**Italian Fascism**

Constitutional Monarchy

Prop Rep

Universal male suffrage

WWI often interpreted as a victory of democracy over dictatorship

Mussolini

* b. 1883
* Fiery, emotional, not too bright
* Before WWI - Radical Journalist, Left wing socialist, revolutionary
* Intense nationalist
* *Italia Irrendenta*
* Joined Italian army - rose to rank of corporal
* Organized *fascio di combattimento* from demobilized, unemployed ex-soldiers
* Named for fasces - symbol of Ancient Rome

Italy after WWI

* Italy had joined war for territory
* Army had not done well - lost 600,000 soldiers
* Hopes for gains were dashed at Versailles
* Huge debt
* Unemployment
* Land seizures, crop burning, rents not paid - general unrest
* Huge urban strikes - fanned by left-wing socialists who were leaning to the communists
* Violence in the streets Fascists (Black Shirts) against communists and workers

Italian parliament generally staying a middle course - Liberals, democrats, moderate socialists and Catholic Popular Party did well

Fascists got 35 of 500 seats - but hey were getting larger

Mussolini painted the fascists as a party in favour of the strength of the nation and law and order - appealing to the desire for stability

Although Mussolini had been a republican before the war he now hailed himself as the loyal supporter of the king

Wealthy property owners and industrialists turned to the Fascists for security against the communists - financial aid

Black Shirts ran campaign of violence - broke up union meetings, strikes etc.

March on Rome

* October, 1922
* Black Shirts were to converge on the capital for a coup - Mussolini in Milan
* Cabinet wanted martial law - King refused
* Cabinet resigned
* King appointed Mussolini premier
* Emergency power for a year to establish order
* Coalition gov’t

Pushed through legislation that the party receiving the most VOTES or 25% automatically be granted 2/3 the seats in parliament - prop rep me¬ant for instability he said - Acerbo Law

Elections of 1924 the Fascists won a majority - intimidation and control of election machinery

Matteotti Affair

* Socialist deputy - respected
* Railed against Fascist violence
* Murdered in 1924
* Clamour for Mussolini’s resignation
* Non-fascist deputies left the leg
* Mussolini eventually accepted full responsibility

Within the next few years Italy became a dictatorship

Hallmarks of Fascism

* Nationalism
* Centralized authority
* Unity
* Militarism
* Private enterprize publicly directed
* Pomp and ceremony - ritual
* Fiercely anti-communist
* Traditionalist

**Domestic Policy**

Economics

Mussolini introduced the Syndicalist or Corporate State

It was a conservative syndicalism - opposed to left-wing revolutionary syndicalism based on labour unions

Looked to the age of guilds as its models - stressing factional cooperation in the goals of the state

Developed slowly - at first there was 13 corporations later Divided all economic life into 22 “corporations”

Each corporation was run by fascist representatives of labour, employers and government

This organization

* set wages
* established working conditions
* established industrial policies

A National Council was to establish economic targets, goals and policies working toward economic self-sufficiency - but the government had the last say in the person of the minister of corporations

In 1938 the corporation became part of the government proper with the Chamber of Fasces and Corporations taking over from the old Chamber of Deputies (leg assembly)

Industry and fascism cooperated well into the mid 20s

Inflation was harsh around 1925

Labour unrest - sometimes sponsored by the Fascists

Mussolini brought industrialists and unions and Fascists together with the Vidoni Pact of 1925

As the depression deepened and the war expenditures hurt the economy the regime took more and more direct control over the economy - corporatism became a myth

*Carta del Lavoro* (Charter of Labour) - 1927

Work is a social duty

Employers agreed that workers got

* Free Sundays
* An Annual paid holiday
* extra pay for night work
* Insurance supported by employers and employees

Wages remained the lowest in Western Europe

The State pledged that it supported private enterprize unencumbered by the state except “when private enterprize fails or is insufficient or when the political interests of the state are involved.”

Employers had to employ the workers supplied to hem by the corporative labour exchanges which would favour fascists

**Battles**

Battle for the lira - Quota 90 - 1926

* Revaluation of the Lima - 90 Lima to the Pound Sterling had been as high as 148
* M. wanted to reassure foreign lender of his control of the economy
* Corporate mergers increased and capital became more concentrated (.88% of the companies owned 52% of the capital)

Battle for Grain - 1925 - 1933

* Increased tariffs on imported grain to protect domestic producers
* Domestic price high above world markets
* Favoured large producers, which in turn supported the Fascists
* Grain production expanded at the expense of other export crops- fruit etc
* Livestock production decreased - higher cost of feed (in 1936 Italy lost .5 million head)
* Decline in Italian diet and health

Battle for Land Reclamation - 1925-1938

* A series of public works projects designed to reclaim mashes - make them arable
* Irrigation Projects
* Quite successful - 3000 farms established, Pontine Marshes
* But 58% of draining projects were uncompleted and 32% of irrigation projects

Battle of the Births - 1927

* Mussolini was upset at low urban birth rates
* Part of the back to rural vitality trend
* Gov’t encouraged large rural families
* Spoke of traditional rural values - etc.
* Lowered rural standard of living even further

**Autarky**

Preparing for war in Ethiopia

Term meaning the campaign for economic self-sufficiency

Trade deficit and outflow of gold a problem

Controls over foreign exchange

Regulations on imports

People who held foreign currency were required to deposit it with the Bank of Italy

It was allocated to various industries to purchase raw material

By 1936 the regime controlled the distribution of virtually all raw materials

Bank of Italy became run by the gov’t

Long term industrial financing became the purview of the state