

# **THE INTERWAR YEARS OF ITALY**

## **(1918-1939)**

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# POST WWI

- Italy received territory, but not all that was promised
- Disorder in Italy multiplied
  1. Peasants seized land
  2. Workers went on striker seized factories
  3. Returning veterans were unemployed
  4. Trade declined and taxes rose
  5. Government , split into feuding factions, couldn't stop it

# MUSSOLINI'S RISE TO POWER

- Organized supporters into "Combat squads."
- The Black Shirts, party militants, denied democratic process in favor of violence
  1. Broke up socialist rallies
  2. Smashed leftist presses
  3. Attacked farmers' cooperatives
- Many people lost faith in constitutional government
- During a rally in Naples, they announced their intention to march on Rome to demand changes in the government
- Terrified of a civil war, King Victor Emmanuel III asked Mussolini to form a government as prime minister



# MUSSOLINI'S RULE

- Obtained the title Il Duce (eel DOO chay) "The Leader"
- Suppressed rival parties, muzzled the press, rigged elections, and replaced elected officials with Fascist supporters
- Received support of Pope Pius XI for recognizing the Vatican as an independent state
- Theoretically, Italy remained a parliamentary monarchy, but actually a dictatorship upheld by terror

# THE ECONOMY OF ITALY

- Economy is under state control
- Preserved capitalism
  - \* An economic and political system in which a country's trade and industry are controlled by private owners for profit, rather than by the state.
- Under Mussolini's corporate state, representatives of business, labor, government, and the fascist party controlled industry, agriculture, and trade
- Favored the upper class and industrial leaders

# LOYALTY TO THE STATE

- State was important, individuals were only important as a member of the state
- All people were attacked by slogans glorifying the state
- "Believe! Obey! Fight!" Were posted all across Italy
- Men became selfless warriors for goths glory of Italy
- Women were pushed out of jobs and were called on to "win the battle of motherhood"
- The future fascists were a major goal
- Youth groups toughened children and taught them obedience a punishment
- Young fascists marched in torchlight parades, singing patriotic hymns and chanting, "Mussolini is always right."



# FASCISM

- Describes any centralized, authoritarian government that is not communist whose policies glorify the state over the individual and are destructive to basic human rights
  1. Intense nationalism
  2. Totalitarian control
  3. State control over individual
- Promised a strong stable government and an end to the political feuding
- Mussolini gave off a feeling of power and confidence at a time of disorder and despair
- Newspapers in Britain, France, and North America applauded the discipline and order of the new government, but soon found out later during Italy's conquest did the western democracies protest