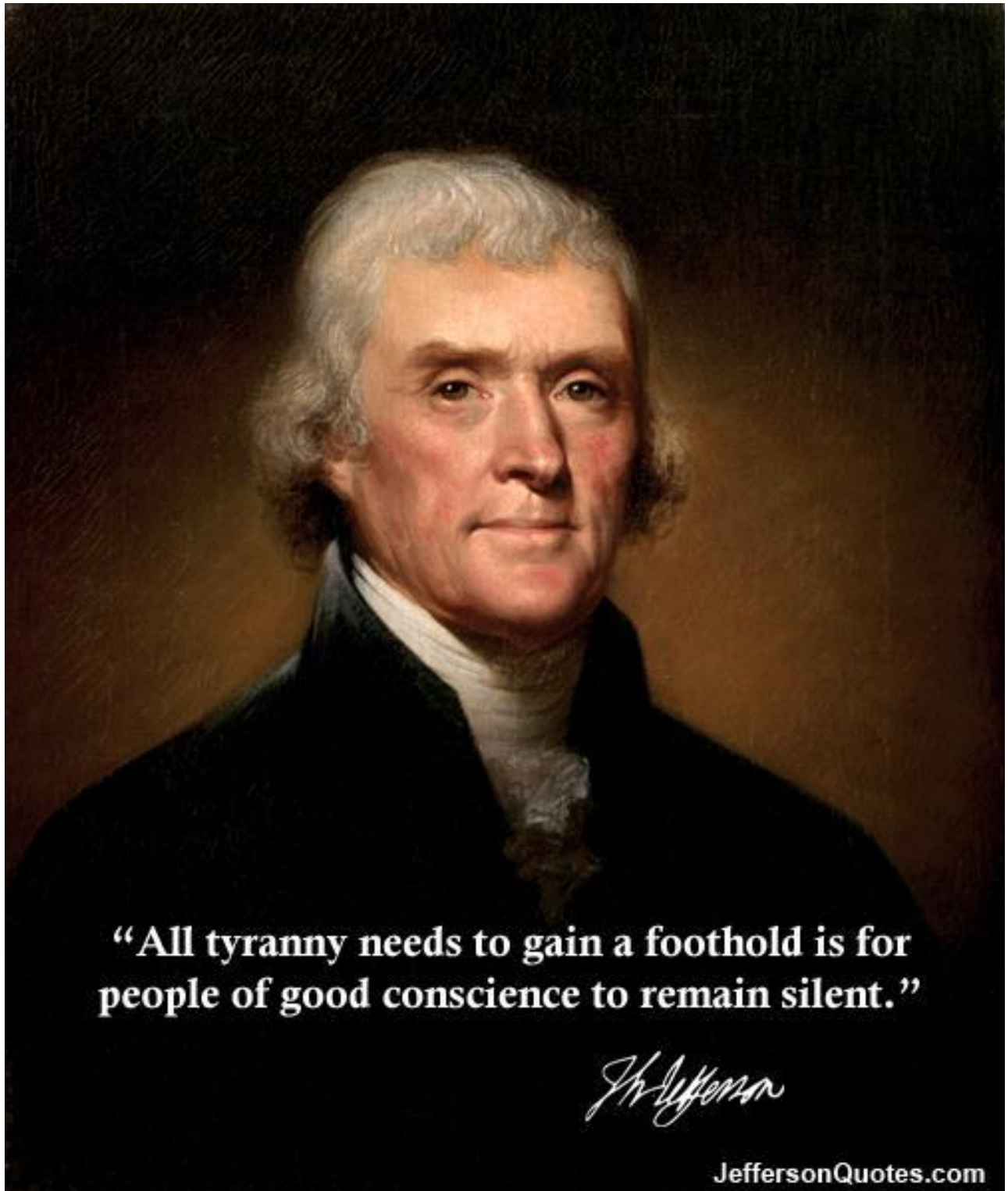


The Rise of Totalitarian Governments

Enduring Understanding: The influence of both world wars and the worldwide Great Depression are still evident. To understand the effects these events had on the modern world you will compare the ideologies of socialism, communism, fascism, Nazism, and their influence on the rise of totalitarian governments after World War I in Italy, Germany, Japan, and the Soviet Union as a response to the worldwide depression.



“All tyranny needs to gain a foothold is for people of good conscience to remain silent.”

Thomas Jefferson

JeffersonQuotes.com

The problems that existed in the Soviet Union, Italy, Germany, and Japan after World War I led to the establishment of **totalitarian governments**, or government systems in which rulers have total control over the way citizens think and live.

Ideologies in the Soviet Union

Socialism and **communism** were the main ideologies of the **Soviet Union**. The Soviet Union, the country formerly known as Russia, became a communist nation after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. The focus of **communism** was to empower the **proletariat**, or working class, and to decrease the wealth and power of industrial capitalists. To accomplish this, industry, production, and business had to be taken out of the hands of a few competing individuals and controlled by society as a whole represented by the government. Communism called for the overthrow of democratic and capitalist societies by the working class. Competition and private property were abolished so wealth could be distributed



equally to all citizens. Land was arranged in communes shared by citizens. This practice of owning property as a group was called **collectivization**. This became the focus of society in the Soviet Union.



Soviet Hammer and Sickle

Communism also called for the end to organized religion and called for the establishment of communal education. The government was in charge of the collective ownership of businesses and property and the equal distribution of wealth.

Socialism is based on the economic principles of communism and not on the ideas of violent revolution. The primary focus of socialists is creating an economic system where the working classes could share in the wealth generated by industry and society as a whole, represented by the government, and would therefore collectively own businesses and the means of production.

Joseph Stalin used these ideologies to strengthen his totalitarian rule. Stalin became the leader of the Soviet Union in 1928 after having been the General Secretary of the Communist Party. After Vladimir Lenin's death Stalin worked hard to win support from his fellow Communist Party members. He exiled Leon Trotsky, his biggest political rival, in 1929. He created a totalitarian state and made the country an industrial power. He censored all sources of information and used propaganda to maintain his power. He used his secret police to monitor everything said and written.



Joseph Stalin

During the **Great Purge**, Stalin terrorized and eliminated members of his Communist Party and anyone else whom he thought was a threat to his power. Stalin persecuted religious institutions, primarily the Russian Orthodox Church and had religious leaders killed, forcing religious faith and practice to go underground.

As a totalitarian leader, Stalin implemented a **command economy**, which is when the economy is controlled by the government, ordering several **five-year plans**. These five-year plans focused on heavy industrialization and increased production dramatically. Unfortunately, there were shortages of light, consumer goods, such as food and clothing, which hurt the people of the Soviet Union. Stalin continued the policy of collectivization by having the government confiscate all farms and combined

them into huge government-controlled farms to increase food production. Agricultural production increased by the late 1930s, but many **Kulaks**, wealthy peasants, who protested collectivization were killed. Stalin improved the economy and education in the Soviet Union; however the people had no political rights.

Section Review

1. What is a totalitarian government?
2. What is the main focus of communism?
3. What must happen for communism to be successful?
4. What two things are abolished under communism?
5. What is collectivization?
6. What social changes occurred under communist rule?
7. What is the primary focus of socialists?
8. Who was Joseph Stalin?
9. How did Stalin maintain power?
10. What happened during the Great Purge?
11. How was Stalin able to create an industrial-based economy in Soviet Union?
12. Why did the Soviet people suffer under Five Year Plans?
13. Who were the kulaks and what happened to them?

Ideologies in Italy



Fascism became popular in Italy and Germany. People blamed democratic governments for the problems that existed after World War I and during the Great Depression. They were willing to try radical, political, and social experiments in the governing of their countries. **Fascism** was the political movement that emphasized an extreme form of nationalism and power to the state. The name comes from a Roman symbol of power, a bundle of rods tied with an axe called **a fasces**. Fascist governments were led by authoritarian leaders who denied people their individual rights and liberties.

The leaders of **fascist governments** used various methods to create unity and spirit and to maintain their power. Such methods included special salutes, military steps and emblems; holding rallies and military parades for the public; and instituting elite military groups that utilized absolute power and terror tactics.

Italy was dissatisfied with the outcome of World War I and the Treaty of Versailles because the country was not rewarded a large amount of land. Italy's democratic government was blamed for the inflation, unemployment, and economic problems that existed in the country after the war.

Benito Mussolini was able to capitalize on the political and economic unrest in the country and gain power by founding the Fascist Party in 1919. He organized a group of supporters called the **Black Shirts** who started to attack communists and socialists. Mussolini promised to strengthen the economy and was soon able to gain the support of the middle class and industrialists by ending a general strike that paralyzed the country. He seized power in 1922 when his fellow Fascists marched to Rome and told King Emmanuel to make Mussolini the leader of the government. Mussolini was given the title of **Il Duce** (The Leader). He set up a fascist dictatorship and used secret police and censorship to maintain his power. Once his power was established, Mussolini was able to begin increasing the size of the military. To prove Italy intended to build an empire and to show dissatisfaction with the Treaty of Versailles, Mussolini invaded Ethiopia with his new army in 1935 and again in 1937.



Benito Mussolini

Section Review

14. Who did the people of Germany and Italy blame for their struggles after World War I?
15. What is fascism?
16. How did the leaders of Fascist governments create unity and spirit?
17. Why were the people of Italy so upset with the Treaty of Versailles?
18. Why was it so easy for Benito Mussolini to take control of Italy?
19. Who were Mussolini's special supporters and where did they attack first?
20. How did Mussolini maintain power?

Ideologies in Germany



Adolf Hitler

Nazism, which began in Germany, is an even more extreme version of Fascism. Germany was devastated by World War I and furious with the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, especially the "War Guilt Clause." The aftermath of the war, the high costs of war reparations (payments for war damages), and the loss of valuable territory hastened the Great Depression in Germany. This led to political dissatisfaction and the perfect opportunity for an authoritarian leader to step in by promising to restore Germany to its former glory. **Adolf Hitler** proved to be that leader. He created a fascist group called the **National Social German Workers Party**, or the **Nazi Party**.

Like the Italian fascists, the Nazis used mass rallies and special salutes to create unity. Hitler's special troops were the **Brown Shirts** and the **swastika** was their symbol. Hitler and his group attempted to overthrow the Weimar Republic in 1923, Hitler failed and was imprisoned. While in prison, he wrote **Mein Kampf**, a book in which he discussed his goals for Germany. He claimed **Aryans**, or pure Germans, were the "master race" and blamed others for Germany's woes. In his book he discussed his hatred for the Hebrew people (Jews), and his desires to regain lost German lands and unite all German speaking people.



Swastika

The deepening of the Great Depression strengthened support for Hitler and the Nazi Party, which became the largest political party in Germany in 1932. Consequently, President Paul von Hindenburg appointed Hitler chancellor. Hitler gained control of the new government and created a totalitarian state. He established a secret police called the **Gestapo**, outlawed all other political parties, and imprisoned political opponents. He utilized censorship and propaganda, banned unions, and controlled the economy. Known as the **Fuhrer**, or leader, Hitler and his government focused on building factories and infrastructure. He ignored the stipulations of the Treaty of Versailles by militarizing Germany. With this strengthened military, Hitler defied the Treaty of Versailles and moved troops into the Rhineland in 1936, took over Austria in 1938, took the Sudetenland in 1938, and finally claimed all of Czechoslovakia in 1939.

Section Review

21. What was Hitler's political party?
22. What part of the Treaty of Versailles did the Germans find unacceptable?
23. Describe the War Guilt Clause?
24. How did the Nazi party gain support?
25. What beliefs did Hitler outline in *Mein Kampf*?
26. What kind of government did Hitler set up in Germany and how did he maintain control?
27. In what ways did Hitler defy the Treaty of Versailles?

Ideologies in Japan



When the Great Depression occurred, Japan was a newly industrialized country still heavily dependent on its export earnings to finance its imports of essential raw materials and fuel. Japan's luxury export sales plummeted during the Great Depression. One of the biggest reasons was the introduction of artificial silk products. This caused distrust of the West and its markets. Bad harvests in several regions further damaged the Japanese economy. Military leaders suggested expansionism in East Asia as a solution to the shortage of resources and farmland. They

wanted to address the economic trade problems while building on the nationalist feelings that had made the country a world power just prior to the turn of the century.



Hideki Tojo

Military leaders like **Hideki Tojo** took control of the main operations of the government, leaving **Emperor Hirohito** as mainly a **figurehead**, or one who rules in name only. The rise of a totalitarian state in Japan therefore took the form of military control. Under this military leadership, the Japanese acted on the policy of expansionism beginning in 1931 with the invasion of Manchuria. The League of Nations could only voice its disapproval of the invasion, but had no power to enforce it. The Japanese

responded by withdrawing from the League in 1933. Japan attacked China in 1937, which caused communist and noncommunist forces in China to unite to fight the foreigners.

Section Review

- 28. In what ways did the Great Depression hurt Japan?**
- 29. What did the Japanese believe was the best solution to their economic problems?**
- 30. What was the basis of Japan's totalitarian state?**
- 31. How did Japan respond to disapproval from the League of Nations?**
- 32. What was the first target of Japan's expansionist policy?**
- 33. Identify –**
 - a. Hirohito –**
 - b. Tojo –**

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