

## FASCISM AND NAZISM



Generically, fascism can be defined as a political ideology whose main characteristics are:

- Authoritarian system with charismatic leaderships
- Economic and social control: everything is controlled by the States
- Cult to violence and militarism
- Radical Nationalism

[Hitler and Mussolini 1940 \(CC0\)](#)

### 1 Fascism in Italy



[Fascist campaign 1934 \(Dominio público\)](#)

## 1.1 The rise of fascism in Italy

Italy suffered the enormous human and economic after-effects of the Great War. There was a major political crisis since they did not get as much as they expected (irredentism). Besides there was a social and economic crisis.

Some farmers occupied big properties, workers invaded factories, a lot of people, particularly middle and upper classes, were afraid of a communist revolution like the one in Russia. The fascists led by Benito Mussolini began to control many parts of Italy. . When socialists called for a general strike in 1922, Mussolini's men terrorised them and controlled the situation. That made him very popular

[March on Rome](#)

(Dominio público)



In the elections (1919 and 1921) he didn't get many votes but on 27th and 28th October 1922 Mussolini marched on Rome with his 30,000 Blackshirts in order to seize the power. King Victor Emmanuel III was terrified so Mussolini was asked to become Prime Minister. He changed the election system and in the next elections (1924) fascists got the power. He began to change Italy into a dictatorship where people had to

do as they were told. He got rid of the other political parties and became the head of the state; the king had no real power any more. Mussolini was now called il Duce (=the leader).

## 1.2 Fascist dictatorship

### Fascist economy:

- Mussolini promoted a capitalist economic model. He promoted the heavy industrial sector.
- He sought self-sufficiency and imports were limited. Public works were developed under this regime.
- Fascist trade unions were created to represent the workers and the others were banned.

### Fascist society:

- Fascism counted on the Catholic support. Mussolini signed the Lateran Treaty in 1929 with the Pope Pius XI: Italy acknowledged the independence of the Vatican as a sovereign state.
- Catholicism was the Italian official religion. Only religious marriages would be allowed.
- Mussolini became more racist with Jews after his approach to Hitler.
- Everything was completely controlled by Mussolini and the Fascist National Party, who imposed censorship and propaganda

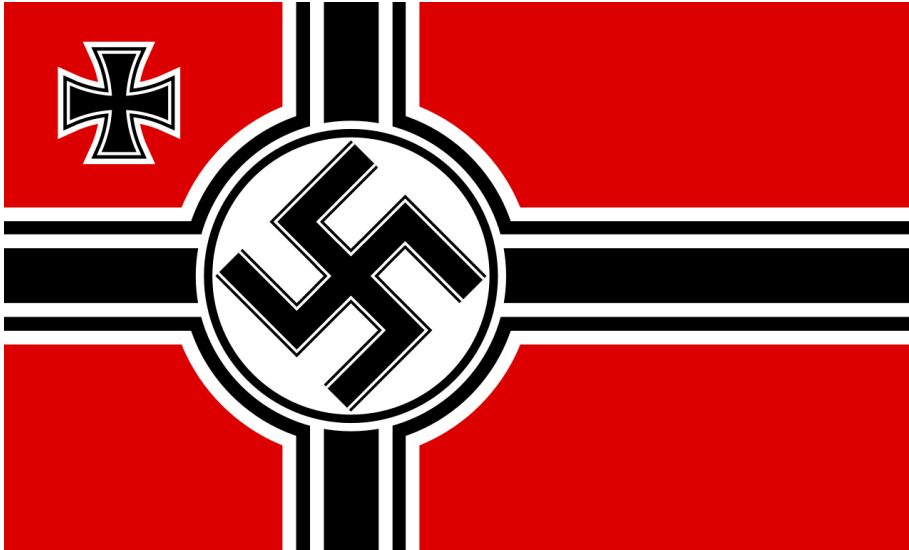
### International policy:

Mussolini believed in Imperialism. Hence he meant to create an Italian empire:

- The rule over Libya was consolidated.
- Mussolini conquered and annexed Abyssinia (Ethiopia) in 1936.
- Albania and Somalia were occupied in 1939.

Due to international conflicts with France and Great Britain, Mussolini got closer to Hitler's Germany. The Rome-Berlin Axis was created on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1936. The Pact of Steel was signed between Hitler and Mussolini on 22nd May 1939. Japan also joined this pact to fight against communism (Anti-Comintern Pact).

## 2 German nazism



[The Nazi war flag and Ensign of the Kriegsmarine](#) (Dominio público)

### 2.1 Weimar Republic

After the Great War a republic was set up in February 1919 at. It was a democratic government. The Weimar republic had many problems:

Thousands of people were poor and starving. The society was divided, they did not accept losing the war and they thought that the conditions of the Peace Treaties were very unfair for Germany

In 1919, Communists tried to take over Berlin in the Spartacist Revolt, but they were defeated.

In 1923 Germany suffered a hyperinflation. This happens when production can't keep up with the amount of money there is, so money keeps losing its value. As result of this, prices could increase every day, middle classes lost their savings and the German market became worthless



[Stab in the back postcard 1919](#)

(Dominio público)

In 1923 there was a new chancellor, called Stresemann, and Germany was starting to recover. The National Socialist German Worker 's Party (Nazis), created by Adolf Hitler tried to take over Munich (Munich Putsh). They were defeated and Hitler went to prison for nine months.

Stresemann's efforts to improve the life of Germans were getting results. Germany joined the League of Nations (1926) and became one of the permanent members of the Council. Reparations would be reduced by one-quarter of the amount, and Germany was given 58 years to pay them. Stresemann won the Nobel Prize for his efforts. He died in October 1929, just before the disaster of the Wall Street Crash. His plans would only work with some help from the USA.

So everything got worse ... and Hitler came back. He was born in Austria; he was a soldier in the Great War. He couldn't accept that Germany had lost the war. The Nazis became popular among several groups:

- The military, because of the war and the small army Germany kept after the war.
- Middle class and business people who suffered financially after the war and were afraid of communism.
- Farmers, because food prices were low.
- People who disliked Jews (anti-Semites)
- People that thought the government was weak.

## **2.2 The rise of the nazis**

The Depression hit Germany deeply. By 1932 conditions were serious in Germany. Over five million people were unemployed and the country was desperate for a strong government. President Hindenburg called an election (April 1932) but did not get the majority. The new government still could not govern properly, and after the new elections (November 1932) Hindenburg offered Hitler the post of Chancellor (head of government)

In January 1933 Hitler decided to call for another election (March 1933) hoping to make the Nazis stronger in the Reichstag (Parliament), and they did it well this time because:

- They controlled the mass media.
- Opposition meetings were banned.
- They used the SA\* to terrorise opponents. \*SA: military force to protect the Nazi leaders and harass their political opponents

[Firemen work on the burning Reichstag](#)

(Dominio público)



A fire broke out in the Reichstag (February, 1933) building, and Hitler blamed the communists. He used emergency decrees against terrorists, so communists were arrested and soon he declared the Communist party illegal. The Enabling Bill let him govern for four years without a Parliament and made all other parties illegal.

Hitler still had opposition. Ernst Röhm controlled the SA (over 400.000 men). On the 30th June 1934, Hitler ordered to arrest Röhm and others. Several hundred people were killed. This was called the Night of the Long Knives. Röhm was shot the next day. When Hindenburg died, Hitler became Chancellor, President and Commander-in chief of the army. He was called Der Führer (the leader). Democracy was dead.

### **2.3 Life under the nazis**

Hitler reorganised Germany into Gaus (provinces) with a Gaulieiter in charge. Above them were the Reichsleiters like Goering and Goebbels who advised Hitler.

Goebbels was in charge of propaganda and controlled all public information (radio, newspapers, education). He had the support of the SS (1925), a personal force for Hitler and the leading Nazis. Heinrich Himmler was in charge or the SS.

Hitler was on top and he was called the Führer, who had absolute power. Everything was controlled and only loyal Nazis could be successful in life. The Gestapo was the secret police and could arrest anybody without a cause.

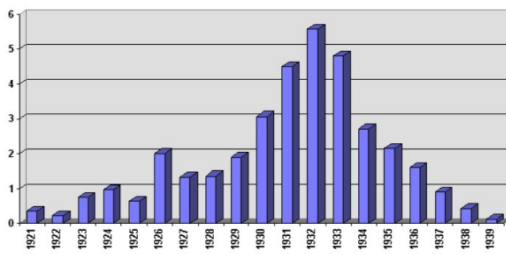
At ten all children joined the Jungvolk (young people); then boys joined the Hitler Youth and girls joined the League of German Maidens. They were taught to support Hitler (even informing about their parents if necessary).

The role of women was to make families and support their men.



## 2.4 Economic program

Unemployment in Germany (1921-1939)



[MrHalligan. Unemployment in Germany](#)

Hitler started a huge plan of public works which gave jobs to thousands of people: motorways, public buildings... All men between the ages of 18 and 25 had to go into the National Labour Service and they got a job.

Strikes were not allowed but they had higher wages than before; good works had benefits, such as holidays ... Big industrial names like Thyssen, Krupp or Volkswagen (the people's car) supported the regime and had a lot of benefits.

## 2.4 Expansionism program

He re-armed the country, which was against the Treaty of Versailles.



[Offnopt. Nazi expansion \(CC BY-SA\)](#)

Hitler wanted to concentrate all the Germans under his rule :

- Changes within Germany. Some areas of Germany had been occupied or controlled by foreign powers after the Treaty of Versailles. Hitler could not tolerate this and began some campaigns to re-take over those German regions(Saarland 1935, Rhineland 1936)
- He wanted Austria to be a part of his Reich and promoted the so-called Anschluss. (1938)

- Czechoslovakia. In the Czech area of the Sudetes there were around 3.5 million Germans, who should be ruled by a German power based on Hitler's principles. On 29th September 1938 **Germany, Italy, Great Britain, and France** reached the **Munich Agreement**, where **Germany** annexed the **Sudetes**
- After the Treaty of Versailles, Poland divided Germany into two parts and East Prussia remained isolated. Hence, Hitler wanted to control Danzig in order to unite both parts of Germany. **Hitler** commanded the invasion of **Poland** on 1st September 1939, which actually involved the outbreak of WWII

## 2.5 Antisemitism

Hitler believed Germans were a super-race and blamed other races for weakening the German people. He said that Jews were responsible for many German problems and several laws were passed against them. They were called the Nuremberg Laws: Jews were not considered German citizens any more.

- Marriage and sexual relationships between Jews and other Germans
- were banned. All Jews had to wear a yellow badge (Star of David) on their clothes.
- They were not accepted in most jobs.

In November 1938 a Jew murdered a German diplomat in Paris. After that there was rioting throughout Germany. Thousands of Jewish shops, houses and synagogues were smashed and thousands of Jews were arrested.

This was called the Night of the Broken Glass (Kristallnacht). Jews were sent to Concentration Camps or humiliated and mistreated in public.

People believed the camps were work-camps where the Jews would work for Germany, but, in fact, the Nazis tried to exterminate the Jewish race. Things were going to be even worse. In 1940, the Jews were moved into ghettos; like Warsaw (the biggest one) where a lot of people died from starvation and disease (500,000 people)



## Webgrafía

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