

Chronology of Fascism

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December 26, 2012

Reference: Fascism, Contributed By: Roger D. Griffin
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The chronology has been organized in chronological order. The purpose is to present the historical facts of Fascism that migrated to different countries in Europe during WWI and WWII era.

1914-1918: Fascist political parties and movements capitalized on the intense patriotism that emerged as a response to widespread social and political uncertainty after World War I and the Russian Revolution of 1917.

- With the important exceptions of Italy and Germany, however, Fascist movements failed in their attempts to seize political power.

1918: In Italy, after World War I, for example, the Fascist Party led by Benito Mussolini initially faced competition from another Fascist movement led by war hero Gabriele D'Annunzio.

1918-1941: These philosophical influences were not the main inspiration for most Fascist movements. Far more important was the example set by the Fascist movements in Germany and Italy. Between World War I and World War II Fascist movements and parties throughout Europe imitated Italian Fascism and German Nazism.

1919: The term *fascism* was first used by Italian dictator Benito Mussolini. The term comes from the Italian word *fascio*, which means “union” or “league.” It also refers to the ancient Roman symbol of power, the *fasces*, a bundle of sticks bound to an ax, which represented civic unity and the authority of Roman officials to punish wrongdoers.

1919-1945: Because Fascism had a decisive impact on European history from the end of World War I until the end of World War II; this period is sometimes called the Fascist era. Fascism was widely discredited after Italy and Germany lost World War II but persists today in new forms.

1922 to 1943: Benito Mussolini led Italy, and he founded the first Fascist political group and later allied his country with Germany in World War II. Mussolini took the title Duce (The Leader).

- His clenched fist, jutting jaw, fiery speeches, and dramatic poses became his trademarks.
- Fascism, modern political ideology that seeks to regenerate the social, economic, and cultural life of a country by basing it on a heightened sense of national belonging or ethnic identity.

Fascism rejects liberal ideas such as freedom and individual rights, and often presses for the destruction of elections, legislatures, and other elements of democracy.

- Fascism is strongly associated with right-wing fanaticism, racism, totalitarianism, and violence.

1930s: In Nazi Germany, for example, the Fascist government tried to create a new *Volkgemeinschaft* (people's community) built around a concept of racial purity. But the changes were also an attempt to transform German society in order to overcome perceived sources of national weakness. In the same way, in Italy under Mussolini the government built new stadiums and held large sporting events, sponsored filmmakers, and financed the construction of huge buildings as monuments to Fascist ideas.

Late 1930s: In addition, Fascist movements do not share a single approach to religion. Nazism was generally hostile to organized religion, and Hitler's government arrested hundreds of priests in the late 1930s. Some other early Fascist movements, however, tried to identify themselves with a national church. In Italy, for example, the Fascists in the 1930s attempted to gain legitimacy by linking themselves to the Catholic Church.

1933: Spurred by the emotional speeches of Adolf Hitler, the National Socialist Party, or Nazis, took control of Germany. The Nazis then reorganized Germany into a totalitarian state, imposing strict laws, eliminating opposition, and implementing a racist policy against non-Aryan people, especially the Jews. Their systematic genocide of millions was the most tragic aspect of their rise to power. Nazi military aggression in Europe sparked World War II, one of the bloodiest wars in human history. Germany's defeat in World War II ended the Nazi regime.

Scholars disagree over how to define the basic elements of Fascism. Marxist historians and political scientists (that is, those who base their approach on the writings of German political theorist Karl Marx) view Fascism as a form of politics that is cynically adopted by governments to support capitalism and to prevent a socialist revolution.

These scholars have applied the label of Fascism to many authoritarian regimes that came to power between World War I and World War II, such as those in Portugal, Austria, Poland, and Japan. Marxist scholars also label as Fascist some authoritarian governments that emerged after World War II, including regimes in Argentina, Chile, Greece, and South Africa.

Scholars disagree, for example, over issues such as whether the concept of Fascism includes Nazi Germany and the Vichy regime, the French government set up in south central France in 1940 after the Nazis had occupied the rest of the country.

1939-1945: In Italy and Germany after World War I, Fascists managed to win control of the state and attempted to dominate all of Europe, resulting in millions of deaths in the Holocaust and World War II.

1945: Many racially inclined Fascist organizations have been inspired by Nazism. These new Nazi movements are referred to as neo-Nazis because they modify Nazi doctrine and because the original Nazi movement inspired them. Since 1945, however, Fascist movements have lacked the mass support to allow the staging of such theatrical forms of politics. The movements have not, however, abandoned the vision of creating an entirely new historical era.

1947: Since the end of World War II, however, the general public revulsion against war and anything resembling Nazism created widespread hostility to paramilitary political organizations. As a result, Fascist movements since the end of World War II have usually relied on new non-paramilitary forms of organization. There have been some Fascist movements that have paramilitary elements, but these have been small compared to the Fascist movements in Germany and Italy of the 1930s and 1940s.

1970s-1990s: Beginning in the 1970s, some historians and political scientists began to develop a broader definition of Fascism, and by the 1990s many scholars had embraced this approach. This new approach emphasizes the ways in which Fascist movements attempt revolutionary change and their central focus on popularizing myths of national or ethnic renewal.

Seen from this perspective, all forms of Fascism have three common features: anticonservatism, a myth of ethnic or national renewal, and a conception of a nation in crisis.

Late 19th-Early 20th Century: Saw an increasing intellectual preoccupation with racial differences. From this development came Fascism's tendency toward ethnocentrism—the belief in the superiority of a particular race.

- The English-born German historian Houston Stewart Chamberlin, for example, proclaimed the superiority of the German race, arguing that Germans descended from genetically superior bloodlines.
- Some early Fascists also interpreted Charles Darwin's theory of evolution to mean that some races of people were inherently superior. They argued that this meant that the "survival of the fittest" required the destruction of supposedly inferior peoples.

Fascist movements surfaced in most European countries and in some former European colonies. The diversity of Fascist movements means that each has its own individual intellectual and cultural foundation. Some early Fascist movements were inspired in this period in pursuing social and political thought. In this period the French philosopher Georges Sorel built on earlier radical theories to argue that social change should be brought about through violent strikes and acts of sabotage organized by trade unions. Sorel's emphasis on violence seems to have influenced some proponents of Fascism.

1980-1990s: In the same way, small Fascist groups in the United States in the 1980s and 1990s combined elements of neo-Nazi or Aryan paganism with Christianity. In all these cases,

however, the Fascist movements have rejected the original spirit of Christianity by celebrating violence and racial purity.

1990s: Some modern forms of Fascism, in fact, preach a “love of difference” and emphasize the need to preserve distinct ethnic identities. As a result, these forms of Fascism strongly oppose immigration in order to maintain the purity of the nation. Some scholars term this approach *differentialism*, and point to right-wing movements in France during this period as examples of this form of Fascism.

COMPARED TO OTHER RADICAL RIGHT-WING IDEOLOGIES:

Late 19th Century: Despite the many forms that Fascism takes, all Fascist movements are rooted in two major historical trends. European mass political movements developed as a challenge to the control of government and politics by small groups of social elites or ruling classes. For the first time, many countries saw the growth of political organizations with membership numbering in the thousands or even millions.

Fascism gained popularity because many intellectuals, artists, and political thinkers in the late 19th century began to reject the philosophical emphasis on rationality and progress that had emerged from the 18th-century intellectual movement known as the Enlightenment. These two trends had many effects. For example, new forms of popular racism and nationalism arose that openly celebrated irrationality and vitalism—the idea that human life is self-directed and not subject to predictable rules and laws.

1890s: In France, the Action Française movement started a campaign to overthrow the democratic government of France and restore the king to power. Although this movement embraced the violence and the antidemocratic tendencies of Fascism, it did not develop the Fascist myth of revolutionary rebirth through popular power. There have also been many movements that were simply nationalist but with a right-wing political slant.

Early 20th Century: Fundamentally, contemporary Fascism remains tightly linked to its origins in this century. Fascism still sets as its goal the overthrow of liberal democratic institutions, such as legislatures and courts, and keeps absolute political power as its ultimate aim. Fascism also retains its emphasis on violence, sometimes spurring horrific incidents. Throughout this century this type of right-wing nationalism was common in many military dictatorships in Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

1909: Originally a Marxist, by 1909 Mussolini was convinced that a national rather than an international revolution was necessary, but he was unable to find a suitable catalyst or vehicle for the populist revolutionary energies it demanded.

1914: But when war broke out in Europe, he saw it as an opportunity to galvanize patriotic energies and create the spirit of heroism and self-sacrifice necessary for the country's renewal. He thus joined the interventionist campaign, which urged Italy to enter the war. As Italian

leaders tried to decide whether to enter the war, Mussolini founded the newspaper *Il Popolo d'Italia* (The People of Italy) to encourage Italy to join the conflict.

1914-1918: In the wake of World War I, Marxist forces on the left and quasi-Fascist groups on the right increasingly polarized Austrian politics. Other right-wing forces created an Austrian Nazi party, but this group rejected many basic elements of Fascism. Henri Pétain was a French military hero in World War I. The first Fascist movement developed in Italy after World War I. Journalist and war veteran Benito Mussolini served as the guiding force behind the new movement.

May 1915: After Italy declared war against Germany and Austria-Hungary on this date; Mussolini used *Il Popolo d'Italia* to persuade Italians that the war was a turning point for their country. Mussolini argued that when the frontline combat soldiers returned from the war, they would form a new elite and bring about a new type of state and transform Italian society. The new elite would spread community and patriotism, and introduce sweeping changes in every part of society.

1919: Mussolini established the *Fasci Italiani di Combattimento* (Italian Combat Veteran's League) to channel the revolutionary energies of the returning soldiers. In the elections of 1919 Fascist candidates won few votes.

1920: Fascism gained widespread support after the Socialist Party organized militant strikes in Turin and Italy's other northern industrial cities. The Socialist campaign caused chaos through much of the country, leading to concerns that further Socialist victories could damage the Italian economy. Fear of the Socialists spurred the formation of hundreds of new Fascist groups throughout Italy.

Another example of a racist, but not Fascist, organization was the Ku Klux Klan, which became a national mass movement in the United States. Although racial hatred was central to the Klan's philosophy, its goals were still reactionary rather than revolutionary. The Klan hoped to control black people, but it did not seek to build an entirely new society as a true Fascist movement would have. Since 1945, however, the Klan has become increasingly hostile to the United States government and has established links with neo-Nazi groups.

1920s-1930s: During this period, Fascism had a mixed impact on Hungarian politics. Some Hungarian leaders hoped that an alliance with Nazi Germany would bring the return of Transylvania, Croatia, and Slovakia—territories that Hungary had lost in World War I. At the same time, however, many Hungarians feared that Germany would try to regain its historical military dominance of the region.

National Socialism was a German political movement that arose in the 1920s from the despair of defeat after World War I. More commonly known as Nazism, it culminated in the establishment of the Third Reich and the rise to power of Dictator Adolf Hitler from 1933 to 1945.

1921: The Fascists gained widespread support as a result of their effective use of violence against the Socialists. Prime Minister Giovanni Giolitti then gave Mussolini's movement respectability by including Fascist candidates in his government coalition bloc that campaigned in the May 1921 elections. The elections gave the newly formed National Fascist Party (PNF) 35 seats in the Italian legislature.

1922: The threat from the Socialists weakened, however, and the Fascists seemed to have little chance of winning more power until Mussolini threatened to stage a coup d'état. The Fascists showed their militant intentions in the March on Rome, in which about 25,000 black-shirted Fascists staged demonstrations throughout the capital. Although the Italian parliament moved swiftly to crush the protest, King Victor Emmanuel III refused to sign a decree that would have imposed martial law and enabled the military to destroy the Fascists.

1922-1943: About 25,000 militant Fascists demonstrated in Rome, Italy. This show of power prompted Italian King Victor Emmanuel III to invite Fascist leader Benito Mussolini to join a coalition government in Italy. Over the next few years Mussolini seized power and became dictator, installing a Fascist regime that ruled Italy until 1943.

Early 1925: Mussolini seized dictatorial powers during a national political crisis sparked by the Black Shirts murder of socialist Giacomo Matteotti, Mussolini's most outspoken parliamentary critic.

1925-1931: The Fascists consolidated power through a series of new laws that provided a legal basis for Italy's official transformation into a single-party state. The government abolished independent political parties and trade unions and took direct control of regional and local governments. The Fascists sharply curbed freedom of the press and assumed sweeping powers to silence political opposition. The government created a special court and police force to suppress so-called anti-Fascism.

1929: Mussolini also pulled off a major diplomatic success when he signed the Lateran Treaty with the Vatican in 1929, which settled a long-simmering dispute over the Catholic Church's role in Italian politics. This marked the first time in Italian history that the Catholic Church and the government agreed over their respective roles.

1930s: Italian Fascism fed off a profound social crisis that had undermined the legitimacy of the existing system. Many Europeans supported Fascism because of a widespread perception that the parliamentary system of government was fundamentally corrupt and inefficient. Thus it was relatively easy for Italians to support Mussolini's plans to create a new type of state that would transform the country into a world power and restore Italy to the prominence it enjoyed during the Roman Empire and the Renaissance. The Falange gained some support, but it was dominated by the much stronger coalition of right-wing groups led by General Francisco Franco.

Italian Fascism was an uneasy blend of elitism and populism. A revolutionary elite imposed Fascist rule on the people. In order to secure power the movement was forced to collaborate with conservative ruling elites—the bourgeoisie (powerful owners of business), the army, the monarchy, the Church, and state officials. At the same time, however, the Fascist movement made sustained efforts to generate genuine popular enthusiasm and to revolutionize the lives of the Italian people.

Fascism was a charismatic form of politics that asserted the extraordinary capabilities of the party and its leader. The main tool for the Fascistization (conversion to Fascism) of the masses and the creation of the new Fascist man was not propaganda, censorship, education, or terror, or even the large Fascist social and military organizations. Instead, the Fascists relied on the extensive use of a ritualized, theatrical style of politics designed to create a sense of a new historical era that abolished the politics of the past. In this sense Fascism was an attempt to confront urbanization, class conflict, and other problems of modern society by making the state itself the object of a public cult, creating a sort of civic religion.

Italy embraced the Fascist myth that national rebirth demanded a permanent revolution—a constant change in social and political life. To sustain a sense of constant renewal, Italian Fascism was forced by its own militarism to pursue increasingly ambitious foreign policy goals and ever more unrealizable territorial claims. There is an indication that any Fascist movement that identifies rebirth with imperialist expansion and manages to seize power will eventually exhaust the capacity of the nation to win victory after victory. In the case of Italian Fascism, this exhaustion set in quickly.

Another feature of Italian Fascism was its attempt to achieve a totalitarian synthesis of politics, art, society, and culture, although this was a conspicuous failure. Italian Fascism never created a true new man. Modern societies have a mixture of people with differing values and experiences. This diversity can be suppressed but not reversed. The vast majority of Italians may have temporarily embraced Fascist nationalism because of the movement's initial successes, but the people were never truly "fascistized." In short, in its militarized version between World War I and World War II, the Fascist vision was bound to lead in practice to a widening gap between rhetoric and reality, goals and achievements.

Finally, the fate of Italian Fascism illustrates how the overall goal of a Fascist utopia has always turned into a nightmare. Tragically for Italy and the international community, Mussolini embarked on his imperial expansion just as Hitler began his efforts to reverse the Versailles Treaty and reestablish Germany as a major military power. This led to the formation of the Axis alliance, which gave Hitler a false sense of security about the prospects for his imperial schemes.

In Portugal the dictator António de Oliveira Salazar led a right-wing authoritarian government in the 1930s that showed Fascist tendencies, but was less restrictive than the regimes of other Fascist countries.

Salazar sought to create a quasi-Fascist *Estado Novo* (New State) based on strict government controls of the economy, but his government was relatively moderate compared to those in Italy, Germany, and Spain. Salazar's conservative authoritarianism was opposed by another movement with Fascist tendencies, the National Syndicalists, which hoped to force a more radical Fascist transformation of Portugal.

1930-39: Right-wing nationalist groups who favored close ties to Germany flourished, and by 1939 the Fascist Arrow Cross movement was the dominant political party. Under the leadership of the radical army officer Ferenc Szálasi, the Arrow Cross sought to enlarge Hungary and hoped to position the country along with Italy and Germany as one of Europe's great powers.

The Hungarian government led by Miklós Horthy de Nagybánya supported Hitler's overall regional ambitions and maintained close ties with the Nazi government, but the regime felt threatened by the Arrow Cross's challenge to its authority. Horthy clamped down on the Arrow Cross, even though his own government had Fascist tendencies.

During World War II Hungary sent about 200,000 soldiers to fight alongside the German army on the Russian front, and about two-thirds of the Hungarian force was killed. To the east of Hungary, Romanian Fascist forces nearly won control of the government. The Iron Guard, the most violent and anti-Semitic movement in the country, grew rapidly when the Romanian economy was battered by the global depression of the 1930s.

1930s-1940s: The German Nazi leaders established numerous concentration camps where Jews, along with Roma (Gypsies), homosexuals, Communists, Slavs, and others judged undesirable, were imprisoned. Many prisoners were worked to death, shot, gassed, or given lethal injections. By the end of the war, more than 6 million people had died in concentration camps.

World War I and the global economic depression of the 1930s destabilized nearly all liberal democracies in Europe, even those that had not fought in the war. Amidst this social and political uncertainty, Fascism gained widespread popularity in some countries but consistently failed to overthrow any parliamentary system outside of Italy and Germany.

In France, Finland, and Belgium, far-right forces with Fascistic elements mounted a more forceful challenge in the 1930s to elected governments, but democracy prevailed in these political conflicts. In the Communist USSR, the government was so determined to crush any forms of anticommunist dissent that it was impossible for a Fascist movement to form there.

A review of the countries where Fascism was seen with some success but ultimately failed helps explain the more general failure of Fascism. These countries included Spain, Portugal, Austria, France, Hungary, and Romania. In these countries Fascism was denied the political space in which to grow and take root. Fascist movements were opposed by powerful coalitions of radical right-wing forces, which either crushed or absorbed them. Some conservative regimes adopted features of Fascism to gain popularity.

1932: Engelbert Dollfuss became chancellor of Austria and allied himself with a Fascist group supported by Italian dictator Benito Mussolini. Dollfuss dissolved parliament and abolished freedom of speech shortly after being elected. When the workers of Vienna declared a general strike, Dollfuss used his guard to crush the opposition.

The somewhat less extreme Christian Social Party led by Dollfuss won power through a parliamentary coalition with the Heimwehr. Once in power, Dollfuss created a quasi-Fascist regime that resisted incorporation into Hitler's Germany and emphasized the government's ties with the Catholic Church.

1932-33: When Nazism is compared to other forms of Fascism, it becomes clear that Nazism was not just a peculiar movement that emerged from Germany's unique history and culture. Instead, Nazism stands as a German variant of a political ideology that was popular to varying degrees throughout Europe between World War I and World War II. As a result of this line of thinking, some historians who study Nazism no longer speculate about what elements of German history led to Nazism. Instead, they try to understand which conditions in the German Weimar Republic allowed Fascism to become the country's dominant political force in 1932, and the process by which Fascists were able to gain control of the state in 1933. The exceptional nature of the success of Fascism in Germany and Italy is especially clear when compared to the fate of Fascism in some other countries.

Unlike Mussolini, Hitler took control of a country that had a strong industrial, military, and governmental power base that was merely dormant after World War I. Hitler also became more powerful than Mussolini because the Nazis simply radicalized and articulated widely held prejudices, whereas the Fascists of Italy had to create new ones. The Nazi Party won control of the German legislature after a democratic election.

1933: Hitler suspended the constitution, abolished the presidency, and declared himself Germany's *Führer* (leader). Once in control, Hitler was able to insert his Fascist vision of the new Germany into a highly receptive political culture. The Third Reich quickly created the technical, organizational, militaristic, and social means to implement its far-reaching schemes for the transformation of Germany and large parts of Europe. Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany, which meant that Mussolini had the support of a powerful Fascist ally.

1934: Millions of Italians attended the Exhibition of the Fascist Revolution in Rome, staged by the government to mark Fascism's first ten years in power. By this point the regime could plausibly boast that it had brought the country together through the *Risorgimento* (Italian unification process) and had turned Italy into a nation that enjoyed admiration and respect abroad.

In principle, Mussolini headed the Fascist Party and as head of state led the government in consultation with the Fascist Grand Council. In reality, however, he increasingly became an autocrat answerable to no one. Mussolini was able to retain power because of his success in

presenting himself as an inspired *Duce* (Leader) sent by providence to make Italy great once more.

The Fascists also established a corporatist economic system, in which the government, business, and labor unions collectively formulated national economic policies. The system was intended to harmonize the interests of workers, managers, and the state. In practice, however, Fascist corporatism retarded technological progress and destroyed workers' rights.

1934-38: Dollfuss was killed when the Austrian Nazis attempted a putsch (takeover), but the Nazis failed in this effort to take control of the government. The government then suppressed the Nazi party, eliminating the threat of extreme Fascism in Austria until Nazi Germany annexed the country in 1938.

1934-68: Salazar's government banned the National Syndicalist movement and sent its leader, Rolão Preto, into exile in Spain. Salazar continued to rule as the dictator of Portugal until 1968.

1935: Italy invaded Ethiopia. In less than a year the Fascist army crushed the poorly equipped and vastly outnumbered Ethiopians. Mussolini's power peaked at this point, as he seemed to be making good on his promise to create an African empire worthy of the descendants of ancient Rome.

The League of Nations condemned the invasion and voted to impose sanctions on Italy, but this only made Mussolini a hero of the Italian people, as he stood defiant against the dozens of countries that opposed his militarism. But the Ethiopian war severely strained Italy's military and economic resources. At the same time, international hostility to Italy's invasion led Mussolini to forge closer ties with Hitler, who had taken Germany out of the League of Nations.

1936: Adolf Hitler (*right*) is considered one of the most brutal dictators in history. After purging possible rivals for leadership, Hitler rearmed Germany into a modern war machine. He and Italian dictator Benito Mussolini (*left*), both Fascists, became allies. Hitler and Mussolini worked more closely together; they became both rivals and allies. Hitler seems to have dictated Mussolini's foreign policy. Both Germany and Italy sent military assistance to support General Francisco Franco's quasi-Fascist forces during the Spanish Civil War, which broke out in 1936.

The Italian troops in Spain suffered several dramatic losses, however, undermining Mussolini's claim that his Fascist army made Italy a military world power. Then in November 1936, Mussolini announced the existence of the Rome-Berlin Axis—a formal military alliance with Nazi Germany.

Fascism, once simply associated with Italy's resolution of its domestic problems, had become the declared enemy of Britain, France, and the United States, and of many other democratic and most communist countries. Italian Fascism was fatally linked with Hitler's bold plans to take control of much of Europe and Russia.

The formation of the pact with Hitler further isolated Italy internationally, leading Mussolini to move the country closer to a program of *autarky* (economic self-sufficiency without foreign trade). As Italy prepared for war, the government's propaganda became more belligerent, the tone of mass rallies more militaristic, and Mussolini's posturing more vain and delusional. Italian soldiers even started to mimic the goose-step marching style of their Nazi counterparts, though it was called the Roman step.

1936-37: The Falangists fought alongside Franco's forces against the country's Republican government during the Spanish Civil War, But the Falange was too small to challenge the political supremacy of Franco's coalition of monarchists (supporters of royal authority), Catholics, and conservative military forces. The Republican government killed the Falangist leader José Antonio Primo de Rivera. With the loss of this key leader, Franco managed to absorb Fascism into his movement by combining the Falange with the Carlists, a monarchist group that included a militia known as the *Requetés* (Volunteers).

1938: Although the Italian Fascists had ridiculed Nazi racism and declared that Italy had no "Jewish problem," in 1938 the government suddenly issued Nazi-style anti-Semitic laws. The new laws denied that Jews could be Italian. This policy eventually led the Fascist government of the Italian Social Republic—the Nazi puppet government in northern Italy—to give active help to the Nazis.

The Iron Guard became more powerful, Romanian ruler King Carol II withdrew his initial support for the movement, and in 1938 ordered the execution of its top leaders. Romanian general Ion Antonescu, who was backed by the Iron Guard and by Nazi Germany, demanded that Carol II abdicated his rule. After the king left the country, Antonescu set up a quasi-Fascist military dictatorship that included fellow members of the Iron Guard. Intent upon creating their own new order, the Iron Guard assassinated political enemies and seized Jewish property. But the campaign led to economic and political chaos, which convinced Nazi officials that the Iron Guard should be eliminated.

1939: During the Spanish Civil War, General Francisco Franco was the leader of the Nationalist forces that fought to overthrow Spain's elected government. As a result of the Nationalist victory in 1939, Franco became *el Caudillo* (the leader) of Spain and ruled the country until his death in 1975. Spain's Fascist movement, the *Falange Española* (Spanish Phalanx) was hobbled by the country's historical lack of a coherent nationalist tradition. The strongest nationalist sentiments originated in Basque Country in north central Spain and in Catalonia in the northeast. But in both areas the nationalists favored separation rather than the unification of Spain as a nation.

The Fascism of the Falange retained some influence when Franco became dictator in 1939, but this was primarily limited to putting a radical and youthful face on Franco's repressive regime. Franco's quasi-Fascist government controlled Spanish politics until Franco's death in 1975. Franco's reign marked the longest-lived form of Fascist political control, but Fascist ideology took second place to Franco's more general goal of protecting the interests of Spain's traditional ruling elite.

1940s: The Nazis' attempts to build a new German empire led to the systematic killing of about six million civilians during the 1940s, and the deaths of millions more as the result of Nazi invasion and occupation—a horror rivaled only by Josef Stalin's rule in the Soviet Union during the 1930s. The Nazis primarily killed Jews, but also targeted homosexuals, people with disabilities, and members of religious minorities such as the Jehovah's Witnesses. All of this killing and destruction stemmed from the Nazis' conviction that non-Germans had sapped the strength of the German nation.

At the same time, the Nazis attempted to take control of most of Europe in an effort to build a new racial empire. This effort led to World War II and the deaths of millions of soldiers and civilians. After early successes in the war, Germany found itself facing defeat on all sides. German forces were unable to overcome the tenacity and sheer size of the Soviet military in Eastern Europe, while in Western Europe and North Africa they faced thousands of Allied aircraft, tanks, and ships.

When Hitler's armies swept through Belgium into France, Mussolini abandoned neutrality and declared war against France and Britain. In this way he locked Italy into a hopeless war against a powerful alliance that eventually comprised the British Empire, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), and the United States.

During World War II in 1940 Pétain became chief of state at Vichy, the French territory under control of the occupying Germans. He ruled as a dictator with the consent of the Nazi regime, suspending the constitution and deporting Jews to German concentration camps.

1940-41: Italy's armed forces were weak and unprepared for war, despite Mussolini's bold claims of invincibility. Italian forces suffered humiliating defeats in 1940 and 1941, and Mussolini's popularity in Italy plummeted.

1940-45: The Vichy regime in France stood as one of the most radical quasi-Fascist governments during World War II. The regime took its name from the town of Vichy, which was the seat of the pro-German government controlled by the Nazis from 1940 until 1945. The Vichy government shared many characteristics with Nazism, including an official youth organization, a brutal secret police, a reliance on the political rituals of a 'civic religion,' and vicious anti-Semitic policies that led to the killing of an estimated 65,000 French Jews.

The Vichy regime was headed by Henri Philippe Pétain, a fatherly figure who ensured that genuine Fascists gained little popular support for their radical plans to rejuvenate France. At the same time, Fascists in other parts of the country supported the Nazi occupation, but the Germans never granted real power to these radical forces.

1941: Amidst rumors that the Iron Guard was planning a coup, Antonescu crushed the movement with Nazi approval. Antonescu's army then cooperated with Nazi soldiers to exterminate Jews in the eastern portion of the country in 1941, and thousands more died when the Fascist forces expelled them to a remote eastern region of the country. By the end of the

war an estimated 364,000 Jews had died in the Romanian Holocaust as a result of this alliance of conservative and Fascist forces.

1943: The Nazis sent 8,000 Italian Jews to their deaths in extermination camps. Mussolini faced with imminent defeat at the hands of the Allies despite Nazi reinforcements; the Fascist Grand Council passed a vote of no confidence against Mussolini, removing him from control of the Fascist Party. The king ratified this decision, dismissed Mussolini as head of state and had him arrested.

1944: As the war turned against Germany, Hungary began to curtail its support for the Nazis, leading Hitler to send troops to occupy Hungary in 1944. The Nazis installed Szálasi as the head of a puppet government that cooperated with the SS when it began rounding up the country's Jewish population for deportation to Nazi extermination camps. By the end of World War II, Fascist Hungarian forces and the Nazis had killed an estimated 550,000 Hungarian Jews. The Arrow Cross party collapsed after the war, and some of its leaders were tried as war criminals.

1945: Italian Partisans patrolling in Milan, Civilian resistance fighters, or partisans, played an active role in defeating Hitler's forces in Italy. While thousands of Italian soldiers were forced to fight alongside the Nazis in Italy or on the Russian front, most Italian citizens opposed Mussolini's Fascist regime. As the war came to an end in 1945, partisans captured Mussolini and executed him. Partisans shot Mussolini as he tried to flee in disguise to Switzerland. Meanwhile hundreds of thousands of Italian soldiers endured terrible suffering, either forced to fight alongside the Nazis in Italy or on the Russian front, or to work for the Nazi regime as slave labor. Partisans also exacted vengeance on German sympathizers and high-ranking officials of the Fascist establishment.

April 1945: Facing certain defeat, Hitler killed himself, and Germany surrendered to the Allies in the following month.

A new generation of ultranationalists and racists who grew up after 1945 hoped to rebuild the Fascist movement and were determined to continue the struggle against what they saw as decadent liberalism. Since 1945 Fascism has spread to other countries, notably the United States. In several countries Fascist groups have tried to build Fascist movements based on historical developments such as fear of immigration, increased concern over ecological problems, and the Cold War. Fascists in Western Europe and the United States formed many thousands of small groups, with memberships ranging from a few hundred to less than ten.

1946: Italy, for example, saw this type of quasi-democratic Fascism with the 1946 formation of the Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI), which hoped to keep Fascist ideals alive.

1947: After World War II, only South Africa saw the emergence of a significant Fascist movement that followed the prewar pattern. Most white South Africans supported the system of

racial and economic exploitation of the black majority known as apartheid, but only a small fraction went so far as to support the Afrikaner Resistance Movement.

1949: In China, for example, the Kuomintang (The Chinese National People's Party), led by Chiang Kai-shek, fought leftist revolutionaries until the Communists won control of China.

Fascism should also be distinguished from right-wing separatist movements that set out to create a new nation-state rather than to regenerate an existing one. This would exclude cases such as the Nazi puppet regime in Croatia during World War II. This regime, known as the Ustaše government, relied on paramilitary groups to govern, and hoped that their support for Nazism would enable Croatia to break away from Yugoslavia. This separatist goal distinguishes the Ustaše from genuine Fascist movements.

1960s-1970s: The New Right intellectuals criticized both liberal democratic politics and communism, arguing that societies should be organized around ethnic identity. Unlike earlier Fascist movements, the New Right agenda did not require paramilitary organizations, uniforms, or a single unifying leader.

1980s: Since the 1980s some leading New Right intellectuals have moved away from the Fascist vision of a new historical era. However, the ideas that form the basis of the New Right movement continue to exert considerable influence on Fascist activists who wish to disguise their true agenda. One example is 'Third Positionists' who claim to reject capitalism and communism in their search for a 'third way' based on revolutionary nationalism.

1980s-1990s: The movement carried out repeated acts of violence and sabotage in the 1980s and especially the 1990s, but remained a minor political force. South Africa's political reforms in the 1990s led to the further reduction in support for the Afrikaner Resistance Movement. In other countries, widespread hostility to Fascism made it impossible to create a mass movement coordinated by a paramilitary political party, as Nazi Germany's National Socialists or Romania's Iron Guard had been.

A loose alliance of antigovernment racists became America's most significant neo-Fascist movement.

Early 1990s: In Germany, Fascist groups in this period launched scores of firebomb attacks against the homes of immigrants, sometimes killing residents. Fascism stood apart from regimes that are based on racism but did not pursue the goal of creating a revolutionary new order. During this period, some national factions in Bosnia and Herzegovina engaged in ethnic cleansing, the violent removal of targeted ethnic groups with the objective of creating an ethnically pure territory.

Mid 1990s: The MSI managed to widen its support significantly when it renounced the goals of historic Italian Fascism and changed its name to the National Alliance (Alleanza Nazionale, or

AN). Although the AN presents itself as comparable to other right-wing parties, its programs still retain significant elements of their Fascist origins. During the 1990s several other extreme-right parties gained significant mass support, including the Republicans (Die Republikaner) in Germany, the National Front (Front National, or FN) in France, the Freedom Movement (Die Freiheitlichen) in Austria, the Flemish Bloc (Vlaams Blok) in Belgium, and the Liberal Democratic Party in Russia.

1995: For instance, Fascist beliefs motivated the 1995 bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, that killed 168 people and wounded more than 500 others.

1997: In Denmark, for example, a Fascist group was accused of sending bombs through the mail to assassinate political opponents. In the United States, Fascists have assaulted and killed African Americans, Jews, and other minorities, and set off scores of bombs. Small Fascist groups also present a threat because the fliers they distribute and the marches and meetings they hold can create a local climate of racial intolerance. This encourages discrimination ranging from verbal abuse to murder.

1999: Inspired by Nazi ideals of ethnic cleansing, Fascist groups conducted a series of bomb attacks in London. The attacks were directed against ethnic minorities, gays, and lesbians. The Serbian government's insistence upon pursuing this policy against ethnic Albanians in the province of Kosovo led to military intervention by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). But unlike Fascist movements, the national factions in Yugoslavia did not set out to destroy all democratic institutions. Instead these brutal movements hoped to create ethnically pure democracies, even though they used violence and other antidemocratic methods.