

## SECTION 2

# The Rise of Dictatorial Regimes

### Guide to Reading

#### Main Ideas

- Mussolini established a modern totalitarian state in Italy.
- As leader of the Soviet Union, Stalin eliminated people who threatened his power.

#### Key Terms

totalitarian state, fascism, New Economic Policy, Politburo, collectivization

#### People to Identify

Benito Mussolini, Joseph Stalin, Francisco Franco

#### Places to Locate

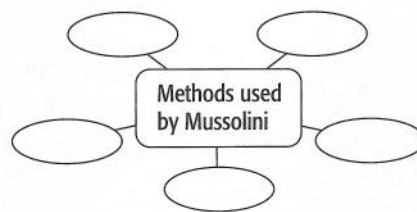
Russia, Madrid

#### Preview Questions

1. To what extent was Fascist Italy a totalitarian state?
2. How did Joseph Stalin establish a totalitarian regime in the Soviet Union?

#### Reading Strategy

**Categorizing Information** Use a web diagram like the one below to list methods used by Mussolini to create a Fascist dictatorship.



#### Preview of Events

◆ 1920

1919  
Mussolini creates the *Fascio di Combattimento*

◆ 1925

1924  
Lenin dies

◆ 1930

1928  
Stalin launches his First Five-Year Plan

◆ 1935

1929  
Mussolini recognizes independence of Vatican City

◆ 1940

1939  
The Spanish Civil War ends

## Voices from the Past

In 1932, Benito Mussolini, the dictator of Italy, published a statement of his movement's principles:

“Anti-individualistic, the Fascist conception of life stresses the importance of the State and accepts the individual only in so far as his interests coincide with those of the State. . . . The Fascist conception of the State is all-embracing; outside of it no human or spiritual values can exist. Thus understood, fascism is totalitarian, and the Fascist State . . . interprets, develops, and potentiates [makes effective] the whole life of a people . . . fascism does not, generally speaking, believe in the possibility or utility of perpetual peace. . . . War alone keys up all human energies to their maximum tension and sets the seal of nobility on those people who have the courage to face it.”

—Benito Mussolini, “The Doctrine of Fascism,” *Italian Fascisms*, Adrian Lyttleton, ed., 1973

These were the principles of the movement Mussolini called fascism.

### The Rise of Dictators

The apparent triumph of democracy in Europe in 1919 was extremely short-lived. By 1939, only two major European states—France and Great Britain—remained democratic. Italy, the Soviet Union, Germany, and many other European states adopted dictatorial regimes. These regimes took both old and new forms.

A new form of dictatorship was the modern totalitarian state. A **totalitarian state** is a government that aims to control the political, economic, social, intellectual, and cultural lives of its citizens. New totalitarian regimes pushed the power of the central state far beyond what it had been in the past.

These totalitarian states wanted more than passive obedience. They wanted to conquer the minds and hearts of their subjects. They achieved this goal through mass propaganda techniques and high-speed modern communication. Modern technology also provided totalitarian states with an unprecedented ability to impose their wishes on their subjects.

The totalitarian states that emerged were led by a single leader and a single party. They rejected the ideal of limited government power and the guarantee of individual freedoms. Instead, individual freedom was subordinated to the collective will of the masses. This collective will of the masses, however, was organized and determined by the leader. The totalitarian state expected the active involvement of the masses in the achievement of its goals, whether those goals included war, a socialist state, or a thousand-year empire like the one Adolf Hitler wanted to establish.

**Reading Check Summarizing** What is the goal of a totalitarian state?

## Fascism in Italy

In the early 1920s, **Benito Mussolini** (MOO•suh•LEE•nee) established the first European fascist movement in Italy. Mussolini began his political career as a Socialist. In 1919, he created a new political group, the *Fascio di Combattimento*, or League of Combat. The term *fascism* is derived from that name.

As a political philosophy, **fascism** (FA•SHIH•zuhm) glorifies the state above the individual by emphasizing the need for a strong central government led by a dictatorial ruler. In a fascist state, people are controlled by the government, and any opposition is suppressed.

**Rise of Fascism** Like other European countries, Italy experienced severe economic problems after World War I. Inflation grew, and both industrial and agricultural workers staged strikes. Socialists spoke of revolution. The middle class began to fear a Communist takeover like the one that had recently occurred in **Russia**. Industrial and agricultural strikes created more division. Mussolini emerged from this background of widespread unrest.



## Geography Skills

Many European countries adopted dictatorial regimes to solve their problems in the 1920s and 1930s.

- 1. Interpreting Maps** Which countries shown on the map above are Fascist? Which are authoritarian? Which are democratic states?
- 2. Applying Geography Skills** Pose and answer a question that creates a comparison between a country's political status as shown on this map and the side that country fought on in World War I.

In 1920 and 1921, Mussolini formed bands of black-shirted, armed Fascists called *squadristi* or Blackshirts. These bands attacked socialist offices and newspapers. They also used violence to break up strikes. Both middle-class industrialists who feared working-class strikes and large landowners who objected to agricultural strikes began to support Mussolini's Fascist movement.

By 1922, Mussolini's movement was growing quickly. The middle-class fear of socialism, communism, and disorder made the Fascists increasingly attractive to many people. In addition, Mussolini realized that the Italian people were angry over Italy's failure to receive more land in the peace settlement that followed the war. He understood that nationalism was a powerful force. Thus, he demanded more land for Italy and won thousands of converts to fascism with his patriotic and nationalistic appeals.

## People In History

### Benito Mussolini

1883–1945—Italian dictator

Benito Mussolini was the founder of the first Fascist movement. He was an unruly and rebellious child who was expelled from school once for stabbing a fellow pupil. Ultimately, he received a diploma and worked for a short time as an elementary school teacher.

Mussolini became a Socialist and gradually became well known in Italian Socialist circles. In 1912, he obtained the important position of editor of *Avanti (Forward)*, the official Socialist daily newspaper.

After being expelled from the Socialist Party, he formed his own political movement, the Fascist movement. When the Fascists did poorly in the Italian election of November 1919, Mussolini said that fascism had “come to a dead end.” He then toyed with the idea of emigrating to the United States to become a journalist.



In 1922, Mussolini and the Fascists threatened to march on Rome if they were not given power. Mussolini exclaimed, “Either we are allowed to govern, or we will seize power.” Victor Emmanuel III, the king of Italy, gave in and made Mussolini prime minister.

Mussolini used his position as prime minister to create a Fascist dictatorship. New laws gave the government the right to suspend any publications that criticized the Catholic Church, the monarchy, or the state. The prime minister was made head of the government with the power to make laws by decree. The police were given unrestricted authority to arrest and jail anyone for either nonpolitical or political crimes.

In 1926, the Fascists outlawed all other political parties in Italy and established a secret police, known as the OVRA. By the end of the year, Mussolini ruled Italy as *Il Duce* (eel DOO•chay), “The Leader.”

**The Fascist State** Since Mussolini believed that the Fascist state should be totalitarian, he used various means to establish complete control over the Italian people. As we have seen, Mussolini created a secret police force, the OVRA, whose purpose was to watch citizens’ political activities and enforce government policies. Police actions in Italy, however, were never as repressive or savage as those in Nazi Germany (discussed later in this chapter).

The Italian Fascists also tried to exercise control over all forms of mass media, including newspapers,

radio, and film. The media was used to spread propaganda. Propaganda was intended to mold Italians into a single-minded Fascist community. Most Italian Fascist propaganda, however, was fairly unsophisticated and mainly consisted of simple slogans like “Mussolini Is Always Right.”

The Fascists also used organizations to promote the ideals of fascism and to control the population. For example, by 1939, Fascist youth groups included about 66 percent of the population between the ages of 8 and 18. These youth groups particularly focused on military activities and values.

With these organizations, the Fascists hoped to create a nation of new Italians who were fit, disciplined, and war-loving. In practice, however, the Fascists largely maintained traditional social attitudes. This is especially evident in their policies regarding women. The Fascists portrayed the family as the pillar of the state and women as the foundation of the family. Women were to be homemakers and mothers, which was “their natural and fundamental mission in life,” according to Mussolini.

Despite his attempts, Mussolini never achieved the degree of totalitarian control seen in Hitler’s Germany or Stalin’s Soviet Union (discussed later in this chapter). The Italian Fascist Party did not completely destroy the country’s old power structure. Some institutions, including the armed forces, were not absorbed into the Fascist state but managed to keep most of their independence. Victor Emmanuel was also retained as king.

Mussolini’s compromise with the traditional institutions of Italy was especially evident in his relationship with the Catholic Church. In the Lateran Accords of February 1929, Mussolini’s regime recognized the sovereign independence of a small area within Rome known as Vatican City. The Church had claimed this area since 1870. When Mussolini formally recognized that claim, the pope then recognized the Italian state.

Mussolini’s regime also gave the Church a large grant of money and recognized Catholicism as the “sole religion of the state.”

In return, the Catholic Church urged Italians to support the Fascist regime.

In all areas of Italian life under Mussolini and the Fascists, there was a large gap between Fascist ideals and practices. The Italian Fascists promised

**HISTORY Online** 

**Web Activity** Visit the *Glencoe World History* Web site at [wh.glencoe.com](http://wh.glencoe.com) and click on **Chapter 24—Student Web Activity** to learn more about the rise of fascism.

much but delivered considerably less. They would soon be overshadowed by a much more powerful Fascist movement to the north—that of Adolf Hitler, a student and admirer of Mussolini.

**✓ Reading Check** **Examining** How did Mussolini gain power in Italy?

## A New Era in the Soviet Union

As we have seen, Lenin followed a policy of war communism during the civil war in Russia. The government controlled most industries and seized grain from peasants to ensure supplies for the army.

Once the war was over, peasants began to sabotage the communist program by hoarding food. The situation became even worse when drought caused a great famine between 1920 and 1922. As many as 5 million lives were lost. With agricultural disaster came industrial collapse. By 1921, industrial output was only 20 percent of its 1913 level.

Russia was exhausted. A peasant banner proclaimed, “Down with Lenin and horseflesh. Bring back the czar and pork.” As Leon Trotsky said, “The country, and the government with it, were at the very edge of the abyss.”

**Lenin’s New Economic Policy** In March 1921, Lenin pulled Russia back from the abyss. He abandoned war communism in favor of his **New Economic Policy** (NEP). The NEP was a modified version of the old capitalist system. Peasants were allowed to sell their produce openly. Retail stores, as well as small industries that employed fewer than 20 workers, could be privately owned and operated. Heavy industry, banking, and mines, however, remained in the hands of the government.

In 1922, Lenin and the Communists formally created a new state called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which is also known as the USSR (by its initials), or as the Soviet Union (by its shortened form). By that time, a revived market and a good harvest had brought an end to famine. Soviet agricultural production climbed to 75 percent of its prewar level.

Overall, the NEP saved the Soviet Union from complete economic disaster. Lenin and other leading Communists, however, only intended the NEP to be a temporary retreat from the goals of communism.

**The Rise of Stalin** Lenin died in 1924. A struggle for power began at once among the seven members of the **Politburo** (PAH•luht•BYOOR•OH)—a commit-

tee that had become the leading policy-making body of the Communist Party. The Politburo was severely divided over the future direction of the Soviet Union.

One group, led by Leon Trotsky, wanted to end the NEP and launch Russia on a path of rapid industrialization, chiefly at the expense of the peasants. This group also wanted to spread communism abroad and believed that the revolution in Russia would not survive without other communist states.

Another group in the Politburo rejected the idea of worldwide communist revolution. Instead, it wanted to focus on building a socialist state in Russia and to continue Lenin’s NEP. This group believed that rapid industrialization would harm the living standards of the Soviet peasants.

These divisions were underscored by an intense personal rivalry between Leon Trotsky and another Politburo member, **Joseph Stalin**. In 1924, Trotsky held the post of commissar of war. Stalin held the bureaucratic job of party general secretary. Because the general secretary appointed regional, district, city, and town party officials, this bureaucratic job actually became the most important position in the party.

Stalin used his post as general secretary to gain complete control of the Communist Party. The thousands of officials Stalin appointed provided him with support in his bid for power. By 1929, Stalin had eliminated from the Politburo the Bolsheviks of the revolutionary era and had established a powerful

## People In History

**Joseph Stalin**  
1879–1953—Soviet dictator



Joseph Stalin established a strong personal dictatorship over the Soviet Union. He joined the Bolsheviks in 1903 and came to Lenin’s attention after staging a daring bank robbery to get funds for the Bolshevik cause. His real last name was Dzhugashvili, but he adopted the name Stalin, which means “man of steel.”

Stalin was neither a dynamic speaker nor a forceful writer. He was a good organizer, however. His fellow Bolsheviks called him “Comrade Index-Card.”

Like Hitler, Stalin was one of the greatest mass murderers in human history. It is estimated that his policies and his deliberate executions led to the death of as many as 25 million people. At the time of his death in 1953, he was planning yet another purge of party members.



◀ Soviet propaganda poster

dictatorship. Trotsky, expelled from the party in 1927, eventually made his way to Mexico, where he was murdered in 1940, probably on Stalin's orders.

**Five-Year Plans** The Stalinist Era marked the beginning of an economic, social, and political revolution that was more sweeping in its results than were the revolutions of 1917. Stalin made a significant shift in economic policy in 1928 when he ended the NEP and launched his First Five-Year Plan. The **Five-Year Plans** set economic goals for five-year periods. Their purpose was to transform Russia virtually overnight from an agricultural into an industrial country.

The First Five-Year Plan emphasized maximum production of capital goods (goods devoted to the production of other goods, such as heavy machines) and armaments. The plan quadrupled the production of heavy machinery and doubled oil production. Between 1928 and 1937, during the first two Five-Year Plans, steel production in Russia increased



### Geography Skills

The period from the beginning of World War I to the beginning of World War II was one of dramatic change in Russia.

- 1. Interpreting Maps** From Moscow, in which direction would you go to find the Soviet Union's most productive farming area: northeast, southwest, northwest, or southeast?
- 2. Applying Geography Skills** Identify a particular area of the Soviet Union as shown on the map and explain why that area would have been of particular interest to Stalin during his First Five-Year Plan.

from 4 million to 18 million tons (3.628 to 16.326 million t) per year.

The social and political costs of industrialization were enormous. Little provision was made for caring for the expanded labor force in the cities. The number of workers increased by millions between 1932 and 1940, but total investment in housing actually declined after 1929. The result was that millions of workers and their families lived in pitiful conditions. Real wages in industry also declined by 43 percent between 1928 and 1940. Strict laws even limited where workers could move. To keep workers content, government propaganda stressed the need for sacrifice to create the new socialist state.

With rapid industrialization came an equally rapid collectivization of agriculture. **Collectivization** was a system in which private farms were eliminated. Instead, the government owned all of the land, while the peasants worked it.

Strong resistance to Stalin's plans came from peasants, who responded by hoarding crops and killing livestock. However, these actions only led Stalin to step up the program. By 1930, 10 million peasant households had been collectivized. By 1934, 26 million family farms had been collectivized into 250,000 units.

**Costs of Stalin's Programs** Collectivization was done at tremendous cost. The hoarding of food and the slaughter of livestock produced widespread famine. Stalin himself is supposed to have said that 10 million peasants died in the famines of 1932 and 1933. The only concession Stalin made to the peasants was that each collective farm worker was allowed to have one tiny, privately owned garden plot.

Stalin's programs had other costs as well. To achieve his goals, Stalin strengthened his control over the party bureaucracy. Those who resisted were sent into forced labor camps in Siberia.

Stalin's desire to make all decisions by himself also led to purges, or removals, of the Old Bolsheviks—those who had been involved in the early days of the movement. Between 1936 and 1938, the most promi-

nent Old Bolsheviks were put on trial and condemned to death.

During this same time, Stalin purged army officers, diplomats, union officials, party members, intellectuals, and numerous ordinary citizens. An estimated eight million Russians were arrested. Millions were sent to forced labor camps in Siberia, from which they never returned. Others were executed.

The Stalin Era also overturned much of the permissive social legislation that was enacted in the early 1920s. To promote equal rights for women, the Communists had made the divorce process easier, and they had also encouraged women to work outside the home. After Stalin came to power, the family was praised as a small collective in which parents were responsible for teaching the values of hard work, duty, and discipline to their children. Divorced fathers who did not support their children were heavily fined.

 **Reading Check** **Summarizing** What was Lenin's New Economic Policy?

## Authoritarian States in the West

A number of governments in the Western world were not totalitarian but were authoritarian. These states adopted some of the features of totalitarian states, in particular, their use of police powers. However, the main concern of these authoritarian governments was not to create a new kind of mass society, but to preserve the existing social order.

**Eastern Europe** Some of these governments were found among the new states of eastern Europe. At first, it seemed that political democracy would become well established in eastern Europe after the war. Austria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia (known as the kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes until 1929), Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary all adopted parliamentary systems. However, most of these systems were soon replaced by authoritarian regimes.

Parliamentary systems failed in most eastern European states for several reasons. These states had little tradition of political democracy. In addition, they were mostly rural and agrarian. Many of the peasants were illiterate, and much of the land was still dominated by large landowners who feared the peasants. Ethnic conflicts also threatened these countries.

Powerful landowners, the churches, and even some members of the small middle class feared land

## What If...

### Trotsky had succeeded Lenin?

Lenin's death in 1924 caused a bitter political struggle to determine his successor. Although he had no influence over the final outcome, Lenin's testament, written in December 1922, predicted a split between Trotsky and Stalin. In his testament, read to delegates at the Thirteenth Congress, Lenin advised removing Stalin from his post as general secretary to prevent a power struggle.

**Consider the Consequences** Consider what would have happened if Stalin had not maintained his position of influence and had lost to Trotsky. Research Trotsky's beliefs, then write a short essay describing the direction the Soviet Union would have taken under his leadership.



### History through Art

#### Guernica by Pablo Picasso, 1937

This famous painting is a strong anti-war statement. **What do the images say about the realities of war?**

reform, communist upheaval, and ethnic conflict. For this reason these groups looked to authoritarian governments to maintain the old system. Only Czechoslovakia, which had a large middle class, a liberal tradition, and a strong industrial base, maintained its political democracy.

**Spain** In Spain, too, political democracy failed to survive. Led by General **Francisco Franco**, Spanish military forces revolted against the democratic government in 1936. A brutal and bloody civil war began.

Foreign intervention complicated the Spanish Civil War. The Fascist regimes of Italy and Germany aided Franco's forces with arms, money, and men. Hitler used the Spanish Civil War as an opportunity to test the new weapons of his revived air force. The horrible destruction of Guernica by German bombers

in April 1937 was immortalized in a painting by the Spanish artist Pablo Picasso.

The Spanish republican government was aided by forty thousand foreign volunteers and by trucks, planes, tanks, and military advisers from the Soviet Union.

The Spanish Civil War came to an end when Franco's forces captured **Madrid** in 1939. Franco established a dictatorship that favored large landowners, businesspeople, and the Catholic clergy. Because it favored traditional groups and did not try to control every aspect of people's lives, Franco's dictatorship is an example of a regime that was authoritarian rather than totalitarian.

**Reading Check Explaining** How did Czechoslovakia maintain its political democracy?

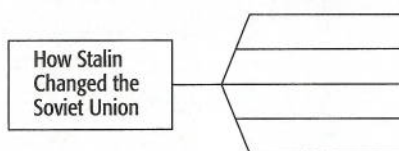
## SECTION 2 ASSESSMENT

### Checking for Understanding

- Define** totalitarian state, fascism, New Economic Policy, Politburo, collectivization.
- Identify** Benito Mussolini, Joseph Stalin, Five-Year Plan, Francisco Franco.
- Locate** Russia, Madrid.
- Explain** how Stalin gained control of the Communist Party after Lenin died.
- List** the countries that participated in the Spanish Civil War.

### Critical Thinking

- Evaluate** What was the major purpose of the Five-Year Plans during the 1920s and 1930s in the Soviet Union?
- Organizing Information** Use a diagram like the one below to identify ways in which Stalin changed the Soviet Union. Include the economic, social, and political results of his programs.



### Analyzing Visuals

- Contrast** the above painting with the rally photo on page 749. Both images make political statements about war and militarism. How do they differ? How are they similar? Which makes the strongest statement?

### Writing About History

- Persuasive Writing** What were the pros and cons of Mussolini's rule? In an essay, argue whether or not Mussolini was good for Italy. Conduct research to support your position.