

Removal of opposition	Pages 67–70	Pages 67–70
Control of media	Pages 68–9	–
Control of leisure and social life	Pages 105–7	Pages 105–7
Control of education	Pages 102–5	Pages 102–5
Control of economy and working lives	Corporate state (pages 83–4)	Pages 83–4

Point out the links between aspects of the dictatorship; for example, the cult of personality was closely linked to the aim of personal rule, and also helped deter opposition. Lastly, don't forget that although the question requires you to consider Mussolini's actions after he became Prime Minister in 1922, you are not expected to assess the dictatorship in the 1930s: do end your analysis in 1928.

Study Guide: Advanced Level Question

In the style of Edexcel

'From 1924, Mussolini and his Fascists were in total control of the Italian state.' How far do you agree with this opinion? (60 marks)

Exam tips

The cross-references are intended to take you straight to the material that will help you to answer the question.

This question clearly asks you to explain the methods used by Mussolini to establish and maintain his dictatorship, and to evaluate the extent of their success. You should make reference to such issues as:

- The reduction of the role of parliament, establishment of personal rule, abolition of free elections (page 52).
- Control of government and civil service (pages 61–2).
- The use of violence and repression (pages 67–9).
- The use of propaganda (pages 57–61).
- Control of the media (pages 68–9).
- Control of education (pages 102–5).
- Control of leisure (pages 105–7).
- Control of the economy and working life (pages 83–4).

To consider the extent to which Mussolini had control over the Italian state you will need to point out the limits to Mussolini's control. For example, the Catholic Church remained highly influential within the state (see page 99), as did *Confindustria*, the employers' organisation (page 84).

In your conclusion, you must make an overall judgement about the extent of Fascist control, summarising your key arguments.

6

Mussolini and the Economy 1922–40

POINTS TO CONSIDER

Mussolini claimed that his economic policy would transform the organisation of the Italian economy and prepare the nation for war. This chapter examines the extent to which the *Duce* achieved his aims, focusing principally on:

- Mussolini's aims
- Impact of Fascist policies, particularly the corporate state, on Italian industry and living standards
- Impact of Fascist policies on Italian agriculture and living standards
- The extent to which Fascism transformed and modernised the Italian economy

Key dates

- 1925 Vidoni Palace Pact banned independent trade unions
- 1925 Start of Battle for Grain
- 1926 Abolition of right to strike
- 1926 Ministry of Corporations set up – start of corporate state experiment
- 1927 Revaluation of the lira damaged Italian economy
- 1929 Start of global economic depression
- 1936 Mussolini increased drive for economic autarky
- 1939 Parliament replaced by the Chamber of Fasces and Corporations

Key question

In what ways was Mussolini trying to transform the Italian economy?

1 | Mussolini's Aims

Mussolini, like Hitler, was no economist. He had little knowledge of, or interest in, the workings of the economy and on coming to power had no coherent programme. Mussolini was, however, determined to hang on to power and therefore, in his early years in office, he adopted economic policies that would make his position secure. As the 1920s progressed, Mussolini became more ambitious and increasingly attracted to the idea of an economic transformation of Italy. He proclaimed the world's first 'corporate state', supposedly a radically new way of organising and running a nation's economy, different from and superior to both the

capitalist economies of Britain and the USA and the Communist economy of the USSR.

By the mid-1930s, his priorities had begun to change again. His war in Ethiopia (see pages 116–18) and his ever closer association with Nazi Germany (see pages 102–22) convinced him that a new type of economic transformation was vital. Fascist Italy would need an economy capable of building and maintaining a modern war machine. In a major war, foreign imports of raw materials or food might be cut off, crippling the war effort. Italy, Mussolini declared, must strive for **autarky** – economic self-sufficiency. Mussolini's preoccupations first with the corporate state and then with autarky meant that the country's 'old problems' – industrial underdevelopment, rural poverty, the north–south divide and illiteracy – were largely ignored. They were only tackled with any determination if they were obstacles to the achievement of the *Duce's* principal aims.

2 | The Impact of Fascist Policies on Italian Industry

Mussolini was lucky enough to come to power just as Italian industry was beginning a period of 'boom'. The economic climate throughout Europe was improving and many Italian companies were able to sell their products abroad with ease. Indeed, exports, particularly of cars, textiles and agricultural produce, doubled in the period 1922–5.

Policies 1922–7

The new political regime claimed the credit for increasing company profits and attempted to win over the support of industrialists by appointing an economics professor, Alberto de Stefani, as Treasury Minister. De Stefani's economic policy was traditional and reassuring to industrialists because it limited government spending, which helped to fight inflation. He also reduced state intervention in industry – the telephone network was taken out of government control and handed back to private companies, while taxes levied on industries that had made huge profits from government contracts during the First World War were either reduced or abandoned. Industrialists were also pleased by the outlawing of Socialist and Catholic trade unions by the Vidoni Palace Pact of 1925 (see page 63).

Battle for the lira

However, after 1925, Mussolini began to take less notice of business interests. The dismissal of de Stefani and the **revaluation** of the Italian currency were two early but important examples of this. Revaluation was particularly significant. By 1926 the boom was coming to an end and the exchange rate of the lira was falling against other currencies. The exchange rate slipped to around 150 lira to the pound, a rate Mussolini found unacceptable. Announcing his 'battle for the lira' he declared:

Autarky

Economic self-sufficiency allowing a country to operate without importing food or other key materials from other countries.

Revaluation

The Fascist government tried to increase the value of the lira against other countries' currencies.

Key question

What actions did Mussolini take to gain the support of industrialists?

Vidoni Palace Pact banned independent trade unions: 1925

Key question

What were the consequences of the 'battle for the lira'?

Key terms

Key date

The Fascist regime is ready to make the sacrifices needed, so that our lira, which is itself a symbol of our nation, our wealth, our efforts, our strength, our sacrifices, our tears, our blood, is and will be defended.

To emphasise his point that his strong, vibrant country should have a strong, vibrant currency he decided to try to set a new rate of exchange of 90 lira to the pound in December 1927. This decision, restoring the value of the lira to its value in October 1922, the month of his accession to power, increased Mussolini's prestige both with foreign bankers and with the Italian public. Thus the *Duce's* main aim had been achieved. But, the effects on the Italian economy were far from beneficial. At a stroke, foreign buyers found Italian goods nearly twice as expensive, and it was not surprising that Italian export industries, particularly textiles, went into depression. Unemployment trebled in the years 1926–8. Even Fiat, the huge vehicle manufacturer based in Turin, was exporting fewer cars in the late 1930s than it had done in the early 1920s.

The revaluation of the lira should have helped the Italian consumer because imports of foods and other products from abroad should have become cheaper. However, the *Duce* prevented this by placing high **tariffs** on many foreign imports. The only winners in economic terms were those industries such as steel, armaments and shipbuilding that needed large supplies of cheap tariff-free imported raw materials. It was these heavy industries that would be promoted throughout Fascist rule. They made healthy profits from the protected domestic market while export industries were neglected.

Corporate state – the theory

At first, the workers benefited from the economic revival of the early 1920s. Unemployment fell and de Stefani's policies curbed inflation. Admittedly, the years 1925 and 1926 saw the banning of independent trade unions and the abolition of the right to strike, but Mussolini claimed to be about to transform the Italian economy. He would create a '**corporate state**', a supposedly revolutionary method of running an economy. Corporations would be set up for each sector of industry and within each corporation there would be employers and Fascist trade unions to represent the workers. Each corporation would organise production, pay and working conditions in its own industry. If employers and Fascist trade unions could not agree then they would go to a labour court, administered by the new Ministry of Corporations, where the dispute would be sorted out quickly and amicably.

The Fascist regime claimed that this system would see employers and workers co-operating to maximise production for the good of the nation. Unlike Britain and France, there would be no bitter industrial disputes that led to strikes and class conflict. Unlike Communist Russia there would still be a role for businessmen whose energy and entrepreneurship would help industries to prosper.

Key dates

Abolition of right to strike: 1926

Ministry of Corporations set up – start of corporate state experiment: 1926

Revaluation of the lira damaged the Italian economy: 1927

Key question
How far did the corporate state transform the Italian economy?

Key terms

Tariffs

Taxes placed on imports of foreign products.

Corporate state

Every industry would be part of a Fascist-led corporation that would sort out disputes between workers and management, and help to organise production, pay and conditions.

Corporate state – the reality

At first it did appear that the Fascist trade unions might provide a real say for workers in the running of their industries, but rivalries within the Fascist Party, and Mussolini's reluctance to alienate big business interests, soon destroyed any such hopes. Rossoni, the head of the Fascist trade union movement, certainly envisaged a major role for his unions but he was opposed by the employers' organisation. *Confindustria* (see page 47) disliked all kinds of trade unions and was determined to ensure that businessmen kept control of their industries. In the middle was the Ministry of Corporations headed by the Fascist Giuseppe Bottai. He distrusted Rossoni, saw little role for the unions, and wanted to see corporations dominated by a partnership of employers and technical experts from his own Ministry. This, he hoped, would be the best way to maximise industrial production. All sides now looked to the *Duce* to clarify his vision of the corporate state.

In 1927 Mussolini came down on the side of Bottai and *Confindustria*: Bottai was charged with the task of writing a 'Labour Charter' setting out the rights of workers. When this charter was finally produced it posed no threat to the employers – private ownership of businesses was declared the most efficient method of running an economy and, as for workers' rights, employers might but were not obliged to provide annual paid holidays. Employers were also given the power to alter working hours and night shifts without any real consultation.

Rossoni's radical influence was reduced still further in 1928 when his single confederation of Fascist trade unions was split into six smaller federations and his followers in these federations were removed from their posts.

Three years after its creation in 1926 the Ministry of Corporations claimed success. The corporate state was ushering in a new economic era and had removed all class conflict in industry. By 1934 there were 22 corporations covering nearly every area of the economy and with the apparent ability to influence every aspect of industry. The reality, however, was quite different. Workers were unable to choose their own representatives in their corporation, and instead had Fascist nominees foisted on them. These Fascist officials tended to side with the employers' representatives over the key issues of wages and working conditions. Only on issues such as sick pay for workers and the belated introduction of paid national holidays in 1938 did the corporations further workers' interests. Industrialists, on the other hand, were allowed to keep their own non-Fascist employers' organisations, and largely ignored the very existence of these corporations. That regulations issued by corporations were only advisory meant that employers maintained their power and independence.

In truth, the 'corporate revolution' never materialised. Conflict between employer and employee was not solved, only suppressed, and the corporations never achieved the pivotal role in the state and the economy envisaged by the *Duce*. Although parliament itself was replaced by the Chamber of Fasces and

Parliament replaced
by Chamber of
Fasces and
Corporations: 1939

Key date

Corporations in 1939, this meant nothing. Parliament had long lost any power and the new Chamber was equally impotent.

Key question

How effectively did the Fascist state deal with the depression of the 1930s?

Key term

Depression

A period of economic stagnation that began in the USA and affected all European industrialised countries for most of the 1930s.

Key date

Start of global economic depression: 1929

Depression

Following the Wall Street Crash in the USA, the early 1930s saw a global economic **depression** that Italy did not escape. A large number of companies collapsed and car production fell by 50 per cent. From under half a million in 1928, unemployment had risen to two million by 1933.

The democratic governments of Western Europe and the USA were reluctant to intervene to help the private sector out of its difficulties as their traditional economic philosophy of *laissez-faire* regarded such actions as reckless: raising the money to help struggling industries might plunge the government into serious debt. The Italian Fascist state had no such worries. It introduced public works schemes, notably the building of motorways and hydroelectric power plants, which put the unemployed back to work. This was important because it significantly increased the amount of money in circulation which, in turn, stimulated demand and created more jobs. The state also did much to avoid the banking collapse which affected the USA and Germany in particular. Banks had lent money to industry, but many companies could no longer meet the repayments on their loans. The banks therefore found themselves without enough money to pay their investors. The Fascist government simply stepped in and 'bailed out' the banks.

A result of this intervention was the creation of the Institute for Industrial Reconstruction (IRI) in January 1933. Many banks had major shareholdings in Italian companies and when these banks were 'bailed out' of their financial troubles IRI took control of these shares. The Italian state, in the guise of IRI, thus became the major shareholder and therefore the effective owner of many top Italian companies. IRI also took over from the banks the responsibility for providing loans for Italian industry. In addition it attempted to promote the latest managerial techniques, with some success.

The government's measures may have cost the taxpayer a great deal of money, but they did enable Italy to weather the depression a little better than its democratic neighbours. Indeed, Mussolini was delighted to hear his admirers claim that President Roosevelt had copied the *Duce's* example when drawing up the US's 'New Deal'.

Key question

How well prepared for war was Italian industry?

Preparing for war

Mussolini's economic policies had never been designed simply to increase the wealth of the country or the prosperity of the ordinary Italian, and this became very apparent by the mid-1930s. As the dictator became increasingly pre-occupied with foreign affairs, living standards and the general welfare of the economy suffered. He believed that war, either in Europe or to further his African Empire, was almost inevitable and that Italy must be prepared. The armaments industries must be promoted,

and Italy's economy must become self-sufficient. Italy should be an autarky – able to supply itself with all the food and material needed to fight a modern war.

The **economic sanctions** imposed by the **League of Nations** after Italy's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 seemed to prove his point that there must be no reliance on imports. Mussolini therefore encouraged heavy industries such as steel, chemicals and shipbuilding by placing large government contracts. State control was expanded to the point where 80 per cent of shipbuilding and 50 per cent of steel production was directed by the government. Economies of scale were looked for and the regime allowed major companies to merge into near-monopoly organisations. Fiat, for instance, controlled car manufacturing, while Pirelli dominated rubber, and Montecatini chemicals. Exports, as usual, took low priority.

The limits of autarky

Despite these efforts the Italian economy was still far from self-sufficient when the *Duce* joined the Second World War in 1940: key materials such as oil, and coal and iron ore for the making of steel, still had to be imported in very large quantities. Italy was unable to match its enemies' levels of production and could not even replace its losses in shipping and aircraft. The drive for autarky in fact only succeeded in worsening Italy's financial difficulties. The government was spending huge sums on contracts related to the autarkic and closely related rearmament programme and also had to fund expensive military adventures in Ethiopia and Spain (see pages 116–21). Ever aware of the need to maintain popularity, the regime did not want to bring in major tax increases and, consequently, government expenditure greatly exceeded its income by the late 1930s. The remedy for these massive government deficits was either swingeing cuts in military expenditure or very significant reductions in living standards. Typically, Mussolini refused to recognise the seriousness of the economic situation and the problem remained unsolved when Italy entered the Second World War.

Impact of industrial policy on living standards

According to the *Duce*, under the corporate state, conflict between workers and bosses would end, and workers would no longer be 'exploited' and would gain greater prosperity and increased respect within society. Open conflict between employers and workers did indeed decline, but only because free trade unions were banned and strikes ruled illegal. As for greater prosperity, many industrial workers actually suffered a serious decline in their standards of living.

As the economic revival petered out in the late 1920s, industry responded with wage cuts. In the early 1930s some of these wage cuts were offset by falling prices in the shops, but, from the mid-1930s, prices began to rise steeply as Mussolini's drive for autarky pushed up the cost of imported goods. Overall, it is estimated that during the period 1925–38 real wages for the Italian worker

Mussolini increased drive for economic autarky: 1936

Key date

Economic sanctions

To pressurise Italy into seeking a peaceful solution to the Ethiopian crisis, the League banned trade with Italy in certain goods such as grain, steel, and textiles. However, the ban did not include oil, the one commodity that would have damaged the Italian war effort.

Key terms

League of Nations

International organisation of over 100 countries designed to help to prevent wars and end disputes between countries.

Key question

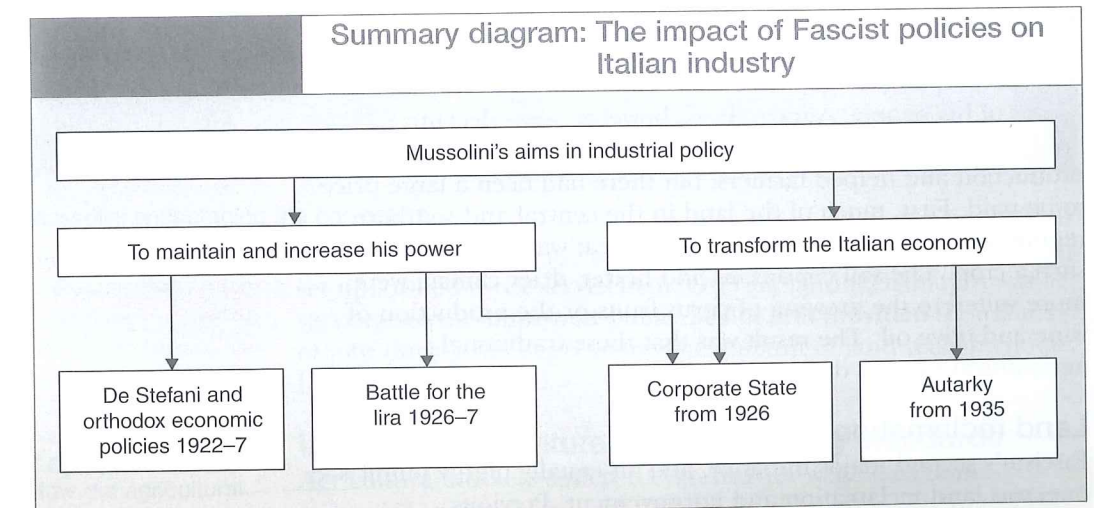
How did the industrial workers fare under Fascism?

fell by over 10 per cent. Falling consumption of meat, fruit and vegetables showed the impact of declining incomes. At the same time, unemployment began to rise, despite the public works programmes, and totalled some two million by 1933. This was a figure close to that of Britain, after allowing for the difference in populations.

The middle classes were far less likely to suffer from unemployment. The number of government employees virtually doubled to a million during the Fascist period and these people were not made redundant during the depression. Many state employees were in traditional jobs such as teaching, but the most explosive growth took place in the new Fascist organisations, principally the Ministry for Corporations, but also the *Dopolavoro* (see pages 105–6), which organised leisure activities for workers. These middle class office workers did suffer wage cuts during the 1930s but it was noticeable that these cuts were less than those for industrial workers.

That Fascism failed to produce real rises in living standards for the mass of Italian workers did not unduly concern the *Duce*. Instead, by December 1930, Mussolini was saying: 'fortunately the Italian people were not accustomed to eat much and therefore feel the privation less than others'. And, by 1936, he was arguing: 'We must rid our minds of the idea that what we have called the days of prosperity may return. We are probably moving toward a period when humanity will exist on a lower standard of living'.

Mussolini had never really been committed to raising the standard of living of ordinary Italians and viewed economic hardship as by no means a bad thing for his people. Economic hardship would create harder, tougher Italians dismissive of a soft 'bourgeois' lifestyle!



3 | Agriculture

Mussolini did not concern himself with the underlying problems of Italian agriculture – the existence of a sizeable class of poor, land-hungry peasants and the use of backward, inefficient farming methods. Instead, as with industry, he occupied himself with projects that would either increase his personal power and prestige, or supposedly help Italy to become a self-sufficient state in case of war.

The dictator's first major scheme was the '**Battle for Grain**'.

The Battle for Grain

The Battle for Grain began in 1925 and was an attempt to promote Fascist power and national self-sufficiency. Traditionally, Italy had needed to import large quantities of grain in order to feed her people. Mussolini saw this as a grave weakness, as in time of war supplies could be cut off and the country would face starvation. A campaign to increase grain production dramatically would solve this problem and would also illustrate to the world just how dynamic the new Fascist state was. Consequently, the government offered grants to enable farmers to buy tractors, fertiliser and other machinery necessary for wheat production. Free advice was made available on the latest, efficient farming techniques. Farmers were also guaranteed a high price for the grain they produced.

The incentives worked and the average harvest rose from 5.5 million tonnes per year in the early 1920s to over seven million tonnes 10 years later. Grain imports declined sharply, dropping by 75 per cent in the period 1925–35. The Battle for Grain appeared to be a resounding success and Mussolini claimed the credit. He ensured that press photographers were on hand to record him visiting farms and helping out with the harvest. Not only was the *Duce* a genius for conceiving the Battle for Grain, he was also prepared to get his hands dirty in the fields – a true leader of his people. Appearances, however, were deceptive.

The Battle for Grain certainly had dramatically increased production and helped farmers, but there had been a large price to be paid. First, much of the land in the central and southern regions that had been turned over to wheat was unsuitable for such a crop. The soil conditions and hotter, drier climate were more suited to the growing of citrus fruits or the production of wine and olive oil. The result was that these traditional agricultural exports declined.

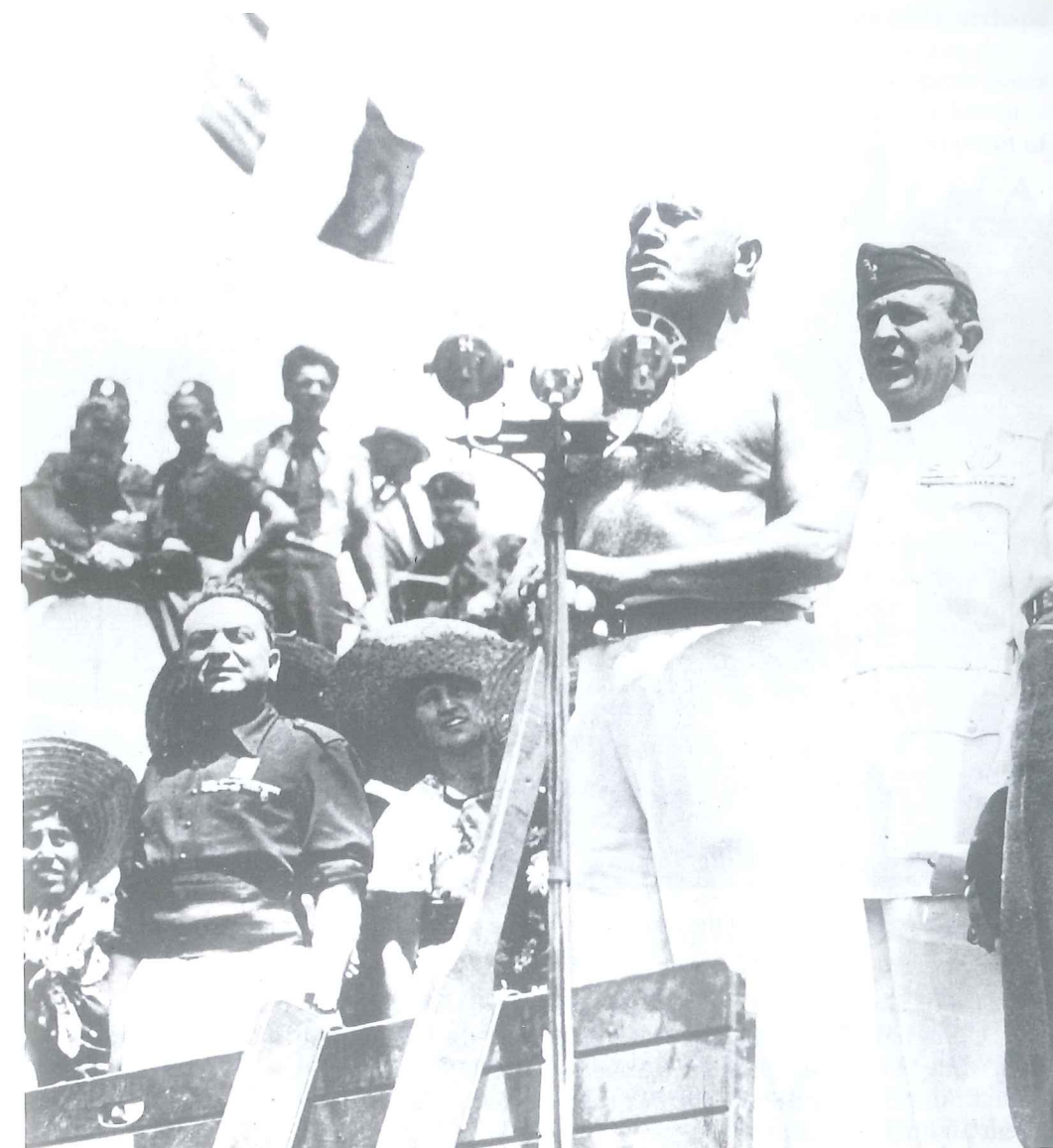
Land reclamation

Fascism's second major initiative, and an equally highly publicised one, was land reclamation and improvement. Previous governments had made a start here, providing money to drain or irrigate farmland. Mussolini simply expanded these schemes. The Pontine marshes, only 50 kilometres from Rome, and thus easily reached by foreign journalists, were the showpiece. These malarial swamps were drained and a network of small farms was

Key question
How successful were Mussolini's agricultural policies?

Key term
Battle for Grain
Fascism's attempt to make Italy self-sufficient in the production of grain, and thus bread.

Key date
Start of the Battle for Grain: 1925

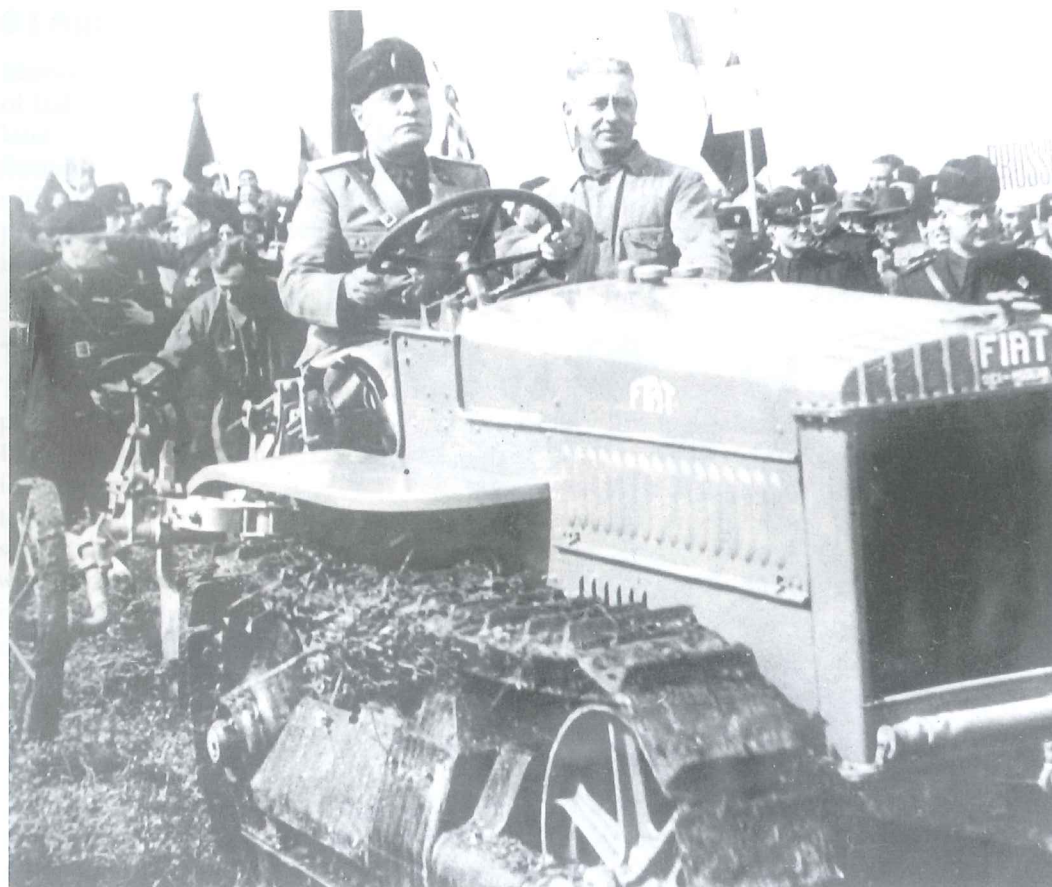


Mussolini encouraging the harvesters.

Key question
How did agricultural workers fare under Fascism?

Impact of agricultural policy on living standards

Agricultural workers suffered even heavier wage cuts than industrial workers during the 1930s. In the past, a way out of this poverty had been emigration. In the first two decades of the century an average of 200,000 Italians, mainly southerners, had emigrated to the USA each year. From 1920, however, the USA decided to stop virtually all further immigration. With this escape route from rural poverty closed, more Italians left the countryside



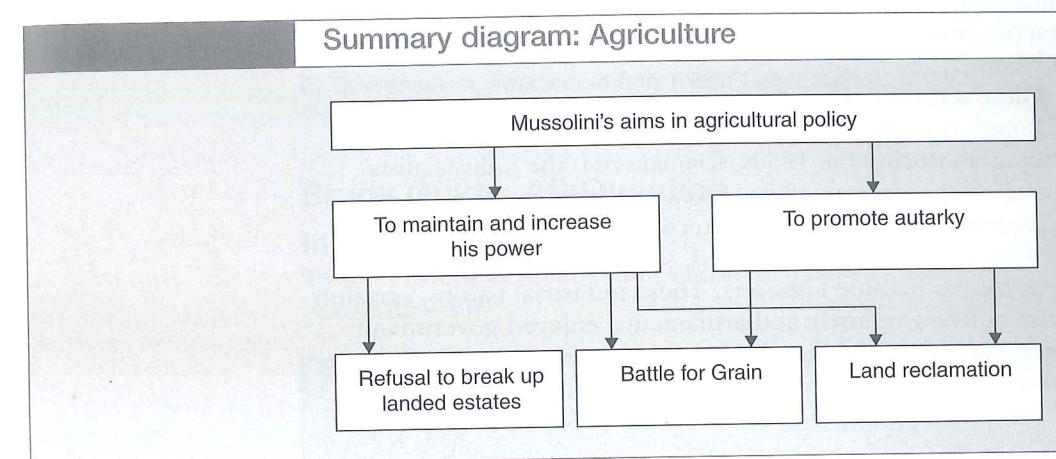
Mussolini cutting the first sod of the new city of Aprilla on the former Pontine marshes.

for the towns and cities to find work and a better standard of living. Up to half a million people left the land in the 1920s and 1930s, while between 1921 and 1941 the population of Rome doubled. And this was despite the fact that Mussolini tried to prevent all further migration.

Mussolini's resistance to migration into the cities was the result of his proclaimed love for the countryside and his desire to 'ruralise' Italy, creating a vigorous class of prosperous peasants devoted to Fascism. However, his government did nothing to bring this about. In fact, his policies brought much more benefit to large landowners than to poor and landless peasants. Such peasants needed enough land to support their families: a law to break up big estates and to distribute them to the peasants had been introduced into parliament in 1922, but Mussolini quietly dropped the policy for fear of offending the great landowners, his political supporters.

The failure to break up the great landed estates only cemented the backwardness and poverty of the south. The gap between an industrialising north and a rural south had grown wider under the Liberal governments before the First World War, but with Fascist neglect it grew wider still. The fact that Mussolini visited

the poverty stricken island of Sicily only once after 1924 perhaps indicates a recognition of his own regime's failure towards the south. That Italy still lay eighteenth in a table of European states as regards the daily calorie intake of its people, with the lowest Italian figures recorded in the south, provided statistical proof of Fascism's failure to tackle rural poverty.



4 | Key Debate

How far did Fascism modernise and transform the Italian economy?

During the 1920s and 1930s many foreign journalists were impressed by Fascism's Battle for Grain, the land reclamation schemes, and the claims that the Italian economy was being modernised – summed up in the phrase '**Mussolini made the trains run on time**'. Newspapers such as the *Financial Times* were intrigued by the idea of a corporate state. Historians since the Second World War, however, have been able to peer beyond the Fascist propaganda and have been much less impressed.

A number of modern historians still argue that Fascism did much to modernise Italian industry – in the words of di Scalia, writing in *Italy, From Revolution to Republic* (1995), 'policies stimulated modern industries such as electricity, steel, engineering, chemicals ... Italy's profile began to resemble that of modern European countries to a greater degree than in the past', but these historians are in a minority. Most historians do concede that some major industries such as vehicles and shipbuilding did expand and modernise, but point out that export industries and much of agriculture were neglected and stagnated. One of the most recent biographers of Mussolini, Richard Bosworth, has written 'so far as his economic policies were concerned, one Mussolinian line [policy] looked modernising, the next traditional'.

Key term

'Mussolini made the trains run on time'

This phrase was coined by foreign journalists to suggest that the Fascist regime had somehow improved the efficiency of Italian industries.

The corporate state

Historians are united in dismissing Fascist claims that the corporate state had transformed the economy and industrial relations. Alexander De Grand, a US professor of history, states that 'Fascism did not create its own unique economic system but rather grafted further statist [governmental] and bureaucratic tissue on the existing body of Italian capitalism'. Martin Blinkhorn, a British academic, adds that 'Corporatism in practice involved the thinly disguised exploitation and oppression of labour'.

There was no radical change in the ownership of industry. Although the state, via IRI, did take greater control over many companies during the 1930s, *Confindustria*, the industrialists' organisation, maintained its power and independence. It was never a hotbed of Fascism, but recognised the advantages of working with the regime. Indeed, several presidents of *Confindustria* became ministers. These industrial barons, certainly those in heavy industry and armaments, enjoyed government contracts and the freedom to form near-monopoly organisations, but resisted Party control and attempted state direction. As Tannenbaum puts it, 'Neither Mussolini's government nor the Fascist corporations were prepared to bully Fiat, Pirelli, or the Bank of Italy'.

Winners and losers

As for winners and losers under Fascism, historians agree that while major industrialists and big landowners, particularly in the north, benefited from the regime, agricultural workers fared the worst. Although some historians, such as the British historian Williamson, point to some of the positive effects of Fascism for industrial workers, such as accident and sick pay, there is a consensus that the interests of industrial workers were ignored and repressed and their living standards fell.

Overall, there was precious little transformation of the Italian economy and this was apparent at the time. As De Grand points out, 'large numbers of Italians understood (by the 1930s) that Fascism lacked any real commitment to economic change'. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that despite Fascism's failures the development of Italian industry and agriculture up to 1940 was not disastrous. Output did increase in both agriculture and industry, and big companies did well. In the field of communications, Fascism made real progress, building *autostrade* (motorways), electrifying 5000 kilometres of railway line, and improving the efficiency of the railway system. On the other hand it should be remembered that such improvements were made principally for propaganda purposes and Italy remained relatively backward compared to Germany, France and Britain. Italy's economic underdevelopment was to be cruelly exposed during the Second World War.

Some key books in the debate

- M. Blinkhorn, *Mussolini and Fascist Italy* (Lancaster Pamphlets, 1984).
 R.J.B. Bosworth, *Mussolini* (Hodder Headline, 2002).
 A. De Grand, *Italian Fascism – Its Origins and Development* (University of Nebraska, 2000).
 N. Farrell, *Mussolini: A New Life* (Weidenfeld, 2003).
 S. di Scalia, *Italy from Revolution to Republic* (1995), quoted in *Fascist Italy* by J. Hite and C. Hinton (John Murray, 1998).
 E. Tannenbaum, *Fascism in Italy* (Allen Lane, 1973).

Study Guide: AS Question

In the style of OCR

To what extent were Mussolini's economic policies a success in the years 1925–40? (45 marks)

Exam tips

The cross-references are intended to take you straight to the material that will help you to answer the question.

To begin with, you need to consider the various meanings of the term 'success'. Specifically you must explain how successful Mussolini was in:

- Achieving his aim of transforming the Italian economy via the corporate state, and the battles for grain and the lira (see pages 82–8).
- Achieving autarky and thus equipping Italy adequately for war (see pages 85–6).
- Using economic policy to cement his support with big business interests, such as *Confindustria* (see page 92).
- Generating popular support via propaganda successes such as the Battle for Grain and land reclamation (see pages 88–9).
- Improving the efficiency and production capacity of Italian industry and agriculture (see pages 91–2).
- Improving the living standards of ordinary Italians (see pages 86–90).

You need to make a judgement about the success or failure of each aspect of economic policy. For example, were his policies more successful in generating propaganda victories than in tackling the economic problems of Italy? If so, explain why this was the case. Examiners will also be impressed if you can explain how policies were inter-related or even contradictory: for example, if Mussolini was to maintain support from big business he could not introduce truly radical policies regarding the corporate state. Finally, you must make an overall judgement about the success of Mussolini's policies and justify your argument.