

The World Is Threatened by Dictators

The world envisioned by Woodrow Wilson at Versailles was one that was made safe for democracy. Nations would form governments by fair elections, and the boundaries of all nations would be guaranteed. With no threat of attack, the money always spent in the past on the military could be used for health, education, and economic development. By the 1930s, Wilson's dream seemed gone forever, as desperate nations turned to strong leaders who had no morals and who cared only about their own survival and national glory. The spread of the Depression across the globe added supporters to their causes, even in democratic countries.

Communism in Russia

When Vladimir Lenin's communists came to power in Russia, they threatened world revolution. In 1924, Lenin died, and Josef Stalin took over. As a man who had survived imprisonment and Siberian exile many times, Stalin killed, imprisoned, or exiled anyone who even thought of replacing him or who stood in his way. Communist parties developed in other countries, and anti-communists were terrified that unless they found someone able to keep communists out, they would lose their property and influence.

Fascism in Italy

Italy was a poor country after World War I—especially in the south—and was a good breeding ground for communism. With many parties in Italy, the parliament was so tied up with organizational problems that it could not deal with the growing violence and economic problems of Italy. A group called Fascists were ready to use force to battle communists. In 1922, the king appointed the Fascists' leader, Benito Mussolini, as premier. Within a year, he had all the power of a dictator.

Germany and the Third Reich

Germany was also torn by bitter battles among various groups. The Weimar Republic, as the government formed after World War I was called, had very little public support. When economic troubles came after 1929, the upper and middle classes feared the strong communist movement among the lower class. One of the most radical groups was the Nazi party, led by Adolf Hitler. After he was arrested in 1923, Hitler wrote his ideas out in *Mein Kampf (My Struggle)*, blaming most of Germany's problems on the nation's Jews. In 1933, he became Germany's chancellor, and in 1934, he became chancellor and president. Calling his regime the "Third Reich," he made life miserable for Jews, forcing some of Germany's most brilliant scientists to escape the country. Others were not so lucky and ended up in concentration camps; by 1945, at least 6 million Jews had been killed.

Military Rule in Japan

Japan faced a serious population problem in the 1920s that threatened the fragile liberal government of Japan. Low on raw materials, the Japanese used their low-paid workers to compete in the world market. That did well until the Depression cut outside markets. After the liberal prime minister was shot in 1930, the military took over, silenced any opposition in the Diet (parliament), and prepared for a war on China.

What Were the Results?

Merciless rulers were using hard times to take control of their nations. It was only a matter of time before they would threaten their weaker neighbors and bring the world to war.

Name: _____ Date: _____

The World Is Threatened by Dictators: Activity

Directions: Use information from the reading selection to complete the graphic organizer.

Headings

Key Details

**Communism
in
Russia**



**Fascism
in
Italy**



**Germany and
the
Third Reich**



**Military Rule
in
Japan**

