Dictators Threaten World Peace

BEFORE YOU READ

In the last section, you saw the effects of the New Deal reforms in the United States during the Great Depression.

In this section, you will see how economic and political conditions in Europe and Asia in the 1930s gave rise to expansionist totalitarian states.

AS YOU READ

Take notes on the chart below. Fill it in with the beliefs and goals of these dictators and on what they did to reach their goals.

DICTATOR I NATION	BELIEFS AND GOALS	ACTIONS
Stalin/Soviet Union	communism, stamp out free enterprise	

Nationalism Grips Europe and Asia (pages 528–534)

How did dictators take power in Europe and Asia?

Woodrow Wilson had hoped that the Treaty of Versailles would provide a "just and lasting peace," among the world's most powerful nations. However, the Treaty mostly caused anger and resentment. The German government was angry about losing territory it considered Germany's, as well as being blamed for starting the war. The Soviet Union resented losing its own territories.

The peace settlement failed to make the world "safe for democracy" as Woodrow Wilson had hoped. New democratic governments, hurt by economic and social problems, floundered and turned to dictatorships.

In the Soviet Union, **Joseph Stalin** came to power in 1924. He was a ruthless leader who let nothing stand in his way. Stalin focused on creating a model communist state. He wanted to stamp out

private enterprise. He did away with private farms and created collectives, or huge state-owned farms. The state also took over industry. Stalin made the Soviet Union into a leading industrial power.

But he also made it into a police state. Anyone who criticized him or his policies was arrested by the secret police. Many were executed. Millions of others died in famines caused by Stalin's restructuring of Soviet society. It is believed that Stalin was responsible for between 8 and 13 million deaths in the Soviet Union. Stalin created a **totalitarian** government—a government with complete control over its citizens. Individuals had no rights, and the government put down all opposition.

At the same time, **Benito Mussolini** was creating a totalitarian state in Italy. His political movement was called **fascism.** It was based on a strong, centralized government headed by a dictator. Fascism grew out of extreme nationalism. Mussolini, called *Il Duce,* or the leader, was known for his efficiency in running all aspects of Italian life. But he did not want the government to own farms and factories. Fascism was actually anti-communist.

In Germany, another fascist party came to power under the leadership of **Adolf Hitler.** Hitler's political philosophy was called **Nazism.** He hoped to unite all German-speaking people into a new German empire, or Reich. He believed that Germans—especially blond, blue-eyed "Aryans"— were the master race. According to Hitler, Aryans were meant to have power over all "inferior races," such as Jews and nonwhites. Hitler believed Germany needed to expand—to gain territory—so that the German people could thrive.

Nazism combined extreme nationalism, racism, and expansionism. It appealed to unemployed, desperate, and resentful Germans during the Great Depression. In the 1932 elections, the Nazi Party gained power. Hitler became *chancellor* in January 1933. He did away with the *Weimar Republic* and set up the Third Reich, or third German empire.

Meanwhile, in Asia, military leaders had taken over Japan. They believed that Japan needed more land and resources. Japan attacked Manchuria, a province of China, in 1931. The League of Nations protested, but Japan left the League and kept Manchuria.

The League's failure to stop Japan made Hitler and Mussolini bolder. Hitler sent troops into the Rhineland and rebuilt the German army. These acts broke the Versailles Treaty. Mussolini captured the African nation of Ethiopia. Haile Selassie, the leader of Ethiopia, asked the League for help. When the League did nothing, he said, "It is us today. It will be you tomorrow."

In Spain, the fascist general **Francisco Franco** led a rebellion to overthrow the elected government. Many American volunteers went to Spain to fight the fascists. These volunteers felt that Spain was the place to stop fascism and defend democracy. The governments of the Western democracies sent only food and clothing to democratic forces in Spain. Hitler and Mussolini supported Franco with troops and weapons. When Franco won in 1939, Europe had another totalitarian government.

1. What five major countries were ruled by dictatorships in the 1930s?

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The United States Responses Cautiously (pages 534–535)

How did the United States respond to the rise of dictators?

Most Americans wanted the United States to stay out of foreign conflicts. Many people thought that the United States had made a mistake in getting involved in World War I. Anti-war rallies were held. *Isolationism* became more popular.

Congress passed the **Neutrality Acts.** These laws banned loans or arms sale to nations at war. Because of the Spanish Civil War, the Neutrality Acts included those involved in civil wars.

In 1937, Roosevelt found a way around the Neutrality Acts. Since Japan had not declared war on China, Roosevelt felt free to send military aid to China. He gave a speech in which he talked of "quarantining the aggressors," but growing criticism from isolationists forced FDR to back down.

2. How did the United States react to the rise of expansionist dictatorships in Europe and Asia?

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