

## FASCISM IN ITALY

**Rise of Mussolini** - in 1919, Italian nationalists were outraged by the Paris peace treaties - lands they expected to gain became part of the new Yugoslavia - peasants seized land, workers went on strike and seized factories, returning veterans faces unemployment, trade declined, taxes rose - govt. was split into feuding factions

**A Leader Emerges** - Benito Mussolini - a socialist in his youth, he became a nationalist during the war - 1919 - Mussolini organized veterans and discontented Italians and formed the Fascist party (taken from the Latin word *fascis*, a bundle of sticks wrapped around an ax, a symbol of authority in ancient Rome)

- a fiery speaker - promised to end corruption and replace turmoil with order, to bring Italy back to its former greatness (saw himself as a modern Julius Caesar)

**Seizing Power** - Mussolini used his **Black Shirts** (combat squads) to break up socialist rallies, smash leftist presses, attack farmers' cooperatives - Fascist gangs ousted elected officials in northern Italy through intimidation and terror

- 1922 - Fascists announced a "march on Rome" to demand changes in the govt. - King Victor Emmanuel III feared a civil war in Italy after seeing Mussolini's supporters swarm into Rome -> offered Mussolini the position of prime minister

**Mussolini's Italy** - by 1925, Mussolini was known as "Il Duce" ("The Leader") - suppressed rival parties, muzzled the press, rigged elections, replaced elected officials with Fascist supporters - Italy remained a parliamentary monarchy (in theory), but was in fact a dictatorship upheld by terror

**Economic Policy** - Mussolini brought economy under state control, but preserved capitalism - reps. of business, labor, govt., and Fascist party controlled industry, agriculture, and trade - production increased, but at the expense of workers (low wages, strikes were illegal)

Social Policies - slogan of Fascist Italy: "Believe! Obey! Fight!" - men urged to be ruthless warriors, women called on to "win the battle of motherhood" - women with more than 14 children given a medal by Mussolini himself - Italy's children were indoctrinated with Fascist ideology as they joined the Fascist Youth - they marched in parades, chanting "Mussolini is always right"

**What is Fascism?** - an authoritarian govt. that is not communist - rooted in extreme nationalism, fascists glorified action, violence, discipline, and blind loyalty to the state, antidemocratic - saw democracy as weak, pursued aggressive foreign expansion, glorified war

Fascism vs. Communism - f. - pursued nationalist goals - c. - hopes for international change - f. - found allies among business leaders, wealthy landowners, lower middle class - c. - support from urban & agricultural workers

- similarities: flourished during economic hard times by promoting extreme programs of social change - dictators imposed totalitarian govts. to bring about social revolutions - a party elite claimed to rule in the name of national interest

Totalitarian Rule - 6 features of totalitarian states: 1. single-party dictatorship 2. state control of the economy 3. use of police spies and terror to enforce the will of the state 4. strict censorship of govt. and monopoly of the media 5. use of schools and the media to indoctrinate and mobilize citizens 6. unquestioning obedience to a single leader

Appeal - Why did fascism appeal to Italians? 1. promised strong, stable govt. + end to political feuding 2. Mussolini revived national pride 3. Mussolini projected a sense of power and confidence at a time of disorder and despair