

CHAPTER
28
SECTION 3

Section Summary

FASCISM IN ITALY

READING CHECK

Who were the Black Shirts?

VOCABULARY STRATEGY

What does the word *proclaimed* mean in the underlined sentence? Think about the function of a poster. How does the purpose of a poster help explain the meaning of *proclaimed*?

READING SKILL

Identify Main Ideas How did Mussolini's Fascists take over Italy?

After World War I, Italian nationalists were outraged when Italy received just some of the territories promised by the Allies. Chaos ensued as peasants seized land, workers went on strike, veterans faced unemployment, trade declined, and taxes rose. The government could not end the crisis. Into this turmoil stepped **Benito Mussolini**, the organizer of the Fascist party. Mussolini's supporters, the **Black Shirts**, rejected democratic methods and favored violence for solving problems. In the 1922 **March on Rome**, tens of thousands of Fascists swarmed the capital. Fearing civil war, the king asked Mussolini to form a government as prime minister.

Mussolini soon suppressed rival parties, muzzled the press, rigged elections, and replaced elected officials with Fascists. Critics were thrown into prison, forced into exile, or murdered. Secret police and propaganda bolstered the regime. In 1929, Mussolini also received support from the pope. Mussolini brought the economy under state control, but basically preserved capitalism. His system favored the upper class and industry leaders. Workers were not allowed to strike, and their wages were kept low. In Mussolini's new system, loyalty to the state replaced conflicting individual goals. "Believe! Obey! Fight!" loudspeakers blared and posters proclaimed. Fascist youth groups marched in parades chanting slogans.

Mussolini built the first modern **totalitarian state**. In this form of government, a one-party dictatorship attempts to control every aspect of the lives of its citizens. Today, we usually use the term **fascism** to describe the underlying ideology of any centralized, authoritarian governmental system that is not communist. Fascism is rooted in extreme nationalism. Fascists believe in action, violence, discipline, and blind loyalty to the state. They praise warfare. They are anti-democratic, rejecting equality and liberty. Fascists oppose communists on important issues. Communists favor international action and the creation of a classless society. Fascists are nationalists who support a society with defined classes. Both base their power on blind devotion to a leader or the state. Both flourish during economic hard times.

Fascism appealed to Italians because it restored national pride, provided stability, and ended the political feuding that had paralyzed democracy in Italy.

Review Questions

1. What was the result of the March on Rome?

2. How are communism and fascism similar?
