

■ In the 1930s, the Soviet Union was made up of 11 soviet socialist republics, as this map shows. In theory, each republic was independent. In practice, the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic always dominated the Soviet Union. How does the area ruled by the Soviet Union in the 1930s differ from that ruled by the Russian Empire in 1914? For answer, see p. A 94.

3 Fascism in Italy

Italy, you will recall, was one of the “Big Four” powers at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. But Italy did not gain all the territory it wanted. As a result, many Italian nationalists denounced the government for its apparent weakness. Other dissatisfied groups contributed to growing unrest in Italy.

Postwar Unrest

Like most European nations, Italy faced severe political and economic problems in the years right after World War I. During the

war, the Italian government had promised social change and land reform. Its failure to live up to these promises aroused unrest among workers and peasants.

In the summer of 1920, dissatisfied workers went on strike and occupied factories. In the countryside, landless peasants seized the property of wealthy landlords. Many Italians, especially middle class property owners, were deeply troubled by these outbreaks of lawlessness.

The growing popularity of socialist parties also worried middle class Italians. In 1919, socialists won more seats in parliament

than any other party. When parliament met that year, socialist members shouted "Long live socialism!" instead of offering their greetings to the king, as custom demanded. In 1920, a communist party was formed in Italy, heightening middle class fears of revolution.

The Italian government seemed unable to prevent worker revolts or preserve order in the countryside. An ambitious politician, Benito Mussolini, leader of an anticommunist party, used this turmoil to gain power.

Benito Mussolini

As a young man, Mussolini had been a socialist. When World War I broke out, he abandoned socialism and became an enthusiastic nationalist, fighting for Italy. In 1919, Mussolini organized many war veterans into the Fascist party. The word fascist comes from the ancient Roman word "fasces," meaning a bundle of rods tied around an ax handle. During the Roman Empire, the fasces had symbolized unity and authority. Mussolini set out to bind Italians together. He used reminders of the glory of ancient Rome to inspire patriotism and obedience to authority.

Fascism. At first, Mussolini had no clear goals for his Fascist party. Gradually, however, fascism developed as a political movement. A key element of fascism was glorification of the state. Mussolini expressed this idea in his slogan: "Everything in the state, nothing outside the state, nothing against the state."

Fascists condemned democracy because they believed rival political parties destroyed the unity of the state. They supported a single-party system guided by a single strong ruler. Fascists despised socialism and communism. They defended private property and private enterprise, which they thought should be regulated by the government.

Another element of fascism was aggressive nationalism. A strong state, fascists argued, had every right to overcome a weaker one. They believed aggression represented action, while a desire for peace merely in-

duced weakness. Fascists also glorified military sacrifice.

Appeal of fascism. Fascism appealed to many Italians. Veterans of World War I appreciated the fascist emphasis on militarism. Italian nationalists applauded the idea of reviving the glories of ancient Rome. Some middle and upper class Italians were impatient with Italy's parliamentary government and yearned for a strong leader who would establish order. They also supported fascist ideas about private property. Mussolini's speeches about "action" and "struggle" stirred the imaginations of many young Italians.

The March on Rome. In the early 1920s, bands of Mussolini's followers, uniformed in black shirts, roamed the streets of Italian cities beating up communists, socialists, and union members. These "Black Shirts" ousted communists and socialists from city governments in Bologna and Milan. With each success, the number of fascists grew.

Sensing a rising tide of support, Mussolini prepared to seize power. In **October 1922**, he announced he would lead a "March on Rome" to defend the capital from a communist revolution. In fact, there was no threat of a communist revolution, but Mussolini hoped that the approach of his Black Shirts would frighten the government into surrender. And it did. When fascist bands approached Rome from four directions, King Victor Emmanuel III refused to use the army against them. A few days later, the king named Mussolini prime minister.

Italy as a Fascist State

As prime minister, Mussolini was given emergency powers for one year. Before the year was up, however, he pushed a law through parliament that in effect guaranteed a Fascist majority in parliament. In the next few years, Mussolini moved steadily to increase his power.

Outwardly, the form of government did not change drastically. Italy remained a monarchy with an elected parliament. But Mussolini had the right to make laws on his own initiative. The Fascist party controlled

elections and outlawed all opposition parties.

Like the Communist party in the Soviet Union, the Fascist party controlled the nation. Party members held important government jobs and leading posts in the army and the police. Mussolini used other methods of the totalitarian state. He imposed government censorship and banned criticism of the government. Fascists bought the leading Italian newspapers and wrote articles full of praise for "Il Duce," meaning the leader, a title Mussolini had adopted.

"Mussolini is always right" was the motto that all Italians were expected to follow. Police rounded up critics, who were held in remote island prisons. In schools, children were taught fascist ideas. They wore black uniforms and learned discipline, duty, and obedience—the virtues Mussolini thought had been a source of strength in ancient Rome.

Fascism differed from communism because it supported private enterprise. How-

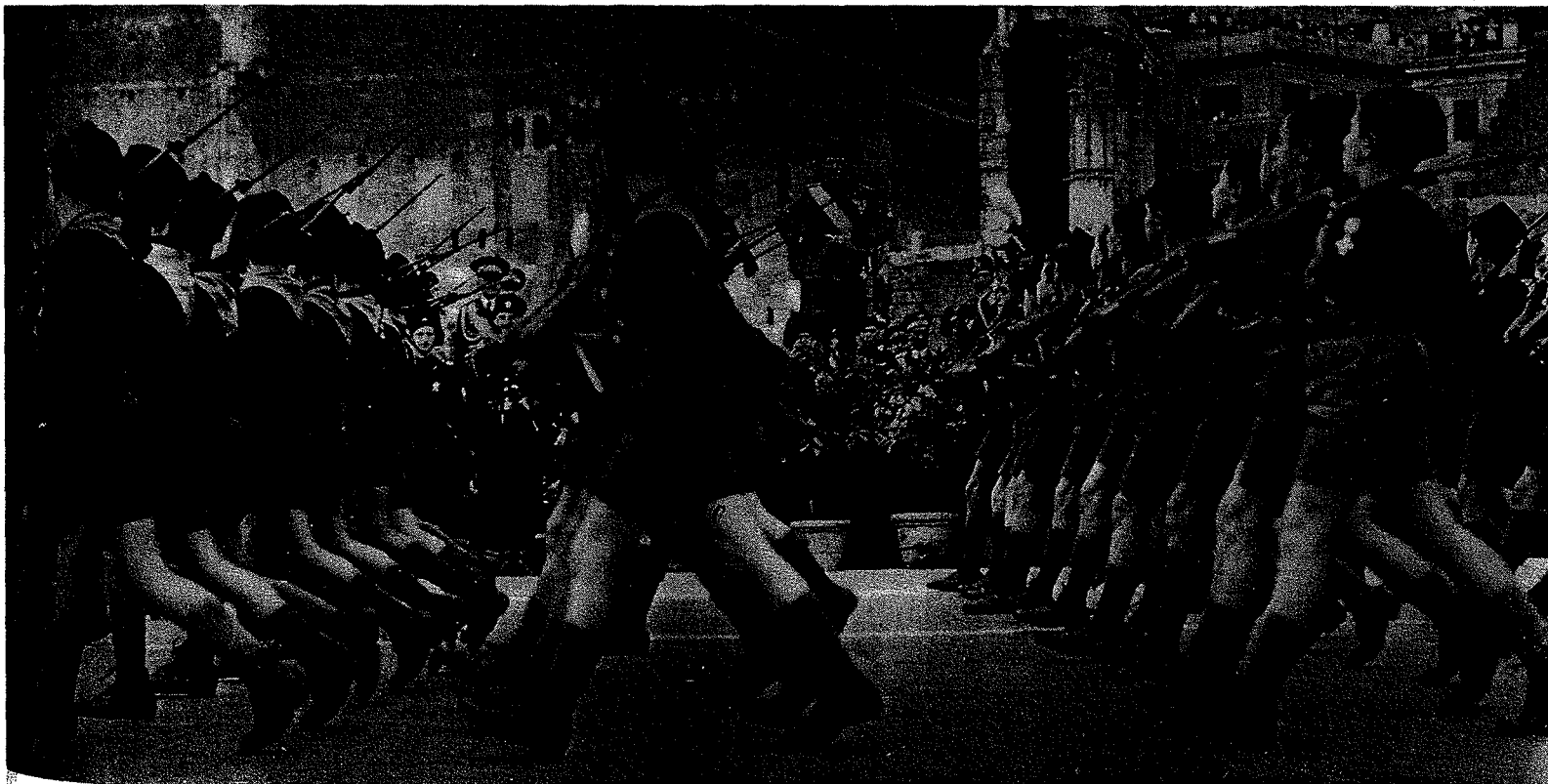
ever, to improve the Italian economy, Mussolini introduced a new type of economic organization, the **corporative system**. Employers and employees in each branch of industry joined a government-sponsored "corporation." Independent unions were abolished. The corporation controlled such matters as wages and prices in its industry. The corporations were largely dominated by business interests and the government.

In the 1920s, Italy enjoyed a brief economic recovery. However, Mussolini was unable to prevent the Great Depression from having a severe impact on Italy. Mussolini blamed Italy's troubles on world economic conditions and sought to distract the people by embarking on an aggressive foreign policy.

Foreign Policy

Mussolini dreamed of building an Italian empire. "**We have a right to an empire**," he claimed, "as a fertile nation which has the

In Italy, as in other totalitarian states, political education and military training began at an early age. Here, Mussolini reviews a military parade of Fascist youth during a celebration on the twentieth anniversary of Italy's entry into World War I. Children were taught the virtue of obedience to Il Duce. They chanted such Fascist slogans as "Believe! Obey! Fight!"



pride and will to propagate its race over the face of the earth." In 1924, he negotiated a treaty with Yugoslavia that gave Italy the city of Fiume. Three years later, Mussolini imposed a protectorate over Albania. But these victories did not satisfy Mussolini. In the 1930s, he turned his attention to Africa.

As you read in Chapter 27, Italy had acquired colonies in North Africa in the late 1800s. Italians still deeply resented their defeat in 1896 by Ethiopia. (See page 493.) In 1934, a clash on the border between Ethiopia and the Italian colony of Somaliland gave Mussolini an excuse to make territorial demands on Ethiopia. Ethiopia appealed to the League of Nations for protection against Italy. The league delayed action, and the world did nothing as Italy invaded Ethiopia in October 1935.

Eventually, the league called for economic sanctions against Italy. That is, league members agreed not to sell arms or lend money to Italy. But they did not cut off oil supplies to Italy, a move that might have slowed the Italian invasion.

The Ethiopians fought bravely, but their cavalry and ancient rifles were no match for Italian planes, tanks, and artillery. In May 1936, Ethiopia fell to the invaders. The next month, Haile Selassie (HĪ lee suh LAS ee), the exiled emperor of Ethiopia, traveled to the League of Nations headquarters in Geneva. Although he made a moving appeal for help, the league took no steps to rescue Ethiopia. In July, the league voted to end the economic sanctions against Italy. For answers, see p. A 94.

SECTION REVIEW

1. Identify: Benito Mussolini, Black Shirts, March on Rome, corporative system, Haile Selassie.
 2. Why were many Italians dissatisfied with the government in 1919?
 3. (a) List three main ideas of fascism. (b) Who supported fascism?
 4. How did Mussolini increase his power after 1922?
 5. (a) Why did Mussolini invade Ethiopia? (b) What was the outcome of this invasion?
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4 The Rise of Nazi Germany

At the end of World War I, Germany was shaken by terrible inflation. Although the German economy recovered from inflation in late 1923, the nation faced other problems. As in Italy, a fascist political movement led by a discontented war veteran, Adolf Hitler, gained popular support in the 1920s. In the next decade, Hitler rose to power and established a brutal totalitarian state in Germany.

The Weimar Republic

Two days before World War I ended, Germany became a republic. The new government held its first national assembly in the town of Weimar. Thus, Germany in the 1920s was often called the Weimar Republic. The new government was led by moderate socialists in its early years.

The Weimar Republic faced enormous problems from the start. It had been discredited in the eyes of many Germans when its representatives signed the hated Versailles Treaty. German generals and other war veterans claimed that Germany had not been defeated but had been "stabbed in the back" by communists, Jews, and liberals in the Weimar government. Although these accusations were untrue, many people looked for someone to blame for the German defeat in World War I.

Political extremists caused unrest in postwar Germany. On the far left were communists, who supported the Marxist idea of world revolution. On the far right were fascists and extreme nationalists, who denounced the Versailles Treaty and opposed the democratic constitution of the Weimar