

# National Fascist Party

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The **National Fascist Party** (*Partito Nazionale Fascista*; PNF) was an Italian party, created by Benito Mussolini as the political expression of Fascism (previously represented by groups known as *Fasci*; *see also Italian fascism*). The party ruled Italy from 1922 to 1943 under a totalitarian system.

It is currently the only party whose reformation is explicitly banned by the Constitution of Italy: "it shall be forbidden to reorganize, under any form whatever, the dissolved fascist party" ("Transitory and Final Provisions", Disposition XII).

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## Policy

The policies of the National Fascist Party evolved over time. Initially the party harboured anti-clerical and republican values, but always maintained a nationalist agenda combined with degrees of statism and fervent anti-communism. The party adopted large elements of its policies from the authoritarian wing of the former Italian Nationalist Association. The party officially abandoned all republican values when trying to earn the support of the monarchy to form a government. Also, upon coming to power, the party eventually abandoned anti-clerical policies for the tactical purpose of gaining the support of Catholic groups, and later Mussolini the PNF endorsed the signing of the Lateran Treaty which created the Vatican City and normalized relations between Italy and the Church which had been badly damaged since the forced annexation of the Papal States in 1870.

## Economics

In power, the party attempted to form an economic policy that was a "third way" between capitalism and socialism, this was called Corporatism. In theory, trade unions and businesses would unite to form a cooperative organization to establish wages, hours of labour, and other issues. However when attempted to be put into practice, corporatism was heavily criticized by the industries who had provided financing in the past to Mussolini to protect them from socialism, and demanded that he keep the labour movement weakened to maintain their support, to which Mussolini and the party agreed, causing corporatism to favour businesses over workers who could only be in Fascist unions.

## Foreign Policy

In foreign policy, the party promised to return Italy to being an important world power, and claimed that Italy would become a New Roman Empire by having Italy militarily dominate the Mediterranean as part of their policy of "*Mare Nostrum*" ("Our Sea") and push for colonial expansion in Africa. The Fascists' inter-war period interventionist approach brought Italy to occupy the Greek island of Corfu in 1923, the regime allowed the annexation of the Italian occupied city of Fiume in 1924, and from the 1920s to 1934, the regime succeeded in negotiations with Britain and France in expanding the Italian colonies of Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, and Fezzan until they were formally unified into the colony of Italian Libya in 1934.

In 1935, the party advocated and proceeded to bring Italy into a colonial war with Ethiopia. The war was meant as an act of restoring Italian national pride on the international stage that had been damaged in Italy's failure to win a previous colonial

## Partito Nazionale Fascista



<b>Historic Leader</b>	Benito Mussolini
<b>Founded</b>	November 7, 1921
<b>Dissolved</b>	July 27, 1943
<b>Headquarters</b>	Rome, Italy
<b>Newspaper</b>	<i>Il Popolo d'Italia</i>
<b>Ideology</b>	Fascism

war with Ethiopia in 1896.

The war with Ethiopia succeeded in 1936, but left Italy isolated with only one other country supporting Italy, Germany under the Nazi regime of Adolf Hitler. Although Hitler's Nazi Party was largely similar and to a significant degree based on that of the PNF, the two ideologies in both countries had differences. Fascists distrusted Hitler's aims at annexing Austria as they feared the next target would be German-populated areas of Italian-held Tyrol, moreover Austrian independence protected Italy from any such aggression, and Austria's fascist regime had maintained good relations with Italy so that in 1934, following the assassination of Austrian leader Engelbert Dollfuss by Austrian Nazis, Mussolini and the PNF promised Austria military support if Germany attempted annexation. Also, unlike the Nazi Party, the PNF did not support anti-Semitism as a number of its members were Jewish, including Mussolini's mistress and PNF propaganda director Margherita Sarfatti. Nevertheless, the two regimes stood eye-to-eye on other policy issues, such as both regimes' opposition to the Treaty of Versailles and both regimes' fervent anti-communism and interventionist attitude toward combatting communist influence.

It was anti-communist sentiment that brought the two regimes to ally in the Axis Pact in 1936, and support the nationalist forces of Francisco Franco in Spain against leftist republican forces during the Spanish Civil War. In 1938, Mussolini pressured the PNF to implement anti-Semitic racial policies to maintain good relations with Germany to which they reluctantly agreed. These measures were opposed by a number of Fascists including Mussolini's son-in-law and foreign minister Galeazzo Ciano.

## History

Founded in Rome on November 7, 1921, it marked the transformation of the paramilitary *Fasci Italiani di Combattimento* into a more coherent political group (the *Fasci di Combattimento* had been founded by Mussolini in Milan's Piazza San Sepolcro, on March 23, 1919).

The PNF was instrumental in directing and popularizing support for Mussolini's ideology. In the early years, groups within the PNF called Blackshirts built a base of power by violently attacking socialists and their institutions in the rural Po Valley thereby gaining the support of landowners.

The PNF was the main agent of an attempted coup d'état on October 28, 1922, the March on Rome. Even though the coup failed in giving power directly to the PNF, it nonetheless resulted in a parallel agreement between Mussolini and King Victor Emmanuel III that made Mussolini the head of the Italian government.

After the drastic modifying of electoral legislation (the *Acerbo Law*), the PNF clearly won the highly controversial elections of April 1924. In early 1925, Mussolini dropped all pretense of democracy and set up a total dictatorship. From that point onward, the PNF was effectively the only legally permitted party in the country. This status was formalized by a law passed in 1928 and Italy remained a one-party state until the end of the Fascist regime in 1943.

After taking sole power, the Fascist regime began to impose Fascist ideology and symbolism throughout the country. Party membership in the PNF became necessary to seek employment or gain government assistance. The fasces adorned public buildings, Fascist mottos and symbols were displayed on art, and a personality cult was created around Mussolini as the nation's saviour and was called "*Il Duce*", "The Leader". The Italian parliament was replaced in duties by the Grand Council of Fascism solely filled with PNF members. The PNF promoted Italian imperialism in Africa and staunchly promoted racial segregation and white supremacy of Italian settlers in the colonies.

The Grand Fascist Council, following a request of Dino Grandi, overthrew Mussolini on July 25 1943. The party was officially banned by Pietro Badoglio's government on July 27.

After the Nazi-engineered Unternehmen Eiche liberated Mussolini in September, the PNF was revived as the **Republican Fascist Party** (*Partito Fascista Repubblicano* - PFR; September 13), as the single party of the Northern and Nazi-protected Italian Social Republic (the *Salò Republic*). Its secretary was Alessandro Pavolini. The PFR did not outlast Mussolini's execution and the disappearance of the Salò state in April 1945.

## Slogans

- "*Il Duce!*", "The Leader!"
- "*Viva Il Duce!*". "Long live the Leader!"<sup>[1]</sup>

- "Eja, Eja, Eja, Alalà!" (Equivalent in English to Hip Hip Hurray!)
- *Viva la Morte*, ("Long live death (sacrifice).")
- *Creedere, Obbedire, Combattere* ("Believe, Obey, Fight")
- *Libro e moschetto - fascista perfetto*, ("The book and the musket - make the perfect Fascist.")
- *Tutto nello Stato, niente al di fuori dello Stato, nulla contro lo Stato*, ("Everything in the State, nothing outside the State, nothing against the State.")
- *Se avanzo, seguitemi. Se indietreggio, uccidetemi. Se muoio, vendicatemi*, ("If I advance, follow me. If I retreat, kill me. If I die, avenge me")
- "War is to man as motherhood is to woman."<sup>[2]</sup>

## Secretaries of the PNF

- Michele Bianchi (November 1921 - January 1923)
- *multiple presidency* (January 1923 - October 1923)

*Triumvirate*: Michele Bianchi, Nicola Sansanelli, Giuseppe Bastianini

- Francesco Giunta (October 15 1923 - April 22 1924)
- *multiple presidency* (April 23 1924 - February 15 1925)

*Quadrumvirate*: Roberto Forges Davanzati, Cesare Rossi, Giovanni Marinelli, Alessandro Melchiorri

- Roberto Farinacci (February 15 1925 - March 30 1926)
- Augusto Turati (March 30 1926 - October 7 1930)
- Giovanni Giuriati (October 1930 - December 1931)
- Achille Starace (December 1931 - October 31 1939)
- Ettore Muti (October 31 1939 - October 30 1940)
- Adelchi Serena (October 30 1940 - December 26 1941)
- Aldo Vidussoni (December 26 1941 - April 19 1943)
- Carlo Scorza (April 19 1943 - July 25 1943)

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### Historical Italian political parties (active parties: simple version, in 2007)

**Communist**: Communist Party of Italy, Italian Communist Party, Organisation of Communists of Italy (Marxist-Leninists), Proletarian Unity Party, Proletarian Democracy, Movement of Unitarian Communists

**Socialist**: Italian Reform Socialist Party, United Socialist Party (1922), Labour Democratic Party, Italian Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity

**Social democratic**: Italian Socialist Party, Italian Socialist Workers' Party, United Socialist Party (1949), Italian Democratic Socialist Party, Unified Socialist Party, Democratic Party of the Left, Italian Socialists, Democrats of the Left

**Green**: Green Lists, Rainbow Greens

**Social liberal**: Action Party, Radical Party, Democratic Alliance, Democratic Union, Movement for Democracy – The Net, The Democrats, European Republicans Movement,

**Liberal**: Italian Liberal Party, Union of the Centre, Liberal Party

**Centrist**: Patto Segni, Italian Renewal, United Consumers, Southern Democratic Party, Middle-of-the-Road Italy, Democracy is Freedom – The Daisy

**Regionalist**: Social Democratic Party of South Tyrol, Fronte Marco Polo, Sardinia Project, Sicilian Alliance, Daisy Civic List

**Christian democratic**: Italian People's Party (1919), Christian Democracy, Italian People's Party (1994), Christian Democratic Centre, United Christian Democrats, Christian Democrats for the Republic, Democratic Union for the Republic, European Democracy

**Conservative**: Uomo Qualunque Front, Monarchist National Party, People's Monarchist Party, Italian Democratic Party of Monarchist Unity, National Democracy

**Fascist and neo-fascist**: **National Fascist Party**, Italian Social Movement–National Right

**Leftist coalition**: Popular Democratic Front, Alliance of Progressives,

**Centre-left coalition**: The Olive Tree, The Union, Rose in the Fist

**Liberal coalition**: National Democratic Union, National Bloc, Republicans, Liberals,

Reformers

**Centrist coalition:** Pact for Italy, Pact of Democrats

**Centre-right coalition:** Pole of Freedoms, Pole of Good Government, House of Freedoms

**Conservative coalition:** National Bloc of Freedom

**Neo-fascist coalition:** Social Alternative

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*Liste civetta:* For the Abolition of Scorporo, New Country

## References

- <sup>^</sup> Smith, Denis M. *Mussolini: A Biography*. 1983. New York: Vintage Books. p176
- <sup>^</sup> Sarti, Roland. 1974. *The Ax Within: Italian Fascism in Action*. New York: New Viewpoints. p187.

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