The Great Depression And The Rise of Totalitarianism

1918 - 1938
Postwar Prosperity

- **United States emerges as a world leader**
  - European economies weakened by war; seek American goods.
  - American Businesses invest in Europe
  - Avoid political entanglement in European affairs.

- **Roaring Twenties**
  - Fast-paced life; frantic pursuit of pleasure
  - Technology alters society-cars, planes, radios, etc
The Postwar Prosperity

- **Economic Flaws**
  - Wages fail to keep up with inflation; factories cut production, lay off workers
  - Workers too poor to buy the goods produced.
  - Farmers produce a surplus of food; prices fall and many farmers cannot repay loans.

- **Economic Nationalism**
  - Using protective tariffs and similar restrictions on the import and export of goods
  - Difficult to market surplus goods overseas
  - Europeans cannot acquire “dollars” to pay off loans.
Post War Prosperity

- Speculation, Panic, Crash
  - Stock prices soar
  - Americans buy stocks on margin (on credit)
  - Investors sell stock; prices fall
  - October 29, 1929, Stock market crashes; banks, businesses, factories, farmers, mining companies, and individuals go bankrupt.
The Great Depression

- Severe Economic Downturn
  - Falling wages and prices
  - Slowdown of business activities
  - High rate of unemployment
  - Bank failures and loss of savings
  - World trade falls sharply (50% by 1932)

- Immediate Responses
  - Maintain Economic Nationalism
  - Raise tariffs; cut off loans

[World Trade Chart]

[Unemployment Chart]
The World Confronts the Crisis

- **Great Britain takes steps for recovery**
  - Low interest loans to industries
  - System of economic cooperation within its empire
  - Elect a coalition government; avoids extremes

- **France’s Response**
  - Less industrialized; Huge debts for wartime expenses, reconstruction, and military defense.
  - Labor reform and nationalization of the banking and armament industries.
The United States Responds

- **Franklin D. Roosevelt’s “New Deal”**
  - Food, Shelter, Clothing for the needy
  - Public works program to provide employment
  - Greater bank and stock regulations
  - Established unemployment and old-age benefits

- **Good Neighbor Policy**
  - Trade incentives for Latin and North American countries
Postwar Troubles in Italy

- Poor Italian Government Response to:
  - Heavy loss of life from World War I
  - Crushing burden of debt
  - High Unemployment
  - Runaway inflation
  - * Labor troubles – violent strikes
Mussolini Gains Power

- **Benito Mussolini** (1883-1945)
  - Edited a socialist newspaper as a young man
  - Becomes an extreme Nationalist during World War I; Expelled from Italian Socialist Party
  - Creates Fascist Party after the war.
  - Robert Leckie, “…like Napoleon, he could strike fear into men twice his size with a direct glance from those astonishing eyes.”
CHARACTERISTICS OF FASCISM

Cultural
- censorship
- indoctrination
- secret police

Social
- supported by middle class, industrialists, and military

Economic
- economic functions controlled by state corporations or state

Political
- nationalist
- racist (Nazism)
- one-party rule
- supreme leader

Chief Examples
- Italy
- Spain
- Germany

Basic Principles
- authoritarianism
- state more important than the individual
- charismatic leader
- action oriented
The Appeal of Fascism

- Mussolini’s program
  - Anticommunism
  - Protection of private property and the middle class
  - Collaboration between labor and management
  - Restore national prestige; military conquests

- Growing support
  - Demobilized soldiers; nationalists
  - Professionals, wealthy landowners, businesspeople, large manufacturers fearful of communism.
  - Lower middle class
A Change in Leadership

- Mussolini Takes Control
  - 1922 - **Black Shirts** (Fascists) converge on Rome
    - Parliament asks the king to declare martial law; king refuses and the cabinet resigns.
    - King appoints Mussolini premier
    - Fascists installed in all official positions of government
  - 1924 – Fascists win the Parliamentary elections
  - 1925 – Mussolini becomes *il Duce* “the leader” accountable to no one.
Mussolini’s Reforms

- A Police State
  - Opposition parties disbanded
  - Freedom of speech, press, assembly and trial by jury all suspended.
  - Labor unions under state control; strikes outlawed
  - Uniformed and secret police spied on everyone.
  - Armed forces under Mussolini’s control
Mussolini’s Reforms

☐ A Corporatist State

- Representation in government was by profession or occupation
- Major economic activities (agriculture, transportation, commerce, manufacturing) formed into *syndicates* (like corporations)
- Government, management, and labor met to establish wages and prices
- All cooperate for the goals of the state.
Which Candidate Will You Choose?

**Context:** It is a spring evening in the early 1930s during the Great Depression, you are one of thousands of Germans gathered at an outdoor stadium in Munich. You are unemployed; your country is suffering. You have come to hear two politicians campaigning for office.

1. What strategy does each candidate have for solving the nation’s problems?
2. Which candidate makes the stronger appeal to the listener’s emotions?
3. Who would you vote for? Why?

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First candidate’s platform
- Remember Germany’s long and glorious past
- Replace our present indecisive leadership with a strong, effective leader
- Rebuild the army to protect against enemies
- Regain the lands taken unfairly from us
- Make sacrifices to return to economic health
- Put the welfare of the state above all, and our country will be a great power again

Second candidate’s platform
- Realize that there are no simple or quick solutions to problems
- Put people back to work, but economic recovery will be slow
- Provide for the poor, elderly, and sick
- Avoid reckless military spending
- Act responsibly to safeguard democracy
- Be a good neighbor country; honor our debts and treaty commitments
“True individual freedom cannot exist without economic security and independence. People who are hungry and out of a job are the stuff of which dictatorships are made.” – F.D.R.

Do you accept or reject this statement? Explain.
Postwar Germany

- The Weimar Republic
  - President, two-house parliament elected by universal suffrage, a chancellor appointed by the President.
  - Seen as the traitorous government who signed the humiliating Versailles Treaty.

- Problems
  - Unemployment and inflation soar
  - Strikes and rebellions paralyze government
Nazism in Germany

- National Socialist German Workers’ Party or Nazi Party forms in 1920
  - Germany’s brand of fascism
  - Extremely nationalistic; violently anticommunist
  - Support from wealthy landowners and business leaders
  - Adolf Hitler becomes the Nazi leader, plots to seize national power.
Adolf Hitler’s Rise

- **Adolf Hitler** (1889 – 1945)
  - Born in Austria,
  - Failed artist; Resentful of Jewish success; becomes anti-Semitic
  - Fights in *World War I*; frustrated by the terms of peace.
  - 1921 - Hitler moves to Munich and joins the Nazi Party
  - 1923 – Takes part in the Munich uprising; sent to prison and writes *Mein Kampf*
Adolf Hitler’s Rise

- **Hitler’s Appeal**
  - Hypnotic talent as an orator; master of propaganda
  - His emotional speeches attract large followings
    - End unfair war reparations
    - Repeal the Versailles Treaty and “war-guilt clause.”
    - Restore lost territories and colonies
    - Expand Germany to new lands (*lebensraum* policy)
    - Restore the military and armaments
    - Protect against communism
    - Practice intolerance toward non-Germanic peoples.
Hitler Becomes Chancellor

- Hitler’s New Power
  - Germans turn to Hitler to solve their economic problems of the 1930s
  - 1932, Nazis become single largest party in the Reichstag
  - President Paul von Hindenburg appoints Hitler as Chancellor
  - Hitler’s Brown Shirts or storm troopers intimidate the Reichstag and opponents
  - 1933, Emergency powers granted to Hitler after the Reichstag fire
  - Hitler becomes the “Fuhrer” at the death of Hindenburg
The Third Reich

- **Nazi Program in Action**
  - **Third Reich** – German empire would last a thousand years.
  - Opposition parties, labor unions, opposition newspapers made illegal
  - **Gestapo** or Secret Police make arrests and deport enemies to large concentration camps.
  - **1935 Nuremberg Laws** - Jewish people deprived on civil liberties, publicly humiliated, murdered Jews
  - November 9, 1938 – **Kristallnacht** or night of broken glass – 100s of Jewish establishments destroyed.
Aggressors Invade Nations

- Japan Seeks an Empire
  - Military leaders take control of country
  - Wants to solve economic problems through foreign expansion
  - 1931, Japanese army seizes Manchuria; League of Nations protests; Japan withdraws from the League
  - 1936, Forms alliance with Italy and Germany
  - 1937, Japan launches war on China
Aggressors Invade Nations

- Mussolini Attacks Ethiopia, 1935
  - League of Nations does not stop action.

- Hitler Defies the Versailles Treaty
  - 1935, Hitler begins rearmament of German Army
  - 1936, Germany occupies the Rhineland
  - Britain urges *appeasement*, a policy of giving in to aggression.
  - Fall 1936, [Berlin-Rome Axis](#) treaty formed.

- Civil War in Spain
  - 1936 - 1939, Hitler and Mussolini help Spanish Fascists and General Francisco Franco win.
Aggressors Invade Nations

- United States Follows Isolationist Policy
  - 1935, Neutrality Acts
  - Most Americans want to avoid war

- Appeasement and German Expansion
  - March 1938, Anschluss - Germany annexes Austria
  - Sept. 1938, Germany demands the Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia; Munich Conference gives in.
  - March 1939, Hitler takes all of Czechoslovakia; (Mussolini takes Albania.)
Hitler’s Lightning War

- **Secret Agreement**  
  - *Nonaggression pact*—Germans, Soviets agree not to fight each other
  - Agreement includes secret deal to split Poland

- **Germany’s Lightning Attack or “Blitzkrieg”**
  - **September 1, 1939** — Hitler launches invasion of Poland
  - Stalin invades Poland and Finland
  - Britain, France declare war on Germany but Poland falls quickly
The “Phony” War

- The Phony War—Months of no action
  - French, British mobilize along French border behind the Maginot Line and wait for German attack
  - In April 1940 - Hitler attacks and quickly captures Denmark, Norway
  - May 1940 — Germany conquers Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg
  - June 1940 — British and French evacuate at Dunkirk; France surrenders to Germany
  - Charles de Gaulle organizes Free France movement
Early Battles:

- **The Battle for Britain**
  - June 1940 – May 1941 – Air Assault on Britain
  - **Winston Churchill** becomes Prime Minister and inspires British resistance

- **The Battle for North Africa**
  - Germans led by **Erwin Rommel** join Italy in a seesaw struggle with the British.

- **The Balkans**
  - By **April 1941** – Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Greece forced to join Germany.
Early Battles

- **Invasion of the Soviet Union**
  - **June 1941** – Hitler launches a surprise attack on one-time ally the Soviet Union
  - Soviets practice “scorched-earth” policy
  - Germans are stopped outside Leningrad and Moscow after much progress.
The Holocaust…

- Hitler’s “Final Solution”
  - Nazis tap into anti-Semitic feelings in Europe
  - Seek to eliminate the Jewish people
  - They shoot men, women, children in mass executions
  - Other Jews sent to concentration camps or slave labor prisons
  - Map of Camps / Survival Rates
American Involvement...

- **Lend-Lease Act**: Allows Roosevelt to loan weapons to countries fighting Germany
- **Atlantic Charter**—Agreement between Britain and US to support free trade, right to form own government
- Roosevelt gives aid to China and cuts oil shipments to Japan
- **December 7, 1941** – Japan attacks Pearl Harbor and the Pacific Campaign begins.
The Allied Path to Victory…

- The Battle for Stalingrad
  - German army moves to capture Soviet oil fields near Stalingrad in 1942.
  - Germans capture the city, then surrender it in February 1943.

- North Africa
  - American General Dwight D. Eisenhower and British defeat Rommel in May 1943.
The Allied Path to Victory

- **The Invasion of Italy – 1943**
  - Mussolini forced out of power and Italy surrenders
  - Germans keep fighting in Italy until 1945

- **The D-Day Invasion – June 6, 1944**
  - Allies land on the beaches of Normandy
  - Retake Paris by September 1944

- **The Battle of the Bulge – Dec 1944**
  - German counter-attack, success at first then fails.
The Allied Path to Victory

- Germany’s Unconditional Surrender
  - Soviets surround Berlin in April 1945, Hitler commits suicide
  - On May 9, 1945, Germany officially surrenders, marking V-E Day
  - President Roosevelt dies in April; Harry Truman becomes president
The Allied Path to Victory

- Japan’s Unconditional Surrender
  - Aug 1945 - Fearing an invasion of Japan would cost 500,000 American lives, President Truman ordered the use of the Atomic bomb on **Hiroshima** and three days later on **Nagasaki**.
  - Japan surrendered **September 2, 1945**.
  - Causes and Effects Summary of the War