

Recovery, Depression and Crisis

*A Half-Century of Crisis and
Achievement (1900–1945)*



Recovery and change

The Roaring Twenties

The Great Depression

The rise of dictatorships

Thematic Icons



Economics and business



Geography and environment



Historical concepts and questions



Politics, government and citizenship



Religion and thought



Society and culture



War, diplomacy and foreign policy

Icons: For more detailed instructions, see the *User Guide*



Flash activity (these activities are not editable)



Teacher notes included in the Notes page



By the end of this section, you will have learned about the rise of dictatorships and know about the following key points:

- Mussolini and the development of Fascism
- The rise of Hitler and the Nazis
- The Spanish Civil War
- Failed attempts to maintain peace.



Before World War I, **Benito Mussolini** was a prominent Italian socialist. However, his pro-war stance at the outbreak of World War I meant that he was thrown out of the Socialist Party.

Mussolini went on to develop a new ideology – **Fascism**. He sought to unite all Italians, regardless of their social class, in an effort to return Italy to the former glory of the Roman Empire.



Mussolini's followers, known as Fascists, were traditionalists who held nationalist values. They were also revolutionaries, because they sought to achieve their aims through violence rather than through elections.





Mussolini's march on Rome



Mussolini organized Italian war veterans into squads called the **Blackshirts**. They attacked communists and socialists at public demonstrations in order to silence political opposition and to prevent a communist revolution from taking place.



In October 1922, Mussolini and his Blackshirts marched on Rome. The King of Italy, Victor Emmanuel III, did not support the liberal prime minister, and instead appointed Mussolini to replace him.

Mussolini had already won the support of military and business leaders. Over the next ten years, he further increased his control over Italy.





Hitler's rise to power



Germany also experienced significant political change during the 1920s and 1930s. Watch this animation to find out about Hitler and the Nazi Party's rise to power.

Press **start** to begin.

start



How did Hitler's tactics change between 1923 and 33?





What did the Nazis believe?



Aryanism –

Germans were descended from the Aryan race and were intellectually, physically, and culturally superior to all other races.

Anti-Semitism –

Jews were inferior.

Lebensraum (living space) – Germany needed more land and would achieve this through expansion to the east.



Women should obey their husbands and be primarily concerned with having children and taking care of the home.

Authoritarianism – Children should unquestioningly obey their parents. Similarly, good Germans must obey their one leader, Adolf Hitler.

Who might these beliefs have appealed to and why?



How did the Nazis maintain control?



Watch this animation to find out how
Hitler dealt with opponents to the
Nazi regime.

Press **start** to begin.

start





In March 1936, Hitler ordered the German army to march into the **Rhineland**. Although this was part of Germany, near the French border, German troops were forbidden to enter this territory.

Hitler's order to remilitarize the Rhineland violated the Treaty of Versailles and the Locarno Treaties, and risked a French military retaliation.



However, given the weak economy, the French government could not afford to go to war. The League of Nations met, but voted against imposing sanctions on Germany.

Why was this a significant victory for Hitler?



The 1930s saw the rise of various dictatorial regimes, and with this came increased militarism.

Press on each tab to find out more information about military acts of aggression throughout the period.

Press **start** to begin.

start





The Spanish Civil War

In 1936, war returned to Europe when a group of Spanish generals launched a coup against the democratically elected government of Spain. A bitter civil war ensued.

Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy gave military aid to the nationalist generals led by **Francisco Franco**. The Soviet Union provided support to the Republican government.

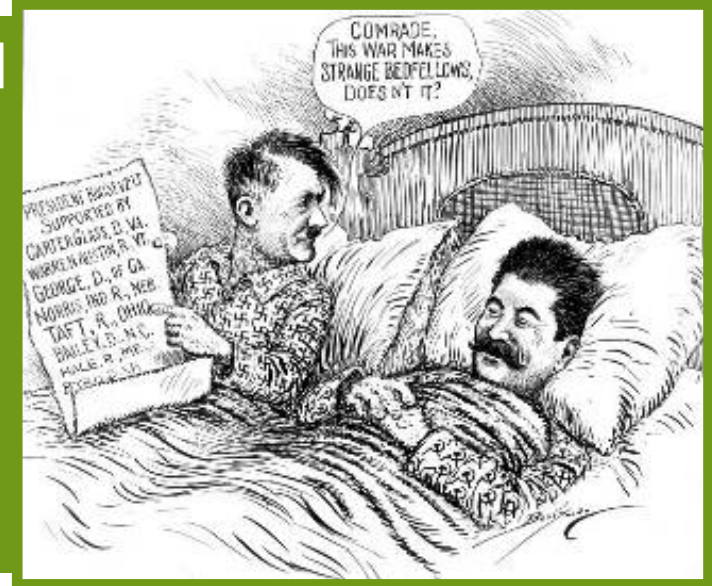


The nationalists finally defeated the Republicans in 1939, and Franco established a dictatorial regime which was to last almost forty years.



In August of 1939, Germany and the Soviet Union signed a treaty of non-aggression. Knowledge of this pact shocked the world, as each country held diametrically opposed ideas. However, the reasons for this agreement soon became clear.

In September 1939, Germany invaded Poland from the west and the Soviet Union invaded Poland from the east. While the two countries would never agree on their beliefs, they could agree on conquering and dividing up neighboring Poland.



This event sparked the beginning of **World War II**.

What do you think this cartoon is saying?



Test your knowledge of the interwar period with this quiz. Choose the correct answer to each question to see how much you can remember.

Press **start** to begin.

start





Test your understanding of the interwar period by recapping key terms and important people using this glossary.
Press on the tabs and then each term to see a definition.
Press **start** to begin.

start

