

Crisis of Democracy in the West (1919–1939)



SECTION 1

THE WESTERN DEMOCRACIES

TEXT SUMMARY

In 1919, Britain, France, and the United States were major world powers, but they and other nations faced serious problems. Soldiers returning from World War I needed jobs. Nations had war debts to pay and cities to rebuild.

Nations had seen the horrors of war. Now they looked for ways to keep peace. (See chart below.) During the 1920s, the League of Nations worked hard to resolve conflicts. In 1925, treaties signed in Locarno, Switzerland, settled German borders. The Kellogg-Briand Pact, signed in 1928, tried to limit arms. Sadly, these efforts could not protect the peace.

The United States was the leading economic power of the 1920s. When things

went wrong there, the whole world was affected. In 1929, many Americans lost money in the stock market crash. Banks failed. Businesses closed. As a result, foreign trade almost stopped. The United States demanded that nations repay loans. The Great Depression of the 1930s began.

Worldwide depression left millions out of work. Across Europe, people lost faith in their governments. In France and Britain, democracy survived. In other nations, hungry, hopeless people turned to leaders who demanded absolute power.

THE BIG IDEA

Following World War I, the leading democratic powers faced difficult political and economic challenges both at home and abroad.

GRAPHIC SUMMARY: Working Toward Peace

	LEAGUE OF NATIONS	LOCARNO TREATIES	KELLOGG-BRIAND PACT
When?	1920	1925	1928
Where?	• Geneva, Switzerland	• Locarno, Switzerland	• Paris, France
Who?	• Organization of more than 40 nations	• Signed by seven European nations	• Signed by most nations of the world
What?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aimed to settle conflicts without violence • Aimed to protect smaller nations against attack by stronger ones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settled German borders with France, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, and Poland • Became symbol of era of peace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlawed war • Agreed to solve problems by peaceful means • Promised to limit size of many navies
Why Failed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United States did not join • No power to stop attacks or prevent war 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not permanently end German attacks beyond its borders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No agreements about limiting the size of armies • No means to enforce

After the horrors of World War I, nations wanted a lasting peace.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why did the Great Depression make some people want a change in government?

2. Chart Skills Give two reasons why the League of Nations failed.

A CULTURE IN CONFLICT

TEXT SUMMARY

THE BIG IDEA

Western culture experienced great changes in the years following World War I.

After World War I, new ideas and discoveries created change. Scientists of the early 1900s questioned past ideas. Marie Curie found that some atoms change and give off energy. Albert Einstein presented surprising **theories**, or ideas, about measuring time and space. Sigmund Freud studied dreams to understand the human mind.

Post-war writers, artists, and musicians developed new styles. Many writers expressed a loss of hope in western civilization. Writers Virginia Woolf and James Joyce described the thoughts of their characters in a style called **stream of consciousness**. In this technique, a writer explores a character's thoughts without

providing any logic or order. Many painters stopped trying to make art look like real life. Their designs used color and shape in unusual ways. African American musicians introduced jazz. The new music mixed western sounds with African rhythms.

Many young people of the 1920s liked the changes. In America, bold young women cut their hair short and wore short skirts. They called themselves **flappers**. Their styles soon spread to Europe.

Postwar years brought the right to vote to women in many western countries. Women began careers that had once been for men only. Some even held public office. Many fields, however, remained closed to women, and women doing the same work as men earned much less.

GRAPHIC SUMMARY: *Revolution in Art, Early 1900s*

ARTIST	COUNTRY	STYLE
Henri Matisse (1869–1954)	France	Paintings unlike real life
Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)	Spain	Objects shown in new shapes and angles
Paul Klee (1879–1940)	Switzerland	Abstract paintings
Vasily Kandinsky (1866–1944)	Russia	Abstract paintings
Salvador Dali (1904–1989)	Spain	Dream-like paintings

Scientists, writers, artists, and musicians of the early 1900s experimented with new, sometimes startling, ideas.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Give two examples that show how the post-World War I era was a time of change.
2. **Chart Skills** How did Pablo Picasso's paintings offer a new view of reality?

TEXT SUMMARY

Italy was a troubled nation after World War I. The Paris Peace Treaties gave away lands the Italians had expected to control. Many war veterans could not find jobs. Trade was slow. Taxes were high. Workers held strikes. Officials argued among themselves, and the government seemed powerless. People wanted change.

Benito Mussolini took advantage of the unrest. In 1919, he gathered war veterans and other unhappy Italians. He called his group the Fascist party. Mussolini pledged to end unemployment. He promised to gain more lands and make the nation strong. The Fascists, he declared, would outlaw rebellion among workers and stamp out all threats of communism.

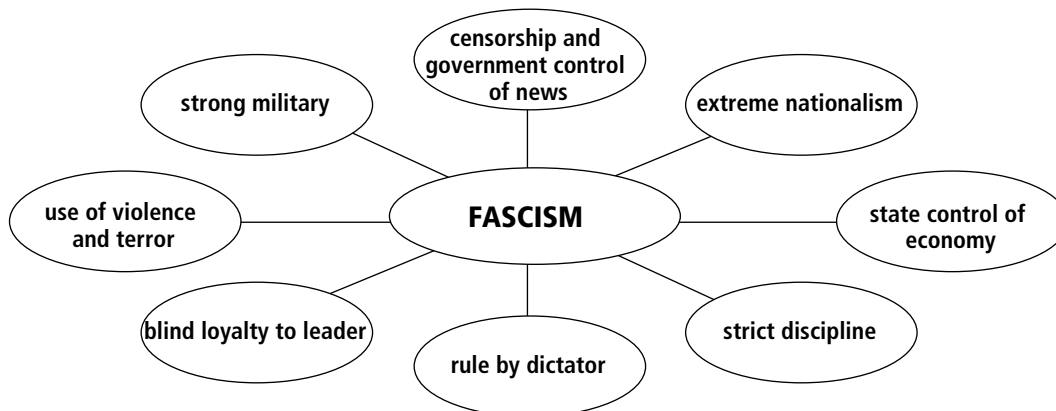
By 1925, the Fascists had used force and terror to gain control. They ended free elections, free speech, and the free press. They killed or jailed those who were against them. Desperate Italians accepted violence in exchange for order. They learned to put the goals of the state above individual rights.

Mussolini had promised change, and life did change in Italy. The economy and industry grew under state control. However, wages for workers fell. Men were expected to fight for glory. Women were expected to be mothers. Boys learned to be soldiers, ready to help Italy gain power.

THE BIG IDEA

Angered by political and economic problems, many Italians turned to Benito Mussolini and fascism for solutions.

GRAPHIC SUMMARY: *The Fascist State*



Fascism promised a strong government, but it took away freedoms.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why was Mussolini able to take control of Italy? Give two reasons.

2. **Diagram Skills** Name three characteristics of fascism.

HITLER AND THE RISE OF NAZI GERMANY

TEXT SUMMARY

At the end of World War I, the Kaiser stepped down, and Germany was in chaos. Moreover, the new government, called the Weimar Republic, had troubles. It took the blame for the terms of the Versailles peace

treaty that left Germany weak. Political parties fought with one another. In 1923, inflation raised prices. When the Great Depression hit, Germans demanded a leader who could provide jobs and build pride.

That leader was Adolf Hitler. In 1921, the ex-soldier headed the National Socialist German Workers, or Nazi, party. Hitler said that Germans were a superior race who should build a new empire. The Nazis won many

followers. In 1933, Hitler was appointed chancellor of Germany.

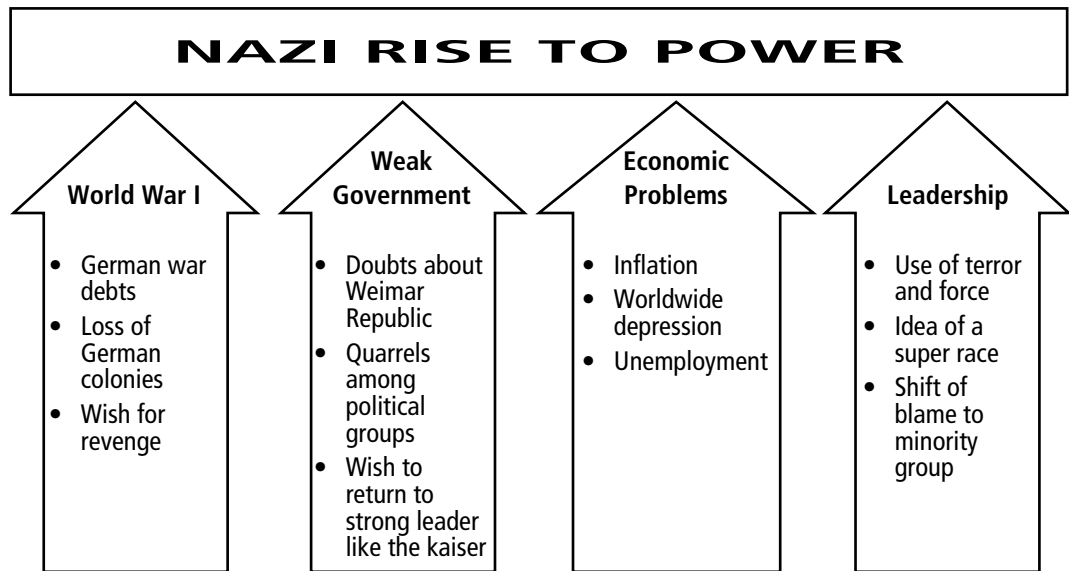
Like Mussolini, Hitler was a dictator. He built a one-party state, ended civil rights, and silenced enemies with force. Hitler put businesses under government control and raised the standard of living. Most Germans accepted the loss of freedoms. They did not question Nazi racism. They let Hitler blame troubles on the Jews. No one stopped his military buildup, an act outlawed by the Versailles treaty.

Poverty and civil conflicts let fascism take hold in new nations of Eastern Europe. As ethnic and religious groups fought for control, Fascist rulers promised to bring order. They took power in most Eastern European countries.

THE BIG IDEA

Under Adolf Hitler, the Nazi government used terror, repression, and one-party rule to establish a totalitarian state.

GRAPHIC SUMMARY: Rise of the Nazis



By 1933, the Nazis had gained complete control of Germany.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How was Hitler similar to the Italian leader Mussolini?

2. **Diagram Skills** Describe two factors that led to the rise of the Nazis.