

Authoritarian / Totalitarian Regimes (Fascism) - OVERVIEW:

A world economic depression intensified political instability and ideological extremism. Demagogues used these times of economic distress to preach a variety of solutions that were generally anti-democratic. Single party totalitarian states emerged in Italy, Spain, the USSR, Germany, Brazil, Argentina, China, and Japan.

- ⇒ The ideology of fascism originated in **Italy** to glorify the state and its leaders and was expansionist in nature.
- ⇒ In **Germany**, Nazism also featured the racist philosophy of Aryan supremacy and the subjugation of other ethnic groups.
- ⇒ In the **USSR**, Stalin adopted rigid communist policies including collectivization of agriculture and state ownership of industry.
- ⇒ **Spain** and **Brazil** used the threat of local Communist parties to gain support from their people.
- ⇒ **Japan's** need for resources fostered the development of militaristic and expansionist policies toward its neighbors.

The western democracies, for a variety of economic and political reasons, relied upon a policy of appeasement in dealing with the totalitarian states.

Characteristics of Fascism:

- A. Personal Dictatorship
 - 1. All power is vested in one individual.
 - 2. The dictatorship has a religious quality.
- B. Intense Nationalism
 - 1. Patriotism for a relatively new, modern nation
 - 2. Militant, aggressive, and intolerant
- C. Forcible Suppression of Dissent
 - 1. censorship of the press
 - 2. exclusion of foreign journalists
 - 3. propaganda about how wonderful life is under the dictator
 - 4. secret police and severe treatment of political prisoners
 - 5. book burning
 - 6. government surveillance of citizens' activities, including religion, culture, family

Challenges to the liberal order

- A. Italian fascism
 - 1. Benito Mussolini, founder of Italian fascism, 1919
 - a. Armed fascist squads called Blackshirts terrorized socialists
 - b. After march on Rome, Mussolini invited by king to be prime minister
 - 2. The fascist state in Italy
 - a. All other political parties banned, Italy became a one-party dictatorship
 - b. Supported by business, the party crushed labor unions, prohibited strikes
 - c. Not aggressively anti-Semitic until after alliance with Hitler in 1938

B. Germany's national socialism

1. Adolf Hitler (1889-1945)
 - a. Born in Austria, schooled in Vienna; hated Jews and Marxists
 - b. Moved to Munich and fought in German army in WWI
 - c. 1921, joined obscure group, [National Socialist] German Workers Party
2. The emergence of the Nazi party
 - a. 1923: attempt to take over Weimar Republic failed; Hitler jailed
 - b. Released in 1924, he organized party for a legal takeover, through elections
3. The struggle for power after 1929
 - a. National socialism enjoyed broad appeal, especially from lower-middle class
 - b. Public lost faith in democracy: associated with defeat, depression, inflation
 - c. 1930-1932, Nazi party became the largest in parliament
 - d. 1932, President Hindenburg offered Hitler the chancellorship
4. Rapid consolidation of power, 1933-1935
 - a. Nazis created one-party dictatorship; outlawed all other political parties
 - b. Took over judiciary, civil service, military
5. Nazi ideology emphasized purity of race
 - a. Women praised as wives and mothers; were discouraged from working
 - b. Cult of motherhood: propaganda campaign to increase births was unsuccessful
6. Nazi eugenics: deliberate policies to improve the quality of the German "race"
 - a. Compulsory sterilization of undesirables: mentally ill, disabled
 - b. State-sponsored euthanasia of physically and mentally handicapped
7. Anti-Semitism central to Nazi ideology
 - a. 1935, Nuremberg Laws deprived Jews of citizenship, outlawed intermarriage
 - b. Jews economically isolated, lost jobs, assets, businesses
 - c. 1938, *Kristallnacht*: official attacks on synagogues and Jewish businesses
 - d. 250,000 Jews fled to other countries; many others trapped