

WW2 Readings

## The United States in the 1920s and 1930s

### THE RETURN TO ISOLATIONISM

One of the great disappointments in Europe following the peace of 1919 was the American return to **isolationism**. While Woodrow Wilson was optimistically forging the League of Nations in France, his support at home was crumbling. Americans were eager to return to peace and prosperity and did not wish further entanglements with European nations.

This desire for isolation was due in part to the fact the United States was a nation of immigrants, many of whom had emigrated in order to escape the corruption and hostilities of Europe. There was also a long-standing American suspicion about the under-handed politics of the Old World. Membership in the League of Nations was perceived as a permanent tie to the complicated affairs of Europe. Consequently, the United States Senate refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles and rejected the bill to join the League of Nations.

In the US elections of 1920, Warren Harding and the Republican Party won by a landslide. Despite the fact that he won the Nobel Prize for Peace that year, President Wilson was not even re-nominated to lead the Democratic Party in the election.

### THE STOCK MARKET CRASH OF 1929

September 13, 1929 was a day to remember on the New York Stock Exchange. It was the last good day for the booming stock market of the 1920s. Over the next month stock prices fluctuated drastically. No one knew why or what to do about it. Then, on October 24—"Black Thursday"—the stock prices collapsed as

some 13 million shares were sold. Panic set in as everyone wanted to get out of the market before it dropped even lower. The following Tuesday—October 29—another record was set as 16 million shares were sold and prices dropped even further. The stock market had crashed. Millions of people who had gone from "rags to riches" in the new industrial economy found that the process was indeed reversible.

### *Causes of the Great Depression*

Although the stock market crash got the headlines, it was only one of a number of factors that led to the Great Depression. Although the world's biggest economy had largely benefited from the First World War, the boom of the "Roaring Twenties" was misleading. America had serious problems that were to burst the illusory "bubble" of progress. These problems included:

- **Unequal distribution of wealth:** It is estimated that only five per cent of Americans owned nearly 33 per cent of the nation's wealth. Nearly 70 per cent of the population was at or below the level of a decent living wage. Few people could purchase the goods streaming from the factories.
- **Over-production of goods and services:** People seemed to think that rapid growth would go on forever. As a result, factories and businesses expanded quickly and without restraint in an attempt to increase their capacity to make more and more. The problem was that they were producing more goods than could realistically be sold or consumed.
- **Debt fuelled the growth of businesses:** Individuals also took out loans for purchases. Much of the stock market boom was made "on margin" or with loans. High levels of credit "busted" companies and individuals when the economy slowed down and the debt collectors came knocking.

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- **Drought:** In North America's western regions, unprecedented drought and grasshoppers destroyed much of the agricultural economy. Farmers lost their farms and headed for an uncertain future in the cities where unemployment was soaring.
- **International tariffs:** High tariffs between nations created barriers to trade. As each nation faced an economic downturn, it rushed to raise trade barriers to protect its own industries and workers. This strangled economic growth even further.
- **Government inaction:** At first, few governments were prepared to intervene in the economy. They preferred to let the market provide the answers. This probably prolonged the Depression. In some European nations, the Depression led to the rise of more radical parties, such as communists and fascists who demanded an end to the economic crisis and promised immediate relief. Although the United States did not follow this path, the American President, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, won an election on the promise of very forceful and dramatic government intervention.

The effect of the stock market crash was devastating. Thousands of businesses went bankrupt, putting countless people out of work. With rising unemployment and no unemployment insurance, people could not buy goods; consequently, other businesses suffered. As profits shrank, more companies laid off workers, and a vicious downward economic cycle resulted. By 1932, unemployment reached 25 per cent; 15 million American workers were without jobs.

In 1933, Franklin Roosevelt was sworn in as president, reassuring the American public that "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.... I am prepared to recommend

the measures that a stricken nation in the midst of a stricken world may require." He proceeded to enlist the services of the best minds in the country to find a way out of the Depression. During his first term in office, Roosevelt announced the **New Deal**—a comprehensive program of "relief, recovery, and reform" for Americans. Included in the New Deal was legislation dealing with public welfare, agriculture, public utilities, housing, industry, and transportation. Ultimately, however, it was the Second World War and the need for armaments that actively stimulated the economy and brought an end to the Great Depression.

In Canada, where the economy depended mainly on exports of farm products and raw materials, the Depression hit extremely hard. Wheat prices plunged, markets shrank, and the economy of the prairies collapsed. The situation was made even worse by drought, dust storms, and crop failure. In Saskatchewan, two-thirds of the population was forced to go on welfare. Across Canada, farms and homes were lost and businesses were closed. Soup kitchens and relief camps were common. Men "riding the rails" on the tops of freight cars became a familiar sight, traveling from one part of the country to another in search of work that wasn't there.

### WORLD DEPRESSION

The economic recovery of Europe after the First World War was largely spurred by the strong American economy. The crash of 1929, therefore, had international repercussions. In the mid-1920s the United States had only three per cent of the world's population. Yet it accounted for 46 per cent of the world's industrial output, 70 per cent of the world's oil, and 40 per cent of the world's coal.

When this powerful engine of growth slowed down, the effects were felt around

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the world. The most immediate impact was an end to foreign lending and pressure to call in existing loans. Between 1931 and 1938 American banks received \$6.6 billion from Europe. This massive withdrawal of funds had a negative impact in Europe. The political implications of the economics of the 1930s were seen in the rise of fascism and the movement toward war.

## INTRODUCTION TO WORLD WAR II

- 1) What was the state of Germany after WWI?
- 2) Why were people considering new forms of government?
- 3) Who was Benito Mussolini?
- 4) What is fascism?
- 5) Identify and state the significance of Blackshirts.
- 6) What is a totalitarian dictatorship?
- 7) What did Germany do in order to meet the financial obligation imposed by the treaty?
- 8) What was the reaction of the German people?
- 9) What did Hitler promise?
- 10) What was the "Beer Hall Putsch"?
- 11) What is an Aryan?
- 12) Define anti-semitism.
- 13) How were the Jews persecuted?
- 14) What would happen to Germans if they associated with the Jews?
- 15) Why were Canadians attracted to fascism?
- 16) What discrimination did Jews face in Canada?
- 17) Identify and state the significance of the *St. Louis*.
- 18) Who was Joseph Stalin?
- 19) What is Communism?
- 20) Why did Communism occur in Russia?
- 21) Describe Stalin's leadership.

# Causes of WWII

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Treaty of Versailles & German Humiliation

Appeasement

Depression

Loss of German Territory

Rise of Dictatorship & Extreme Politics

Isolationism

Memories of WW I

Weakness of the League of Nations

## Communism

Economy in Government Hands / No Private Elite

Totalitarian State (Use of Censorship / Surveillance / Police State / Propaganda)

Sought to Create a Classless Society

Use of Radical Means to Eliminate the Economic and Social Elite

Worker Rights / Equality Most Important

No Political Opposition

Joseph Stalin

Use of Violence / Terror

## Fascism

Use of Radical Means to Take Over the State

Economy in Private Hands / Private Elite

Extreme Nationalism / No Individual or Worker Rights

The State and the Leader is the Single Most Important Aspect of Life

Rigid Social and Economic Hierarchy

No Political Opposition

Totalitarian State (Use of Censorship / Surveillance / Police State / Propaganda)

Power Monopoly

Use of Violence / Terror

Benito Mussolini

## Nazism

Use of Legal Means to Take Over the State

Economy in Private Hands / Private Elite

Extreme Nationalism / No Individual or Worker Rights

The State and the Leader is the Single Most Important Aspect of Life

Rigid Social and Economic Hierarchy

No Political Opposition

Totalitarian State (Use of Censorship / Surveillance / Police State / Propaganda)

Power Monopoly

Anti-Semitism a Dominant Idea

Use of Violence / Terror / Genocide

Adolf Hitler

## Overview

The impact of the Treaty of Versailles was hardly what the Allies had intended. Instead of an agreement for peace, the treaty seemed more like an armistice—a brief respite before the renewal of war.

Democracies, new and old, were challenged by the rise of powerful ideologies (fascism, communism), strut-

ting dictators (Mussolini, Franco), and economic crisis including the onset of a global depression. The dream of a League of Nations soon became a nightmare as the world drifted slowly towards yet another global conflict. The failure to produce a lasting peace would scar the rest of the twentieth century.

### Focus Questions

1. What was the impact of communism on the peoples of Russia and Europe?
2. Why did fascism gain such appeal in Europe during the inter-war years?
3. What factors led to the Great Depression?
4. What accounted for the failure of the League of Nations?

## International Confrontation

Idealists such as American president Woodrow Wilson hoped that the terrible lessons of "The Great War" or "The War To End All Wars" (it was not yet called the First World War, since no one suspected another horrible conflagration would erupt) would result in a new international order based on honesty and co-operation. The new League of Nations provided hope, and more importantly, an ongoing structure to resolve international issues through diplomacy. However, the nations of the world, particularly the powerful nations of Europe, were soon divided by old rivalries, nationalism, desires for revenge, and shaky new frontiers.

Many of the states created or reshaped by the Treaty of Versailles were weak and unsteady politically and economically. These difficult divisions were sharpened

by the rise of new ideologies and political philosophies. Dictatorial regimes arose in war shattered states and soon challenged democracies both young and old. The new world order of 1919 rapidly descended in a spiral of radical politics, revolution, and rearmament.

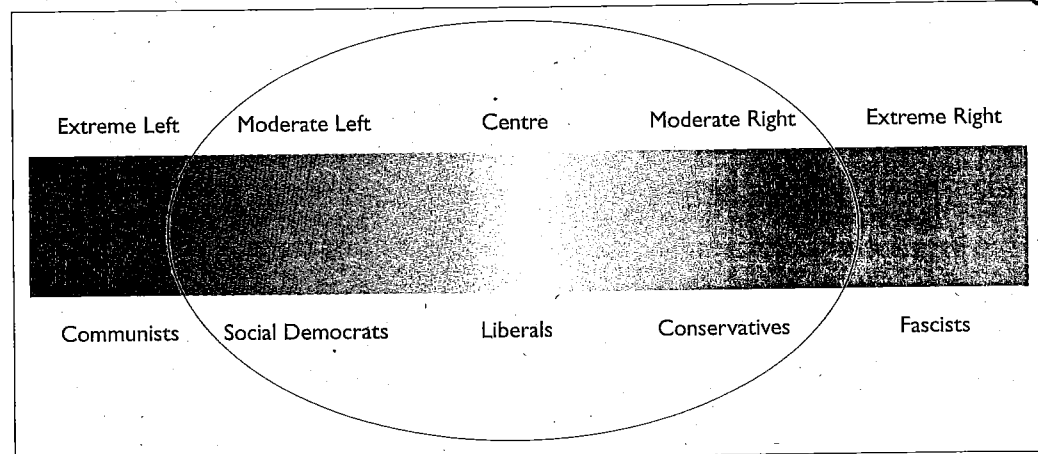
### THE POLITICS OF THE EXTREME RIGHT AND THE EXTREME LEFT

The terms *right* and *left* are commonly used in describing political parties. Right, in general, refers to people or parties with more conservative, traditional views; and left refers to people or parties that hold more liberal, less traditional views. These political labels derive from the French Revolution. In the seating plan of the French National Assembly, those who wanted greater democracy tended to sit on the left while those who preferred to maintain a strong monarch sat on the right. Those in the centre were more willing to compromise. Those further to the

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**Figure 3.1**

The political spectrum is a conceptual tool used by observers to classify political parties, ideologies, and even individuals. Like a light spectrum, it attempts to show the “political colours” or range of belief systems in an organized manner. It can only be used in a general sense, since people and parties are seldom right or left on all issues, all the time. The more a society becomes polarized (i.e. with strong parties at the edges, rather than the centre) the more unsteady, divided, and sometimes violent the political system is likely to be.

right or left tended to hold more extreme views and were less willing to compromise their beliefs.

At both ends of the spectrum (as seen in Figure 3.1) are extreme parties or individuals that are less democratic and more open to revolution and dictatorship. The centre includes conservatives as a party of the moderate right, **social democrats** as a party of the moderate left, and liberals as a party of the centre. Although these parties may differ widely on important social, economic, and political issues and policies, they refrain from political violence and support democratic means to achieve their goals. However, in the outer parts of the spectrum are two parties with extreme views that are distinct from others in that they reject the values of the centre—democracy and freedom—in favour of totalitarian beliefs.

**Totalitarianism** is a political ideology that is generally opposed to democracy and personal freedom. The emphasis is on rigid and dictatorial control on all aspects of society from the ruler down. Freedom

is chaos in a totalitarian regime, and chaos will be suppressed by any means necessary—including violence. In this sense, **fascism** is a rightist totalitarian party and **communism** a leftist totalitarian party.

Politics is most simply described as the pursuit and exercise of power. In the aftermath of the First World War, a host of new parties arose to claim the leadership of their nations. In the confusion, chaos, and confrontation of the post-war years, two movements on the radical extreme, communism and fascism, moved to the forefront of this struggle. As the compromise politics of the centre collapsed, the extremes seized power and helped edge the world to yet another global war.

#### **THE CHALLENGE OF SOVIET COMMUNISM**

Well before the outbreak of the First World War, Russia was a nation teetering on the edge of revolution. In fact, in 1905, after the humiliating defeat of Russia by the forces of Japan (see page 24), the

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Russian government came close to collapse as the state was besieged by a series of urban riots, peasant uprisings, military mutinies, and nationalist uprisings.

The Russian peasantry was destitute and needed land reform. The economy was in shambles and the difference in lifestyle between the rich and the poor was growing. On a day that came to be known as "Bloody Sunday," a peaceful parade of workers, led by a priest, attempted to present a list of moderate demands to the czar. They were gunned down by czarist soldiers. For many Russians, the image of their czar as a benevolent figure who cared about his people was forever swept away in the carnage of that day.

#### THE SEEDS OF REVOLUTION

Russia entered the First World War with great hopes of victory over Germany. However, when the czar led his nation into the cataclysm, he exposed his long suffering people to a series of bloody defeats that revealed too clearly the backwardness of the regime, the economic weakness of the state, and the incompetence of the leadership. By 1917, Russian soldiers had lost the will to fight and Russia was on its knees.

During the war, Grigori Rasputin, a peasant monk who claimed mystical powers, appeared to exert powerful political influence over the czar's German-born wife. While Czar Nicholas was away at the front, Russia fell into anarchy. Rasputin was brutally murdered but his personal excesses and ties to the monarchy further destroyed the image of the czar in the eyes of his people and provided much gossip for his critics.

At home, starving citizens began to riot for an end to the war and the desperate poverty. An expanding middle class felt it had little future and railed against the feudal and autocratic features of the czarist

regime. Many of these people were well-educated and young. They wished to modernize Russia and usher in a period of political freedom, economic progress, and social justice.

Meanwhile, peoples in nations that had been conquered by Russia over centuries prior to the Great War were eager to claim their independence. National revolts were a continuing theme in Russian history. Most revolts were ruthlessly repressed, but the urge to throw off the Russian yoke was undying.

#### A REVOLUTION IN TWO STAGES

In 1917, Russia experienced two revolutions. They are known as the February Revolution and the October Revolution. In February, armaments workers in Petrograd went on strike. They were soon joined by workers in other cities. Army units also went on strike. The unrest spread quickly and the czar was forced to abdicate. This left the fate of the country in the hands of the Duma (the Russian parliament) and workers councils called "Soviets" that were formed in the major cities. This was an uneasy alliance and soon fell apart under the pressure of war, political and economic chaos, and deep mistrust.

When the Duma decided to continue the unpopular war, the split with the Soviets was wider and deeper. Alexander Kerensky took power in July of 1917, but was unable to reverse war losses or deal with the rising revolts among Russia's destitute peasantry.

Soon the Soviets fell under the control of a small band of highly organized Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Lenin—a brilliant Marxist theoretician and tough minded political leader. He had spent much of his life in exile waiting for this moment to strike. Lenin, a master slogan-writer, promised "peace, bread, and power" to the Soviets. Brushing aside

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objections and fears, Lenin bullied and inspired his small party to seize power and create the first communist state on the face of the earth.

The Bolsheviks struck in October, 1917. This seizure of power was the first modern revolution and became a template for future revolutions during the twentieth century. With scarce resources and no real popular support, the Bolsheviks decapitated the Russian government by seizing the instruments of state power such as the telegraph and telephone offices, the railway stations, newspaper offices, and government institutions. Although Lenin and his associates were in power, the revolution had yet to spread beyond a few cities and a few vital buildings.

One of Lenin's first tasks was to end Russian involvement in the war. In March 1918, Russia was so desperate to leave the battle fields that it felt it had no alternative but to sign the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. This Treaty forced Russia to acknowledge the independence of Ukraine, Poland, Finland, Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania and to agree to substantial reparation payments. This treaty cost Russia over 30 per cent of its population and 75 per cent of its coal and iron ore. But with Germany's defeat later that year, the treaty became little more than a piece of paper.

### ***Russian Civil War: War Communism 1917-1921***

After the collapse of both the czar and the Russian Duma, an intense civil war erupted across Russia. Soviet historians refer to the period between 1917 and 1921 as the period of **War Communism**. This was a time of desperate struggle for the soul and soil of Russia. Dozens of factions battled each other for many different reasons. In general, the belligerent forces were identified as Red (Communist) or White (anti-Communist). The Red army was led

by Leon Trotsky, who built a dedicated and powerful military force. The Whites included a broad range of groups, including former czarist officers and units, rebellious nationalities such as Finns, Poles, and Estonians eager to throw off Russian control, and provincial warlords. This diversity made the White forces larger and more widespread but also unwieldy, disorganized, and undisciplined. The White Army was aided somewhat by the arrival of Allied forces including British, French, American, and Canadian forces. These former allies of Russia were keen to keep Russia in the war against Germany and to seal the fate of the Communist state.

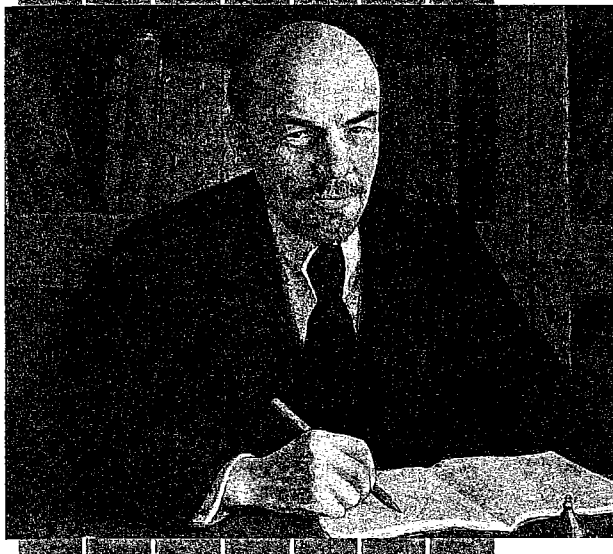
### ***Red Victory***

The Red Army eventually triumphed due to the lack of coordinated leadership of their foes. When the Allied forces left in 1919, the Whites were weakened. Peasants in White territories were frustrated by the lack of land reform. On the other hand, Trotsky worked tirelessly to transform the Red Army into an organized, motivated, and effective fighting force. The Reds controlled the major cities and had easy access to supplies. A special secret police force called the *Cheka* unleashed a brutal attack on anti-communist elements. This "Red Terror" was a key element in the Red victory.

By 1921, the civil war was over. Although some peoples such as the Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians had gained independence, the vast territories of czarist Russia were now firmly under the control of the new Communist regime. The lasting result of the civil war and Allied intervention was a deep distrust on the part of the Communists toward all Western powers. The atmosphere of hostility and fear would permeate Russian attitudes about the Western nations for the next 70 years.

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## Profile

Vladimir Ilich Lenin  
(1870-1924)

**Figure 3.2**  
Vladimir Ilich Lenin

Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov, or Lenin, the revolutionary name by which he was known, was the architect of one of the greatest political revolutions in the twentieth century. Lenin's story reveals the profound impact that one human being can have on the course of world history.

Lenin was born in 1870 to a family of the lower Russian nobility. His older brother Alexander was arrested, tried, and executed for plotting the assassination of the czar when Lenin was still a teenager. Lenin joined a group of Marxist revolutionaries. (Marx had argued that all history was the history of class struggle and that eventually the poor, oppressed workers would rise up and destroy their capitalist masters, the **bourgeoisie**. He foresaw a world where no classes would exist and all people would live and prosper in communal harmony and freedom.) Lenin was arrested and exiled to Siberia, where he married another revolutionary, Nadezhda Krupskaya.

In 1900, with his term of exile completed, Lenin and Krupskaya travelled to Western Europe to continue their underground revolutionary activities. In 1903, the Russian

Marxists held a congress in Brussels and London to unify Russian Marxism. Instead, the congress served to split the Marxists into two groups—the **Mensheviks** and the **Bolsheviks**. Lenin headed the Bolsheviks.

When the First World War erupted, Lenin believed the end of czarist Russia was imminent. Under mounting pressure from military defeats and internal economic and political chaos, the czar abdicated in March 1917. Lenin and other exiled revolutionaries hurried back to Russia.

Lenin skilfully won support for the Bolsheviks with slogans promising peace, land, and bread. In the political chaos of the months following the czar's abdication, Lenin knew the time was ripe for action. "History will not forgive us if we do not act now," he urged. When the Bolsheviks did strike, in November 1917, they were victorious.

Consolidating the victory would take years. In 1918, thirty different groups claimed to rule Russia. However, Lenin, with unwavering support from Leon Trotsky and Joseph Stalin, and backed by the Red Army, defeated all rivals. Bourgeoisie, reactionaries, moderate socialists, and proletarians alike were eliminated to establish the communist regime. The czar, his wife, and five children were murdered in 1918 to prevent counter-revolutionary forces from rallying behind the monarchy.

In 1918, an attempt was made on Lenin's life when a member of a rival left-wing socialist group shot and seriously wounded him. The would-be assassin, Fanny Kaplan, and her collaborators were executed. A few years later, Lenin suffered a series of debilitating strokes, and in 1924 he died. His death set the stage for the emergence of Stalin and a far bloodier chapter in the history of the new communist nation.

### Responding

1. What conditions allowed Lenin to seize power in Russia?
2. Although Lenin had been born into nobility and economic advantage, he subscribed to Marxist philosophy—a world without social classes. What do you think this says about Lenin's personality and values?

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## In Review

1. What were the major weaknesses of the czarist regime in Russia?
2. Summarize the terms of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Do you support or reject Lenin's decision to withdraw Russia from the First World War? Explain your answer.
3. Summarize the problems faced by Russians during the period of War Communism (1918 to 1921).
4. How did the New Economic Policy attempt to revive the Russian economy?
5. What were the objectives and results of the first Five-Year Plans (1928 to 1932 and 1933 to 1938)?
6. In your opinion, was the economic progress made under Stalin worth the price paid by the Russian people? Explain.

## The Rising Tide of Fascism

### THE ORIGINS OF FASCISM

Fascism, an extreme but popular philosophy that still has adherents in the world today, spread across Europe in the turmoil of the post-war world and gained renewed life in the chaos of the Great Depression. It has been argued that its appeal lies in its simple answers to complex questions and in its strategy of finding and attacking scapegoats for the problems of millions.

The name, Fascism, originated in Italy and refers to the bundle of rods (called fasces) that were symbols of power in Ancient Rome. First used by Mussolini in Italy, the term came to describe a new political movement that professed an extreme right-wing ideology. In addition to Mussolini, it had adherents across the globe including Adolf Hitler in Germany and Francisco Franco in Spain. There were similar movements in most European countries and the fascist philosophy found believers in Britain under Oswald Mosley and in Canada under Adrien Arcand.

### Principles and Policies

Although there was no international fascist organization, and different nations and leaders expressed varying beliefs and policies, there are a number of features that most fascist parties then and now exhibit. These include:

- **Extreme nationalism**

Far beyond loyalty or love of country, fascist parties and leaders demand unquestioning loyalty and service to the nation-state. They tend to see the world in terms of good and evil and they are ostensibly on the side of good. There is a clear sense of superiority to others, which often involves returning a failed nation back to the glories of the past. For example, Mussolini constantly fanned belief in the greatness of Ancient Rome.

- **Racial purity**

Closely allied to the sense of extreme nationalism is the concept of racial purity. Many fascists believe that intermarriage and ideas such as multiculturalism weaken and corrupt a nation. They promote separation of races and cultures.

- **Violence and war**

Fascists believe pacifism is a weakness and belligerence a virtue. Conciliators, moderates, and parliamentarians are generally despised as weak and lacking in courage and principles. Fascists have only disdain for the principles of democracy. Although willing to use democratic freedoms in order to win power, fascist regimes quickly move to shatter democratic political structures immediately after.

- **Devotion to a leader**

Fascist parties promote the cult of the leader and absolute obedience to that person's wishes. They swear loyalty to one person who becomes the voice of the nation and represents the entire power of the nation. Hitler became *Der Führer* (The Leader), Mussolini proclaimed himself *Il Duce* (The Leader), and Franco in Spain was lionized as *El Caudillo* (The Leader). Most fascist states and parties are organized into a rigid hierarchy in which everyone knows his/her place and duty.

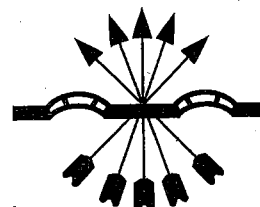
- **Creation of Scapegoats**

Tragically, much of fascism's appeal is based on the identification, hatred, and oppression of "scapegoats," that is, people and groups unjustly blamed for a nation's ills or failures. The defeat of Germany in WWI was often blamed on communists, Weimar politicians, and Jews. Mussolini blamed socialists, communists, trade union leaders, and democrats for Italy's weakness after the First World War, and Franco attacked those who believed in the Republic rather than the old monarchy of Spain. This political strategy was to result in the deaths of millions of innocents and the unleashing of the horrors of the Holocaust (pages 123-127).



Italian Fascism:

"The rods represent the power of corporal punishment and the axe represents the power of capital punishment."



Spanish Fascism:

"The crossbow and arrows was adapted from the Spanish coat of arms and represented military might."

**Figure 3.5**

Symbols of fascism. Are you aware of any current political movements in Canada or abroad that seem to follow fascist principles?

### WHY WAS FASCISM SUCCESSFUL?

The politics of 1920s Europe became increasingly polarized between communism on the left and fascism on the right. Many of the new nations created by the Treaty of Versailles had little experience with democratic politics. People looked to simple solutions and dramatic leaders. The depressed economic conditions in the aftermath of the First World War led to pessimism about the future. People were impatient with moderate policies that did not seem to deal effectively with important issues. In Britain, the Liberal Party faded as a political force in 1924; the Labour Party, a left-wing coalition, took power the same year. In Germany, while the Social Democrats remained

strong, the forces of the right were gaining power. The most dramatic change, however, occurred in Italy where the extreme right, under Benito Mussolini, swept aside all democratic institutions and established a dictatorship in just a few years.

### *Post-War Italy*

When the guns of war died down, Italy was on the victor's side but with little to show for having changed sides from the Triple Alliance to the Triple Entente. The Treaty of Versailles did not give much to Italy. The country was impoverished and in chaos. **Inflation** (an increase in prices and decrease in the value of currency) was only second to the **hyperinflation** that so ravaged Germany. Parliament was unstable and radical political movements fought in the streets. Benito Mussolini was to rise from the chaos and institute the first fascist regime in history. He would be a role model for a young Adolf Hitler dreaming of similar glory.

Benito Mussolini was born into a poor blacksmith's family in rural northern Italy. Although a capable student, he was often violent and twice was expelled from school when he stabbed other boys. As a young man, he dreamed of re-creating the might and glory of the ancient Roman Empire.

In 1914, as editor of a socialist newspaper, *Avanti*, he opposed Italy's entry into the First World War. But the next year he joined the popular pro-war movement and served as a soldier until wounded. In the chaos that followed the war, his star began to rise. He founded a right wing, paramilitary organization called the *Fasci di combattimento* (battle squads) in 1919. Members saluted, carried blackjacks (leather-covered lead batons) and knuckle dusters, and wore black shirts. This unofficial army burned the offices of left-wing newspapers and unions, broke up strikes,

and beat people at the political meetings of opponents.

Mussolini's opposition to communism won him the support of industrialists and wealthy landowners who feared a communist revolution similar to that in Russia. His claim to be "of the people" and his promise to restore order and greatness to Italy appealed to the working class. Those who opposed the Fascists were beaten and in some cases murdered. Before long the **Blackshirts**, Mussolini's unofficial army, dominated Italy's politics. As Italy faced the threat of more chaos and even civil war, Mussolini and 25 000 Blackshirts travelled across the country in the "March on Rome". He was then offered the prime ministership.

Once Mussolini had accepted King Victor Emmanuel's invitation to become Italy's prime minister in 1922, he wasted little time eliminating the opposition through intimidation and violence. In 1924, Giacomo Matteotti, leader of the United Socialist Party, was murdered. Mussolini later accepted responsibility. By 1925, he had control of the press, the police, and the government. No other political parties were allowed. Strikes and lockouts were illegal. Mussolini moved to halt Church disapproval of his regime by negotiating the **Lateran Treaties**, which recognized Roman Catholicism as the state religion of Italy and the Vatican City as an independent state within Italy itself. *Il Duce* was the unquestioned dictator of Italy. It was a dictatorship that would last for 21 years.

Under Mussolini, Italy did experience some economic recovery. Unemployment was reduced by public works schemes in housing, hydroelectric power, highways, and land reclamation. However, after 1929 the Great Depression hit Italy as it did most of the world, causing unemployment and hardship. It was a situation that gave

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**Figure 3.6**

Benito Mussolini ruled Italy for 21 years: 1922 to 1943. He became an inspiration for the young Adolf Hitler. What is suggested about Mussolini by this photo?

Mussolini justification for total state control of the economy. With the rise of Hitler, Mussolini's international stature rose, as Hitler was a strong supporter of Mussolini. In 1945 Mussolini was executed by Italian partisans. His rule resulted in economic stagnation, political dictatorship, and military humiliation for the Italian people.

#### **THE NAZI PARTY IN GERMANY**

In Germany, even more than in Italy, fascism found mass support and flourished. Adolf Hitler, who led the German movement, initially admired Mussolini and incorporated many of the principles of Italian fascism into his Nazi doctrine. Like the Italian Fascists, the Nazis denounced democracy, liberalism, capitalism, and communism. They called for a powerful German state, strengthened by unity of purpose and decisive action. At every opportunity, they attempted to increase fear of communism and decrease confidence in democracy and the existing government.

#### **Democratic Failure in Germany: The Weimar Republic**

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In 1918, the Kaiser was overthrown by German politicians eager for an end to the First World War. The monarchy was replaced with a **republic**, a state in which power rests with the people or their elected representatives, as opposed to a monarch or dictator. So weak was the support for the new regime that it had to be centred in Weimar, away from the turmoil of the former capital of Berlin. For some Germans, the Weimar government was forever tainted with the smell of defeat as it reluctantly signed the Treaty of Versailles. It was often referred to as "a democracy without democrats." Even though Germany was reeling from military defeats and economic collapse, a myth grew up that Weimar politicians had "stabbed Germany in the back." The birth of democratic rule had promised hope for Germany and peace for Europe, but the new government had little time to establish deep roots or enjoy the flowering of political success.

#### **Threats to Weimar**

**The Treaty of Versailles:** Few Germans supported the Treaty of Versailles. The "war guilt clause" seemed insulting to a nation that had suffered so much. The loss of territory, colonies, and national pride was a bitter experience. For a time, Germans suffered the dismemberment of their armed forces and occupation of parts of their country. In 1924, when the government was unable to make the huge reparation payments demanded by the treaty, French and Belgian forces occupied the Ruhr Valley, Germany's industrial heartland. For many, it seemed as if the new government was unable to protect German borders or German pride. This defeat and humiliation bred a thirst for revenge among some Germans.



**Economic Instability:** The stability of the new government was threatened by the enormity of the post-war task—the rebuilding of a devastated nation. The economy was in ruins; huge war debts and reparations payments overwhelmed the new treasury. In the early years, a wave of hyperinflation left the German mark almost worthless. The economy was so poor that in 1922 people resorted to the barter system to avoid paying a literal truckload of deutschmarks for a bottle of milk. Families used some of the bundles of worthless money as fuel. Children made kites out of the banknotes. The life savings of many people were wiped out and those on pensions, including many former soldiers, were reduced to poverty. The economic crisis turned to distrust, even hatred of the Weimar regime.

**Political Instability:** Germans did not have a long experience with democracy. Although some voting rights existed before the First World War, in general, the government was in the hands of a wealthy elite, led by a hereditary monarch. The shift to adult suffrage with dozens of new political parties was for some exhilarating, but for the majority, it was confusing and disappointing. Governments rose and fell with depressing regularity. Elections often descended into brutal propaganda campaigns and fist fights. New more radical parties such as the communists and fascists broke into open battle in the streets of the major cities. Political maneuvering left many citizens with a lack of respect for democracy and elected politicians. Too many political leaders seemed more concerned with their own welfare and presented few successes to the average German. Frustration and intrigue resulted in outright rebellions, often led by hordes of former soldiers disenchanted with their fate.

### *A Ray of Hope*

In spite of all the massive challenges facing the Weimar regime, it would be wrong to see it as a doomed experiment in democracy. There was hope and promise and, for some years, measurable progress. The new government also found friends and helpers from the United States and other former enemies. When hyperinflation crushed the value of the German currency in the early 1920s and the nation could not continue its reparations payments, a team of financiers led by American banker Charles Dawes authored the **Dawes Plan**. This plan made it easier for Germany to make the repayments and even extended loans to help bolster the troubled currency. In 1929, in a new economic crisis, another American initiative called the **Young Plan** was devised to lower Germany's reparations payments by 75 per cent. Only one payment was made before Hitler cancelled all payments entirely.



**Figure 3.7**

The worthless German deutschmarks were used as cooking fuel, wallpaper, and even kites. What effect would this economic instability have had on the people's morale?

Internationally, Germany slowly became an accepted member of the world community. In 1925, Germany was invited to join the League of Nations after signing the **Locarno Pact**, a series of agreements to guarantee the borders of former combatants such as Germany, France, and Belgium. (Although Germany did not fully accept the borders with Poland and Czechoslovakia, it did promise to pursue any changes peacefully.) In 1928, it signed the **Kellogg-Briand Pact**, an agreement that outlawed war among the signatories.

Germany made particular progress economically and within the world community under the leadership of Gustav Stresemann. Stresemann served in a variety of positions in the Weimar period, including foreign minister and chancellor. His efforts to rebuild Germany economically and to establish a true peace earned him the Nobel Peace Prize. Tragically, he died in 1929 at the outset of the world depression that would sound the death knell for the young German Republic.

### *The Fall of Weimar*

The hard-won but fragile progress of the Weimar republic was shattered by the unforeseen onslaught of the **Great Depression** that erupted from the United States, the world's wealthiest and most powerful nation. Within months, the German economy was reeling. Business failed, industries closed their doors, and unemployment levels soared. Political tensions rose and the electorate looked for an end to a seemingly endless series of crises. Elections produced street battles and minority governments. Depression, social collapse, international humiliation, and political chaos destroyed the fabric of the new democracy. The final blow was delivered by Adolf Hitler, once one of the millions of unemployed former

soldiers wandering the streets of the failed republic. Within a dozen years, Hitler would lead Germany to an even greater defeat in the Second World War.

### **THE RISE OF HITLER**

Adolf Hitler was not born in Germany, but in a small town in Austria. His early years were marred by the deaths of his brother and sister and the abuse of a drunken, overbearing father. He was a failure at school and left as a drop-out. Afterwards he became a vagrant, working at menial jobs. He was a bitter, desperate young man with a bleak future.

When the First World War broke out, Hitler rushed to join the Austrian military, but was rejected as unfit. He moved to Germany where he successfully enlisted in the army. For Hitler, the war was a great adventure. He had a good war record, earning medals for his service. But the return to civilian life meant a return to poverty and obscurity. At the time, Germany was boiling over with discontent and revolutionary fervour. Hitler threw himself with vigour and determination into this political storm. He joined a tiny political party of other disenchanted, ruthless young men and soon found an outlet for his energy and ideas.

As leader of the **National Socialist German Workers Party (Nazi)**, Hitler skillfully and purposefully brought his movement into the forefront of German politics. He provided organization, discipline, and a clear political program. He vilified the German democrats as spineless traitors. He attacked the hated Treaty of Versailles and boldly promised to shred it to pieces. Hitler preached about the **Aryans** (Caucasians not of Jewish descent; usually described as blonde with blue eyes), a "master race" destined to rule "inferior" peoples. His hatred included visible minorities, people with disabilities, and

homosexuals. However, he unleashed his most vitriolic attacks on Jews. Building on long-standing European prejudices, he blamed the Jewish population for all of Germany's problems, from disease to defeat in the First World War.

Hitler was a powerful orator able to hold his audiences entranced for hours. His speeches drew larger and larger crowds and the Nazis began to hold spectacular rallies and marches. Many German youths were attracted to the Nazis, who provided a little food, some shelter, an impressive uniform, and pocket money.

Many Germans feared that rising communist strength, strikes, and revolts would lead to a Bolshevik Revolution like that in Russia. The Nazis were the only political party to boldly confront communism. Hitler seemed to be a safe bulwark against the communist threat.

The popularity of the Nazi Party rose as the Great Depression quashed any hopes of a post-war German recovery. Blaming everything on the Jews, communists, democracy, and Versailles, Hitler gathered increasing attention—and votes. The electoral gains were stunning: in 1928, 12 seats; in 1930, 107 seats; in 1932, 230 seats. In the growing confusion and polarization of German politics, Hitler made strategic alliances with elements in the army and big businesses that were eager to crush the "red menace" and rebuild German might.

By 1933, Adolf Hitler was the leader of the most powerful political force in Germany, but still not the leader of a majority party. In the political chaos of the time, no one seemed capable of running the government. In 1932, two chancellors tried and failed to command a majority in the Reichstag. The chancellorship of Germany seemed too important to go to such a radical upstart as Hitler. But by skilful negotiation with the

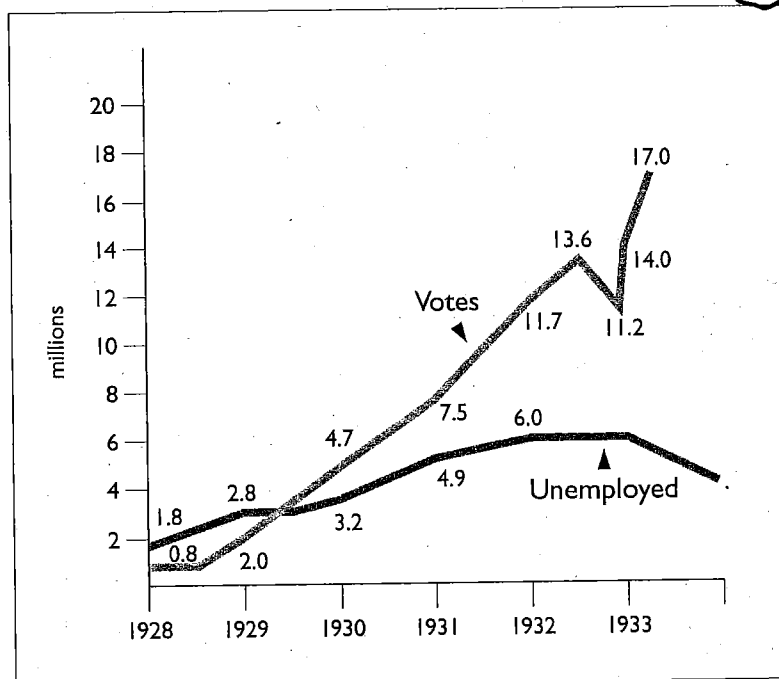


Figure 3.8

The Relationship Between Unemployment and Votes for the Nazis. What appears to be the relationship between the employment rate and support for the Nazis?

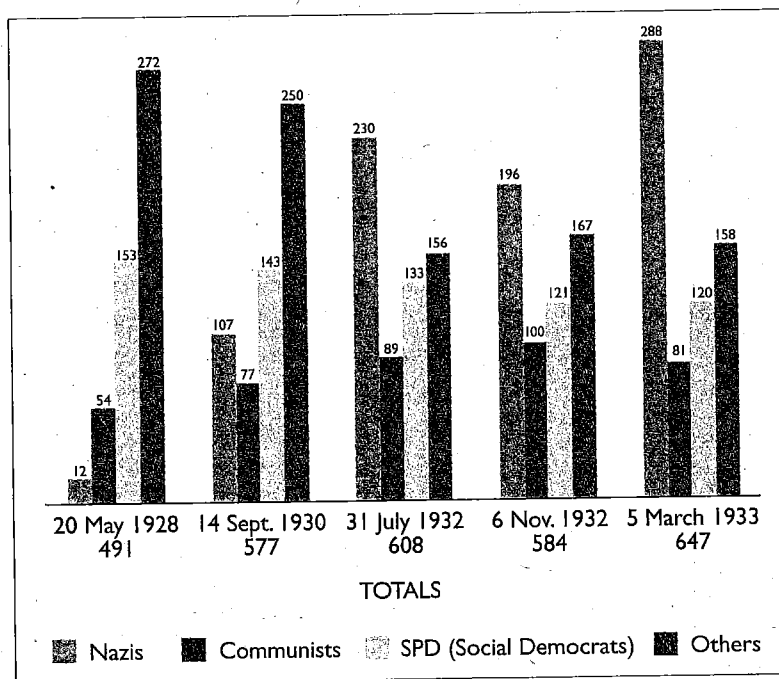


Figure 3.9

Nazis at the Polls, 1928 to 1933. Study the graph carefully and describe any patterns you see.

aging President Hindenburg, Hitler, as leader of a coalition of right wing parties, had himself appointed chancellor. After all, he did lead one of the most successful parties in the Reichstag. Most political observers felt that Hitler would soon prove to be a weak leader or be controlled by the business and military elite. They were wrong. It was the end of democracy in Germany.

### HITLER'S GERMANY

After becoming Chancellor in January 1933, Hitler took immediate steps to establish a totalitarian state. Within two months, after failing to win an absolute majority in the last free elections, the Reichstag passed the Emergency Decree and the Enabling Law. These laws allowed Hitler to suspend the Weimar constitution and rule by decree, as opposed to parliamentary consent. As a result, Hitler had virtually unlimited power. All political parties, except the Nazis, were abolished. When President Hindenburg died, Hitler combined the offices of president and chancellor. In 1934 during the "Night of the Long Knives" Hitler turned on his friends and associates and murdered those he felt might be rivals or challengers. A secret police force—the **Gestapo**—was created. Concentration camps were set up to hold prisoners and "undesirables". The judiciary and civil service were purged of possible dissidents. Jews were removed from the universities and public service. Anyone could be arrested without charges and imprisoned without a trial.

### Nazi Persecution of the Jews

As Hitler's power was consolidated, the Nazis launched their campaign of persecution against Jews. The **Nuremberg Laws** of 1935 deprived Jews of German citizenship and outlawed marriage between Jews and Aryans. Jews were not permitted to

practise law or medicine or to perform music. Many Jewish shops were closed, synagogues were shut down, and properties were confiscated.

The situation escalated on 7 November 1938, after a German diplomat in Paris was assassinated by a Jewish youth. Two nights later, on November 9, Jewish communities across Germany were attacked. This night of terror became known as **Kristallnacht**—the night of broken glass. Synagogues, homes, and shops went up in flames. Jews were arrested, beaten, and even murdered. The Jewish community was forced to pay an atonement fine to repair the damages that resulted from *Kristallnacht*. They could no longer own stores or businesses or engage in trade of any kind. Jewish children were banned from attending school. Places of public entertainment, culture, and sports were off limits. Driving licences were revoked. All Jews were forced to wear yellow stars, symbolizing the Star of David, on their clothing as identification. Thousands were arrested and imprisoned. Still more were forced into **ghettos**, and then ultimately into the Nazi death camps.

### Hitler's Economic Policies

At the time Hitler rose to power in 1933, Germany was in the midst of the Depression. World trade was at a standstill and the American loans that had allowed Germany to make reparation payments had ended. Hitler immediately set to work to eliminate unemployment and make Germany economically self-sufficient. Vast public works and rearmament programs absorbed the unemployed. German factories started manufacturing war materials; housing programs were begun; highways were built across the country; and, after 1935, the armed forces were greatly increased through conscription. Strict government control aimed at minimizing

imports and maximizing exports substantially strengthened the economy. Working to reduce Germany's need to import raw materials, German scientists developed synthetic rubber, plastics, and textiles. These decisive policies and the positive results they yielded won Hitler many supporters, both inside and outside of Germany.

### Foreign Policy

In 1936, Hitler announced his ultimate goal: to mobilize the armed forces and the economy for war within four years. State

control of industry, commerce, and the military made sure these aims were implemented.

Hitler's foreign policy was geared towards the destruction of the Treaty of Versailles, rejection of the new League of Nations, the annexation of all German areas in Europe into Germany, expansion to the East, and the destruction of communism. His foreign policy rested on full-scale rearmament that would lead to German supremacy on the battlefields. The stage was set for another world war.

## Voices

### Fascism in Germany

Adolf Hitler has been called many things—"the greatest demagogue in history," "a madman." Whatever the reality, he had a tremendous effect upon the history of the twentieth century. His voice was mesmerizing, strident, and all too prophetic. Hitler was to be the touchstone that unleashed forces that ultimately led to the deaths of 50 million people. As you read these quotations, consider how a person like Hitler could rise to power. Was it due to events and desperate times or personal charisma?

"One truth which must always be borne in mind is that the majority can never replace the man."

—Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 1925

"The great masses of the people... will more easily fall victims to a big lie than to a small one."

—Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*

"The importance of physical terror against the individual and the masses... became clear to me."

—Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*

"The Marxists taught—if you will not be my brother, I will bash your skull in. Our motto shall be—if you will not be a true German, I will bash your skull in."

—Adolf Hitler, 1933

### Responding

1. What ideas seem to dominate Hitler's thinking?
2. How might opponents have countered Hitler's message?
3. Do Hitler's views have any appeal today? Explain.
4. What qualities do you think would make a leader attractive to the general population? Why do you think certain speakers seem to have an uncanny ability to captivate and influence their audience?

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# Skill Path

## Creating Concept Maps

When visiting a large city you have never been in before, it is easy to become inundated by information: new street names, buildings, people, sounds and transit systems, not to mention local customs and procedures with which you may not be familiar. All of this can be very disorienting, as well as distressing. You may feel a similar sort of disorientation when you are studying a new history topic—one rich with personalities, place names, events and, of course, dates. One method of gaining your bearings and keeping this information straight in your mind is by using a map.

Concept maps are organizers that graphically link ideas in a logical way. You could use a concept map when a question asks you to criticize or judge a topic or issue. Justifying and proving require a visual display of your reasoning towards a conclusion you have reached. When you are asked to relate ideas, you must show connections

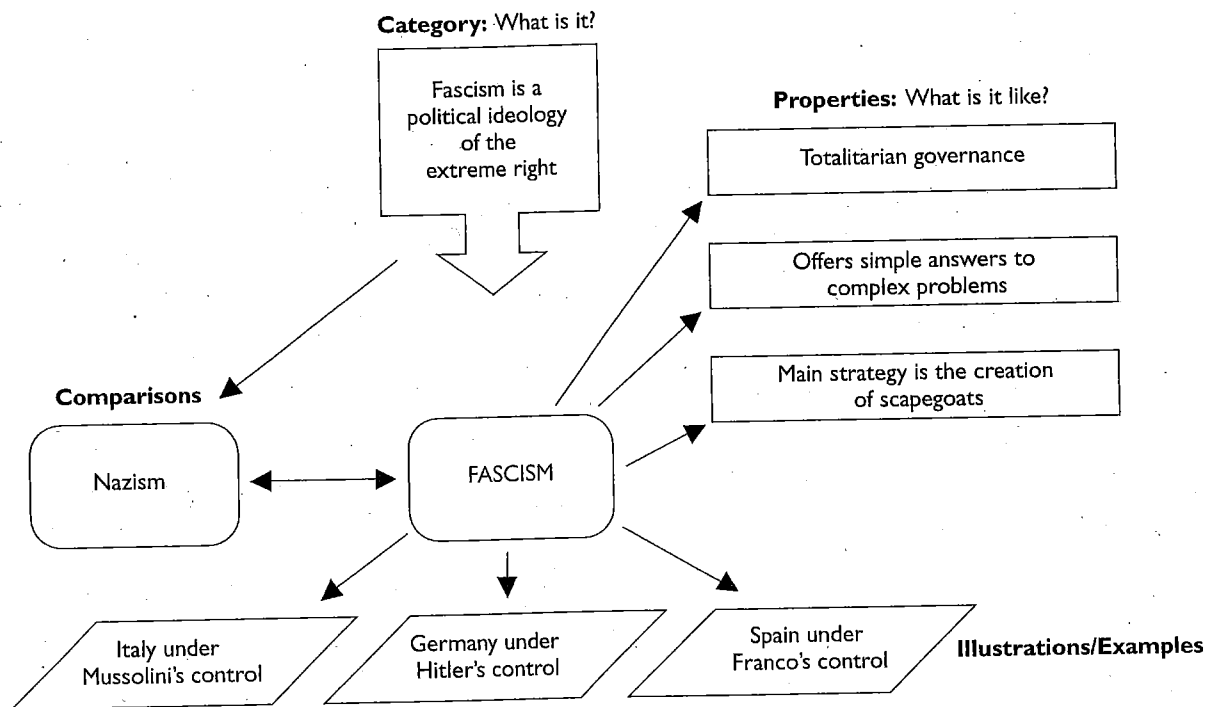
between things—how one influences the other.

These maps can help you both in the short term to understand and analyse a topic, and in the long term to prepare for your exam. Creating concept maps is more effective than simply reading your notes because it forces you to interact with the material and discover how it all ties together.

### Step One: Decide on Your Objective

After reading about a topic in history, decide on what you want to accomplish through the use of a concept map. Do you want to define a certain element or idea? Analyse a problem or issue? Or, organize various elements of the topic in a logical structure? A different type of concept map can be used to help you accomplish each of these goals. The following diagrams will give you a basic outline for each.

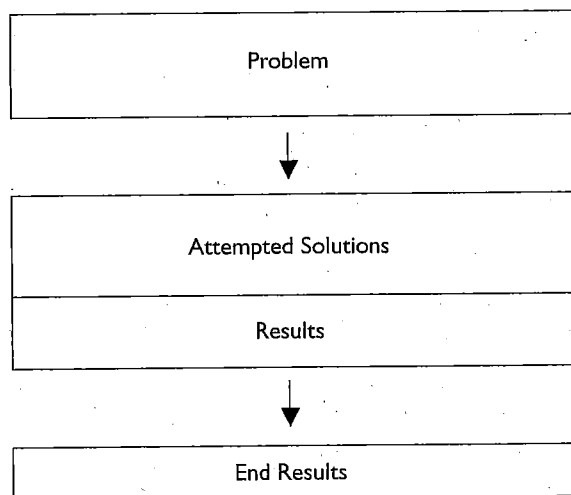
A) A concept map as a defining tool (using the example, Fascism)



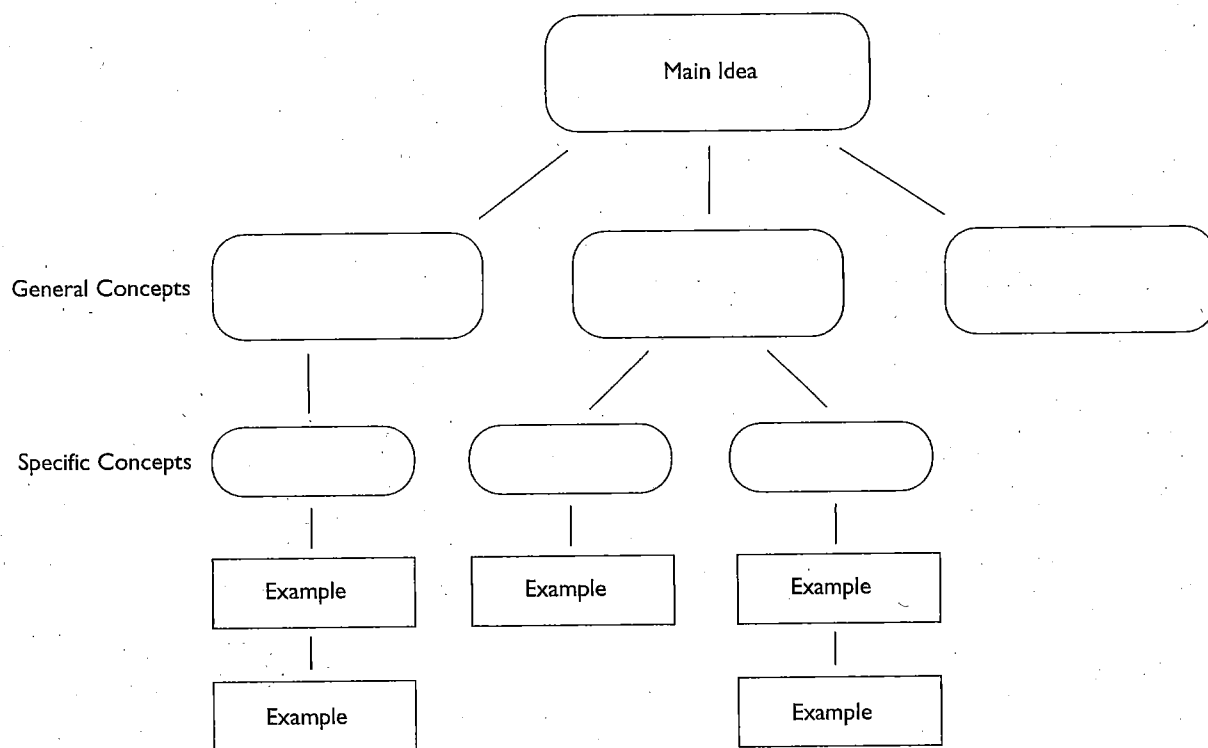
(12)

## B) A concept map as an outline for problem solving

Who? What? Why?



## C) A concept map for organizing ideas





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**Step Two: Identify the Central Idea or Issue**

No matter what your purpose is in creating a concept map, you must start by identifying the central idea or issue. This main idea should be worded very concisely. Print it in capitals or highlight it in some way on the page so that you are constantly reminded of it as you are filling in the rest of the map. For example, say you want to define the ideology of fascism. Write this word in capitals at the top of a blank sheet of paper and draw a box around it. Next, from memory, or by referring back to your notes or textbook, begin drawing an arrow out from that main box to a new box or circle containing a simple definition.

**Step Three: Expand Your Links**

A concept map is used to link boxes in an organized way so that each bit of information expands on the previous link. So, for the example, try brainstorming comparisons to other ideologies you've learned about. You might add on more arrows and boxes to give examples of fascist countries. From there you could expand the information to include such details as the names of the leaders of each of these fascist states and the dates during which they ruled. More branches could outline the indigenous characteristics of fascism in various countries.

**Step Four: Apply Emphasis**

As you are adding links, you may also want to highlight the most pertinent boxes and arrows. You could do this with colour, or different types of fonts, etc. Also, consider adding pictures or drawing graphics if they will help you make a point. Such emphasis will provide visual clues to help jog your memory later, when you use the map to study for exams.

**Practise Your Skill**

1. Use a concept map to explain one of the following situations based on material studied in this chapter.

- An evaluation of Stalin's Five-Year Plans
- Analysis of the fall of the Weimar Republic
- Comparison of Hitler and Mussolini as fascist dictators
- The causes and results of the Great Depression
- An assessment of the League of Nations and collective security

2. In what way is the political spectrum presented on page 68 a concept map? How effective is it in your opinion?

## In Review

1. Summarize the central beliefs of the Fascists.
2. What factors explain the rise to power of Mussolini in Italy and Hitler in Germany?
3. How did the Emergency Decree and the Enabling Law prepare the way for a totalitarian state in Germany?
4. What measures did Hitler take to tighten his grip on Germany?
5. How did the Nazis persecute the Jewish citizens of Germany?
6. What were the results of Nazi economic policies in Germany?
7. In your opinion, how should the world have regarded the rise of the Fascists?



Germany did not lose the Great War, but was stabbed in the back by her own government. Those cowards of the Weimar Government agreed to a humiliating treaty-- The Treaty of Versailles. All of Germany's problems are caused by this scrap of paper.

Germany was forced to give up land to the Poles and the Czechs. Eight million loyal Germans are now living under foreign rule. will regain this land by force if necessary, and return those Germans to their historic homeland.

The German army is pitifully small--only 100,000 men. The Treaty of Versailles will not allow them to have any tanks, aircraft or submarines. The army could not defend a city, let alone a whole nation. will introduce conscription. We will build the strongest army in the world. No foreign nation should be able to dictate the size of our army. Germany must be strong enough to discourage any nation from invading us. The German nation will be as strong as it should be.

The German worker is cheated. The fruits of his labour are not for German consumption. Most of what is produced must go to Britain and France as part of the reparations payments. Germany did not start the Great War, as the Treaty of Versailles claims. It takes two nations to make war--all the nations involved in the Great War must share the blame, not Germany alone. will refuse to allow any more money to leave the country. The German economy is for German benefit.

Germany's problems are the fault of the Treaty of Versailles. will tear up this scrap of paper and make Germany as wealthy and strong as she deserves to be. Germany must rearm! Germany must rebuild! Germany must be strong!

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Although the terms of the Treaty of Versailles are hard on Germany, we must fulfill our obligations. We signed the treaty to end a terrible and costly war. We were on the verge of defeat. If we hadn't agreed to the Treaty of Versailles, Germany would have been invaded, and we would have lost much more than we did.

As honourable and fairminded people, Germans must pull together and suffer a little longer. The reparations payments will not last forever. When we have paid our debt to the world Germany can then rebuild to her rightful place. Our reputation and our honour will be intact. The other nations will know that Germany honours her obligations.

The many German who have found themselves in Poland and Czechoslovakia have not revolted. Therefore, they must be content. If they are dissatisfied, they can move back to Germany.

Germany has no need of a large army. It is a waste of money and manpower. Germans are needed to help pay off the debt. If Germany deals with other nations in an honourable fashion, we will be in no danger from them. A large German army will only threaten others and eventually bring on another war.

ENCLOSURE

[REDACTED]

Germany's problems are due to the capitalist system. The capitalists caused the Great War, and the foreign capitalists are now causing the hardships that the German people are now suffering. Look around you. There are some very wealthy people still in Germany, while the workers and the farmers suffer under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles.

Germany must become a Communist state, like the Soviet Union. The resources of the nation should not be for the benefit of the few, whether German or foreign. The resources should be shared by all Germans. Only this would make sure that all Germans share in Germany's wealth.

Democracy has not worked for the benefit of the average German. The government pays and pays to foreigners. Your labour is used for the benefit of the few who think more of German honour than they do of German stomachs.

Rise workers, and take over your local governments. Establish a soviet in your city for the benefit of the workers and the farmers. They produce the wealth, they should enjoy it.

... promises equality for all in a new and better Germany. Renounce the Treaty of Versailles, and renounce Capitalism.

## Hitler speaks

The beer hall was crowded with people smoking and shouting for more beer. But the young man with the small moustache sat quietly, waiting for his moment. At last it came. Adolf Hitler climbed on to a chair and started to speak.

He began quietly. But soon he worked himself up into a shouting, spitting rage. Some listeners thought that he was crazy. Others were ready to believe anything he told them.

Hitler's message was one of hate. Hate for the Versailles Treaty, for the Weimar Republic, for communists. Hate, above all, for Jews.

## Hitler and the Jews

Jews looked and spoke like other Germans, and lived like other Germans. Yet they were different. Many centuries before, their ancestors had come to Europe from Palestine. Modern Jews had kept alive their ancestors' customs and stuck faithfully to their religion.

Some Jews became successful businessmen, doctors, scientists, politicians. It may have been this that first made Hitler hate them. Before the war he had been a poor nobody in the city of Vienna. Plenty of Vienna's many Jews were poor, too. But Hitler envied the rich ones, and his twisted mind blamed them for his problems.

## The 'stab in the back'

Now, years later, he blamed them for Germany's problems, too. He claimed that it was Jews and communists who had made Germany lose the war. They had stabbed the country in the back, he said, by persuading the soldiers to stop fighting.

This was a lie. But many Germans were ready to believe the lie. Hitler gave them something they needed – somebody to blame for their troubles.

## Hitler's followers

Hitler's Nazi party grew quickly in the early 1920s. Many out of work ex-soldiers joined. It won support, too, from people with small businesses, such as shopkeepers. Many people like these had lost a lot of money due to the war. They thought the Nazis would stop the communists from taking the rest.

Hitler gathered a private army of brown-shirted thugs called the SA. These Nazi 'storm troopers' paraded the streets, beating up socialists and communists and supporters of other rival parties.

In 1923 the Weimar government said that Germany was too poor to pay the reparations demanded by the Allies in the Versailles Treaty. It stopped the payments. A chain of disasters started.

## The Ruhr occupation, 1923

French troops marched into the Ruhr, Germany's richest industrial region. They took over its mines to collect the reparations in coal. The Ruhr workers went on strike and the Weimar government backed them by paying their wages. It printed millions of banknotes to do this.

## Inflation, 1923

But Germany lacked the real wealth to back the notes. The result was massive inflation. Money lost its buying power. It became so worthless that bakers gave vouchers for loaves to their workers

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## The Munich Putsch, 1923

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instead of wages. The inflation also wiped out people's savings. Some used bundles of worthless banknotes to light their fires.

Hitler felt that the time was right to overthrow the Weimar government. His Nazis had a lot of support in Munich, the chief city of Bavaria in the south of Germany. Together with General Ludendorff, Hitler marched on the army headquarters there at the head of 3000 followers.

Armed police were waiting. Rifle fire scattered the Nazi marchers. They broke and ran away.

This attempted rebellion was called the Munich *Putsch* - a German word for an armed rising. Hitler and Ludendorff were put on trial. But they had powerful friends in the government of Bavaria and the army. The judges let Ludendorff go free. They sent Hitler to prison, but he was released nine months later.

Despite its failure, the Munich *Putsch* made Hitler's name known all over Germany. The time in prison also gave him the chance to write a book setting out his ideas. He called it *Mein Kampf* - My Struggle. For loyal Nazis *Mein Kampf* became a sort of bible.

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## Mein Kampf

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## Gustav Streseman

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After 1924 life got better for the German people. A new Chancellor, or Prime Minister, had taken over the Weimar government. His name was Gustav Streseman. In 1924 he agreed to the Dawes Plan, a scheme to pay off the reparations by instalments. Then he brought in a new kind of money. Prices came down and wages were worth something again. Trade with other countries grew. Germans soon had more work and more food.

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## Hitler and the Reichstag

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With Streseman in charge, people became more contented. Hitler found it more difficult to get them to support his plans to overthrow the government by force. So he changed his tactics. He set out to get more Nazis elected into the German Parliament, or *Reichstag*.

To do this he needed money to start newspapers to spread Nazi ideas and to set up party branches all over the country. He got the money from rich businessmen. They paid Hitler as a sort of insurance policy, to stop the communists from gaining power.

In 1929 Streseman died. The following year trade between the countries of the world started to fall sharply. All over Europe and America millions of workers lost their jobs (see Unit 26).

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## Germany and the Depression

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This world depression, or slump, hit the German people very hard. By 1932 six million of them were out of work. Many felt that democratic government of the Weimar kind had failed.

Some turned to Communism. Even more turned to Hitler. They packed his meetings and cheered his speeches. Most important of all, they voted for him. In elections in 1930 and 1932 the number of Nazis in the *Reichstag* rose from 12 to 230. They had more seats than any other one party.

But votes for the communists were also rising. Hitler claimed that only the Nazis could prevent a communist takeover.

Field Marshal Hindenburg, Germany's President, believed him. In January 1933 he made Hitler Chancellor of Germany.

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## Hitler becomes Chancellor

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### The Reichstag fire, 1933

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'Fire! Fire! The *Reichstag* is on fire!'

The news ran like fire itself through the snowy streets of Berlin. By half past nine on the cold, raw February night in 1933 an excited crowd had gathered on the snowy pavement outside the German Parliament building. They watched red and orange flames licking through the glowing metal girders of its great dome.

When Hitler heard the news he could hardly believe his luck. Hindenburg had made him Chancellor only a month before. Ever since he had been looking for an excuse to crush anyone who disagreed with Nazi policies. Now he had it.

The fire was the work of the communists, shouted Hitler's supporters. They were plotting a revolution! The only way to stop them was to give Hitler the power to do anything he thought was necessary.

The story about a communist plot was quite untrue. But most people believed it. Perhaps this isn't surprising. The police caught a communist called Van der Lubbe inside the *Reichstag* with matches and firelighters in his pockets.

What people didn't realise was that Van der Lubbe was mentally ill. Starting the fire was entirely his own idea.

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### The last election

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Thousands of communists were arrested on the same night as the fire. So were many others the Nazis had grudges against.

With his rivals on the run, Hitler decided the time was right for a snap election. He called the election for just six days after the fire; hardly time for other parties to get organised, but enough for his storm troopers to beat up their followers. When the votes were counted, the Nazis were the biggest party in the *Reichstag*. But the German people had not all been fooled. Seventeen million voted for Hitler's men – but twenty million voted against.

That did not stop Hitler. Communist members were arrested or forced into hiding. When the other members came to the opening meeting of the *Reichstag* in its temporary home in an opera house, they found the corridors lined with SA troops.

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### The Enabling Act, 1933

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Ninety-four socialist members stood up to Hitler. The rest of the *Reichstag* voted for a law which gave him the power to do what he liked: the Enabling Act. The Nazi rule of terror had begun.

Hitler banned all rival political parties and threw their leaders into prison. He closed down newspapers which had dared to criticise him, did away with trade unions and forbade workers to strike.

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### The Night of the Long Knives, 1934

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Then he turned on some of his own men. The SA storm troopers had played a vital part in bringing Hitler to power. But he decided that they were getting too big for their boots.

Their leader, Ernst Roehm, wanted to form them into a new German army. But Hitler wanted the support of the old German army. He was afraid that Roehm's plan for an SA takeover of the

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### The Gestapo

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army would turn its officers against him.

Hitler got rid of Roehm and many other leaders of the SA on the 'Night of the Long Knives' in June 1934. He had them dragged from their beds and murdered.

The 'Night of the Long Knives' left nobody to challenge Hitler. His rivals were now dead or safely locked up. He set up a secret police force called the Gestapo to make sure things stayed like this.

The Gestapo had spies everywhere – in shops, in factories, in blocks of flats, even in schools. A word against Hitler or the Nazis meant instant arrest.

Thousands of people disappeared behind the barbed-wire fences of special prisons called concentration camps. Many were never heard of again.

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### The Jews and the Nuremberg Laws, 1935

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The Jews suffered most. Just to be a Jew became a crime in Hitler's Germany. Their synagogues, or churches, were burned down. Their homes were smashed up by Nazi thugs. Customers were ordered away from their shops.

Finally Hitler took away all their rights. They could not hold government jobs or work as lawyers, doctors or teachers. These unjust 'laws' were called the Nuremberg Laws, after the city where Hitler announced them in 1935.

Thousands of Jews gave up everything and fled from Germany in fear of their lives. They were the lucky ones. Millions who stayed were finally herded into Nazi concentration camps. Here they were later murdered in cold blood – men, women, children, even babies.

Despite Hitler's brutal treatment of Jews and other innocent people, most Germans supported his rule. A flood of clever publicity, or propaganda, organised by Josef Goebbels made sure of this.

Goebbels' job was to see that newspapers, magazines, films and the radio all hammered home the same simple message – that Adolf Hitler was Germany's saviour, a superman who could do no wrong.

Goebbels' propaganda was brilliantly convincing. Millions of Germans believed every word of it. Hitler, the ordinary man, became the *Fuehrer* – the Leader.

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### Why was Hitler popular?

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A more solid reason for Hitler's popularity was that he found people jobs again. In less than four years he cut the number out of work from six million to under one million.

Hitler took many men into his growing army. He put thousands more to work in factories making tanks and aeroplanes. Others built a network of fine new roads, called *autobahns*, across Germany.

In return for steady jobs most Germans were ready to turn a blind eye to the concentration camps and other unpleasant sides of Hitler's rule.

The *Fuehrer* seemed to be building a strong and prosperous new Germany out of the ruins of the old one. What did freedom to vote for somebody different matter if you had a job and felt that your country was recovering at last from the shame of defeat in 1918?

### WW11- QUESTIONS ON ARTICLE

1. For what reasons did Hitler hate the Jews?
2. What was Hitler's private army called? What did they do?
3. What happened as a result of the Ruhr occupation?
4. What does Munich Putsch mean? What was the significance of this?
5. Why is Mein Kamp important?
6. What is the Reichstag? Why did Hitler want the Nazis party to join it?
7. Why was the Reichstag fire an important event for Hitler?



8. What was the Enabling Act?

9. Explain what happened on the 'Night of the Long Knives'.

10. Who were the Gestapo?

11. What were the Nuremberg laws?

12. Who was Josef Goebbels?

13. Why did the German people support Hitler?

## NAZISM: BELIEFS AND PROPAGANDA

### WHAT DID THE NAZIS BELIEVE:

The Nazis believed in:

1. the use of terror (violence) against the "enemies" of Germany. An enemy was anyone who was not a believer and supporter of the Nazi Party.
2. Hitler as the supreme leader (the Fuhrer). Everyone was forced to take an oath of loyalty to the Fuhrer and to salute with the words "Heil Hitler" (long live Hitler). If you did not, you were punished.
3. extreme Nationalism. The German Volk (German people) were the most important. The German people were to devote their lives to improving Germany. This idea led to the Nazi racist beliefs. According to the Nazis, Germans were the Aryan race (Super race). Nazis believe most other races were inferior and should survive only to serve the German "master" race. The Poles and Slavs were to be made the slaves of the Germans. The Jews were sub-human and needed to be eliminated by deportation (moving them to concentration camps) or liquidation (killing them).
4. Imperialism and Lebensraum (living space). Germans, being the master race needed new lands, because Germans would have more babies, and this master race would settle lands previously owned by "inferior" people.
5. Germans should have big families. Men were the breadwinners and warriors. Women were expected to stay at home and have more babies to serve Hitler and Germany. German women who had 4 or more children receive a medal: the Honour Cross of the German Mother.

These ideas were not new. They had existed in many countries, including Britain and France. But never before had these 5 ideas been brought together to form the main beliefs of a political party.

How did Hitler and the Nazis get the German people to support their ideas?  
 How did Hitler and the Nazis silence those people who opposed them?  
 Through the use of terror and propaganda Hitler made people believe that the Nazi Party was the answer to all of Germany's troubles.

## **PROPAGANDA**

**\*\*All governments and many companies use propaganda. It exists even in our society today. But Hitler was the first leader to have a Minister of Propaganda, Josef Goebbels. He was the master of manipulating the ideas of the people.**

### **TECHNIQUES USED BY GOEBBELS ON BEHALF OF HITLER:**

1. RADIO BROADCASTS OF HITLER'S SPEECHES
2. THE THEATRE - PLAYS
3. NEWSPAPERS
4. POSTERS, BANNERS, FLAGS
5. PARADES, NIGHT CEREMONIES
6. UNIFORMS
7. BOOKS
8. FILMS
9. WORKS OF ART
10. EDUCATION

Before Hitler gained power in 1933, he used propaganda to win support. He held rallies and parades, making speeches about Germany's greatness, and blamed the Treaty of Versailles, the Communists, and Jews for Germany's troubles. Posters were also made showing the Germans as superior people. When Hitler took power all films shown in Germany were about the glory of Germany. The Ministry of Propaganda made all newspapers print articles that supported Nazi ideas. Any books that did not follow Nazi ideas were burned.

All workers, and children were required to join organizations such as the Jungenvolk (the Nazi boyscouts), the Hitler Youth, the Army, and the Nazi Workers League. They participated in parades and rallies, and wore special uniforms.

All teachers who did not support Nazism were fired. Textbooks, especially history books were rewritten to fit Nazi beliefs. Education stressed the idea of the Jews as the enemies of Germany.

## CANADIAN SOCIETY AND EUROPE PRIOR TO WORLD WAR II

### CAUSES OF WORLD WAR II

- the most important issue for Canadians in the 1930s **JOBS**
- Canada and all other European countries were hit hard by the **Depression**
- most nations wanted to ignore problems happening in the world and concentrate on getting their economies moving
- all people also had ~~a~~ clear memories of the horrors of **World War I**
- the last thing people wanted to see was a long war like World War I
- the leaders knew Germany, Italy, Spain, and Japan had **oppressive** governments, but the leaders did not want to become involved in a war
- instead, they ignored actions of these governments

### CAUSES OF WORLD WAR II: 4 MAIN CAUSES

#### 1. GERMAN HUMILIATION AFTER THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

- the **treaty of Versailles** was very harsh on Germany
- Germany could not have an air force, could only have a small army, and Germany had to pay \$33 billion in **Reparation Payments** (money paid to other countries by the loser of a war for damages)
- Germany also had to give up the **Saarlunds** - these were rich lands containing mines and minerals
- because of these clauses in the Versailles treaty, the German economy was in a bad state until the **Allies** changed the clauses
- Germany blamed the allies for their economic troubles
- Also, the Versailles treaty contained a clause known as the **War Guilt Clause**: this clause stated that Germany was to blame for World War I
- Germany felt that this was unfair because many nations were involved in the war

#### 2. LOST GERMAN TERRITORY

- the Treaty of Versailles took back lands that Germany had won in World War I and created new countries
- Germans were humiliated and wanted them back

#### 3. THE RISE OF DICTATORSHIPS IN EUROPE

- Italy, Germany, the Soviet Union, Spain, Portugal, and Japan were nations led by dictators
- these dictators persecuted anyone who disagreed with them
- these nations wanted to control more land: Italy invaded Ethiopia, Germany invaded Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland
- the allies tried to stop these countries using the **League of Nations**, but this failed
- eventually the allies would have to get involved

#### 4. THE WEAKNESS OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND APPEASEMENT

- the League of Nations was similar to today's United Nations, but it had very little power
- the League of Nations was created to prevent another World War from occurring
- if there was a conflict the League of Nations hoped countries would discuss their problems instead of going to war
- but the League of Nations was weak: the United States and the Soviet Union pulled out of the League, and without these nations the League of Nations lost much of its power
- the policy of **appeasement** was ineffective against the dictators

## THE WAR BEGINS

"War is life," Hitler wrote. "War is the origin of all things."

**O**n September 1, 1939, the German armies invaded Poland. World War II had begun. The aim of German foreign policy, Hitler said, was to "secure for the German people the land and the spoils to which they are entitled on this earth." Austria and the Sudetenland had been taken into the Reich without a shot being fired, but the conquest of Poland required war. "Only thus shall we gain the *Lebensraum* [living space] which we need," Hitler told his troops.

*Lebensraum* was only one motive for going to war. Hitler's determination to carry out Nazi racial policy was of equal importance. In a speech on January 30, 1939, celebrating the beginning of his sixth year in power, Hitler issued an unequivocal warning:

If international-finance Jewry [Hitler's term for the supposed conspiracy of Jewish bankers] inside and outside of Europe should succeed once more in dragging nations into another world war, the consequence will not be the Bolshevization of the earth and thereby the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe.

War made possible, Goebbels wrote, "the solution of a whole series of problems that could never have been solved in peacetime." War freed the regime from all restraints and at the same time united the German people against their enemies — both real and imagined. Hitler's war, which overnight reversed the humiliating defeat of 1918, restored the confidence of the nation that until recently had been still reeling from its defeat in World War I. Within a year of the attack on Poland, Germany achieved hegemony over an empire in the East.

The Polish army was destroyed within days of the Nazi invasion. Warsaw surrendered in less than a month. Great Britain and France declared war on Germany to fulfill their treaty obligations, but provided no military

tance to the beleaguered Polish government. Germany and its new Soviet ally proceeded

to carve up Poland. (In a stunning reversal of policy, Germany and the Soviet Union had signed a nonaggression pact less than two weeks before the attack on Poland.) Eastern territories were annexed to the Soviet Union; those in the west, including the city of Danzig, became part of the Reich or came under German rule. More than twenty-two million people were added to the Nazi empire.

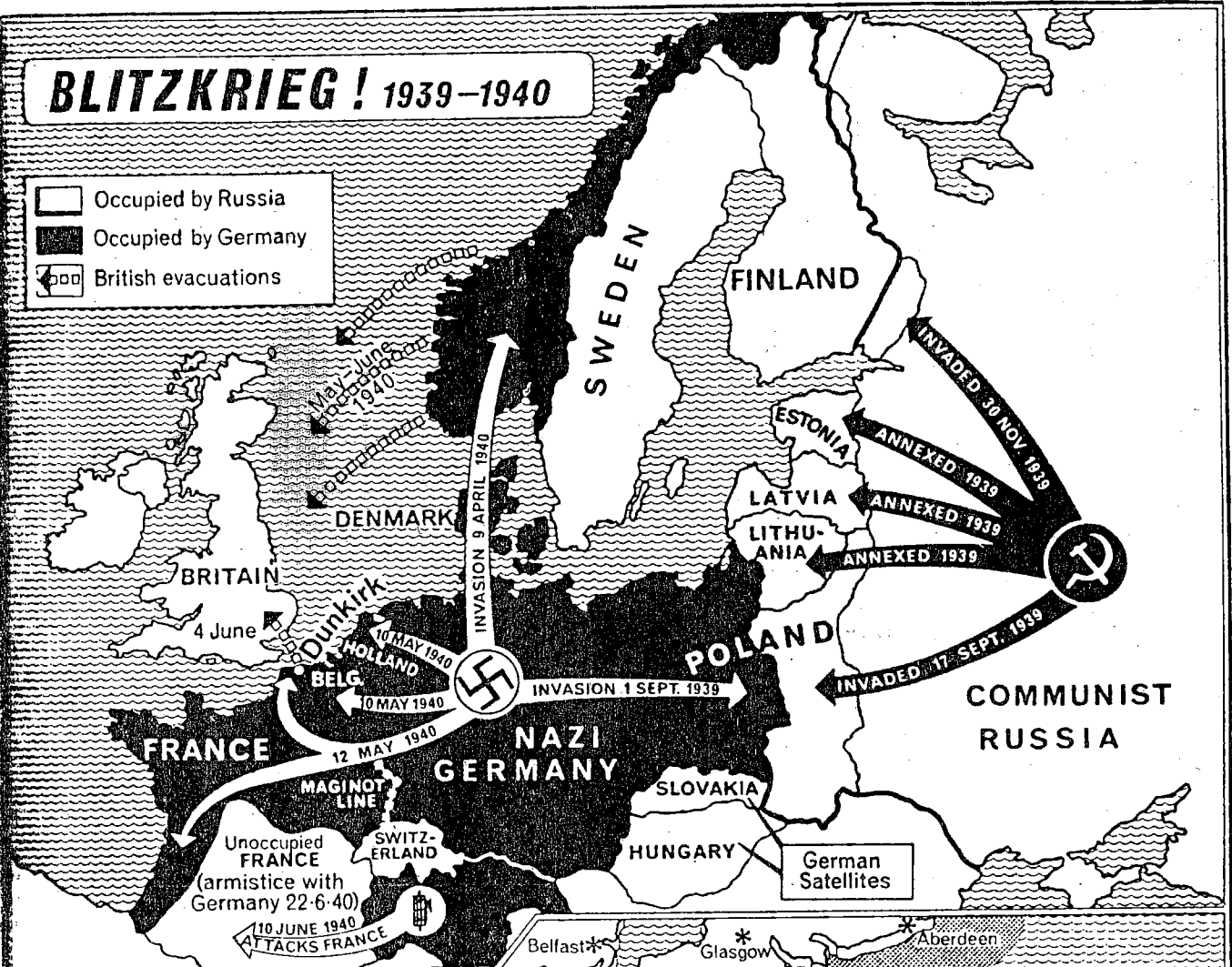
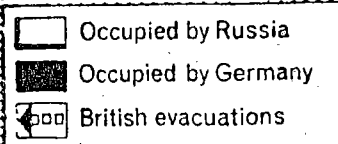
On April 9, 1940, Germany invaded Denmark and Norway. Both were conquered swiftly. On May 10, German armies swept through Belgium and the Netherlands on their approach to France in an attack called the *Blitzkrieg*, or lightning war. The Netherlands fell in five days. Belgium capitulated in less than three weeks, forcing a British army of a quarter of a million to flee across the English Channel from the beaches at Dunkerque.

The French army, afraid of being totally destroyed, retreated. On June 13, Paris fell to the Germans. Under an armistice agreement, France was divided. The northern part of the country was occupied by Germany, while Hitler's ally, Italy, occupied part of the south. Part remained under nominal French control, ruled by the Vichy government, which was in fact a puppet of Germany.

During the summer of 1940, the Luftwaffe, the German air force, launched massive bombing raids on Britain as the prelude to a planned invasion, but met unexpectedly strong opposition from the Royal Air Force. Between July and October, the skies above England were ablaze with aerial combat; Germany lost 1,722 aircraft to the RAF's 915.

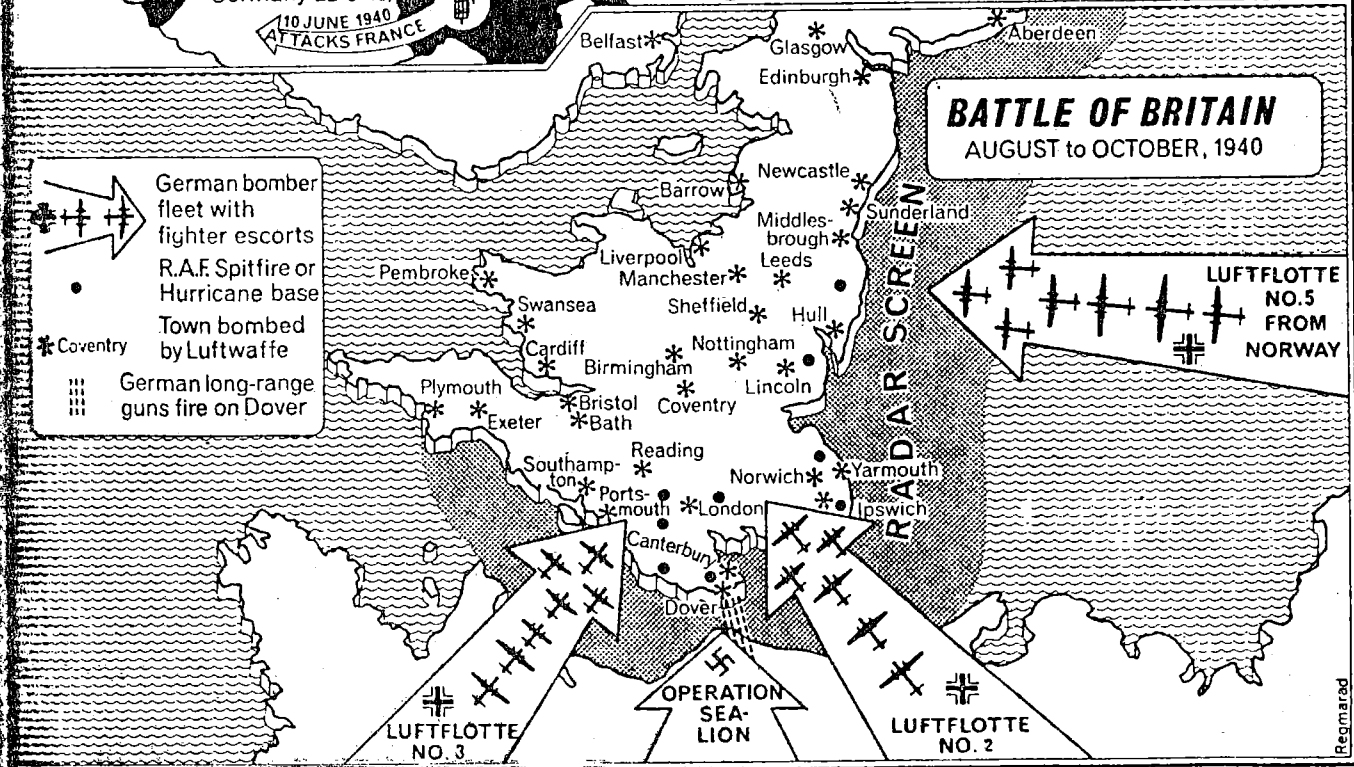
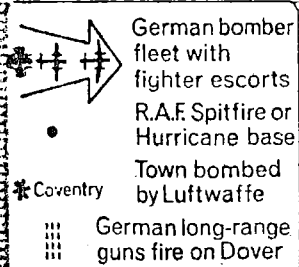
During the winter, the German army completed plans to invade the Soviet Union in May 1941. On April 6, 1941, Germany invaded the Balkan countries of Greece and Yugoslavia (Bulgaria and Romania had already come under German domination). The Greeks and Yugoslavs put up strong resistance, causing Germany to delay the invasion of the Soviet Union until late June, a postponement that was to have fateful consequences when the German armies were forced to campaign in the deadly Russian winter. Still, on the eve of the attack, the Soviet army was the only major land force on the European continent left standing against the Nazis. The triumphant German army looked invincible.

# BLITZKRIEG! 1939-1940



## **BATTLE OF BRITAIN**

### AUGUST to OCTOBER, 1940



## ANTI-JEWISH LEGISLATION

The first stages of the Nazi solutions to the "Jewish Problem" were carefully devised in the following legal steps:

*February 28, 1933;*

***Emergency Decree For The "Protection Of People And State"***

With this law, the police could arrest anyone they considered anti-Nazi or a political threat to the state.

*March 23, 1933*

***The Enabling Act, "Law for the Relieving of the Distress of People and Reich"***

Parliament voted that Hitler and his cabinet had the right to make laws on their own. Hitler gained the legal right to rule by decree (direct order) and could remove basic civil rights from those Germans deemed dangerous to the Reich.

*April 1933*

***"Law for the Restoration of Professional Civil Service"***

This was the first anti-Jewish law. It removed "non-Aryans" (Jews) from the German civil service, including; postal, fire and police departments, the courts, railroads conductors, public school teachers, etc.

*April 1933*

***"Law Regarding the Admission to Bar"***

Persons of "non-Aryan descent" (Jews) and/or pro-Communists could not practice law.

*April 1933*

***"Law Against the Overcrowding of German Schools and Institutions of Higher Learning"***

The number of "non-Aryan" (Jewish) students was reduced in public and private schools.

*July 14, 1933*

The Nazi Party was officially declared the only legitimate party in Germany.

## NUREMBERG LAWS

*A continuation of anti-Jewish legislation*

*September 1935*

***"Reich Citizenship Law" and the "Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honour" (commonly known as the Nuremberg Laws):***

According to the Nuremberg Laws, people were of the Jewish "race" if one grandparent was considered Jewish or if they considered themselves members of the Jewish "race." A grandparent was considered Jewish if he or she had belonged to a Jewish religious institution.

The first of these laws reclassified Jews as "subjects" rather than "citizens" and, thereby, removed their basic civil rights.

The second of these laws was directed at governing private life:

1. It prohibited intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews.
2. Sexual intercourse was forbidden between Jews and non-Jews.
3. Jews could not employ non-Jewish women under age 45 as domestic helpers.

*NOTE :The Nuremberg Laws made it possible to begin to carry out policies of discrimination and exclusion by removing civil rights. The legal definition of a "race" was now dependent upon membership in a religious group.*



# GLOSSARY (A)

## ALLIES

The nations fighting Nazi Germany, Italy, and Japan during World War II; primarily the United States, Great Britain, Canada, and the Soviet Union.

## ANTI-SEMITISM

Prejudice towards or hatred of Jews.

## AUSCHWITZ

A concentration camp established in 1940 at Oswiecim, Poland. In 1942, it became an extermination camp. It contained a labour camp, the death camp, Birkenau, and the slave labour camp, Buna-Monowitz. Up to 1.5 million Jewish men, women and children were murdered in this camp and 100,000 victims from other ethnic and cultural groups. Only 7,650 were found alive at liberation.

## CONCENTRATION CAMPS

Immediately after assuming power on January 30, 1933, the Nazis established camps where they "concentrated" and imprisoned perceived enemies of the state. Enemies of Nazism included: actual and potential political opponents (Communists, Socialists, Monarchists), Jehovah's Witnesses, Gypsies, homosexuals and others deemed "anti-social." The general round-up of Jews did not begin until 1938. Before then, only Jews who fit the other categories were interned in the camps. The first three camps were Dachau, Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen.

## DER STÜRMER ("THE ATTACKER" OR "THE STORMTROOPER")

A weekly anti-Semitic Nazi newspaper, founded and edited by Julius Streicher, which was published in Nuremberg between 1923 and 1945.

## FINAL SOLUTION

Nazi code name for the plan to destroy the Jews of Europe.

## GÖRING, HERMANN

An early member of the Nazi Party, Göring participated in Hitler's "Beer Hall Putsch" in Munich in 1923. During World War II, he was virtual dictator of the German economy and was responsible for the total air war waged by Germany. Convicted at Nuremberg in 1946, Göring committed suicide by taking poison just two hours before his scheduled execution.

## HESS, RUDOLF

Deputy and close associate of Hitler from the earliest days of the Nazi movement. Hess was tried at Nuremberg, found guilty, and sentenced to life imprisonment. He was the only prisoner in Spandau Prison until he apparently committed suicide in 1987.

## HIMMLER, HEINRICH

Head of the SS (see definition below) and secret police.

## HITLER, ADOLF

Born in 1889, became leader of the Nazi Party in 1921 and later Chancellor of Germany from 1933-1945. Led Germany into a world war and was the prime initiator of the Holocaust. Hitler killed himself in a Berlin bunker at the end of the war. Contrary to myth, Hitler did not have any Jewish ancestry.

## HOLOCAUST

The destruction of some 6 million Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators in Europe between 1933-1945. Other individuals and groups were persecuted and suffered grievously during this period, but only the Jews were marked for complete and utter annihilation. The term "Holocaust" — meaning "a completely burned sacrifice" — has a sacrificial connotation appropriate to the events. The word Shoah, originally a Biblical term meaning widespread "disaster", is the modern Hebrew equivalent.

## INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL

Established by the Allies to try Nazi criminals; popularly known as the Nuremberg trials.

## JACKSON, ROBERT

United States Supreme Court Justice commissioned to form the International Military Tribunal and to preside as head of the prosecution staff.

## LONDON AGREEMENT

Basis for the prosecution of war criminals.

## NAZI

Name for the National Socialist German Workers Party.

## NAZISM

The ideology of the National Socialist German Workers Party and the Party's system of rule from 1933 to 1945. Also a form of fascism. The ideology included: 1) anti-liberalism and anti-parliamentarianism; 2) anti-communism and anti-socialism; 3) the Führer principle which replaced parliament with a hierarchical, dictatorship based on the concepts of leader and follower, command and obedience; 4) nationalism; 5) racism and anti-Semitism; 6) imperialism and; 7) militarism.

## NUREMBERG LAWS

Two anti-Jewish statutes enacted September 1935 during the Nazi Party's national convention in Nuremberg. The first, the Reich Citizenship Law, deprived German Jews of their citizenship and all pertinent, related rights. The second, the Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honour, outlawed marriages of Jews and non-Jews, forbade Jews from employing German females of childbearing age, and prohibited Jews from displaying the German flag. Many additional regulations were attached to the two main statutes, which provided the basis for removing Jews from all spheres of German political, social, and economic life. The Nuremberg Laws carefully established definitions of Jewishness based on bloodlines. Thus, many Germans of mixed ancestry, called "Mischling," faced discrimination if they had a Jewish grandparent.

## NUREMBERG TRIALS

At the end of the war, on August 8, 1945, the Allies (France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom & the United States) established an International Military Tribunal to try leaders of the Nazi movement and the German state for crimes against peace, war crimes and crimes against humanity. The tribunal opened in Nuremberg, Germany in August, 1946 and closed October 1, 1946. Eight judges, two from each of the Allied countries tried 21 Nazi leaders. Three were found innocent, twelve were given death sentences, Göring committed suicide and the rest received sentences ranging from life to ten years.

A short time later, twelve individual trials were also held at Nuremberg, known as the "Subsequent Trials" to try groups of Nazis such as the "Nazi Doctors" and several SS organizations such as the Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing units).

## PROPAGANDA

A form of communication in the support of objectives designed to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes or behavior of its audience. Promotes biased information, derogatory ideas or practices and is transmitted in speeches, slogans, posters, newspapers, film etc.

## SA

(abbreviation: Sturmabteilung); the storm troops of the early Nazi Party; organized in 1921.

## SS

Abbreviation usually written with two lightning symbols for Schutzstaffel (Defence Protective Units). Originally organized as Hitler's personal bodyguard, the SS was transformed into a giant organization by Heinrich Himmler. Although various SS units were assigned to the battlefield, the organization is best known for carrying out the destruction of European Jewry.

## WANNSEE CONFERENCE

Meeting held on January 20, 1942 near Berlin to discuss and coordinate the "Final Solution." It was attended by many high-ranking Nazis, including Reinhard Heydrich and Adolf Eichmann.

## GLOSSARY (B)

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### *Allies*

The nations fighting Nazi Germany, Italy, and Japan during World War II; primarily the United States, Great Britain, Canada, and the Soviet Union.

### *Anti-Semitism*

Opposition or hatred of Jews. As a term, it came into wide-spread use in the 1870s. Subsequently, it has come to denote hatred of Jews, in all of its forms, throughout history.

### *Auschwitz*

A concentration camp established in 1940 at Oswiecim, Poland. In 1942, it became an extermination camp. It contained a labour camp, the death camp, Birkenau, and the slave labour camp, Buna-Monowitz. Up to 1.5 million Jewish men, women and children were murdered in this camp and 100,000 victims from other ethnic and cultural groups. Only 7,650 were found alive at liberation.

### *Axis*

The Axis powers originally included Nazi Germany, Italy, and Japan who signed a pact in Berlin on September 27, 1940. They were later joined by Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, and Slovakia.

### *Concentration Camps*

Immediately after assuming power on January 30, 1933, the Nazis established camps where they "concentrated" and imprisoned perceived enemies of the state. Enemies of Nazism included: actual and potential political opponents (Communists, Socialists, Monarchists), Jehovah's Witnesses, Gypsies, homosexuals and others deemed "anti-social." The general round-up of Jews did not begin until 1938. Before then, only Jews who fit the other categories were interned in the camps. The first three camps were: Dachau, Buchenwald, and Sachsenhausen.

### *Der Stürmer* ("The Attacker" or "The Stormtrooper")

An inflammatory, anti-Semitic German weekly, founded and edited by Julius Streicher, which was published in Nuremberg between 1923 and 1945.

### *Final Solution*

Nazi code name for the plan to destroy the Jews of Europe.

### *Göring, Hermann*

An early member of the Nazi party, Göring participated in Hitler's "Beer Hall Putsch" in Munich in 1923. After its failure, he went to Sweden, where he lived (for a time in a mental institution) until 1927. In 1928, he was elected to the *Reichstag* and became its president in 1932. When Hitler came into power in 1933, he made Göring Air Minister of Germany and Prime Minister of Prussia. He was responsible for the rearmament program and especially for the creation of the German Air Force. In 1939, Hitler designated him his successor. During World War II, he was virtual dictator of the German economy and was responsible for the total air war waged by Germany. Convicted at Nuremberg in 1946, Göring committed suicide by taking poison just two hours before his scheduled execution.

### *Hess, Rudolf*

Deputy and close associate of Hitler from the earliest days of the Nazi movement. On May 10, 1941, he flew alone from Augsburg and parachuted, landing in Scotland where he was promptly arrested. The purpose of his flight has never become clear. He probably wanted to persuade the British to make peace with Hitler as soon as he attacked the Soviet Union. Hitler promptly declared him insane. Hess was tried at Nuremberg, found guilty, and sentenced to life imprisonment. He was the only prisoner in Spandau Prison until he apparently committed suicide in 1987.

**Himmler, Heinrich**  
Head of the SS and secret police.

**Hitler, Adolf**

*Führer und Reichskanzler* (Leader and Reich Chancellor). Although born in Austria, he settled in Germany in 1913. At the outbreak of World War I, Hitler enlisted in the Bavarian Army, became a corporal and received the Iron Cross First Class for bravery. Returning to Munich after the war, he joined the newly formed German Workers Party which was soon reorganized, under his leadership, as the National Socialist German Party (NSDAP). In November 1923, he unsuccessfully attempted to forcibly bring Germany under nationalist control. When his coup, known as the "Beer-Hall Putsch," failed, Hitler was arrested and sentenced to 5 years in prison. It was during this time that he wrote *Mein Kampf*. Serving only 9 months of sentence, Hitler quickly reentered German politics and soon outpolled his political rivals in national elections. In January 1933, Hindenburg appointed Hitler chancellor of a coalition cabinet. Hitler, who took office on January 30, 1933, immediately set up a dictatorship. In 1934, the chancellorship and presidency were united in the person of the *Führer*. Soon, all other parties were outlawed and opposition was brutally suppressed. By 1938, Hitler implemented his dream of a "Greater Germany," first annexing Austria; then (with the acquiescence of the Western democracies), the Sudetenland (A Czech province with ethnic German concentration); and, finally, Czechoslovakia itself. On September 1, 1939, Hitler's armies invaded Poland. By this time the Western democracies realized that no agreement with Hitler could be honoured and World War II had begun. Although initially victorious on all fronts, Hitler's armies began suffering setbacks shortly after the United States joined the war in December 1941. Although the war was obviously lost by early 1945, Hitler insisted that Germany fight to the death. On April 30, 1945, Hitler committed suicide rather than be captured alive.

**Holocaust**

The destruction of some 6 million Jews by the Nazis and their followers in Europe between the years 1933-1945. Other individuals and groups were persecuted and suffered grievously during this period, but only the Jews were marked for complete and utter annihilation. The term "Holocaust" — meaning "a completely burned sacrifice" — has a sacrificial connotation appropriate to the events. The word *Shoah*, originally a Biblical term meaning widespread disaster, is the modern Hebrew equivalent.

**International Military Tribunal**

Established by the Allies to try Nazi criminals: Popularly known as the Nuremberg Trials.

**Jackson, Robert**

United States Supreme Court Justice commissioned to form the International Military Tribunal and to preside as head of the prosecution staff.

**London Agreement**

Basis for the prosecution of war criminals.

**Nazi**

Name for the National Socialist German Workers Party.

**Nazism**

The ideology of the National Socialist German Workers Party and the party's system of rule from 1933 to 1945. Also a form of fascism. The ideology included: 1) anti-liberalism and anti-parliamentarianism; 2) anti-communism and anti-socialism; 3) the *Führer* principle which replaced parliament with a hierarchical, dictatorship based on the concepts of leader and follower, command and obedience; 4) nationalism; 5) racism and anti-Semitism; 6) imperialism and; 7) militarism.

### **Nuremberg Laws**

Two anti-Jewish statutes enacted September 1935 during the Nazi party's national convention in (Nürnberg) Nuremberg, Germany. The first, the Reich Citizenship Law, deprived German Jews of their citizenship and all pertinent, related rights. The second, the Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honour, outlawed marriages of Jews and non-Jews, forbade Jews from employing German females of childbearing age, and prohibited Jews from displaying the German flag. Many additional regulations were attached to the two main statutes, which provided the basis for removing Jews from all spheres of German political, social, and economic life. The Nuremberg Laws carefully established definitions of Jewishness based on bloodlines. Thus, many Germans of mixed ancestry, called "*Mischling*," faced antisemitic discrimination if they had a Jewish grandparent.

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At the end of the war, on August 8, 1945, the Allies (France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom & the United States) established an International Military Tribunal to try leaders of the Nazi movement and the German state for crimes against peace, war crimes and crimes against humanity. The tribunal opened in Nuremberg, Germany in August, 1946 and closed October 1, 1946. Eight judges, two from each of the Allied countries tried 22 Nazi leaders. Three were found innocent, twelve were given death sentences, Göring committed suicide and the rest received sentences ranging from life to ten years.

A short time later, twelve individual trials were also held at Nuremberg, known as the "Subsequent Trials" to try groups of Nazis such as the "Nazi Doctors" and several SS organizations such as the *Einsatzgruppen* (Mobile Killing Units).

### **Propaganda**

An organized scheme for the propagation or dissemination of a doctrine or practice - often derogatory ideas. Propaganda is commonly thought of as biased information.

### **SA**

(abbreviation: *Sturmabteilung*); the storm troops of the early Nazi party; organized in 1921.

### **SS**

Abbreviation usually written with two lightning symbols for *Schutzstaffel* (Defence Protective Units). Originally organized as Hitler's personal bodyguard, the SS was transformed into a giant organization by Heinrich Himmler. Although various SS units were assigned to the battlefield, the organization is best known for carrying out the destruction of European Jewry.

### **Wannsee Conference (January 20, 1942)**

Lake near Berlin where the Wannsee Conference was held to discuss and coordinate the "Final Solution." It was attended by many high-ranking Nazis, including Reinhard Heydrich and Adolf Eichmann.

## TIMELINE OF THE HOLOCAUST 1933-1945

### 1933

*January 30*

Adolf Hitler appointed Chancellor of Germany.

*March 20*

Dachau concentration camp opens.

*April 1*

Boycott of Jewish shops and businesses.

*April 7*

Laws for Re-establishment of the Civil Service barred Jews from holding civil service, university and state positions.

*April 26*

Gestapo established.

*May 10*

Public burnings of books written by Jews, political opponents of the Nazis and others.

*July 14*

Law permitting the forced sterilization of Gypsies, the mentally and physically disabled, African-Germans and others considered "unfit." East European Jewish immigrants stripped of German citizenship.

### 1934

*August 2*

Hitler proclaims himself *Fuhrer und Reichskanzler* (Leader and Reich Chancellor). Armed forces must now swear allegiance to him.

*Oct.-Nov.*

First major wave of arrests of homosexuals.

### 1935

*March 17*

Hitler's army invades the Rhineland.

*April*

Jehovah's Witnesses banned from all civil service jobs and are arrested.

*September 15*

"Nuremberg Laws," anti-Jewish racial laws enacted; Jews lose the right to German citizenship and to marry Aryans.

### 1936

*Summer*

Olympic Games take place in Berlin. Anti-Jewish signs are temporarily removed.

*July 12*

First German Gypsies are arrested and deported to Dachau concentration camp.

*October 25*

Mussolini and Hitler form Rome-Berlin Axis.

1938

*March 13*

Austria is peacefully annexed (*Anschluss*) by Germany. All anti-Semitic decrees immediately applied in Austria.

*July 6-15*

Representatives from thirty-two countries meet at the Evian Conference in France. Most countries refuse to let in more Jewish refugees.

*November 9-10*

Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass): anti-Jewish pogrom in Germany and Austria; synagogues destroyed; Jewish homes and shops looted; nearly 30,000 Jewish men sent to concentration camps.

*November 12*

Decree forcing all Jews to transfer retail businesses into Aryan hands.

*November 15*

All Jewish pupils expelled from German schools.

*December 2-3*

All Gypsies are required to register with the police.

1939

*March 15*

Germans invade Czechoslovakia.

*August 23*

Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact signed: non-aggression pact between Soviet Union and Germany.

*June 1939*

Cuba, the United States and Canada refuse to admit Jewish refugees aboard the S.S. *St. Louis*, which is forced to return to Europe.

*September 1*

Germany invades Poland; World War II begins.

*September 10*

Canada declares war on Germany.

*October*

Hitler extends power of doctors to kill institutionalized mentally and physically disabled people in the "euthanasia" program.

*October 12*

Germany begins deportation of Austrian and Czech Jews to Poland.

*October 28*

First Polish ghetto established in Piotrków.

*November 23*

Jews in German-occupied Poland forced to wear an arm band or yellow star.

1940

*Spring*

Germany invades Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Luxembourg, Holland and France.

*May 7*

Lodz Ghetto sealed.

*May 20*

Auschwitz concentration camp established at Oswiecim, Poland.

*August 8*

Battle of Britain begins.

*September 27*

Italy, Germany and Japan form an alliance called the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis.

*October*

Warsaw Ghetto established; ultimately contains 500,000 people.

1941

*March 22*

Gypsy and African-German children are expelled from schools in the Reich.

*March 24*

Germany invades North Africa.

*April 6*

Germany invades Yugoslavia and Greece.

*June 22*

Germany invades the Soviet Union. The *Einsatzgruppen*, mobile killing squads, begin mass murders of Jews, Gypsies and Communist leaders.

*July 31*

Heydrich appointed by Göring to implement the "Final Solution."

*September 23*

Soviet prisoners of war and Polish prisoners are killed in Nazi test of gas chambers in Auschwitz.

*Sept 28-29*

Approximately 34,000 Jews are murdered by mobile killing squads, at Babi Yar near Kiev, Ukraine.

*October*

Establishment of Auschwitz II (Birkenau) for the extermination of Jews; Gypsies, Poles, Russians and others.

*December 7*

Japan attacks Pearl Harbour.

*December 8*

Gassing begins at Chelmno extermination camp in Poland.

*December 11*

United States declares war on Japan and Germany.

1942

*January 20*

Wannsee conference in Berlin; fifteen Nazi leaders meet to discuss "the Final Solution", the plan to exterminate the Jews of Europe.

*1942*

Nazi extermination camps at Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka, Sobibor, Belzec and Majdanek-Lublin begin the mass murder of Jews in gas chamber.

*June*

Jewish partisan units established in the forests of Byelorussia and the Baltic States.

*June 1*

Jews in France and Holland are required to wear identifying stars.

1943

*January*

German 6th Army surrenders at Stalingrad.

*April 19 - May 16*

Warsaw Ghetto uprising; Jewish armed resistance to being deported to extermination camps.

*June*

Himmler orders the liquidation of all ghettos in Poland and the Soviet Union.

*Summer*

Armed resistance by Jews in Treblinka concentration camp, Bedzin, Bialystok, Czestochowa, Lvov and Tarnów ghettos.

*October 14*

Armed revolt in Sobibor extermination camp.

*Oct-Nov*

Rescue of Danish Jewry to Sweden.

1944

*March 19*

Germany occupies Hungary; Eichmann put in charge of plan to eliminate Hungarian Jewry.

*May 15 - July 9*

Over 430,000 Hungarian Jews are deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where most of them are gassed.

*June 6*

D-Day: Allied Invasion at Normandy, France.

*July 20*

Group of German officers fail in their attempt to assassinate Hitler.

*July 24*

Russians arrive at Majdanek concentration camp.

*August 2*

Nazis destroy the Gypsy camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau; approximately 3,000 Gypsies are gassed.

*October 7*

Prisoner revolt at Auschwitz-Birkenau and blow up one crematorium.



1945

*January 17*

Nazis evacuate Auschwitz and force prisoners on "death marches" toward Germany.

*January 27*

Soviet troops enter Auschwitz-Birkenau.

*April*

U.S. troops arrive at Buchenwald and Dachau concentration camps.

*April 30*

Hitler commits suicide in his bunker in Berlin.

*May 5*

U.S. troops arrive at Mauthausen concentration camp.

*May 8*

V-E Day: Germany surrenders; the war ends in Europe.

*August 6*

The U.S. bombs Hiroshima, Japan.

*August 9*

The U.S. bombs Nagasaki, Japan.

*September 2*

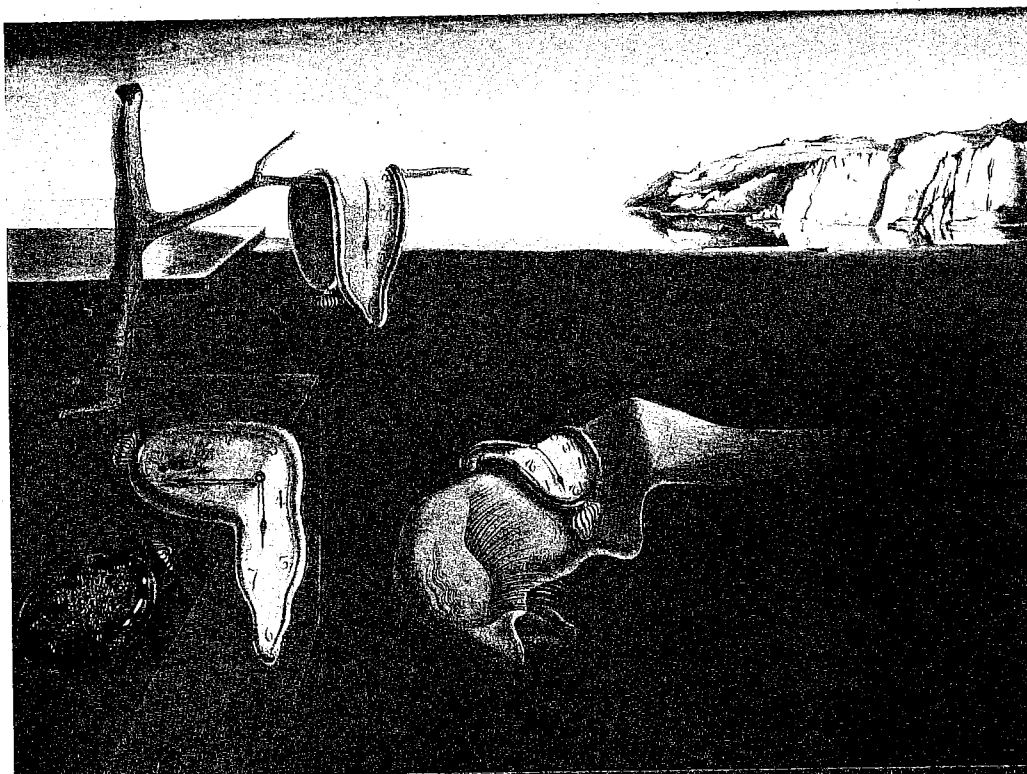
V-J Day: Japan surrenders; end of World War II.

*November 1945 - October 1946*

International Military War Crimes Tribunal held at Nuremberg, Germany.

## CHAPTER THREE

# Change and Conflict Between the Wars: 1919-1939



Salvador Dalí (1904-1989) was one of the most famous members of the Surrealist group of painters. Surrealism was a revolutionary art form that stressed the bizarre and the irrational. This is perhaps Dalí's most recognized work, *The Persistence of Memory*. Dalí was later rejected by the surrealists for his support of the fascist General Franco of Spain. What is suggested in this painting? Can you find the self-portrait that Dalí included in this work?

*"This is not peace. It is an armistice for twenty years."*

— Marshal Ferdinand Foch (1851-1929),  
French Commander of the Allied Armies, speaking on  
28 June 1919, the day the Treaty of Versailles was signed

*"Whoever can conquer the street will one day conquer the state, for every form of power politics and any dictatorially-run state has its roots in the street."*

— Joseph Goebbels (1897-1945),  
Hitler's minister of propaganda