

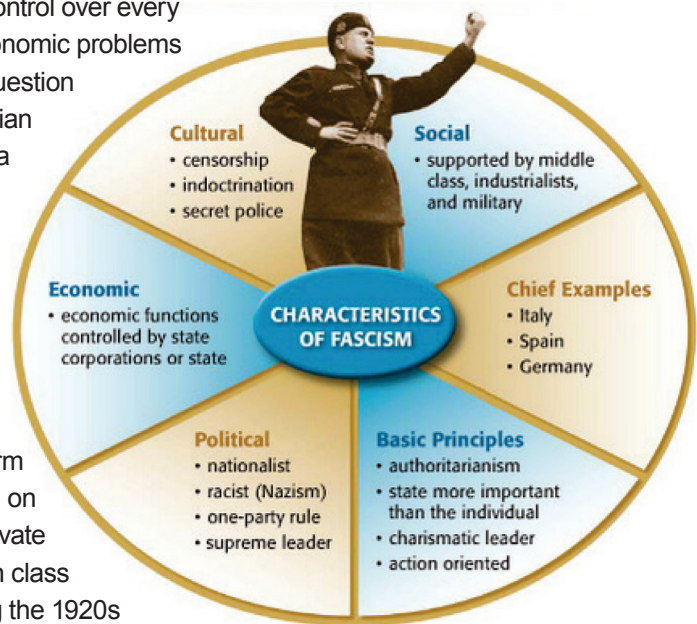
Totalitarianism and the Rise of the Dictators (1920s–1930s)

You Mean Dictators Have Multiple Ways to Control People?

Totalitarianism

A **totalitarian** ruler leads a government that maintains complete control over every part of public and private life of the citizens in that country. The economic problems that resulted from World War I and the Depression led people to question whether democratic government could improve their lives. Totalitarian governments appeared to provide a sense of security and offered a strong direction for the future.

Both **Communism** and **Fascism** used aspects of totalitarianism as part of their governments. In general, both used dictators, only allowed one political party, and denied many individual rights. Police terror was used for control and to get rid of any opposition. Controlling media sources (newspapers, television, radio etc.) with **propaganda** and limiting what was reported helped influence what people thought. However, Fascism believed in an extreme form of nationalism and pride in the country, while Communism focused on the spread of their beliefs worldwide. Communism did not allow private property and eliminated social classes. Fascism believed that each class had a role to play in society and supported private property. During the 1920s and 1930s, four major totalitarian governments developed – one was Communist, the other three were Fascist.



Characteristics of Fascism

Source: <https://splashmans.wikispaces.com/Unit+6+-+The+Interwar+Period>

The Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin

After Vladimir Lenin's death, Joseph Stalin took power. He wanted to strengthen his power and the Communist state. He used his secret police to stop any riots and arrest or kill anyone who spoke out against him. In 1933, he began the **Great Purge** to



Soviet Propaganda Poster

Source: <http://christiewaf.weebly.com/propaganda.html>

eliminate his political rivals in the Communist Party and the government. He knew that in order to compete with other modern countries, the U.S.S.R. (Soviet Union) needed to fix its economy. He began a series of **Five Year Plans** to improve the Soviet Union's industries. Production of steel, coal, and oil increased dramatically, but Stalin set impossibly high production rates. Stalin took control of all privately owned farms and began a program of collectivization. Hundreds of families worked the collective farms to produce food for the country. Many landowners and peasants resisted by destroying fields and killing their cattle and sheep. Millions died as a result of famine from the damages and also attacks by the secret police to stop the rebellions. By the mid-1930s Stalin changed the Soviet Union into a totalitarian state and made it into an industrial power.

Italy under Benito Mussolini

In the early 1920s, Italy was struggling economically and politically. Benito Mussolini's Fascist Party fought with the Communists for political power and won. Mussolini promised to restore the power and glory of the Roman Empire. One way to do this was to expand Italy's empire. In 1935, Mussolini invaded Ethiopia in East Africa. Italy continued to expand by invading Albania in 1939. These invasions elevated Mussolini's popularity and control.

Japan under Emperor Hirohito and Hideki Tojo

When the Great Depression hit Japan, many Japanese blamed the government for the economic problems. Military leaders gained public support and won control of the government. Because the military kept Emperor Hirohito as the symbolic leader,

the public supported military government and military leaders such as Hideki Tojo who ruled in the name of the emperor. Japan had been industrializing very quickly. It needed more raw materials than the islands could supply so Japan looked to other areas to conquer. Manchuria, the northeast region of China, had iron and coal. Japan successfully invaded in 1931 and began to extract those resources. They continued to expand into southern China during the rest of the decade prior to the start of World War II.

Japanese Expansion in the 1930s.

Source: <http://www.jeron.je/anglia/learn/sec/history/wwar2c/japan.htm>



Germany under Adolf Hitler

Germany was devastated after World War I. The Treaty of Versailles forced Germany to reduce its military, give up land and colonies, and pay **reparations** or damages for the war. Accepting this war guilt left Germans angry and insulted. Their economy was also in trouble as a result of the reparations, inflation, and the Great Depression. Adolf Hitler joined a Fascist group called the National Socialist German Worker's Party or the Nazis. Hitler and the Nazis gained popularity and power through propaganda and close relations with government officials. Eventually Hitler was given the position of Chancellor. Hitler ended democracy and took absolute power. He outlawed Communism and all other political parties. He also gave the Germans someone to blame for many of the problems: the Jews. He encouraged feelings of **anti-Semitism**, discrimination against the Jews. Hitler refused to follow the Treaty of Versailles and began to rebuild the military. He ignored the League of Nations as he began to expand Germany's borders into Austria and Czechoslovakia. These actions gave Germans a sense of extreme nationalism and confidence. In 1939, Hitler's invasion of Poland prompted Great Britain and France to declare war on Germany.

Key Vocabulary

Totalitarianism: a government where the state has complete control over every part of public and private life

Communism: a society with no classes or private property and all businesses are run by the government

Anti-Semitism: prejudice against Jews

Fascism: a political belief that focuses on extreme nationalism and a dictatorship of one leader with only one party

Propaganda: information or material that is spread to make people feel a certain way

Great Purge: time period in the Soviet Union when Stalin tried to get rid of all opposition to his leadership

Five-Year Plans: plan by Stalin to improve industrialization in the Soviet Union

Collectivization: large government controlled farms made up of smaller farms, usually found in a Communist society

Reparations: the compensation for war damage paid by a defeated state

Quick Review

1. Which statement is the best definition of a totalitarian state?

- A. There is a democratic government
- B. Many political parties compete for power
- C. Free speech, press and religion are encouraged
- D. Government controls all aspects of people's lives

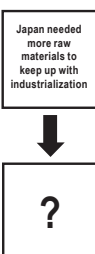
2. Which characteristic should replace the question mark?

- A. Classless society
- B. One-party rule
- C. Extreme nationalism
- D. No private property

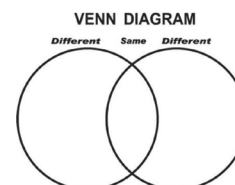


3. What event best completes the graphic?

- A. Japan attacked the Soviet Union for oil reserves
- B. Japan opened up trade with China and Korea
- C. Japan invaded Manchuria for iron and coal
- D. Japan asked for help from the United States



4. Compare and Contrast two totalitarian leaders using the graphic organizer below.



Connection to Today

Can you think of any other leaders in the world today that are totalitarian dictators? Explain your answer.

Resources

ABC-CLIO

• Totalitarianism:

<http://worldhistory.abc-clio.com/Search/Display/311210?terms=totalitarian>

• Fascism

<http://worldhistory.abc-clio.com/Search/Display/310453?terms=fascist>