

In the 1920s, some nations moved toward democracy. Others moved toward repressive dictatorships and **totalitarianism**, a type of government in which a single party or leader controls the economic, social, and cultural lives of its people.

The 1917 communist revolution in the Soviet Union produced the first totalitarian state, headed by Vladimir Lenin. In 1924, **Joseph Stalin** took his place as the Communist Party's head.

A postwar economic depression troubled Italy. In 1922, the king asked the founder of the Fascist Party, **Benito Mussolini**, to form a government. Mussolini turned Italy into a fascist country, with a controlled press, secret police, and no political parties.

Following World War I, Germany became a democracy. However, the Great Depression caused severe economic troubles in the 1930s. The National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nazi Party) led by **Adolf Hitler** rose to power. Hitler criticized many people, political programs, and ideologies, but his sharpest assaults were against communists and Jews. Hitler was violently **antisemitic**, or prejudiced against Jewish people. He was appointed chancellor in 1933 and became president of Germany within two years.

In Japan, the Great Depression ended a period of increased democracy and peaceful change. Military leaders argued that expansion throughout Asia would solve Japan's problems. Japan attacked Manchuria and established a puppet state in 1931. Six years later, Japan attacked China again, raiding the capital city with such brutality that it became known as the "Rape of Nanjing."

In the 1930s, Italy and Germany resorted to acts of aggression similar to those of Japan in Asia. Hitler reclaimed the Saar region from French control and sent troops into the Rhineland, while Mussolini led an invasion into Ethiopia. The League of Nations did almost nothing to stop the aggression.

France, Britain, and the United States pursued the policy of **appeasement** toward the fascist leaders. Appeasement means granting concessions to a potential enemy to maintain peace. However, this approach only encouraged the leaders to become bolder and more aggressive.

Review Questions

1. After World War I, what kind of government was set up in Germany? Who became the country's leader?

2. How did the military leaders of Japan want to solve the country's problems?

READING CHECK

How did Benito Mussolini come to rule Italy?

VOCABULARY STRATEGY

What does the word *ideologies* mean in the underlined sentence? What context clues can you find in the surrounding words or phrases? Circle any words or phrases in the paragraph that help you figure out what *ideologies* means.

READING SKILL

Summarize Name the countries and leaders discussed in this section.
