

## Mussolini's Foreign Policy

Mussolini wanted to make Italy, 'great, respected and feared.'... First he had an adventurous foreign policy with the Corfu incident (1923) and the occupation of Fiume (1920) His foreign policy was in two distinct stages 1923-34 after 1934 1923-34 Tried to be as diplomatic as possible Rivalry with France and Ally Yugoslavia He attended the Locarno Conference (1925) Disappointed, but became international guarantor anyway, along with Britain He was friendly with Greece, Hungary and Albania Albania was virtually controlled by Italy He cultivated good relations with Britain Supported Britain and so got a small part of Somaliland Recognised USSR non-aggression pact with USSR (Sept 1933) Bolstered Austria against the threat of Nazi Germany Supported Dolfuss (anti-Nazi) Sent three Italian divisions to frontier to prevent Nazi takeover of country when Dolfuss was assassinated. Mussolini was now highly respected abroad - he was not happy though - his successes weren't big enough. After 1934 Less suspicious of Hitler - now starting to admire his achievements - wanted to imitate him In their first meeting (June 1934) Mussolini called Hitler 'that mad little clown' Later he believed there was more to gain from friendship between himself and Hitler than with Britain and France. When Hitler introduced conscription - Italy along with France and Britain condemned the action. Britain and France avoided talk of the current situation in Abyssinia. Mussolini took this as though Britain and France would turn a blind eye The Invasion of Abyssinia turning point Mussolini's motive for the attack Italy's existing colonies were not very rewarding Italy was suffering from the depression - this victory would divert peoples attention and provide a new market for Italian goods. Would please nationalists and colonialists, since defeat in 1896. Would therefore increase his popularity It illustrated the ineffectiveness of collective security The League of Nations condemned Italian aggression Applied economic sanctions (not including oil, steel and coal) Secret treaty of Hoare-Laval to give 2/3 of Abyssinia to Italy. It failed to outrage of public when the plan leaked. Reasons for weak stand against Italy Britain and France were unprepared for war - didn't want to provoke Italy, Hoping to revive the Stresa front Wanted Italy as an ally against the real threat to peace, Germany The results - were disastrous The League of Nations and the idea of collective security were discredited Mussolini was annoyed by the sanctions anyway, and began to be drawn towards Hitler Mussolini dropped his objection of Hitlers invasion of Austria Hitler took advantage of everyones preoccupation with Abyssinia to invade the Rhineland When the Spanish civil war broke out (1936) Mussolini supported Franco, the Fascist leader to try and set up a third Fascist state in Europe. His excuse was that he was preventing the spread of communism. Signed the Rome-Berlin Axis (1936) Signed the Anti Comintern pact (1937) His popularity revived due to the Munich agreement (September 1938) (April 1939) Italian troops occupied Albania. Wanted to mimic Hitlers invasion of Czechoslovakia Pact of Steel (May 1939)

## About the Author

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