

The world created after the Great War was one of economic depression and political instability. People were looking for radical solutions to these radical problems, and many began to believe that the answer could be found in ideology. As Chapter 3 addressed, nationalism was still preva-

lent throughout the world as colonies sought independence, successor states struggled to establish legitimate governments, mandates were created, and Zionism moved into the Middle East. Wilson's goal was the spread of democracy, but many people held the capitalist economy associated with democracy responsible for the Great Depression. In the relatively strong countries, governments stepped in to provide relief for their citizens, shifting many democratic governments decidedly toward socialism. In the weaker countries, the military took control of the government to provide security. For the poor, communism seemed to be an answer to their poverty because one of its basic core beliefs was that wealth should be shared equally by the citizens. But communism and the equal sharing of wealth was exactly what the middle and upper classes feared most, and they started looking for a government to protect them against the communist revolution. After

WORKING WITH THE THEMES

THE EFFECTS OF TECHNOLOGY Communications and weapons technology developed during the Great War are used to solidify political power within countries.

CHANGING IDENTITIES As the economic depression deepens, people turn to radical political ideologies to address their problems. Democracy is in decline as communism, fascism, and authoritarianism spread. Women in democracies gain suffrage.

SHIFTING BORDERS Germany grows as Hitler seizes the Rhineland, Austria, and Czechoslovakia in pursuit of *Lebensraum*.

GLOBALIZATION The economic devastation of the Great Depression creates political turmoil. The Comintern fosters communist political parties around the globe.

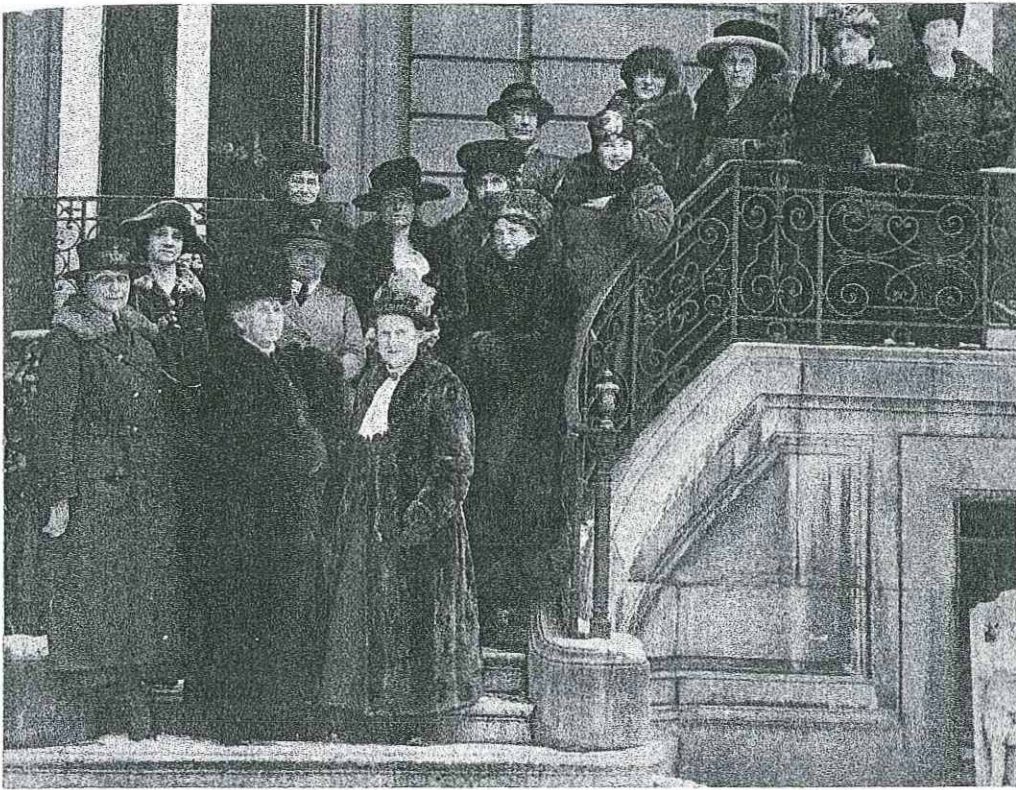
years of war and economic depression, they wanted security and stability, and fascism was just the ideology to give it to them. The result of these ideological "isms" was the rise of authoritarian governments around the globe—the exact opposite of the world Wilson envisioned.

Democracy

Although President Wilson died in 1924, his vision of a peaceful world filled with self-determined, democratic governments did not. Nationalists and colonists around the world continued to fight for their right to participate in governmental decision making. Ironically, this often forced governments to crack down even harder to prevent revolutions and civil wars and preserve domestic stability. Similarly, democracy and the capitalist economic theory it espoused were blamed for exacerbating the Great Depression. Throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, as the economic depression deepened, democratic governments continued their laissez-faire approach and refused to intervene in the economy. But as living conditions worsened and life became less stable and predictable, democracy appeared to be unable to provide what people needed.

Women living in democracies had been arguing about the hypocrisy of democracy since the mid-1800s. If indeed a democracy is "rule by the people," then shouldn't all the people be included? Although some women enjoyed suffrage in a few local elections in a few parts of the world prior to the Great War, a debate in the British House of Commons exemplified the prevailing attitude toward extending the right to vote to women:

...women had their own honourable position in life, that that position had been accorded to them by nature, and that their proper sphere was the home. . . Women would be neglecting their homes if they came into the House of Commons, and when they would be compelled to attend public meetings and to read all the newspapers and Blue-books and other dry documents, so as to fit themselves for the franchise. . . There were times and periods in women's lives when they required rest not only for mind but for body, and to drag them into the political arena under those conditions would be cruel indeed. (Sir Samuel Evans in Parliament, April 25, 1906)



Allied women suffragists at the Paris Peace Conference.

During the Great War, women kept the factories and farms producing necessary supplies, maintained functioning homes and held their families together, clearly proving that they were physically and mentally capable of taking care of both domestic and civic life. Suffragist demonstrations resumed with vigor after the war, and it became increasingly difficult for democratic governments to refuse to acknowledge women's rights to participate in government. The Netherlands granted suffrage in 1917, and many other countries followed suit. In 1918, women's suffrage was granted in Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Sweden and Great Britain (but only to women over the age of thirty, until that was changed in 1928). In 1919, Germany and Luxembourg extended women's suffrage, and the United States passed the Nineteenth Amendment to its Constitution in 1920, granting American women the right to vote. For women in France, Belgium, Italy, Romania and Yugoslavia, suffrage did not happen until the 1940s.

Great Britain

Parliamentary democracy in Great Britain had deep roots and was never seriously challenged by right-wing fascist politics or left-wing communist politics. Although the centrist Conservative and Labour parties disagreed on the role the government should play during the Great Depression, both parties agreed wholeheartedly that communism must be stopped. The British Communist Party, founded in 1920 by Lenin's Comintern, was relatively small and never a real revolutionary threat.

Economic, political and social recovery from the Great War was not yet achieved when the full force of the Great Depression hit in 1930. As demand for British goods dropped, unemployment rose as high as 30 percent in some areas. The Conservative Party was blamed for the war and its economic consequences, paving the way for the dominance of the Labour Party in the late 1940s.

Comintern

nickname for the *Communist International*, a political movement started by Lenin to establish communist political parties around the world directly connected to the USSR

France

Throughout the 1920s, France was physically, economically and emotionally devastated and absolutely reliant on loans from Great Britain and the United States and German reparations for money to rebuild. By the time the Great Depression hit in the 1930s, the Allied troops were gone, the Locarno Treaty was in place, and the French people had lost faith in their government. Although one segment of the French Socialist Party joined Lenin's Comintern in 1920, others did not, splitting the party into several factions that frequently pressured the government of the **Third Republic**.

Third Republic

the republican parliamentary democracy of France, created in 1870 after the monarchy was destroyed by the Franco-Prussian War

In 1934, fascist-led riots convinced the various strands of socialist and communist parties to ally and form a coalition known as the Popular Front. Leon Blum became France's first socialist president in 1936 and began work on some bold reforms to help the working class get through the economic depression, including the Matignon agreement that legalized labor unions and provided national rights to workers. Nonetheless, France suffered from tremendous internal political divisions, leading to instability.

The United States

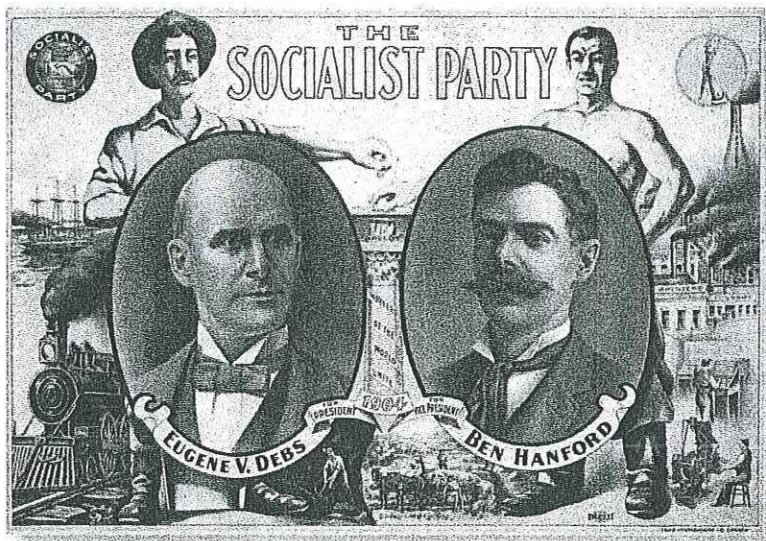
The dramatic poverty brought on by the Great Depression was absolutely unprecedented in the United States. As a constitutional democracy, the government was supposed to stay far removed from individual citizens' lives, which is exactly how the Hoover administration initially responded. As the depression worsened, it appeared that American democracy was failing.

The Communist Party of the United States was founded in 1919 when the Socialist Party of America joined Lenin's Comintern. State and federal authorities did everything they could to destroy the party, driving it underground throughout the **red scare** of the early 1920s. Although membership continued to grow through connections to many labor unions, communist leadership in the United States was frequently divided, particularly after Lenin's death.

red scare

U.S. government response to the fear of a Bolshevik revolution in America that included censorship, unconstitutional raids and arrests, and the deportation of foreigners

In 1932, the American people elected Franklin Delano Roosevelt, a Democrat who promised them a "New Deal." His radical three-pronged economic policy was aimed at providing short-term relief to the people and economic recovery for industry, as well as restructuring the American economic system. In the first three months of 1933, Roosevelt and Congress enacted a record number of laws, all of which involved heavy government participation in the economy. Although the New Deal leaned further toward socialism than past American economic and social policies and required a planned economy, the administration's philosophy was that the government had a responsibility to solve problems for its people. In doing so, the U.S. government expanded its political reach in ways that violated both the fact and the spirit of the U.S. Constitution. On the other hand, the New Deal restored Americans' faith in their government, perhaps preventing radical political ideologies from taking root in the United States as they did elsewhere in the world. In economic terms, the New Deal did not directly end the depression; it would take a national effort at rearmament and war preparations to achieve that.



The U.S. Socialist Party campaign poster.

Authoritarian and Military Regimes

The countries that lacked the internal political or ethnic unity required to form democratic governments suffered from political and social instability during the 1920s.

Once the Great Depression hit in 1930, there was no hope of developing a coordinated economic, political and social response. The most effective way to prevent internal chaos was to form an authoritarian regime, either ruled directly or heavily supported by the military.


 Read the Document *FDR's First Inaugural Address* on mysearchlab.com

Successor States

Although the Republic of Austria was set up as a parliamentary democracy, it was basically ruled as a League of Nations mandate throughout the 1920s because of outstanding financial debts. In 1933, in an attempt to prevent Nazism from spreading into Austria, the chancellor dissolved the Parliament, outlawed the Social Democrat Party and established authoritarian rule, igniting civil violence.

In Poland, a group of former military officers created the *Sanacja* movement and led a coup against the corrupt government of the Second Polish Republic in 1926. Led by Jozef Pilsudski, all political parties except *Sanacja* were outlawed, and all government leaders required Pilsudski's approval before taking office.

At the Paris Peace Conference, the Allies combined the independent countries of Serbia and Montenegro with chunks of former Austro-Hungarian territory to create the Kingdom of Serbs,

 Watch the Video *Hitler and Roosevelt* on mysearchlab.com



MAP 4.1 Europe, 1940

MAKE THE CONNECTION
 Why didn't the Western European governments do anything to prevent authoritarian regimes from replacing weak democratic governments throughout Eastern Europe?



MAP 4.2 Authoritarian Regimes in Latin America, 1940

Croats and Slovenes. The nationalist rivalries crippled the political system, so in 1929 King Alexander banned all political parties and created his own country, Yugoslavia, which he ruled as a dictator.

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania fought wars against Russia to earn their independence, and each initially established a democratic government in the 1920s. A military coup in Lithuania in 1926 led to an authoritarian regime marked by nationalist education and radical land reform. Estonia and Latvia remained democracies until 1934, when political coups in each country established nationalist dictatorships.

Probably the most robust of the successor states, Czechoslovakia was a democratic republic with a comparatively healthy industrial sector, but it suffered from serious internal ethnic divisions. The Czech majority ran a highly centralized political and economic system that disenfranchised the Slovak, German and Hungarian minorities. These minority populations never fully acknowledged the authority of the Czech government and frequently worked against it.

Latin America

Because Latin American countries relied almost solely on the exportation of primary goods, the Great Depression thoroughly destroyed their economies. Furthermore, many large industries were owned by foreign (mostly U.S.) corporations over which the governments had no control. During the 1920s, most Latin American governments defaulted on their

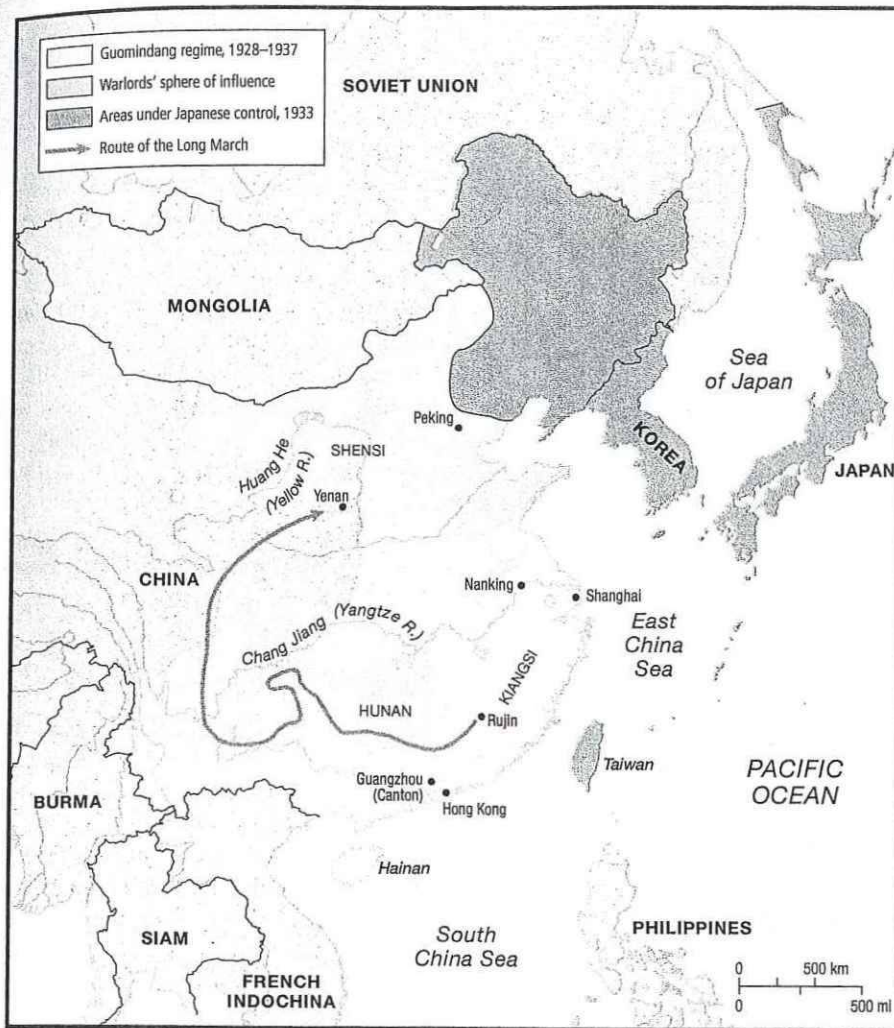
foreign debts and tried to focus on their domestic economies, but there was no money for welfare measures to help the citizens.

Although most governments in Latin America were constitutional democracies by design, they were generally controlled by the wealthy elite. As the Great Depression ravaged these commodity-export economies, the people blamed the governments, and internal violence increased. That provided the excuse for the military to step in to maintain control and prevent civil unrest. By 1935, military coups had seized control of Argentina, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Bolivia, Peru, Guatemala, Ecuador, El Salvador, Chile and Venezuela.

Japan

Prior to the Great War, Japan had built a heavily industrialized economy. The government itself had financed many key industries, such as mining and shipyards, and had worked in conjunction with large family-owned manufacturing industries and banks to provide consumer goods. But Japan relied heavily on foreign trade, so it too was vulnerable to the unemployment and inflation brought on by the Great Depression even though it participated only minimally in the war. The Japanese government tried to regulate the economy by financing military industries, exploiting its territories for cheap raw materials and artificially depressing the prices of domestically manufactured goods, but it was unable to alleviate the people's suffering.

Because of these measures and the dissatisfaction of the people, parliamentary democracy in Japan fell victim to a series of assassinations and military coups. High-ranking military officers ran the government and the economy, and they took advantage of the fact that the world's governments were focused on domestic affairs to engage in imperialist invasions of Manchuria and China. They shifted the focus of the economy to military industries above all else, including food and consumer goods. When the League of Nations condemned Japan's militaristic actions, the Japanese government simply quit the League of Nations.



MAP 4.3 Japanese Expansion

Communism

Many of the decisions made by the U.S. government at the Paris Peace Conference and in the two decades that followed were, in large part, driven by the desire to block communist expansion. As poverty grew, so too did the appeal of communist ideology. With established communist political parties throughout Europe and the United States, an expanding Comintern movement worldwide and Mao Zedong's peasant revolution in China, communism was quickly becoming a viable political alternative to democracy.

The USSR

Under the Bolsheviks, the USSR was ruled by the heavy and harsh hand of the General Secretary of the Communist Party (initially Lenin) and its Red Army. When Lenin died in 1924, the Communist Party was split at first between two factions: Leon Trotsky's followers, who called for rapid industrialization at the expense of the peasantry, and Josef Stalin's followers, who wanted to conduct industrialization slowly and concentrate on "socialism in one country." By 1927, Stalin had won the struggle for power and evicted Trotsky first from

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Stalin (front row, fourth from the right) with Great Purge survivors.

ANALYSIS

This is a photograph of the top echelon of the Communist Party after the Great Purge. What does Stalin's body language tell you? What else is notable, for 1938, about this picture?

gulags

forced labor camps in remote regions of Siberia; the Soviet economy became reliant on their labor for major infrastructure projects and mining, but conditions were extremely harsh

the Communist Party, then from the USSR altogether. To further prove his victory, he sent out assassins, who caught up with Trotsky in Mexico and brutally murdered him with an ice pick.

Traditional Bolshevik ideology (grounded in Marxism) called for a permanent international revolution, which is why Lenin formed the Comintern to support revolutions in other countries. Marx predicted that the proletarian revolution would be worldwide and spontaneous, but Lenin's Comintern strayed from the spontaneity requirement. Stalin's focus on "socialism in one country" marked a complete shift in party ideology and practice. With this motto and his Five-Year Plans, he made it clear to the Soviet people, who were tired of civil war and struggling with famine, that he was more concerned about their well-being than he was about spreading the communist ideology around the world. While this made him popular with his people, he was not one to leave his power to chance.

Between 1936 and 1938, Stalin consolidated his absolute control of the USSR with the "Great Purge," which he started after one of his closest comrades was assassinated. There is, of course, no way to know what really happened before and after the assassination. Publicly, Stalin declared that he was expelling "opportunists" and "counter-revolutionary infiltrators" from the party. In reality, he imprisoned and executed anyone he believed might pose a threat to his leadership, including government officials, Communist Party members, military officers and ethnic minorities. Conservative estimates put the death toll of the Great Purge at 1 million people (of the approximately 1.5 million who were detained). Almost 700,000 of them were executed (shot), an average of 1,000 per day. The rest died in gulags during their imprisonment. By the end of the 1930s, Stalin clearly controlled the USSR.

China

In the wake of internal disorder at the beginning of the century, a popular uprising in the city of Wuchang against the Qing Empire led to the empire's demise and the eventual creation of the Republic of China in 1912, although there was no true centralized government and the country was essentially run by warlords in different regions of the territory. In 1922, Sun Yat-sen, founder of the Guomindang (Nationalist Party), received financial assistance from the Comintern to build a military to defeat the warlords and reunite China. This forced the Guomindang into an alliance with the newly formed Chinese Communist Party (CCP), led by Mao Zedong. But when Sun Yat-sen died in 1925, Chiang Kai-shek seized control of the Guomindang and launched the **Shanghai Massacre** against the CCP. He established an authoritarian nationalist government with one-party rule by the Guomindang, which, because communism was what the West feared most, was recognized by the West even though the government was decidedly nondemocratic.

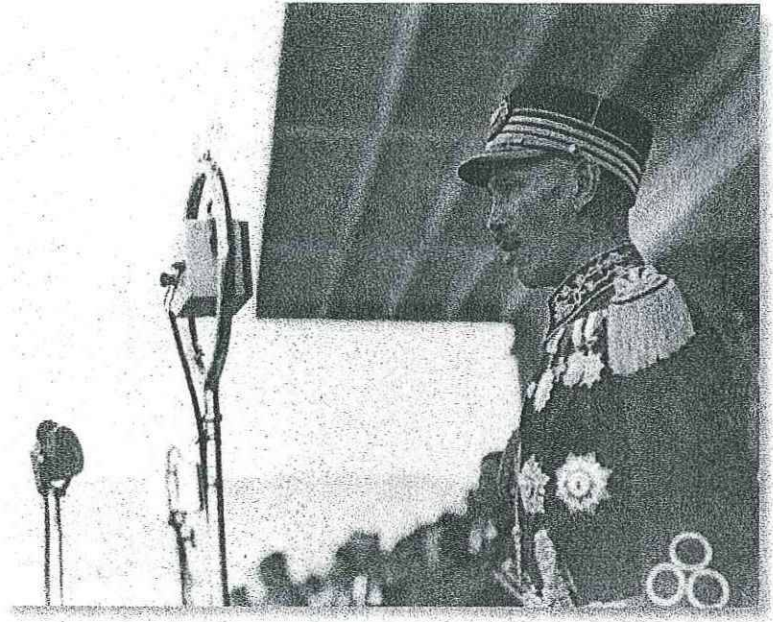
The Great Depression hit China particularly hard because it was an agrarian economy. Debilitating poverty attracted China's peasants to communism, enabling Mao Zedong to build a guerilla military force to rival the Guomindang army. Civil war throughout the early 1930s culminated in the "Long March" of 1934, when the Guomindang army forced 100,000 CCP guerillas 6,000 miles across the mountains of China, killing 90 percent of them along the way. Despite the ongoing civil war, the 1936 Japanese invasion of Manchuria forced Chiang Kai-shek's Guomindang and Mao's CCP into a very uneasy and temporary alliance in an attempt to defeat Japan and preserve China's territorial integrity.

Fascism

Fascism was a right-wing political ideology that appeared during the interwar years as the primary opponent to the spread of communism. Relying on an authoritarian government structure to provide much-needed stability for citizens, fascism was antidemocratic, anti-Marxist and racist. But it was fiercely nationalistic, and it promised to hold back the spreading communist revolution, so it appealed to the middle and upper classes in Europe.

Italy

Although Italy had joined the Great War on the Allied side, the Italian delegation was not allowed to participate equally with the other victors at the Paris Peace Conference. The government (a constitutional monarchy) viewed this as disrespectful, particularly after the final version of the Treaty of Versailles denied Italy much of the territorial gain it felt it was promised. Within Italy, the people were suffering from the consequences of the war and did not believe their government was representing their interests either domestically or internationally. Almost immediately (from 1919 to 1921), there was considerable social turmoil, and the politically deadlocked Parliament could not agree on a single piece of legislation to help the people. The Italian middle and upper classes feared that the poverty and social turmoil would lead to a communist revolution.



Chiang Kai-Shek.

Shanghai Massacre
the Guomindang army attacked their communist allies (executing 5,000 to 6,000) in April 1927, igniting civil war in China



Portrait of Benito Mussolini.

Read the Document “*The Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism*” on mysearchlab.com

Corporatism

Mussolini’s plan for social revolution and national cohesion in which everyone is united, each with a particular role to play, in strengthening and glorifying Italy

In stepped Benito Mussolini, an educated man from the middle class. He was an active socialist and journalist before he enlisted and fought in the Great War (earning the rank of corporal). After the war, he used the newspapers he owned to explain his newly developing fascist ideology to the Italian people, and in 1919 he established the National Fascist Party. To win their support, he formed a volunteer paramilitary group called the National Security Volunteer Militia (more commonly known as the “Black Shirts” because of their uniforms) to intimidate the communists and assure the people that someone was paying attention to security in their neighborhoods. The Black Shirts tapped into the frustration and outright anger of the Italian people following the war; and the group attracted nationalists, former military officers and soldiers and young middle-class men as volunteers. Promising to prevent the communists from seizing control of the government, Mussolini’s fascist ideology was exactly what the Italian people wanted to hear, and he was one of thirty-five fascists elected to the Italian Parliament in 1921.

In August 1922, the Socialist Party and the unions it represented organized a labor strike across Italy. Recognizing opportunity, Mussolini ordered his Black Shirts to replace the striking workers to keep the Italian economy running and maintain social order—he was a hero to the middle and upper classes. The strike lasted only four days, after which Mussolini emerged as the most popular politician in Italy. To avoid a civil war, King Victor Emmanule made him the Prime Minister of Italy in October 1922. In the following years,

Mussolini staged a very popular and completely legal revolution that left Italy a one-party state ruled by the National Fascist Party under his dictatorial control. Mussolini’s regime stayed in power because of effective anticommunist propaganda, censorship, the Black Shirts and the support of the Catholic Church (in exchange for maintaining control of the Vatican).

To deal with the financial aftermath of the war and the Great Depression, Mussolini undertook a program of public works, subsidized the shipping industry, introduced protective tariffs to help Italian industry, and expanded wheat farming. He made agreements with leaders of industry and agriculture and all but destroyed labor unions. Under the policy of **Corporatism**, private industry was subordinated to state guidance but not total control—Corporatism was sort of a hybrid between capitalism and a planned economy. Still, Corporatism was unable to solve the economic crises affecting the people.

Mussolini became “Il Duce” (revered leader) to the Italian people and even gained worldwide respect from governments that feared the spread of communism. But he had dreams of building a new Roman Empire around the Mediterranean, which led him to attack the Greek island of Corfu and set up a puppet regime in 1923 and eventually to invade Albania and colonize Libya. In 1935, he invaded Abyssinia (now called Ethiopia) and drew criticism and a painful economic embargo from the League of Nations for his aggression. But he didn’t let it alter his foreign policy choices, and in 1936 Mussolini began supporting the fascist overthrow of the Spanish government. By the end of the 1930s, as the world was lining up for yet another war, Great Britain and France viewed Mussolini as an uncooperative aggressor, pushing him closer to Hitler.

Spain

In 1931, the King of Spain was exiled when the Spanish people voted to establish a republic form of government. In the first elections, the Socialist Party won an overwhelming victory and controlled the government until a coalition of right-wing parties took over after the 1933 elections. The Socialist, Communist and other left-wing parties formed the Popular Front coalition to oppose the right-wing National Front coalition. In the 1936 general election, the Popular Front defeated the National Front by only one percentage point and then upset the conservatives with the leftist policies they enacted when they took office. They released all leftist political prisoners, outlawed the *Falange Espanola* (a political party that followed Mussolini's model of fascism) and sent right-wing military leaders to serve outside of Spain. They introduced agrarian reforms that financially hurt the landed aristocracy and granted the region of Catalonia autonomy. Fearing that communism was on its way to Spain, the upper class sent its money out of the country to protect it, leading to an economic crisis. The currency declined in value while prices rose, leading to labor strikes across Spain. The Spanish military, which supported the National Front, began planning to overthrow the Popular Front government.

The Spanish Civil War began in July 1936. The war was fought between the Nationalist military, led by General Francisco Franco and supported by Germany and Italy, and the Republican army, which consisted of ethnic minorities, various left-wing paramilitary groups supported by the USSR and the **International Brigades**. The civil war, which lasted through 1939, was a classic ideological confrontation between communism and fascism. Interestingly, the powerful democracies in the middle of the political spectrum (Great Britain, France and the United States) did not participate, although volunteers from these countries joined the International Brigades. They were not necessarily communists, but they felt compelled to help fight fascism because their governments were not doing so.

By February 1939, General Francisco Franco's Nationalist military clearly controlled Spain. During the course of the civil war, roughly 500,000 people including civilians died, 10,000 of them foreign soldiers fighting to spread either fascism or communism. The fact that the U.S., British and French governments—the victors of the Great War—were unwilling to participate to spread their own ideology (democracy) sent a message to both fascist and communist governments in Europe. As a result of the Spanish Civil War, Germany and Italy solidified their "Rome-Berlin alliance" into a **Pact of Steel** in May 1939.

The Rise of Nazi Germany

Throughout the 1920s, Germany struggled economically, socially and politically under the democratic Weimar government. The suffering German people blamed the regime for accepting the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, which brought about disastrous effects. Extreme poverty led to political unrest as people were increasingly attracted to communism and other radical political alternatives. By the 1930s, antigovernment sentiment was high—the only question was, who would emerge to replace the Weimar regime?

The Nazi Party

Adolf Hitler, head of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (better known as the Nazis), believed that his political party had the answers to Germany's problems. Although they did not call themselves a fascist party, they certainly had a lot in common with Mussolini's ideology, including militant anti-Marxism, brutal racism in the form of **anti-Semitism** and intense nationalism (preserving Germany for pure Germans only), all defended by legions of

Because we are no longer an isolated minority group fighting hopelessly against an immense giant. Because, my dear, we have joined with, and become an active part of, a great progressive force, on whose shoulders rests the responsibility of saving human civilization from the planned destruction of a small group of degenerates gone mad in their lust for power. Because if we crush Fascism here we'll save our people in America, and in other parts of the world from the vicious persecution, wholesale imprisonment, and slaughter which the Jewish people suffered and are suffering under Hitler's Fascist heels...

—Canute Frankson, American volunteer
in Albacete, Spain, July 6, 1937

International Brigades

organized by the Comintern, 59,000 communist and antifascist volunteers (men and women) from fifty-five countries were militarily trained and fought for the Republican cause

Pact of Steel

ten-year total military commitment between Germany and Italy with regard to war

anti-Semitism

prejudice or hostility against Jews

 Read the Document
Twenty-Five Points on
mysearchlab.com

ANALYSIS

- How many of the Twenty-Five Points related directly to the Treaty of Versailles?
- How many of the twenty-five points dealt with treatment of Germany's Jewish population?
- How many of the twenty-five points expanded the powers of government?

paramilitary volunteers in the *Sturm Abteilung* (called the SA, Stormtroopers or Brownshirts). The party's platform was explained in the *Twenty-Five Points*, which made demands such as the end of the conditions imposed by the Versailles Treaty, the unification of Austria and Germany, the exclusion of Jews from German citizenship, agrarian reform and various other measures to benefit the working class. The more the Nazis talked, the more support they gained from German citizens who were completely fed up with feeling inferior to the rest of Europe. The people loved the Nazi message of nationalism and hoped the promise of economic growth was true. They even loved the SA—because the Treaty of Versailles had banned a substantial German military, someone needed to provide security.

👁️ Watch the Video *Conformity and Opposition in Nazi Germany* on mysearchlab.com

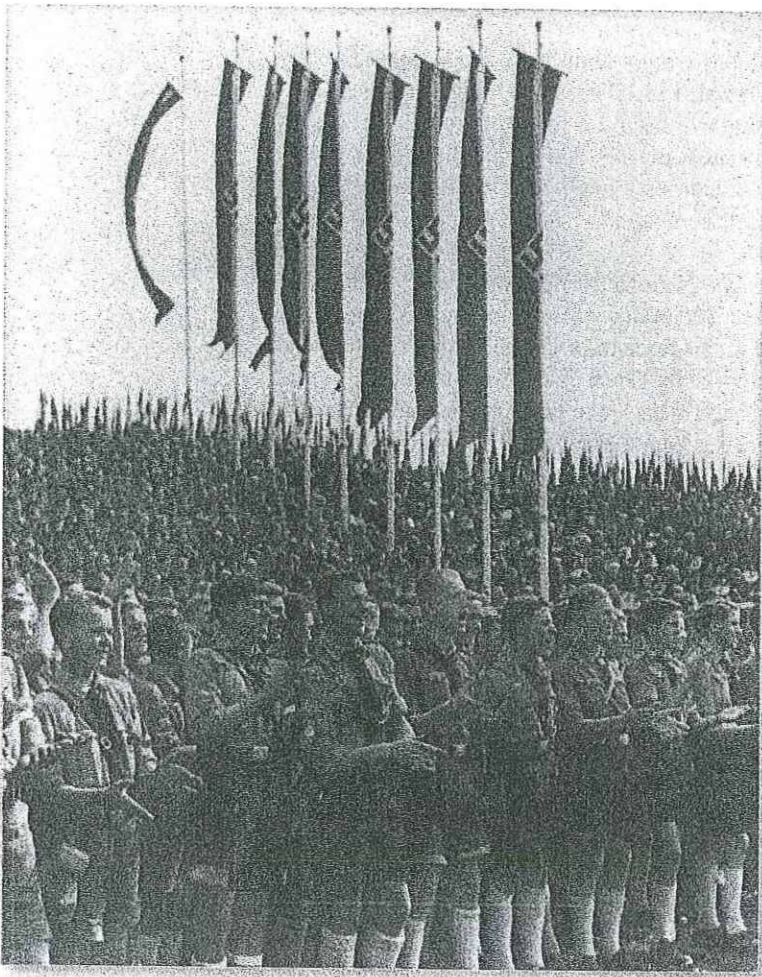
Hitler's Early Career

How did Hitler move from being a regional political party member to becoming “*der führer*” (the leader) of Germany? Hitler's rise to leadership happened through the gradual growth of the Nazi political party, the support of the German people and Hitler's legitimate appointment to German political office.

Before the Great War, Hitler was living in poverty in Vienna (the capital of Austria-Hungary), which suffered from political upheaval because of high nationalist tensions. On

the eve of the Great War, he moved to Munich, his German Fatherland, and enthusiastically volunteered for the Bavarian military. Hitler was a good soldier, earning the rank of corporal and the Iron Cross first class medal, rarely awarded to foot soldiers. As the war dragged on, Hitler was disgusted by his fellow soldiers' low morale in the trenches and the antiwar sentiment among the German citizens. When the German government admitted defeat, he remarked, “I knew that all was lost... in these nights hatred grew in me, hatred for those responsible for this deed.” He blamed the Weimar government and the Jews for subverting his beloved, Christian monarchy.

Hitler first became associated with the German Workers' Party in 1919, which he saw as a nationalist working class movement more than anything else. He was put in charge of propaganda and membership because of his fiery nationalist and anti-Semitic tirades. He drew in a lot of ex-military colleagues who were disgusted at the terms of the so-called peace treaty. He drew middle- and upper-class people who feared a communist revolution, and he drew Christians who wanted to stamp out Judaism. By the end of 1920, the Nazi Party had about three thousand members, primarily due to Hitler's marketing. In 1921, he took control of the party leadership.



Hitler Youth at a Nuremberg Rally, November 9, 1935.

As economic conditions worsened in Germany, particularly after France's invasion of the Ruhr Valley, Hitler made his first attempt at a government coup with the Beer Hall Putsch. In November 1923, he and his SA troops seized a beer hall in Munich while three top Bavarian government officials were there. The coup did not go at all as planned, and Hitler was arrested and tried for treason in a month-long public event that received heavy press coverage. Hitler used the trial as an opportunity to spread the Nazi message, and support for the party grew. Even the judges liked what he said, so Hitler received a minimal sentence in a low-security prison, with the promise of early parole. During the nine months Hitler was imprisoned, he ranted and raved about the problems of the world and how to solve them while his personal secretary wrote it all down. The result was a political tirade entitled *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle), which contained Hitler's views on Aryan supremacy and Jewish and Slavic inferiority, including specifics on what he would do about it. He declared that *Lebensraum* would be acquired by force and specifically referred to seizing Russian territory and seeking revenge against France. In 1925, *Mein Kampf* laid out exactly what Hitler planned to do when he gained control of Germany, but hardly anyone read the published book.

After the Beer Hall Putsch, Hitler decided to take control of Germany by election rather than force. He completely reorganized the Nazi Party, creating one group focused on undermining the Weimar government and a second group that was essentially a "government-in-waiting" to take over when the Weimar government fell, as he knew it would. The party divided Germany into thirty-four districts (sort of like soviets in the USSR) and the Hitler Youth group was formed to bring adolescents on board. Hitler also created an elite guard unit within the SA, called the Schutzstaffel (SS), to do the dirty work.

With the Dawes Plan of 1924, the German economy began to pick up. But after the U.S. stock market crash in 1929 and the onset of the Great Depression, Hitler knew his time had come. The Weimar government lost support, and when new elections were held in September 1930, the Nazis won 18 percent of the vote, which entitled them to 107 seats in the 577 seat **Reichstag**. When the elected Nazis entered the Reichstag, they wore the Brownshirt uniform and at roll call responded, "Present! Heil Hitler!". Hitler became a national hero and an international political figure. The second largest political party in Germany, the Nazis went after their political opponents (Social Democrats and Communists) viciously, disrupting parliamentary proceedings and rendering the Reichstag totally ineffective.

Hitler Takes Control of Germany

As the economy worsened, civil unrest grew, and the government was unable to help. In March 1932, Hitler ran for president of Germany and forced a **runoff** against the aging incumbent, Paul von Hindenburg (Hindenburg received 49 percent of the votes, Hitler received 30 percent). Despite the vigorous efforts of the Nazi propaganda machine, Hindenburg received 53 percent of the votes in the final election that April and narrowly retained the office of president. But there was no doubt that Hitler was incredibly popular with the people—13.5 million Germans had voted for him.

At eighty-five years old, the odds were that Hindenburg would not be able to serve out his seven-year term, and men within the administration began fighting for control of his government. After six months of political backstabbing, scandal, four failed governments and civil violence led by the Nazi Brownshirts, a state of martial law was declared in Germany—there was no working government in place. Fearing a communist revolution in the midst of German civil rioting, the country's most influential corporate and industrial leaders pushed Hindenburg to allow Hitler to try to establish a government. Left with no other choice, Hindenburg reluctantly named Adolf Hitler the chancellor of Germany on January 30, 1933, although his cabinet was limited to only two additional Nazis in an attempt to keep his power in check.

Read the Document *Mein Kampf* on mysearchlab.com

Lebensraum

literally "living space"; to Hitler the term meant the acquisition of territory to the east (Russia) to allow for the growth of the superior race (Aryan)

Reichstag

the German Parliament

runoff

in an election with several candidates running, if no candidate receives a majority of the votes, a second election is held between the top two candidates only

Whatever happens, mark what I say. From now on Germany is in the hands of an Austrian, who is a congenital liar [Hitler], a former officer who is a pervert [Röhm], and a clubfoot [Goebbels]. And I tell you the last is the worst of them all. This is Satan in human form.

—Gregor Strasser, December 1932 (Strasser was a founder of the Nazi Party but was removed in 1932 after disagreeing with Hitler over Nazi policies.)

By appointing Hitler Chancellor of the Reich you have handed over our sacred German Fatherland to one of the greatest demagogues of all time. I prophesy to you this evil man will plunge our Reich into the abyss and will inflict immeasurable woe on our nation. Future generations will curse you in your grave for this action.

—General Erich Ludendorff, who participated with Hitler in the Beer Hall Putsch, to Hindenburg in January 1933

Enabling Act

called the “Law to Remedy the Distress of the People and the Nation,” it gave Hitler the power to pass laws without the consent of Parliament, even if the laws were unconstitutional

Restrictions on personal liberty, on the right of free expression of opinion, including freedom of the press; on the rights of assembly and association; and violations of the privacy of postal, telegraphic and telephonic communications and warrants for house searches, orders for confiscations as well as restrictions on property, are also permissible beyond the legal limits otherwise prescribed.

The SA and SS sprang into action, rounding up, imprisoning and executing suspected communists, social democrats and liberals. Anyone speaking against the Nazi Party was a suspect, and political enemies were quickly silenced. Still, in the March election, the Nazis did not win the majority of the Reichstag, forcing Hitler to seek the **Enabling Act** to seize absolute control, essentially ending democracy in Germany.

I swear by God this sacred oath: I will render unconditional obedience to Adolf Hitler, the Führer of the German Reich and people, Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and will be ready as a brave soldier to risk my life at any time for this oath.

On August 2, 1934, President Hindenburg died, and Hitler passed a law combining the offices of chancellor and president, becoming the **Führer** of Germany. Each military officer in Germany was required to take an oath of obedience. Hitler created a police state and ruled by force, purging the Nazi Party of anyone not totally on board, purging the government of anyone not Nazi, and purging society of anyone not German (by

his definition). He justified this anti-Semitism based on Social Darwinism—if he was to create a strong Germany, only the fittest could participate.

Domestic Affairs in Nazi Germany

Under the Enabling Act, the government instituted a massive program of public works and spending, mostly related to rearming Germany, restoring its military strength and rebuilding the infrastructure. The government guided the decisions of private industry and crushed trade unions. Although this kept wages low, it reversed the spiraling unemployment. Women returned to their traditional German responsibilities in the home, and by 1935 German agriculture and industry were on the rise. Despite its destruction of personal liberty, the Nazi regime did achieve economic security for the German people.

Jewish people in Germany represented less than 1 percent of the population, came from all economic backgrounds, and were members of a variety of political parties (except, of course, the Nazis). But to Hitler, the Jewish people were all enemies of the Germans, despite the fact that 80 percent of them were German citizens and many others were married to ethnic Germans. In the twelve years Hitler was in power, more than four hundred laws were created specifically to hurt Jews. Stripping Jews of their legal rights began with a boycott of Jewish businesses just a week after the Enabling Act was signed. The boycott was a Nazi reaction to negative stories about Hitler in the British and American press, which he blamed on the “international Jewry.” From there, Jews were banned from working as government employees, lawyers, doctors, dentists, teachers, professors, journalists and entertainers.

In 1935, the Nuremberg Laws stripped Jews of their German citizenship and specifically outlawed sexual relations and marriage between ethnic Jews and Germans. But it was very difficult

to distinguish exactly who was legally a Jew and who was not. The government decreed that a "full Jew" was a person with at least three Jewish grandparents; those with fewer than three were designated **mischlinge** in the first (two Jewish grandparents) or second (one Jewish grandparent) degree. Many of the **mischlinge** were even Christian. To help officials identify Jews, the Nazis produced instructional charts that measured facial features and distinguished between Jewish and non-Jewish eye and hair color.

The persecution of the Jews was temporarily suspended while the world watched as Berlin hosted the 1936 Olympic Games. Afterward, however, Jews were required to register their property and relinquish their businesses and jobs to ethnic Germans. They carried identity cards marked with a red "J" stamp and were eventually required to wear a "Star of David" insignia on their clothing to make it even easier for the police to identify them. Localized, violent assaults on Jews were common, but a nationwide attack took place on November 9 and 10, 1938, in what is now called *Kristallnacht* ("Night of Broken Glass"). Led by the SA and Hitler Youth, Germans destroyed and burned Jewish synagogues, homes and businesses.

Another important goal for the Nazis was the reeducation of German citizens. In Hitler's mind, they had been exposed to devastatingly non-German perspectives that needed to be purged. Strict adherence to Nazi propaganda in education at all levels was nonnegotiable. Book burnings demonstrated the outright hatred for non-German ideas, and all teachers and professors were required to take the Nazi oath to keep their jobs. Those who could flee the country did, most famously Albert Einstein, depriving Germany of intellectual richness and diversity. Between the Nazi curriculum in schools and the Nazi Youth for after-school activities, education was focused on preparing German children for service to the German state. For adults, the Nazis held religious-like rallies (best captured in Leni Riefenstahl's 1934 documentary film, *Triumph of the Will*) and created extensive propaganda to indoctrinate Germans in the Nazi ideology. Refusing to conform to Nazi standards exacted a high price.

The **Gestapo** was created to ensure that Nazi laws were followed. Because the Gestapo operated outside of the court system (by decree), there was no legal oversight or appeal for Gestapo activities, which included interrogation, incarceration and execution. The first **concentration camp** at Dachau was opened in 1933 to reeducate Germans who did not comply with Nazi ideology. Because of prison overcrowding due to the new laws in place, there were fifty camps by the end of the year, each run by either the SA or the SS. Initially, the camps were barbed-wire stockades within which the "enemies of the state" were denied sleep, forced into hard labor and fed little more than Nazi ideology. The goal was to reform them and send them



On April 1, 1933, the Nazi boycott began. Placard reads, "Germans, defend yourselves, do not buy from Jews," at the Jewish Tietz store in Berlin.

mischlinge
half-breed

Gestapo
plain-clothes police force

concentration camp
Nazi prisons first opened in 1933 in remote locations where people were kept in one location to increase efficiency—a camp complex would have separate facilities for hard labor, experimentation and eventually extermination

back to be productive members of Nazi society. The motto was: "There is one way to freedom. Its milestones are: obedience, zeal, honesty, order, cleanliness, temperance, truth, sense of sacrifice and love for the Fatherland."

To simplify matters of domestic law, in 1938 Hitler declared: "All means, even if they are not in conformity with existing laws and precedents, are legal if they subserve the will of the *Führer*."

Hitler's Foreign Policy

Throughout his career, Hitler based his actions on the belief that all the ethnic Germans should be united in Europe's strongest nation. Hitler never lost sight of this goal; he was, nonetheless, an opportunist, willing and able to change tactics when the situation changed. He recognized that achieving his goal would almost certainly require a major war, one that Germany, of course, must be prepared to win.

The first step for Hitler was to free Germany from the military restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles. In 1935, he formally denounced the treaty's disarmament provisions and began to rebuild the Germany military, reinstating **conscription** until he had an army of half a million men. Although Hitler had clearly violated the treaty, the League of Nations did not respond. In fact, Great Britain even negotiated an agreement allowing Germany to build its naval power to 35 percent of Britain's.

How did Hitler get away with this? The short answer is that he was a really good liar. Hitler was a gifted orator, and he convinced the League of Nations that his actions were simply to prepare Germany to defend herself within Europe. He told them horror stories of his experiences in the trenches of the Great War and assured them that he would never instigate matters in Europe that could lead to such devastation. The truth is that Great Britain recognized that a weak Germany could never successfully block the spread of communism across Eastern Europe, leaving Western Europe vulnerable.

What they did not know, however, was that Hitler's war plans were already underway. In November 1937, Hitler convened a secret meeting of his most trusted followers and laid out his plans for expanding *Lebensraum* based on the simple fact that the German people were entitled to more living space than any others in Europe. This would only be gained through force—Hitler presented three possible military strategies against France and Britain but ultimately focused on the Soviet Union. Clearly, he had been planning this for awhile.

Hitler's first step—sort of a test to see how France and Great Britain would react—was to remilitarize the Rhineland (the DMZ between Germany and France) in March 1936. This action violated both the Treaty of Versailles and the Locarno agreements. The League of Nations had every reason and right in the world to react but did not, mostly because its membership could not agree on how to respond. France was justifiably angry but militarily incapable of responding on its own. Poland, which had just signed a border agreement with Germany, decided it was probably a legitimate action given Germany's position. Great Britain agreed with France that the action was wrong but did not view it as a threat in any way. So the League of Nations did not react and instead sent Hitler the subtle message that they were not willing (or perhaps not prepared) to defend the Treaty of Versailles. This led to one of the most controversial foreign policies in modern history—**appeasement**. The League of Nations would not stop Hitler as long as his goals seemed limited and reasonable. Neville Chamberlain, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, actually came to trust Hitler, or at least believed Hitler was a reasonable man with whom he could negotiate. After all, Hitler promised Europe that he was satisfied after the Rhineland:

First, we swear to yield to no force whatever in the restoration of the honor of our people, preferring to succumb with honor to the severest hardships rather than to capitulate. Secondly, we pledge that now, more than ever, we shall strive for an understanding between European peoples, especially for one with our Western neighbor nations... We have no territorial demands to make in Europe!... Germany will never break the peace.

conscription

compulsory enrollment for military service, also called "the draft"

appeasement

literally, "to pacify" or "conciliate"; in Chamberlain's words, "As long as war has not begun, there is always hope that it may be prevented, and you know that I am going to work for peace to the last moment" (September 1938)



Austrians welcome Hitler during the *Anschluss*.

Emboldened by a 99 percent approval rating from the German citizens and the lack of response from the League of Nations, Hitler continued toward his goal of *Lebensraum*. In 1938, Hitler made use of his alliance with Mussolini to expand Germany's borders and bring the 7 million ethnic Germans living in Austria home to the Fatherland. Hitler called it the *Anschluss* (the union) of Germany and Austria, and indeed there was no violence, bloodshed or Austrian military resistance as Germany's tanks and troops invaded Austria in March 1938. In fact, ethnic Germans were lined up on the side of the road, cheering and waving Nazi flags to celebrate Hitler as their new *Führer*. Invading a sovereign country was clearly yet another violation of the Versailles Treaty, but by now it was obvious that no one was going to uphold the treaty. Mussolini supported Hitler; Chamberlain thought it seemed reasonable because the Austrian people were happy about it, and the Austrian government never even asked for help.

After the *Anschluss*, Czechoslovakia found itself surrounded by Germany on three sides and still in possession of the Sudetenland, home to 3 million ethnic Germans. Clearly, Czechoslovakia was next on Hitler's "to-do" list. As Nazi supporters in Czechoslovakia created civil unrest, Hitler planned a full-scale military invasion. A group of high-ranking German officers even sent a secret envoy to Great Britain to warn of the impending attack, hoping that the League of Nations would take a threatening stance against Hitler and the German army could overthrow him, but Chamberlain thought it was a trick. Instead, he would meet with Hitler personally. Britain and France had decided to negotiate with Hitler, allowing him to seize and occupy the Sudetenland as long as he promised he would go no farther into Czechoslovakia. The agreement was signed into treaty by Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany at the Munich Conference on September 30, 1938. The government of Czechoslovakia was not even invited to attend. On October 1, German troops invaded the Sudetenland and the British press announced Chamberlain's triumphant declaration that the Munich agreement would bring "peace for our time." In March 1939, Hitler violated the Munich agreement and invaded and occupied the rest of Czechoslovakia. Perhaps appeasement was not the way to handle Hitler after all.



MAP 4.4 German Territorial Expansion, 1933-1939

Read the Document *The Nazi-Soviet Pact* on mysearchlab.com

By now, the British Parliament had enough of Chamberlain's appeasement policy and pushed him to respond more forcefully. The British and French announced that they would guarantee the security of Poland, Hitler's next territorial goal. As the governments of the world quickly formed their alliances in preparation for the war that was now certain to come, the only real question was what would Stalin do? He was, quite frankly, a little offended that he had been left out of European negotiations up to this point and questioned if perhaps Chamberlain and Hitler were actually working together against him. Would Stalin remain neutral, because both alliances were anticommunist, or would someone convince him to get involved?

The primary problem for the West was that it did not trust Stalin. Poland absolutely refused to allow Soviet troops into its territory, even to protect it against a German invasion. Plus, every bit of rhetoric in the West was aimed squarely against communism and Stalin himself, which did not make Stalin excited at the prospect of having to trust them. Of course, Hitler and Mussolini were violently anticommunist, so Stalin was not terribly trusting of them either. But Hitler and Stalin had two things in common (other than being ruthless dictators): their countries were arbitrarily carved apart in the Treaty of Versailles, and they both wanted that land back.

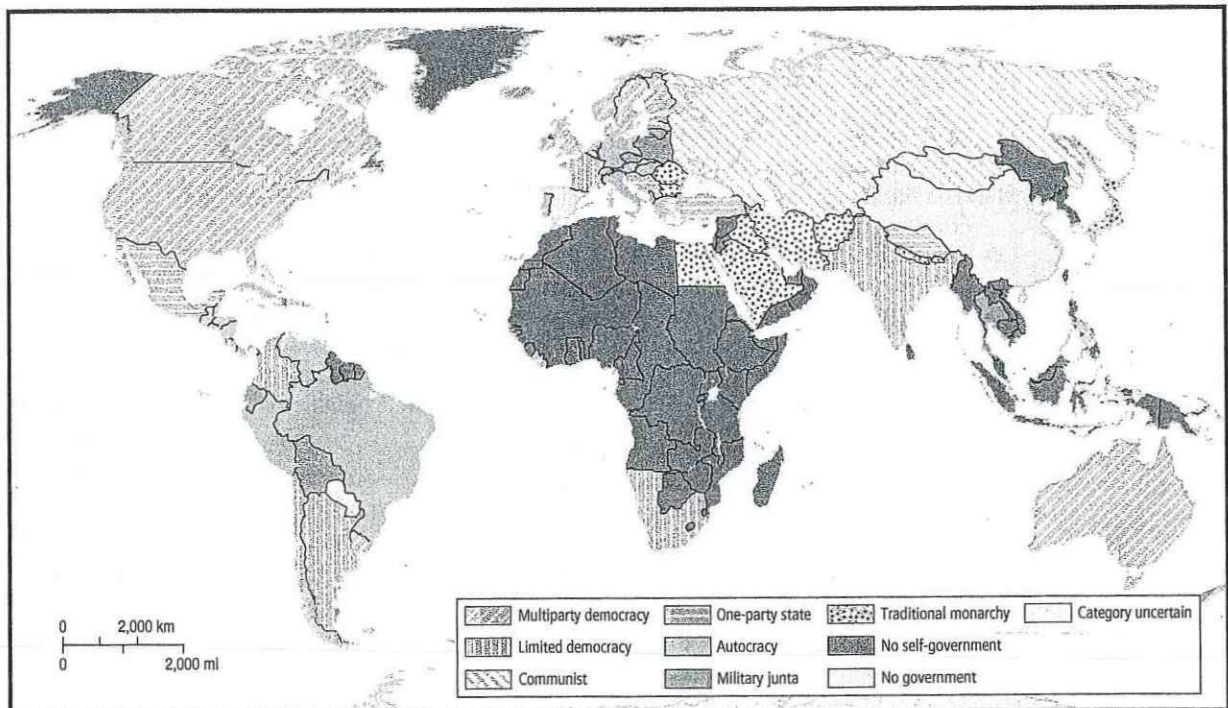
When the Nazi-Soviet Pact was signed on August 28, 1939, the world knew that war was inevitable. The pact was simply one of nonaggression, which meant the two leaders promised not to take aggressive action against the other. But this essentially handed Poland over to the German military because Hitler had no threat of a two-front war. To get Stalin to agree to this neutrality agreement, Hitler added a secret provision—as Germany invaded Poland from the west, the Soviet military would move into the region and regain the territory it lost in the Treaty of Versailles. For Germany and the USSR, the “wrongs” committed at the Paris Peace Conference that closed the Great War would be corrected. Now the rest of the world would have to decide how to respond.

Conclusions

By the end of the 1930s, there were far more nondemocratic governments among the leading world powers than democracies. Strikingly, almost all of these nondemocratic governments enjoyed the support of the citizens. The dramatic effects of the Great War, coupled with the crippling poverty created by the Great Depression, forced people to think about what their government actually did for them. A very tangible fear of spreading communist ideology and violent governments (Stalin’s) made people seek security, which, given the chaotic destruction of the Great War, could only come through a strong military force such as fascism. In Germany, the restrictions imposed by the Treaty of Versailles added another layer of despair for the common people. All of these authoritarian governments were successful because: (1) they provided stability for the people (and most also offered a way out of economic depression), and (2) they employed very effective propaganda machines to convince the citizens to “buy in.” By the end of the 1930s, the spread of communism seemed to be stopped, but so too did the spread of democracy.

MAKE THE CONNECTION

Of the major powers of the world, which ideology controlled the most governments? Which controlled the fewest?



MAP 4.5 Political Systems, 1939

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