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FASCISM

Fascism is a political system in which the state has all the power. All citizens must work for the country and the government. A dictator or another powerful person is the head of such a state. He uses a strong army and a police force to keep law and order. He is often a strong, authoritarian leader who is, at the beginning, admired by many people. Fascism first appeared after World War I when Benito Mussolini came to power in Italy. In Germany of the 1930s Adolf Hitler's National Socialism rose to power. Fascism also appeared in Japan, Spain and Argentina.

LIFE IN A FASCIST REGIME

Fascist governments control the way people live. Those who criticize the government or do not obey are punished. They must leave the country, go to prison or are often executed. Fascist leaders want to make their state strong and powerful. They claim that only the strongest and fittest in the population can survive. With the help of a strong army they go to war and expand their territory. School teachers show children that only the state is important. Pupils must exercise to stay healthy. Young organizations are often created in which children admire the state and learn slogans and songs. They are trained to march and follow the beliefs of the ruling party. Fascist governments try to give all people work, mainly in the industries they need. They build roads, hospitals and industries which help them rise to power. In fascist countries no other political parties are allowed. The government controls newspapers, radio and television. There is no freedom of speech.

RISE OF FASCISM

Fascism became a strong movement during the first part of the 20th century for many reasons. Most states had no experience with democracy because they were ruled by a king or queen. After World War I many people were disappointed and angry because the war destroyed a lot of their country or because some of their land was taken away from them.



Italians were not satisfied with the way other countries treated them after World War I. Benito Mussolini emerged as a powerful leader who promised the people that he would bring back pride and make Italy a well-respected state again. He created his own private army with their own uniforms. Mussolini's followers were aggressive and started fights with other citizens and regular soldiers in the streets. Finally, in 1922 Mussolini became dictator of Italy.

Benito Mussolini

Germany was one of the big losers of World War I. It lost a lot of its land. The winners of the war made Germany give up most of its weapons and the government had pay for the destruction that occurred during the war. The country was poor, its economy was ruined.

In the 1920s and 30s a new party emerged: the National Socialist Workers' Party became powerful. By 1933 the Nazis were the strongest party in Germany. Their leader, Adolf Hitler, dissolved parliament, took over power and made Germany a fascist state. In the following years he built up a strong police force and the largest army in Europe.

Hitler was called the Fuehrer. He claimed that the German people were better, stronger and more intelligent than any other people. Other groups, especially Jews and Romanies were considered



Adolf Hitler

to be inferior. Hitler believed that Germany could survive only if it got rid of these weak people. In the course of the war the Nazis killed over 6 million Jews and invaded most countries in Europe. When Germany was defeated in 1945 the fascist government fell apart. The situation in Japan was similar. The economy was in bad condition and people had little to eat. Many Japanese wanted the military to take over the government and Japan to be a strong country again. In the 1930s Japan started expanding its power. It hated other Asian countries and wanted all of Asia under Japanese control.

FASCISM IN OTHER COUNTRIES

Spain was another fascist country in Europe. General Franco led a nationalist movement in the Spanish Civil War, in which he got help from Italy and Germany. After winning the war Franco became dictator of Spain and ruled the country until he died in 1975. In Argentina Juan Peron led a fascist movement that lasted for a decade and in Chile a military group under the command of Augusto Pinochet held on to power for almost two decades.

Glossary

emerge = come up, to become known as

freedom of speech = the right to say what you want

law and order = people respect the law and crime is controlled by the police

inferior = not as good as

invade = to enter a country with an army in order to take control of it

Romanies = group of people who travel around and lead a nomadic life

nationalist = a group of people who want to get or keep political freedom for their people