LONG-TERM CAUSES SHORT-TERM CAUSES CONSOLIDATION OF POWER

MATERIAL: Old Morris (HL) = 286-302 Newest Morris (SL) = 297-327 Traynor = 171-202/252-305

LONG-TERM CAUSES:

•	Debased and corrupt parliament – Transforism: Italy had a debased and corrupt form of parliamentary system - " <i>Transforism</i> " - welding together large and sometimes unlikely coalitions in support of ministries. They lacked true party spirit and ruled out any real clash to alternative party principles:
•	Social and Economic problems: Italy had enormous social and economic problems especially in the backward power-stricken south The problems in Italy led to mass emigration. In 1914 six million Italians (out of 41 million) lived and worked abroad.:
•	Fear of Socialism: The growing force of socialism (stimulated by the industrial growth of the late 1880's and the early 1890's) had about 25% of the electoral votes before WWI. They were weakened by constant divisions and many of the leaders preferred reforms in stead of revolution:
•	Catholic Church: The Pope and the Catholic Church opposed Italy since it's unification. The Church instructed "good Catholics" to boycott the elections. This policy was relaxed in 1904 - not because any increased regard for the state, but from fear of the increasing influence of socialism. Therefore the church became a potential ally of the more conservative elements in the state:
•	Nationalists: Constant attacks from a resurgent nationalist party. They were more an intellectual influence (especially from the support of writer Gabriele D'Annunzio) then an electoral success This nationalism was stimulated by the Tripolitan War 1911-1912.:

SHORT-TERM CAUSES:

• <u>Dissatisfaction with the treaties after WWI</u> - Italy had lost 700.000 men and 1 million men were wounded. After the war Italy therefore made extensive claims. They received South Tyrol, Istria and Trieste. They also claimed but did not receive Dalmatia, several Aegean islands and the town of Fiume. This made Italians frustrated and was used in the propaganda of the nationalists. The exservicemen became an important ingredient in the fascist combat groups______

• <u>Dissatisfaction with the economic situation</u> - 3 million men were de-mobilized after the war. This led to widespread unemployment - By November 1919 Italy had 2 million unemployed. This together with the poverty in the south (especially among the landless

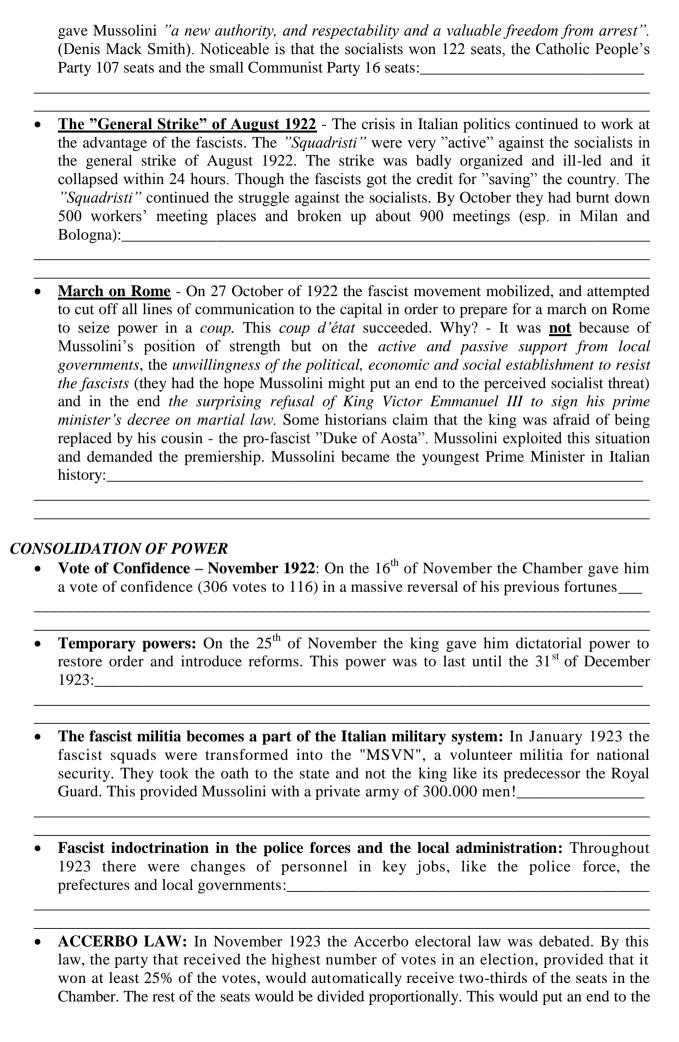
	peasants) and a huge inflation led to a very tense situation. (The inflation was 560% between 1914 and 1921):
•	General disorder - strikes and factory occupations: In 1920 over 2000 strikes occurred (280 in Milan in 1919). Many of the wealthy landowners and industrialists feared a Bolshevik style take-over. In the south peasants began to seize land. They were ready to turn to someone that could bring order:
•	Political instability : In 1919 Italy introduced a proportional system in the parliament. This didn't seem to change the political instability. Without a political tradition no party would gain an absolute majority. So the coalitions between different parties continued (and the quarrels continued). Italy had five different governments between 1919-1922
•	Fiume incident (or "Christmas of Blood") : The writer and war-hero D'Annunzio (together with 2600 legionaries) occupied the town of Fiume in September 1919. They transferred it into a city-state and established an authoritarian government. There wasn't any reaction from the Italian government until December 1920 when regular troops attacked and seized the city. The public saw the late reaction as a "weakness" of the government and when they finally did something the action was viewed as "unpatriotic". (In the Treaty of Rapallo 1922 Fiume became an international city. In 1924 it was acquired by Italy in agreement with Yugoslavia):
•	Fascist Party: The Fascist Party had already been established in March 1919. At first you could see a great influence of left-wing politics (especially influences from French Syndicalism). In the program was ★ Decentralisation of government ★ Profit-sharing for workers ★ Worker participation in management ★ Coalition of producers (both middle class and proletariat) ★ vote at the age of 18. Denis Mack Smith (Mussolini, 1981) writes in his extensive biography of Mussolini "Fascism was not a system of immutable beliefs but a path to political power." With the disappointing results of the Milan election in November 1919 (The fascists had 2 candidates but did not win any seat in the parliament) the fascist policy began to change to the right. In December 1919 the fascists had only 87 members. In 1920 Mussolini began a campaign for the parliament. In July 1921 he made the "Pact of Pacification" with the socialists. This pact only lasted a few months but won some respect

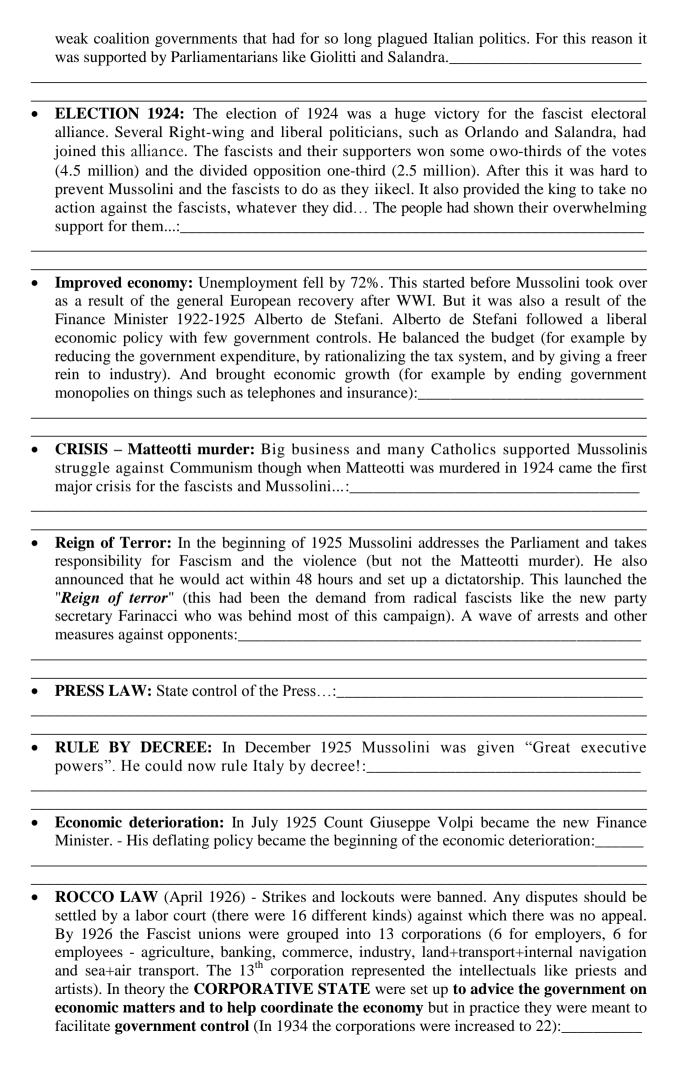
• <u>Squadrismo</u> - By the end of 1920 a paramilitary armed organization was established - "Squadrismo". These squads took violent action against striking urban workers and rural socialist labor leagues:

claimed 320.000 members...:

among the population of Italy. The new "twin themes" of the Fascist Party were - Nationalism and Anti-Bolshevism. Mussolini now also supported the free enterprises. These changes gave the fascists support - both from the middle class and the wealthier upper class. Big businesses like Fiat motor Company, Pirelli tyre Company and the Italian Banking Association began to give substantial contributions to the Fascists. By late 1921 the party

• <u>Electoral alliance</u> - In 1921 the Prime Minister - liberal Giovanni Giolitti called for new elections. Under the impression of the growing support of the fascists Giolitti accepted Mussolini's offer of an electoral pact. As part of a government alliance the fascists won 35 parliamentary seats in the elections (in a parliament of 535). This was a small start but it





•	RULE BY DECREE: In December 1925 Mussolini was given "Great executive powers". He could now rule Italy by decree!:
•	OVRA: The secret police OVRA was established in September 1926:
•	Law for the defense of the State (October 1926): After another assassination attempt against Mussolini a formal decree - The new law for the defense of the State banned all other political parties:
•	New Electoral Law (September 1928): The new electoral law gave the right to the <i>Fascist Grand Council</i> (headed by Mussolini) to decide about the composition of the assembly (parliament). The Council suggested a list of 400 nominees. The electorate could accept or reject the list. Morris writes that "it is surprising that as many as 136.000 voters rejected the list in 1929". After this the number of rejections fell:
•	Fascist Grand Council: In December 1928 the king was deprived the right to select new Prime Minister – this right was given to the Fascist Grand Council:
•	LATERAN ACCORDS 1929: Mussolini and the Pope reach an agreement about the position of the Catholic Church in Italy. The Pope was granted the Vatican City and paid annually for the loss of the Papal State and Rome in 1870. Catholicism became state religion, compulsory religious education was established in secondary school and divorce