The Rise of Fascism in Europe 1919-1939: Mussolini’s Italy

Elements of fascism

Emphasis on power and strengthening the nation through:

- Dictatorship
- Extreme nationalism
- Economic self-sufficiency
- Military strength and war

Characteristics and tactics

- Propaganda
- Blaming scapegoats
- Secret police
- Censorship of the press
- Banning other political parties

MUSSOLINI’S ITALY

Why did fascism develop in Italy after WWI?

- **No history of democracy**: Too many political parties competed for votes and the people were suspicious of democracy. Coalition gov’ts (made up of many different parties) were inefficient.
- **Impact of WWI**: High casualties in WWI followed by no real gains in territory. Economic and political instability—high inflation, unemployment, war debts followed WWI.
- **Industrial unrest**: Strikes broke out after the war as jobs grew scarce. Industrialists and factory owners blamed communists and socialists for economic slumps.

Growth of the Fascist Party

- Benito Mussolini began as editor of a socialist newspaper but his experiences in WWI pushed him to the right.
- 1919-Italians dissatisfied with Paris Peace Conference and high unemployment. Strikes and protests broke out. Many feared a communist revolution.
- 1919-Muss’s ‘Blackshirts’ attacked strikers and socialists, gaining more support.
- 1922-Party membership grows to 300,000.
- Aug. 1922-Muss led 50,000 black shirts in March on Rome to seize power. Victor Emmanuel III invited Muss to form gov’t. Muss made Prime Minister.
- Jan 1925- VEIII gave Muss power to make laws w/o parliament. He banned all other parties, censored press, increased powers of police & army.

Many people supported fascism because they were afraid of communism.