



International Relations – Mussolini

History – Junior Cert

Quick Notes

International Relations – Mussolini

Dictators replaced democratic governments when Mussolini took control of Italy, Hitler of Germany and Franco of Spain. These men were strongly anti-communist, nurtured complete devotion to themselves as leaders, and used propaganda to further their image. Benito Mussolini founded the Fascist party in 1919 which stood for four things – strong leadership, law and order, restoring Italy as a powerful empire and anti-communism. By the mid-1930s, Mussolini had become known as Il Duce (the leader). Mussolini also wanted to expand Italy's overseas empire and so, the Italians were in complete control of Abyssinia by the end of 1936. In 1936, Hitler and Mussolini signed the Rome-Berlin Axis, in which they agreed to support each other if either was threatened. Mussolini cut unemployment levels in Italy, undertook massive public works and signed the Lateran Treaty which put an end to centuries of dispute between the papacy and Italy.

In the aftermath of World War 1 and the Treaty of Versailles, the German economy was in ruins and the Weimar politicians were blamed for this. In 1921, Hitler spied on the Nazi Party and was so impressed that he joined them quickly and became their leader. The party adopted the swastika as their symbol. Hitler hated Jews and blamed them for all of Germany's problems. He also thought that the leaders who signed the Treaty of Versailles ('November Criminals') had betrayed Germany. He wanted to build the Third Empire and to expand Germany eastwards to create living space. Hitler spent 1924-1929 organising the party into a nationwide force and in January 1933, Hitler became chancellor of Germany. In August 1934, President Hindenburg died and Hitler merged the positions of president and chancellor to become Der Führer (the leader). In June 1934, Hitler got rid of the undesirables in the party in an event known as the 'Night of the Long Knives'. In November 1935, the Nuremberg laws were passed prohibiting marriages between Jews and Germans. Jewish people also lost all rights as German citizens and had to wear the Star of David as an identity badge.

In November 1938, hundreds of Jews were murdered in Berlin in an event known as the Crystal Night or the Night of the Broken Glass. Hitler imprisoned many Jews in concentration camps and drew up a plan called the Final Solution to get rid of all Jews, which he implemented during World War 2. An estimated 6 million Jews were killed in the camps, mainly in gas chambers. This massacre was known as the Holocaust. During his time in power, Hitler cut unemployment, completed vast public works and improved

communications. In July 1936, General Franco, supported by the fascist party attempted to seize power in Spain. But when he failed to capture Madrid, civil war dawned on the country. The Spanish civil war lasted from 1936 until 1939 and was between the popular front made up of republicans and the falangist made up of nationalists. Both sought help abroad but Franco's side was more successful and when they captured Madrid in March 1939, Spain became fascist led by Franco.

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