Mussolini & Hitler: The Road to WWII
Introduction

• After WWI, long established democracies remained strong in the US and Britain, but in Italy, Germany, and Russia, a new form of dictatorship, known as totalitarianism emerged.

• Totalitarianism grew out of WWI
  – democratic & autocratic gov’ts temporarily assumed sweeping powers

• Totalitarian dictatorships extended powers
  – Used vast authority to
    • remodel entire societies
    • conquer other lands
RISE OF FASCISM IN ITALY

• After WWI, dissatisfaction gripped Italy
• Italian nationalists outraged the treaties had not given them more territory from the Central Powers.
• In economic crisis, chaotic conditions favored rise of Mussolini.
• Mussolini formed a new party (1919)
  – Fasci di Combattimento ➔ Fascist Party
  – philosophy advocates
    • glorification of the state
    • 1 party system w/strong ruler
    • aggressive form of nationalism
MUSSOLINI’S ROAD TO POWER

• Economy grew worse, factory workers went on strike.
  – spread to rural → peasants seized land from landowners & farmers refused to pay their rents
• middle & upper classes feared Communists
• Mussolini “a little something to everyone” = gain power
• 1922- Fascists used force for power.
  – Blackshirts attacked political opponents & drove elected officials from office.
• Democratic gov’t believed Fascism = way of controlling Socialists & workers → did nothing to stop them
• October 1922- Fascists march on Rome
• King Victor Emmanuel III → Mussolini prime minister
MUSSOLINI’S DICTATORSHIP

• Ended democratic rule

• 1924 election- brutal tactics (Blackshirts) → Fascists won majority in parliament

• Parliament gave Mussolini sweeping powers
  – Called himself – Il Duce “The Leader”
  – Consolidated power → reorganized the gov’t
  – Created a corporate state

  • Ordered syndicates (corporations of workers & employers) to be formed for each industry

  – Banned non-Fascist parties
• Syndicates sent representatives to Rome
  – set policies on wages, production, & distribution
• Many Italians opposed fascism
  – majority supported Mussolini
  – believed he prevented a Communist revolution
• Mussolini rekindled
  – feelings of patriotism & nationalism
  – promised to restore Italy to greatness
THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC

- 1919, to comply with the ToV, Germany
  - elected delegates → national assembly
  - draft a new constitution
  - established a democratic republic → Weimar Republic (1919 – 1933)

- Political instability and violence threatened to overwhelm it.

- It failed to overcome widespread opposition to its policies.
REPARATIONS

- to pay $35 BILLION to Britain and France
- By 1922 could not meet the $ policies of the ToV
- French troops marched into Germany’s industrial Ruhr Valley in 1923
  — took control of the coalmines & steel mills.
INFLATION

• To meet the expenses the German gov’t printed more paper money → Inflation soared.

• Before the WWI, 4 German marks equaled 1 American dollar. By late 1923, it took 4 trillion marks to equal 1 dollar.

• Mid 1920’s – Germany finally saw some relief.

• French leave Ruhr Valley and ease up on the payments.

• Germany entered period of prosperity.
Rise of Nazism

• Political parties challenged the Weimar Republic

• National Socialist German Workers Party = Nazi Party
  – 1 of its 1st recruits (WWI veteran) Adolf Hitler
  – formed the Brownshirts → private army of young veterans & street thugs

• 1923 (inflationary crisis)- Hitler attempted a coup in Munich → FAILED
  – went to prison (sentenced to 5 yrs. - served only 9 mths)

• wrote Mein Kampf (My Struggle) while in prison.
  – Believed the Germans were not responsible for losing WWI → blamed the Jews & Communists
  – Declared that Germans were a “master race” whose destiny was to rule the world.
Rise of Nazism Cont’d.

• After his release from prison, Hitler resumed his activities.
• In the early 1930’s, the Nazis won a large # of seats in the Reichstag → legislative lower house.
• Backed by conservative politicians who hoped to control him, Hitler became chancellor in 1933.
Hitler in Power

• Hitler’s goal → creation of a totalitarian state
  – Nazis were still a minority → Reichstag, held a new election
  – Brownshirts forced Germans to vote for Nazis

• Nazi dominated Reichstag met after elections
  – gave Hitler emergency powers to deal w/Communist threat & used new powers to crush opponents
  – consolidate rule - controlled economic, social, & religious aspects life

• Hitler feared radical members among the Brownshirts
  – set out to weaken their ranks
  – 6/30/1934 - Night of Long Knives - 100s of Nazis killed
Attacks on the Jews

• Directed his most bitter attacks against the Jews.
• 1935- Nuremberg Laws stripped Jews of their citizenship & right to hold public office.
• *Kristallnacht* (Night of Broken Glass) Nov 9 & 10, 1938, attacked Jews on the street, vandalized Jewish businesses, homes, & synagogues.
• Gestapo (secret police) arrested 1000s of Jews & other opponents of the gov’t.
• Many were shot; others sent to concentration camps – large prison camps for political prisoners or refugees
The Third Reich

- Absolute power, Hitler → der Fuhrer – “the Leader”.
  - His gov’t - Third Reich (3rd Empire) & boasted that it would last a 1,000 years.

- Ignored the provisions of the ToV
  - ordered factories to begin making guns, ammunition, airplanes, tanks, etc...

- Intellectual & artistic activity under his control & imposed his own ideas on the arts.
  - Many artists & scientists fled the country. (Einstein)

- Actively used the press, radio, & movies to flood Germany w/Nazi propaganda.

- Set up organizations to mold young Germans (6 – 18) to accept Nazi ideas → Hitler Youth
## Hitler’s Actions

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<tr>
<th>Hitler’s Actions</th>
<th>Significance</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hitler became Chancellor on January 30, 1933.</td>
<td>Hitler posed as a man of peace, stating that</td>
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<td>Hitler announced the creation of a German air force on March 9, 1935.</td>
<td>The ToV had expressly forbidden Germany from having an air force.</td>
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<td>Hitler began a draft to increase Germany’s army to 550,000 troops on March 16, 1935.</td>
<td>The ToV had expressly limited the German army to 100,000 troops.</td>
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<td>Hitler sent troops to the Rhineland on March 7, 1936.</td>
<td>The ToV made the Rhineland into a demilitarized zone.</td>
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<td>Hitler sent troops to Spain to help Franco in the Spanish Civil War in 1936.</td>
<td>Gave Hitler an opportunity to train his army in a real war situation.</td>
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<td>October 1936- Mussolini and Hitler agreed to recognize their common interests in the Rome Berlin Axis.</td>
<td>Not a military alliance, but would develop into a partnership between Germany and Italy during WWII.</td>
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<td>November 1936- Japan and Germany sign the Anti-Comintern Pact</td>
<td>Developed into a partnership in WWII</td>
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<td>March 1938- Germany occupied Austria</td>
<td>The Anschluss (union) with Austria had been one of Hitler's objectives for many years and was his 1st move beyond Germany’s pre-WWI boundaries.</td>
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<td>1938- Hitler demanded the Sudetenland (German-speaking) portion of Czechoslovakia.</td>
<td>Munich Conference – Britain wanted to appease Hitler and prevent a war.</td>
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<td>March 1939- Hitler occupied the rest of Czechoslovakia.</td>
<td>Hitler could not be trusted.</td>
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<td>August 23, 1939- Hitler and Stalin sign a non-aggression agreement.</td>
<td>Assured Hitler would not have to fight a 2-front war.</td>
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<td>September 1, 1939- Germany invaded Poland.</td>
<td>Official start date of WWII</td>
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