Questions for Discussion and Review (VII)

RELEVANT LECTURES: Numbers 24 ("Mussolini and the Evolution of Fascism, 25 ("Hitler and National Socialism")

RELEVANT READING: McKay, Chapter 29 [956-60, 968-91, Perry, Chapter 13 [pp. 363-91]

1. Identifications:

a. Mein Kampf  
b. il biennio rosso  
c. Joseph Goebbels  
d. "March on Rome"  
e. Weimar Republic  
f. "Night of Long Knives"  
g. Lebensraum  
h. Karl Lueger  
i. Freikorps  
j. Fronterlebnis  
k. S.A. and S.S.  
l. Kristallnacht  
m. Machtergreifung  
n. Reichstag Fire  
o. Nuremberg Laws  

2. Review Questions:

a. Were the terms of the Treaty of Versailles justified? What might have been a fairer, and wiser settlement in regard to Germany?

b. Mussolini wrote “fascism is the complete opposite of Marxian Socialism.” [cf. Perry, p. 364] Yet others have suggested similarities in the two doctrines, pointing especially to Mussolini’s early career. What did Mussolini mean by that remark, and how justified was it?

c. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was famous for saying, in regard to the Great Depression, that “all we have to fear is fear itself.” Do you agree? What do you consider to be the most important reasons for the Depression (how central was "fear")? In particular, what was the relationship of the crash of the American stock market to then ensuing world-wide decline in production?

d. Hitler wrote in Mein Kampf that “the Jewish people, despite all apparent intellectual qualities, is without any culture of its own. For what sham culture the Jew today possesses is the property of other peoples, and for the most part it is ruined in his hands.” [cf. Perry, 371] How does this comment fit into Hitler’s notion of race?

3. Discussion Questions:

a. Would it be appropriate to apply the term “fascist” to any contemporary American or world political figure? Is there any key or essential quality common to all fascist regimes?

b. “Mussolini was obviously a fascist, but he was not a totalitarian.” Comment critically. In which specific areas did Mussolini exercise a less than “totalitarian” control? Compare his
methods of rule with those of Hitler and Stalin. How would you compare Mussolini to the
“conservative authoritarians,” as defined by McKay (957 ff.)?

c. “In all of history no more powerful argument for the importance of personality can be made
than in the case of Adolf Hitler. Without his genius there would have been no Nazi movement, no
*Machtergreifung*, no World War II, no Holocaust.” Comment critically. What were the Great
Historical Forces that favored Hitler’s successes—and that conditioned his ultimate failures?