

Political intolerance cards

By 1926, parliament had no control over policy. In the 15 years between 1925 and 1940 100,000 decrees were passed in Italy.

It is estimated that in 1927 only 15% of the Italian bureaucracy were members of the Fascist party.

From May 1928 only those who paid taxes of more than 100 lire a year were entitled to vote – this prevented the poorest from voting.

Dozens of judges were sacked and the legal system was perverted to allow imprisonment without trial. Mussolini often personally intervened in cases.

In the March 1929 elections 136,000 people voted against the Fascist Grand Council representatives.

Known opponents were kept under surveillance – in a typical week 20,000 visits, searches or arrests were carried out by the OVRA.

Elections were rigged by Mussolini to show a 98% approval rate.

The OVRA sounded more intimidating than might have been the case, given that it was staffed by only 375 agents.

In 1928 the King accepted his own impotence when he agreed that the future choice of PM would lie with the Fascist Grand Council.

Penal camps were established on the Lipari Islands where 5000 opponents were imprisoned or banished for a total of 28,000 years.

How successful was Mussolini in limiting political diversity?

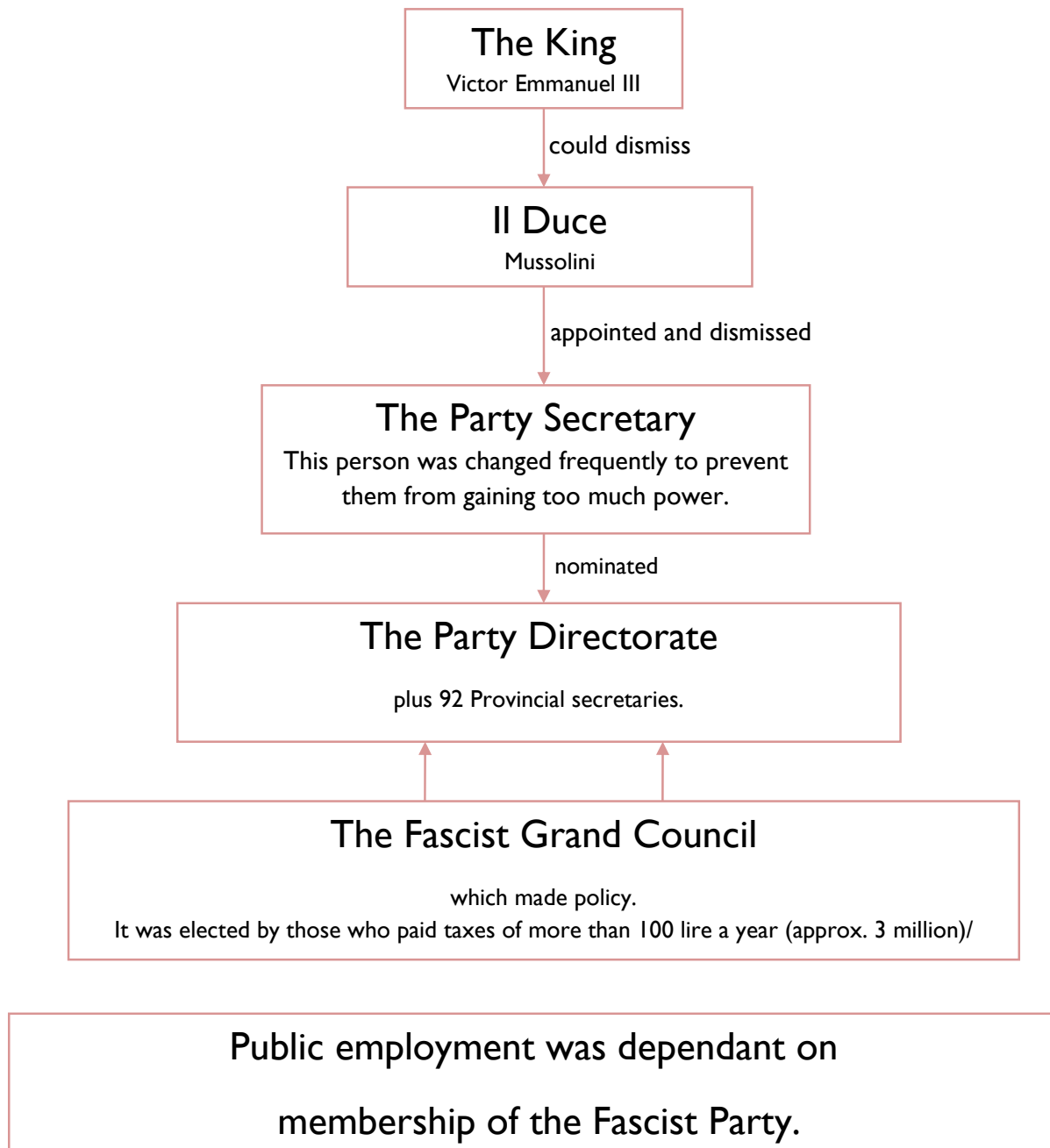
Record sheet

The establishment of the one-party state in 1926 destroyed any official political diversity. The next 15 years saw the suppression of political opposition. As the fascist grip on Italy tightened, Mussolini declared 'I am the government. Italy will obey me as she never obeyed me before.' Was he correct?

Using the cards, identify Mussolini's successes and failures in eliminating political opposition.

Examples of Mussolini's successes in eliminating political opposition	Examples of Mussolini's failure in eliminating political opposition

The relationship between the Fascist Party and the State



What potential problem for Mussolini can you see in this structure of government?

Other important considerations

- Extremists were brought under control by a decision to make Robert Farinacci Party Secretary in 1925. He centralised the Fascist Party, closed local press and brought local Fascist bosses (the Ras) under his control.
- The October 1926 revised party structure affirmed the strength of Mussolini. Officially it made him the head of the party, all party posts were made subject to his selection and the Fascist Grand Council became the body which made policy.
- The party itself was purged, with around 170,000 Fascists expelled because of extremism. By 1939, party membership numbered 2.6 million.
- There was no violent purge of the party like in the Soviet Union under Stalin. The OVRA did not become an independent power like the NKVD in the Soviet Union and the SS in Germany.
- Most of the local bosses (Ras) were too concerned with fighting each other to challenge Mussolini.

Using what you have learned so far and the additional information above, have a go at answering the following exam style question:

How far did Mussolini remove political diversity from Fascist Italy? (24 marks)

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Teaching notes

Task objectives

1. describe how political opposition was limited in Fascist Italy
2. identify the structure of government in Fascist Italy
3. assess Mussolini's success at removing political diversity from Italy

Materials

- enough sets of the 'Political intolerance cards' for one set between two students
- one A3 copy of the 'The relationship between the Fascist Party and the State diagram' (p. 3)
- other materials: plain paper, coloured pens, clock
- copies of the worksheet (pp. 2-5)

Instructions

Objective 1 task – card sort

1. Ask students to sort the 'Political intolerance cards' into examples of Mussolini's success or failure in removing political diversity. They could write these onto the table of their worksheet if you want them to keep a permanent record for their notes.
2. Review their answers through questioning.

Objective 2 task – memory relay race

1. Working in groups of 3/4. Give each group a sheet of plain A3 paper and some coloured pens.
2. Ask them to assign a reader and a writer (they will all have a go at each job so it doesn't matter who goes first).
3. Ask the readers from each group to come to the front and show them the A3 diagram of the 'relationship between the Fascist Party and the State diagram' for 30 seconds. They should aim to memorise as much as possible.
4. The readers should then return to their groups and explain what they have seen to the writer who must record as much as possible.
5. Next, the writer should come to the front (becoming the new reader) and the person in the group who is yet to have has a 'job' should become the writer. Repeat this process for as many rotations as you feel is reasonable for your students to recreate the diagram.
6. Once finished ask the groups to hold up their diagrams to compare with the original. Ask students to rate each other's attempts.

Objective 3 task – assessing Mussolini's success

1. After the memory game, ask the students to study the copy of the diagram they have on the worksheet and suggest what problems this system might have created for Mussolini.
2. Ask students to use all the information from the session, and the 'Other important considerations' section of the worksheet to decide whether or not Mussolini successfully removed political opposition from the Fascist Party and the rest of Italy. If you choose, this could be in the form of the essay question; how far did Mussolini remove political diversity from Fascist Italy? (24 marks).