

World War Looms, 1931–1941

Germany invades neighboring countries and launches the Holocaust—the systematic killing of millions of Jews and other “non-Aryans.” The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor ushers the U.S. into World War II.

Section 1

Dictators Threaten World Peace

The rise of rulers with total power in Europe and Asia lead to World War II.

Nationalism Grips Europe and Asia

Failures of the World War I Peace Settlement

- Treaty of Versailles causes anger, resentment in Europe
- Germany resents blame for war, loss of colonies, border territories
- Russia resents loss of lands used to create other nations
- New democracies flounder under social, economic problems
- Dictators rise; driven by nationalism, desire for more territory

Joseph Stalin transforms the Soviet Union

- 1922 V. I. Lenin establishes Soviet Union after civil war
- 1924 **Joseph Stalin** takes over:
 - replaces private farms with collectives *[Visual]*
 - creates second largest industrial power; famines kill millions
 - purges anyone who threatens his power; 8–13 million killed
- **Totalitarian** government exerts almost complete control over people

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The Rise of Fascism in Italy

- Unemployment, inflation lead to bitter strikes, some communist-led
- Middle, upper classes want stronger leaders
- **Fascism** stresses nationalism, needs of state above individual
- **Benito Mussolini** plays on fears of economic collapse, communism *[Visual]*
- Supported by government officials, police, army
- 1922 appointed head of government, establishes totalitarian state

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The Nazis Take Over Germany

- **Adolf Hitler** leader of National Socialist German Workers' Party
- *Mein Kampf*—basic beliefs of **Nazism**, based on extreme nationalism
- Wants to unite German-speaking people, enforce racial “purification”
- 1932, 6 million unemployed; many men join Hitler's private army
- Nazis become strongest political party; Hitler named chancellor
- Dismantles democratic Weimar Republic; establishes Third Reich

Militarists Gain Control in Japan

- 1931, Nationalist military leaders seize Manchuria
- League of Nations condemns action; Japan quits League
- Militarists take control of Japanese government

Aggression in Europe and Africa

- 1933, Hitler quits League; 1935, begins military buildup
 - sends troops into Rhineland, League does nothing to stop him *[Visual]*
- 1935, League fails to stop Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia

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Aggression in Europe, 1936–1939



Civil War Breaks Out in Spain

- 1936, General **Francisco Franco** rebels against Spanish republic
 - Spanish Civil War begins
- Hitler, Mussolini back Franco; Stalin aids opposition
 - Western democracies remain neutral
- War leads to Rome-Berlin Axis—alliance between Italy and Germany
- 1939, Franco wins war, becomes fascist dictator

Americans Cling to Isolationism

- Public is outraged at profits of banks, arms dealers during WW I
- Americans become isolationists; FDR backs away from foreign policy
- 1935 **Neutrality Acts** try to keep U.S. out of future wars
 - outlaws arms sales, loans to nations at war

Neutrality Breaks Down

- 1937 Japan launches new attack on China; FDR sends aid to China *[Visual]*
- FDR wants to isolate aggressor nations to stop war

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