The Making of the 20th Century

This series of specially commissioned titles focuses attention on significant and often controversial events and themes of world history in the present century. Each book provides sufficient narrative and explanation for the newcomer to the subject while offering, for more advanced study, detailed source-references and bibliographies, together with interpretation and reassessment in the light of recent scholarship.

In the choice of subjects there is a balance between breadth in some spheres and detail in others; between the essentially political and matters economic or social. The series cannot be a comprehensive account of everything that has happened in the twentieth century, but it provides a guide to recent research and explains something of the times of extraordinary change and complexity in which we live. It is directed in the main to students of contemporary history and international relations, but includes titles which are of direct relevance to courses in economics, sociology, politics and geography.

The Making of the 20th Century

Series Editor: GEOFFREY WARNER

David Armstrong, Lorna
Lloyd and John Redmond
S. R. Ashton

From Versailles to Maastricht: International
Organisation in the Twentieth Century
In Search of Détente: The Politics of East-West
Relations since 1945

V. R. Berghahn Germany and the Approach of War in 1914,

second edition
Raymond F. Betts
John Darwin

Second edition
France and Decolonisation, 1900–1960
Britain and Decolonisation: The Retreat from
Empire in the Post-War World

John F. V. Keige

Dominic Lieven

Sally Marks

Philip Morgan

France and the Origins of the First World War

Russia and the Origins of the First World War

The Illusion of Peace: International Relations
in Europe, 1918–1933

Italian Fascism, 1919–1945

Philip Morgan
A. J. Nicholls
Weimar and the Rise of Hitler, fourth edition
R. A. C. Parker
Chamberlain and Appeasement: British Policy
and the Coming of the Second World War

Anita J. Prazmowska

Eastern Europe and the Origins of the Second
World War

G. Roberts The Soviet Union and the Origins of the Second World War

Alan Sharp The Versailles Settlement: Peacemaking in Paris,

1919

Zara Steiner Britain and the Origins of the First World War Samuel R. Williamson Austria-Hungary and the Origins of the First

World War

R. Young France and the Origins of the Second World War

Italian Fascism, 1919–1945

Philip Morgan





© Philip Morgan 1995

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

No paragraph of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written permission or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, or under the terms of any licence permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency, 90 Tottenham Court Road, London W LP 9HE.

Any person who does any unauthorised act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

First published 1995 by MACMILLAN PRESS LTD Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS and London Companies and representatives throughout the world

ISBN 978-0-333-53779-4 ISBN 978-1-349-23893-4 (eBook) DOI 10.1007/978-1-349-23893-4

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 06 05 04 03 02 01 00

This book is dedicated to my father and to the memory of my mother, who was always asking when it was going to be finished.

Contents

Acknowledgement	ix
List of Abbreviations	x
Map of Modern Italy	xii
Part 1 The Conquest of Power, 1919-29	1
1 The Postwar Crisis and the Rise of Fascism, 1919-22	3
Politics and society in post-unification Italy	3
The war in Italy	6
'1919-ism' and early Fascism	13
The 1919 elections	16
The biennio rosso and Fiume	21
The Fascist reaction	34
Giolitti and Fascism	40
The transition from movement to party	43
The March on Rome	52
2 Between 'Normalisation' and 'Revolution', 1922-5	60
The various Fascisms	60
Dictatorship by stealth	64
The conquest of the South and the 1924 election	71
The Matteotti crisis	75
3 The Construction of the 'Totalitarian' State, 1925-9	79
'Totalitarianism'	79
The party and the state	81
Syndicates and corporations	88
The Fascist constitution	92
The conciliation with the Catholic Church	95
The revaluation of the lira	97
'Ruralism'	101

viii CONTENTS

Part II The Fascist Regime, 1929-36	105
4 The Years of the Great Depression, 1929-34	107
The party and the inquadramento of the nation	107
The organisation of the young, welfare and free time	109
The impact and limitations of 'totalitarian' control	116
Corporativism and the Great Depression	124
5 The Creation of the Fascist Empire, 1935-6	131
Imperialism, revisionism and the limits to Fascist foreign	
policy in the 1920s	131
The 'totalitarian' state: internal policy as foreign policy	
and vice versa	136
The Depression and Fascism's opportunity	138
The invasion and conquest of Ethiopia	140
Part III Fascist Expansionism at Home and Abroad,	
1936–43	145
6 The Axis Connection and the 'Fascistisation' of Italian	
Society, 1936-40	147
The Axis with Germany	147
Forcing the pace of 'fascistisation'	155
Autarky and economic preparation for war	165
'Non-belligerency' and war, 1939-40	169
7 Fascist Italy at War, 1940-3	173
The collapse of Italy's parallel war	173
The impact of war and the internal crisis of the regime	176
The fall of Mussolini	180
Epilogue: The Italian Social Republic, 1943-5	183
Notes	189
Select Bibliography	193
Index	200

Acknowledgement

I am particularly grateful to Tony Mason, who offered to read the chapters as they were written, and did so speedily, giving not only comment and encouragement but also good advice on how to make the text more manageable and readable.

List of Abbreviations

CIL Confederazione Italiana del Lavoro [Italian

Confederation of Labour (Catholic trade union

organization)]

CGL Confederazione Generale del Lavoro [General

Confederation of Labour (Socialist trade union

organization)]

CLNAI Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale per Alta Italia

[Committee of National Liberation of Northern Italy (the organisation coordinating the political

and military activities of the anti-Fascist

Resistance)]

CONFAG Confederazione dell'Agricoltura [Confederation of

Agriculture (the umbrella organisation of landowners and farmers associations)]

CONFINDUSTRIA Confederazione dell'Industria Italiana [Italian

Industrialists Confederation

EOA Ente Opere Assistenziali [Agency for Welfare

Activities (Fascist party social welfare

organisation)]

ERR Ente Radio Rurale [Rural Radio Agency]
FIOM Federazione Italiana Operai Metallurgici [Italian

Federation of Metalworkers (CGL-affiliated

national metalworkers trade union)]

FISA Federazione Italiana Sindacati Agricoltori [Italian

Federation of Farmers' Syndicates (Fascist union

of farmers)]

GIL Gioventù Italiana del Littorio [Italian Youth of the

Lictors (Fascist party youth organisation)]

GUF Gioventù Universitaria Fascista [Fascist University

Youth (Fascist students organisation)]

IRI Istituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale [Institute for

Industrial Reconstruction

MVSN Milizia Volontaria per la Sicurezza Nazionale

[Voluntary Militia for National Security]

ONB Opera Nazionale Balilla [National Balilla

Organisation (Fascist children and youth

organisation)]

OND Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro [National Afterwork

Organisation (Fascist leisure and recreational

organisation)]

OVRA Organizzazione per la Vigilanza e la Repressione

Antifascista [Organisation for the Surveillance and Repression of Antifascism (the Interior Ministry's

secret police branch)]

PCF Parti Communiste Français [French Communist

Party]

PFR Partito Fascista Republicano [Republican Fascist

Party]

PNF Partito Nazionale Fascista [National Fascist Party] PPI

Partito Popolare Italiano IItalian Popular Party

(Catholic)]

PSI Partito Socialista Italiano [Italian Socialist Party] **RSI** Republica Sociale Italiana [Italian Social Republic]



Modern Italy