

### **Mussolini and Fascism**

The First World War, far from resolving the country's problems as its leaders had hoped, only exacerbated them. There were no victories in the field, the territorial gains at the expense of Austria probably would have come anyway, and half million had died. The war had cost a sum about twice as large as all government expenditure between 1861 and 1913 combined. And it had accentuated class divisions: the idea that the poor had died in useless frontal assaults while the rich had stayed at home was widespread. After the war, the government was unable to gain control, as inflation skyrocketed, peasants seized land, and strikes and factory occupations spread in towns. Nationalists propagandized against the territorial settlement, and a group of them led by the post D'Annunzio seized the disputed port city of Fiume in 1919.

**1. Explain the problems WWI created in Italy:**

Fascism flourished in a period when grievances and fears were rife and the state was too weak and passive to address them effectively. Mussolini claimed that the war had been one of the finest chapters in Italian history, that Italy had been cheated of the gains won by the blood of its sons, and that those who tolerated the Treaty of Versailles and betrayed the heroism of Italy's dead youth must be driven from power. And at the same time he appealed to the wealthy landowners and industrialists whose economic interests were threatened by the continuation of strikes and expropriations and who were looking for a leadership that would be more responsive to their plight than the older parties.

**2. Why was Mussolini able to gain the support of Italian citizens? (Why did Fascism appeal to all?):**

Fascism promised to transcend the class struggle by developing a new "corporatism": a planned economy that preserved private ownership of capital and offered compulsory government arbitration of labor disputes. (Workers lost their most powerful weapon: the right to strike.) Instead of increased productivity, however, the economy suffered from more bureaucracy and corruption. Mussolini pumped up the lira (Italian Currency) to please his middle class supporters, and the results in 1927 were recession, unemployment, and a 20% wage reduction. He declared innumerable "battles" to mobilize public opinion, and aimed to transform the nation into a "monolith," a "block of granite." He undertook elaborate public works and transportation schemes, built impressive-looking armed forces, and rhetoric and the impression of dynamism and stern political will were essential to Mussolini's mystique.

**3. What did Mussolini do once he was in power (think social, political, & economic policies)? Were they successful?**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ P. \_\_\_\_\_

**Comparing Fascism/Nazism and Communism** fascism/Nazism and Communism are two different totalitarian political systems with some common characteristics.

	<b>Fascism/Nazism</b>	<b>Communism</b>
<b>Basic Principles</b>	Authoritarian; action-oriented; charismatic leader; state more important than individual	Marxist-Leninist ideas; dictatorship of proletariat; state more important than individual
<b>Political</b>	Nationalist; racist (Nazism); one-party rule; supreme leader	Internationalist; one-party rule; supreme leader
<b>Social</b>	Supported by middle class, industrialists, and military	Supported by workers and peasants
<b>Cultural</b>	Censorships; indoctrination; secret police	Censorship; indoctrination; secret police
<b>Economic</b>	Private property control by state corporations or state	Collective ownership; centralized planning
<b>Examples</b>	Italy, Spain, Germany	U.S.S.R.