

The Interwar Years

Section 4

Section Summary

MUSSOLINI'S ITALY

Benito Mussolini promoted new ideas about government power in Italy in the years after World War I. Hoping to build a great Italian empire, he founded the National Fascist Party in 1919. **Fascism** is an authoritarian form of government led by an all-powerful dictator. In fascism, the good of the nation is more important than anything else, even individual needs and rights. Mussolini took control of the government after his followers convinced Italy's king to place him at the head of the parliamentary government. Once in power, Mussolini tried to influence all aspects of Italian life. This is called **totalitarianism**. He used propaganda, festivals, and holidays to encourage pride in Italian heritage. Then in 1935, Mussolini conquered Ethiopia. Though the world condemned the action, other nations did nothing to stop Mussolini. Still recovering from World War I, they did not want to risk another conflict. Even the League of Nations only placed some economic sanctions on Italy.

List two traits of fascist governments.

STALIN'S SOVIET UNION

Soviet leader Vladimir Lenin died in 1924. At the end of the power struggle that resulted, **Joseph Stalin** became the new leader. Stalin believed totalitarianism was needed so that communism could grow stronger. He also wanted to modernize the Soviet economy. In 1928, he started the first Five-Year Plan. Factories and mines were given production goals by the government as part of its system of central planning. This is different from capitalism, which uses market forces to determine the type and number of goods to make.

Stalin brought collectivization to Soviet farms. Small farms were combined to make them more productive. Land given to Russian peasants by Lenin was taken away from them. Those who protested faced violence. Many thousands of Russian citizens were killed or sent to the coldest region of Siberia to work in a system of labor camps called the **Gulag**. Many died there. In the republic of Ukraine, people resisting collectivization were starved to death when

What happened under collectivization?

What happened to people who opposed Joseph Stalin?

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Stalin cut off all food supplies to punish them. Fearing a political plot against him, Stalin began a program of terror called the Great Purge, or the Great Terror, in the mid-1930s. Civilians and military officers suspected of opposing the Communist Party were killed or sent to the Gulag. Stalin's rule dominated every aspect of daily life. Places were renamed in his honor, churches were closed, and his portraits appeared all across Russia.

Circle three ways in which Stalin dominated daily life in the Soviet Union.

HITLER'S GERMANY

Adolf Hitler rose to power during a time when Germany was unstable, both politically and economically. After serving in the first World War, Hitler became involved in politics. In the National Socialist Party, also known as the **Nazi Party**, he emerged as a leader. Wanting more power, he led a failed attempt to overthrow Germany's government in 1923. This landed him in prison, where he wrote a book that described his political ideas. These included nationalism and the racial superiority of the Germans.

Hitler's power grew as the effects of the Great Depression worsened in the 1930s. He promised to make Germany strong and rebuild its military, even though this defied the Treaty of Versailles. Desperate for life to improve, Germans elected Hitler Chancellor in 1933. He removed opposition to his leadership through arrests and intimidation. Hitler bullied the German legislature to give him total power.

A key part of the Nazi system was **anti-Semitism**, prejudice against Jews, whom Hitler blamed for Germany's problems. The Nazis encouraged people to believe that Jews were a separate race. The Nazis passed the **Nuremberg Laws** in 1935. The goal of these laws was to exclude Jewish people entirely from mainstream German life. They gave Jews a separate legal status, eliminated their citizenship, and took away many rights. On November 9 and 10, 1938, Nazis attacked Jewish people, their property, and their places of worship in riots across the country. This event, **Kristallnacht**, resulted in the death of 100 Jews and much damage. This destruction was only a preview of the terrible years yet to come as Hitler led his nation into another world war.

Why was Hitler sent to prison in 1923?

Explain how Hitler was able to gain power in the 1930s.

What difficulties did Jews in Germany face as a result of Hitler's power?
