule in the best interests of society, most of these systems are based on some form of elitism. The reliance on a particular political group, social class, clan, or family group for support has led many times in the past to the adoption of policies that favoured these groups at the expense of the rest of society. This has more than once resulted in war, popular revolt, and the overthrow of the system.