

# World War II

## Outcome: Causes of World War II



# Causes of World War II

## 1. Underlying Causes of World War II

a. Totalitarian Dictators gained power around the world

i. Fascist leaders arose in Europe after WWI in:

1. Italy: Benito Mussolini (followers wore black shirts)

2. Spain: Franco's fascists won the Spanish Civil War

3. Soviet Union: Joseph Stalin took control of the communist nation

4. Japan:

a. Hideki Tojo: Military Leader & Prime Minister

b. Emperor Hirohito: Political & Spiritual figurehead

5. Germany: Adolf Hitler (Nazism = German Fascism)

# Fascism

\* a political philosophy, movement, or regime that exalts nation and often race above the individual and that stands for a centralized autocratic government headed by a dictatorial leader, severe economic and social regimentation, and forcible suppression of opposition

# Benito Mussolini of Italy





# Francisco Franco of Spain



# Joseph Stalin in The Soviet Union



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# Adolf Hitler in Germany





# Causes of World War II

- b. Each dictator took advantage of economic problems by:
  - i. Promising simple solutions to their nation's problems
  - ii. Rebuilding national pride (often using propaganda)
  - iii. Providing scapegoats (targets for anger & blame)
  - iv. Absorbing power, taking away individual rights, and crushing opposition (1 party; 1 ruler)

# Adolf Hitler in Germany



# Causes of World War II

## c. Nationalism + Imperialism

### i. In Germany, Adolf Hitler preached:

1. Vengeance against (4 hates)
  - a. Democracies (a weak & undisciplined form of gov't)
  - b. Communism (a threat to Nazi growth)
  - c. November Criminals who signed the WWI Armistice
  - d. Jews (the source of all evil & problems in Germany)
2. Anti-Semitism & racial supremacy (The Master Race)
3. A desire to unit all people of German ancestry (Blood & language)
4. "Lebensraum" (a desire for more living space) needed to build his empire he called The Third Reich

# Benito Mussolini of Italy





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## ii. In Italy, Mussolini (Il Duce = “The Leader”)

1. Felt betrayed by the Allies at the Treaty of Versailles Conference due to a promise of land for joining the Allies that was not kept
2. Wished to rebuild the ancient Holy Roman Empire and wanted to control lands around the Mediterranean Sea; “Mare Nostrum = Our Sea”



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- iii. Japan wanted to be self sufficient and #1 in Asia but needed oil and raw materials
  1. Wanted China's land for this purpose
  2. Goal: Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere: name for power in Asia

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## d. Militarism

### i. Germany:

1. Defied the Treaty of Versailles & rebuilt the army
2. Created the “Nazi War Machine”

### ii. Japan

1. Built up the strongest military regime in Asia
2. Soldier's motto: “Death before Dishonor”

### iii. Italy

1. Formed the Rome-Berlin Axis (alliance) with Germany in 1936



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- e. **Poor Decisions were made by the powerful democracies**
  - i. France & Great Britain adopted a policy of appeasement
  - ii. The League of Nations would prove ineffective; lacked a military
  - iii. U.S.: Isolationism & Depression kept our focus on U.S. concerns; once aggression began we claimed to be neutral

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Equation:

Nationalism + Imperialism + Militarism = Aggression

Extreme Aggression = War!

