



▲ Hitler's manifesto, *Mein Kampf*

WITNESS HISTORY AUDIO

Hitler's Brutal Determination

For the German dictator Adolf Hitler, war was an ennobling experience. War united a nation, demanded righteous sacrifices, and culminated in territorial acquisitions. Hitler believed that there was no morality in war, just victory and defeat. He instructed his generals:

“The victor will not be asked afterwards whether he told the truth or not. When starting and waging a war it is not right that matters, but victory. Close your hearts to pity. Act brutally. Eighty million people [Germans] must obtain what is their right. Their existence must be made secure. The stronger man is right.”

—Adolf Hitler, August 1939

◀ Hitler speaks to the German people.

Dictators and War

Objectives

- Explain how dictators and militarist regimes arose in several countries in the 1930s.
- Summarize the actions taken by aggressive regimes in Europe and Asia.
- Analyze the responses of Britain, France, and the United States to the aggressive regimes.

Terms and People

totalitarianism
Joseph Stalin
Benito Mussolini
Adolf Hitler
anti-Semitism

Spanish Civil War
appeasement
Anschluss
Munich Pact

NoteTaking

Reading Skill: Summarize As you read, summarize the actions in the 1930s of each of the countries listed in the table below.

Soviet Union	Italy	Germany	Japan

Why It Matters The effects of World War I and the Great Depression touched almost every corner of the world. In some countries, these upheavals led to the rise of a new kind of brutal dictatorship—the totalitarian state. Led by aggressive dictators, these states would destroy the peace established after World War I and spark a new, even deadlier, global conflict. **Section Focus Question:** Why did totalitarian states rise after World War I, and what did they do?

A Bitter Peace Unravels

In November 1918, World War I ended when Germany surrendered to the Allies. In 1919, delegates from 27 nations met in Versailles to hammer out a peace agreement, but only Britain, France, and the United States had a real say in most of the important decisions. Germany and Russia were not even present. From the first, many Germans resented the resulting Treaty of Versailles. Other nations also grumbled over the peace settlements. Italy and Japan, both Allies, had expected far more land for their sacrifices. The war that American President Woodrow Wilson had called “a war to end all wars” had left behind a mountain of bitterness, anger, frustration, and despair, often capped by a burning desire for revenge.

During the 1920s many nations, new and old, moved steadily toward democracy and freedom. Others, however, took the opposite direction, embracing repressive dictatorships and **totalitarianism**, a theory of government in which a single party or leader controls the economic, social, and cultural lives of its people. Throughout history

there have been dictatorships, countries ruled by one person or small groups of people. But totalitarianism was a twentieth-century phenomenon. It was more extreme than a simple dictatorship, as the chart below shows. Why were totalitarian regimes able to take hold in the years leading up to World War II? As you will read, historians lay much of the blame on the destruction and bitterness left behind by World War I and the desperation caused by the Great Depression.

✓ **Checkpoint** What legacy did World War I leave behind?

Repression in the Soviet Union and Italy

The 1917 communist revolution in Russia inaugurated the first totalitarian state. The communist leader Vladimir Lenin created the beginnings of a totalitarian system of control to maintain power. His programs resulted in civil war, starvation, famine, and the death of millions of Russians.

Stalin's Grip on the Soviet Union After Lenin's death in 1924, **Joseph Stalin** took Lenin's place as the head of the Communist Party. In Russian, *Stalin* means "man of steel," and it is an apt description of the dictator's personality. Stalin was suspicious, cruel, ruthless, and tyrannical. He did not think twice about killing rivals or sentencing innocent people to death. His efforts to transform the Soviet Union into an industrial power and form state-run collective farms resulted in the deaths of at least 10 million people. In what became known as the Great Terror, Stalin purged the Communist Party of real or suspected traitors in the 1930s, ordering the deaths or imprisonment of up to a million people. The purge also included most of the higher officers of the Red Army, among many others. A combination of fear and massive propaganda kept Stalin in power.

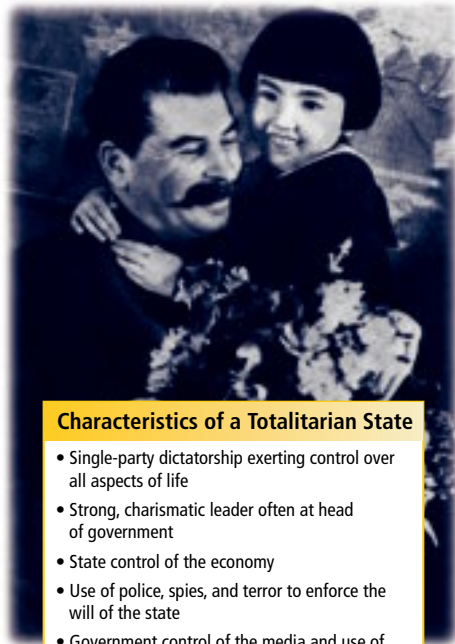
Mussolini's Fascist Party Controls Italy Italian totalitarianism was in many ways a direct result of the war and the peace treaties. Although Italy was on the winning side, it did not get the land along the Adriatic coast it had hoped to obtain from the division of Austria-Hungary. Added to this frustration, the postwar economic depression made it difficult for returning veterans to find jobs, a communist movement was growing, and the government seemed weak and inept.

It was during this period that **Benito Mussolini** entered the world stage. In 1919, Mussolini founded the *Fasci di Combattimento* (FAH shee dee kohm ba tee MEHN toh), or Fascist Party, a right-wing organization that trumpeted nationalism and promised to make Italy great again. Followers of Mussolini, known as Black Shirts, fought in the streets against socialists and communists. Fearing revolution, in 1922, Italian King Victor Emmanuel III asked Mussolini to form a government. Calling himself *Il Duce* (ihl DOO chay), or "the leader," Mussolini consolidated his control over the government and the army within a few years. He outlawed political parties, took over the press, created a secret police, organized youth groups to indoctrinate the young, and suppressed strikes. He opposed liberalism and socialism. Still, his hold over Italy was never as powerful as Stalin's grip on the Soviet Union.

✓ **Checkpoint** How did Stalin and Mussolini maintain their power?

Stalin: A Gentle Father?

In this staged photo, a fatherly Stalin poses with a young girl, Galia Markifova. Years later, Stalin's government sent Galia to the dreaded Gulag, a chain of labor camps where millions of Soviets were imprisoned during Stalin's rule. *How is this photo an example of propaganda?*



Characteristics of a Totalitarian State

- Single-party dictatorship exerting control over all aspects of life
- Strong, charismatic leader often at head of government
- State control of the economy
- Use of police, spies, and terror to enforce the will of the state
- Government control of the media and use of propaganda to indoctrinate citizens
- Use of schools and youth organizations to spread ideology to children
- Strict censorship of artists, intellectuals, and political rivals with dissenting opinions

Aggressive Leaders in Germany and Japan

After World War I, Germany became a democracy. The Weimar (vi mahr) Republic (named after the town of Weimar where the government was created) struggled throughout the 1920s to establish a functional democracy. However, Germany was beset by severe economic troubles in the 1920s, including runaway inflation. Anger over the Treaty of Versailles and internal disunity also plagued the young government. The Weimar Republic's ship of state was slowly sinking.

The Nazis Rise In the early 1930s, the worldwide Great Depression hit the Weimar Republic hard, worsening the problems that already existed. Increasingly, antidemocratic parties on the right, especially the National Socialist German Workers' Party, or Nazi (NAHT see) Party, threatened the republic. Regardless of the party's name, Nazis were not socialists. They bitterly opposed socialism, communism, or any other *ism* that promoted class interests or workers' rights above German ethnic solidarity. **Adolf Hitler** led the Nazi Party. The son of a minor Austrian civil servant, Hitler was a failed artist, a wounded and decorated World War I soldier, and a person who teetered on the brink of madness.

Hitler joined the small Nazi Party after the war and soon gained control of it. While in prison after the party attempted a rebellion, Hitler dictated the book *Mein Kampf* ("My Struggle"), in which he stated his explanations for the problems facing Germany. He criticized many people, political programs, and

INFOGRAPHIC

HITLER'S STRANGLEHOLD ON GERMANY

When Adolf Hitler came to power, he promised that Germany would rise again from the quagmire of reparations and the economic Depression that it had floundered in since World War I. For many, those promises seemed to come true in the 1930s. "[O]nce Hitler came to power, it was wonderful. Everybody had a job and there weren't any more unemployed people," remembers one German citizen. But from the beginning, Hitler's promises had dark undertones of oppression, based on extreme antisemitism and the rejection of democracy. Hitler maintained his power by alternately brainwashing the public with lies and propaganda drives or terrifying them into silence through ruthless violence. His rule led ultimately to genocide and the devastation of World War II.



Propaganda images like this presented Hitler as Germany's savior. Medals (above right) rewarded German mothers who bore several children.



German soldiers humiliate a Jewish boy and his father by forcing the boy to cut off his father's beard in 1933.

ideologies, but his sharpest assaults were against communists and Jews. Hitler was violently **anti-Semitic**, or prejudiced against Jewish people. Anti-Semitism had troubled Europe for centuries, mainly motivated by religious intolerance and economic resentment. In the late nineteenth century, new pseudo-scientific theories about Jews as a race, along with the rise of nationalism, caused Jews to be marginalized as ethnic outsiders. Hitler believed and spread this type of thinking. He preached that the greatest threat confronting Germany was the Jewish people who lived there. In *Mein Kampf*, which quickly became a national bestseller, Hitler presented a blueprint of his hatreds and plans for world domination.

Hitler Seizes Power The shattered German economy—the widespread unemployment, homelessness, and hunger—played into the Nazis' hands. Recognizing the power of Hitler's party, in January 1933, the president of the Weimar Republic appointed Hitler chancellor of Germany. Over the next two years, Hitler became president as well as chancellor, consolidated his power, and ruled unchecked by the Reichstag (RĪKS tahg), or the German parliament. By 1935, the democratic institutions of the Weimar Republic were silenced, and Hitler spoke alone as the voice of Germany.

Like Stalin and Mussolini, Hitler was the symbol of his totalitarian regime. Aided by a secret police that crushed all opposition, a state-controlled press that praised his accomplishments, and a state-controlled educational system that

Vocabulary Builder

ideology—(ĭ dee AHL uh jee) *n.* a system of ideas that guides an individual, movement, or political program



Through organizations such as the Hitler Youth for boys and the League of German Girls, young people were indoctrinated with Nazi ideas.

◀ Young Nazis confiscate books that they consider “un-German” to be burned in a huge demonstration in Berlin in May 1933.

◀ A 1932 voting slip for Adolf Hitler offers the public a government of “freedom and peace.”

Thinking Critically

- Synthesize** Which of the characteristics listed in the chart earlier in this section are illustrated here?
- Draw Inferences** Why did the Nazi government try to win the loyalty of young Germans?

indoctrinated the young, Hitler assumed a godlike aura. One German described the emotions of seeing Hitler address a crowd:

Primary Source

“There stood Hitler in a simple black coat and looked over the crowd. . . . How many look up to him with a touching faith! As their helper, their savior, their deliverer from unbearable distress—to him who rescues . . . the scholar, the clergyman, the farmer, the worker, the unemployed, who leads them from the [jumbled political] parties back into the nation.”

—Louise Solmitz, a schoolteacher who observed an early Nazi rally

By the late 1930s, Hitler's economic policies, including rearmament and massive public-works projects, had ended the depression in Germany. Many Germans followed his lead and cheered for him at Nazi rallies. Meanwhile, his political initiatives restricted freedom. He openly attacked Jewish people, communists, and socialists.

Militarists Gain Power in Japan In Japan, as in Germany, the 1920s was a period of increased democracy and peaceful change. The Japanese government

reduced the power of the military, passed laws to give all men the right to vote, legalized trade unions, and allowed several diverse political parties to be established. This period ended when the Great Depression discredited Japan's civilian leaders in the 1930s.

Reasserting their traditional powers, military leaders argued that expansion throughout Asia would solve Japan's economic troubles and guarantee future security. Throughout the 1930s, the military played a significant role in shaping Japanese civilian and military policy.

Japan, however, did not become a totalitarian dictatorship. No charismatic leader like Stalin or Hitler emerged. Instead, Japan continued as a constitutional monarchy headed by a mainly aloof emperor.

The Japanese Expand Their Empire As the power shifted toward military control, Japan started on a course of aggressive military expansion. In 1931, Japan attacked Manchuria (man CHUR ee uh), a region in northeastern China, and established a puppet state. The new nation was named Manchukuo (man choo kwoh). Japan controlled its domestic and foreign policies, as well as its abundant natural resources. In 1937, Japan moved against China, gaining control over major Chinese railroad links and coastal areas. In the then-capital city of Nanjing, Japanese soldiers acted with such brutality—murdering more than 200,000 residents and burning a large section of the city—that the incident became known as the “Rape of Nanjing.”

Geography Interactive

For: Interactive map
Web Code: nep-1002

Japanese Expansion, 1931–1939



Map Skills In the 1930s, Japan tried to increase its influence in Asia by taking control of Manchuria and attacking China.

Predict Consequences How might an empire such as Japan's be hard to defend?



Checkpoint How did the Great Depression affect political life in Germany and Japan?

Dictators Turn to Aggression

In the 1930s, Italy and Germany resorted to acts of aggression similar to those of Japan in Asia. Throughout the decade, neither the League of Nations nor democratic nations succeeded in stopping the aggression. It was a time that recalled a line from Irish poet William Butler Yeats: “The best lack all conviction and the worst are full of passionate intensity.”

Weakness of the League of Nations

In many ways, the League of Nations never recovered from America's refusal to join it. The League was also handicapped by its own charter. It had no standing army and no real power to enforce its decrees. It was only as strong as its members' resolve, and during the worldwide depression of the 1930s, those members lacked resolve. When aggressive nations began to test the League, they discovered that the organization was long on words and short on action.

Hitler and Mussolini Threaten the Peace

From the first, Hitler focused on restoring Germany's strength and nullifying the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles. From 1933 to 1936, he rebuilt the German economy and dramatically enlarged the army, navy, and air force in direct defiance of the Treaty of Versailles. In the mid-1930s, Hitler began to move toward his goal of reunifying all Germanic people into one Reich, or state. He spoke often of the need for Germany to expand to gain *Lebensraum* (LAY buhns rowm), or living space, for its people. In 1935, he reclaimed the Saar (sahr) region from French control. In 1936, in a direct challenge to the League, he sent German troops into the Rhineland. The League failed to respond.

Meanwhile, Mussolini commenced his own imperial plans. In 1935, Italy invaded Ethiopia, an independent country in east Africa. Its emperor, Haile Selassie (Hi luh suh lah SEE), appealed to the League of Nations for support. The organization did almost nothing, and Ethiopia fell.

Fighting Breaks Out in Spain Fascists were also victorious in the **Spanish Civil War**, a bloody conflict that raged from 1936 until 1939. The Nationalists, who had fascist tendencies, rebelled against Spain's democratic Republican government. Both Hitler and Mussolini sent military and economic aid to the Nationalist leader, General Francisco Franco, using the conflict to test some of their new military technology. Though the Soviet Union provided some support for the Republican side, France, Britain, and the United States remained largely on the sidelines, deploring the bloodshed but refusing to provide weapons to the Republican forces.

✓ **Checkpoint** Why did the League of Nations fail to halt German and Italian aggression?

Aggression Goes Unchecked

The policy that France and Britain pursued against aggressive nations during the 1930s is known as **appeasement**. It is a policy of granting concessions to a potential enemy in the hope that it will maintain peace. Unfortunately,

HISTORY MAKERS

Benito Mussolini (1883–1945)

Adolf Hitler (1889–1945)

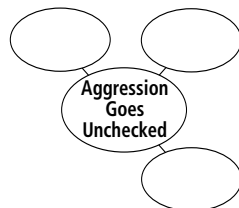
Benito Mussolini's involvement in radical politics began when he was a young man. In 1919, he formed the Fascist Party and quickly gained followers with his powerful speaking style and by terrorizing opponents. Other world leaders criticized him when he sent Italian armies to invade Ethiopia in 1935. Only Germany's Adolf Hitler supported the move, and the two leaders became allies.

Before World War I, Adolf Hitler lived in Vienna and tried to make his living as an artist. During the war, he fought for Germany and was wounded several times. In 1933, Hitler became head of the German government. He quickly took absolute power using propaganda and violence. Though never close, he and Benito Mussolini supported each other in their efforts to control Europe.



NoteTaking

Reading Skill: Identify Main Ideas Use a concept web like the one below to record the main ideas about the policies of Great Britain, France, and the United States toward aggressive nations.



Appeasement at Munich

British prime minister Neville Chamberlain greets Hitler at the Munich Conference in 1938. Historians still debate why Britain and France pursued the policy of appeasement leading up to World War II.



appeasement only spurred the fascist leaders to become more bold, adventurous, and aggressive.

Why did France and Britain appease the fascist powers? There were a number of reasons. World War I was so horrible that some leaders vowed never to allow another such war to break out. Other leaders believed that the Soviet Union posed a greater threat than Nazi Germany. They maintained that a strong Germany would provide a buffer against the Soviet menace. Still other leaders questioned the resolve of their own people and their allies—particularly the United States.

The United States played an important role in this appeasement policy. Although, in the 1930s, President Franklin Roosevelt pursued a Good Neighbor policy with Latin America and improved relations with the Soviet Union, he did not take a forceful line against German aggression. Instead, the country concerned itself with its own economic troubles and embraced a policy of isolationism.

Hitler took advantage of the lack of commitment and unity among France, Britain, and the United States. In the spring of 1938, he brought Austria into his Reich. Austria was given little choice but to accept this union, called the **Anschluss** (AHN shloos). In the fall, Hitler turned toward the Sudetenland, a portion of western Czechoslovakia that was largely populated by ethnic Germans.

Many people expected the conflict over the Sudetenland to lead to a general war. But once again, Britain and France appeased Germany. At the Munich Conference with Hitler, British prime minister Neville Chamberlain and French premier Edouard Daladier sacrificed the Sudetenland to preserve the peace. On his return to London, Chamberlain told a cheering crowd that the **Munich** (MYOO nihk) **Pact**, the agreement reached at the conference, had preserved “peace for our time.” He was wrong. It merely postponed the war for 11 months.



Checkpoint Why did Britain, France, and the United States not stop fascist aggression in the 1930s?

SECTION

1 Assessment

Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self-test with vocabulary practice
Web Code: nea-1003

Comprehension

1. Terms and People Write several sentences describing what the items listed below have in common.

- totalitarianism
- Joseph Stalin
- Benito Mussolini
- Adolf Hitler
- anti-Semitic
- Anschluss

2. NoteTaking Reading Skill:

Summarize Use your table and concept web to answer the Section Focus Question: Why did totalitarian states rise after World War I, and what did they do?

Writing About History

3. Quick Write: Analyze Primary

Sources Reread the Primary Source in this section describing the crowd at one of Hitler's speeches. Write one paragraph analyzing the source. Consider the following questions: What key words are used to describe Hitler? What do these words suggest about how the crowd viewed Hitler?

Critical Thinking

4. Recognize Effects How did World War I contribute to the rise of dictators in Europe?

5. Make Comparisons How were Germany and Japan similar in the 1930s? How were they different?

6. Express Problems Clearly How did the policy of appeasement encourage aggression?