

# **Chapter 21**

## **The Rise of Totalitarianism and the Crisis of Democracy in the West (1918-1939)**

After **World War I** (world conflict from 1914-1918 that included all of the world's major nations), western nations worked to restore prosperity and ensure peace. At the same time, political and economic turmoil in the 1920s and 1930s challenged democratic traditions and led to the rise of dictators.

## **Section 1- The Western Democracies**

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.

## Section 1- The Western Democracies

Nations had seen the horrors of war. Now they looked for ways to keep peace. During the 1920s, the **League of Nations** (group of over 40 countries that hoped to settle problems between countries without war) 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 the amount of weapons that countries could have. Sadly, these efforts could not protect the peace.

## Section 1- The Western Democracies

The United States was the leading economic power of the 1920s. America boomed during the “**Roaring Twenties**” (right after World War I, the time during the 1920s when America’s economy and amount of jobs grew a lot) while the rest of the world struggled to get back on its feet after the war.

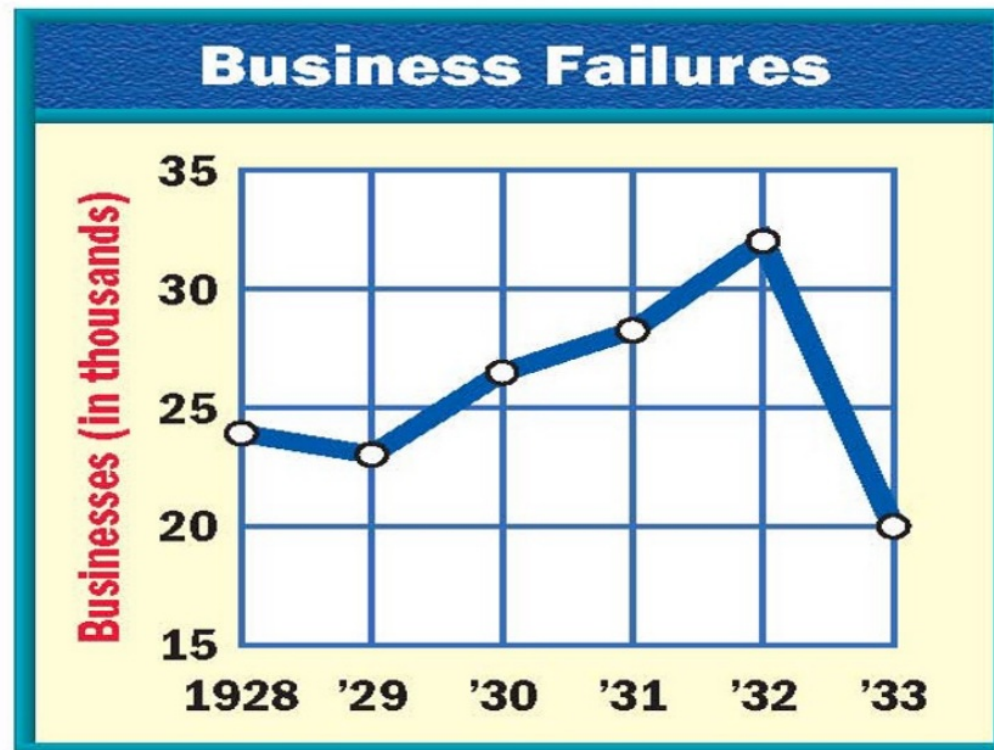
## Section 1- The Western Democracies

When things began to go wrong in America, the whole world was affected. In 1929, many Americans lost money in the **stock market crash** (when America's confidence in its economic future decreased a lot and the value of companies decreased because people sold their stock many companies) because of **easy credit** (when people get loans from banks that most people can't afford to pay back) and the overproduction of goods. The U.S. economy plummeted and banks failed. Businesses closed.

## **Section 1- The Western Democracies**

America's economy became so bad that the time was called the **Great Depression** (1929-1939). As a result, foreign trade almost stopped. The United States demanded that nations repay loans. The worldwide depression of the 1930s created financial turmoil and widespread suffering throughout the industrialized world.

# Depression Indicators





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## **Section 1- The Western Democracies**

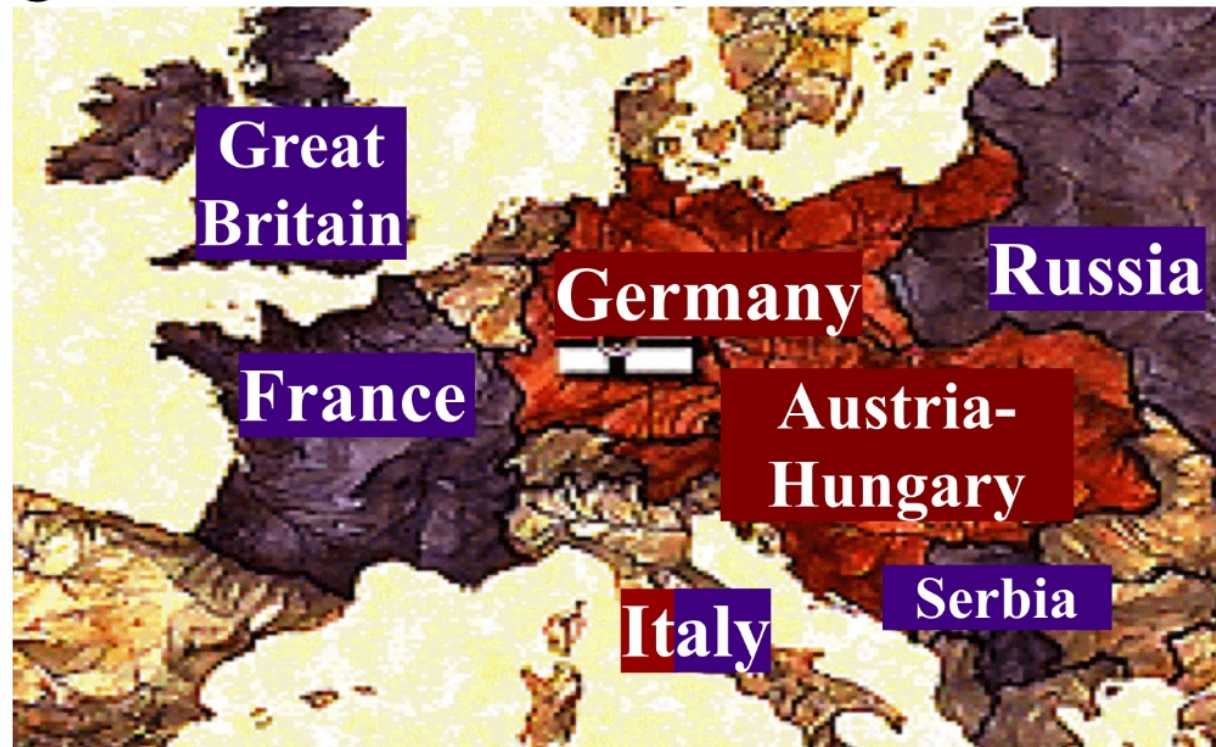
Worldwide depression left millions out of work. Across Europe, people lost faith in their governments. Continued money problems made many people in democratic countries think that maybe democracy wasn't the best form of government. The fear of Socialism and Communism grew. In France and Britain, democracy survived. In other nations, hungry, hopeless people turned to leaders who demanded absolute power.

## **Section 3- Benito Mussolini, Facism, and Italy**

**Italy** (peninsula country southeast of France) was a troubled nation after World War I. The Versailles Peace Treaty gave away land 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.

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## Section 3- Benito Mussolini, Facism, and Italy

**Benito Mussolini** (Italian dictator from 1924-1944) took advantage of the unrest.



**Adolf  
Hitler**

**Benito  
Mussolini**

## Section 3- Benito Mussolini, Facism, and Italy

In 1919, he gathered war veterans and other unhappy Italians. He called his group the **Fascists** (political party that believes in extreme nationalism and extreme militarism), which was based on socialism (the idea that the government should own everything for the good of everyone; no individual ownership). Mussolini pledged to end unemployment. He promised to gain more land and make the nation strong. The Fascists, he declared, would outlaw rebellion among workers and stamp out all threats of communism.



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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.

## **Section 4- Adolf Hitler and the Rise of Nazi Germany**

At the end of World War I, the Kaiser William II stepped down, and **Germany** (country in central Europe that lost World War I and wanted revenge) was in chaos. Moreover, the new democratic 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.



## Section 4- Adolf Hitler and the Rise of Nazi Germany

That leader was **Adolf Hitler** (leader of the Nazi Party in Germany and dictator from 1933-1945). Hitler rose to power by appealing to extreme **nationalism** (to love your country; sometimes to where what you think is best for your country is ok even if it is bad for others), **anti-Semitism** (those who against people who are Jewish), **anti- communism** (those who are against communism), and resentment of the Treaty of Versailles.



## Section 4- Adolf Hitler and the Rise of Nazi Germany

In 1921, the ex-soldier headed the **National Socialist German Workers Party**, or **Nazi Party** (political party in Germany that believed in extreme nationalism and extreme militarism). 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** (Prime Minister) of Germany and turned the German state into a **totalitarian** (complete and total) Nazi dictatorship. He called his new empire the **Third Reich** (an empire; the First Reich was the Holy Roman Empire from 962-1806 and the Second Reich was Germany under Bismarck and William I and II from 1871-1918).



## **Section 4- Adolf Hitler and the Rise of Nazi Germany**

Like Mussolini, Hitler was a **dictator** (a leader of a country who has absolute power in the country). 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.

## **Section 4- Adolf Hitler and the Rise of Nazi Germany**

Three systems of government, democracy, communism, and fascism, competed for influence in postwar Europe.

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In the **Pacific Ocean** (largest ocean on Earth; between America and Asia), **Japan** (island nation in the western Pacific Ocean east of China) continued to be imperialistic in search of **natural resources** (stuff made by mother nature that is necessary for a country to have for it to have industry and be a strong country, like metal, oil, wood, and rubber).

