

US History Origins of World War II

Learning Target:

I can examine the rise of fascism and militarism in Europe prior to WWII.

2. The Rise of Militarism – Mussolini & Italy

The Italian Communist Party –

- Italy was on the winning side of World War I but was unhappy with the Treaty of Versailles
- Many Italian veterans could not find jobs during the Global Depression
- Many joined the Italian Communist Party
 - Urged Italians to take over land and seize factories

Benito Mussolini & The Fascist Party –

Fascism – Belief that a military-dominated government should control all aspects of society; stressed nationalism and placed the interests of the state above those of individuals

- Mussolini founded the Fascist Party in 1921 to destroy the Communist Party and promote his own rise to power
- Clashes between the Communists and the Fascists bordered on civil war in Italy

Mussolini Becomes Prime Minister –

- Mussolini appointed prime minister and given dictatorial powers by the king
- Limited freedom of speech, arrested political opponents, and restricted voting to consolidate his power

Mussolini & Ethiopia –

- Mussolini pledged to make Italy an imperialistic power
- Sent troops into Ethiopia in 1935
- Ethiopia proved to be no match for Italy's army
- US placed a neutrality act banning arms shipment to both sides
 - US did not want to be drawn into the conflict
 - Hurt Ethiopia more than Italy
- The lack of support for Ethiopia convinced other fascist countries that aggression would go unpunished