

# Notes: Between the Wars

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## *Spielvogel Chapter 26*

- I. An Uncertain Peace: The Search for Security
  - A. *French Coercion (1919-24)*
    1. France wants strict enforcement of Versailles treaty
    2. Attempt to force Germany to pay all reparations (\$33B)
      - a. Impossible – French move in and take over German industrial areas (Rhur Valley)
    3. Germans hate Versailles treaty – totally unfair
    4. Germans passively resist – print more money –
      - a. horrible inflation
        1. 1914 – 4.2 marks = \$1
        2. 1923 – 4.2 trillion marks = \$1
      - b. Hitler makes first attempt at German takeover – small group of National Socialists
      - c. Germany’s economy bankrupt
    5. 1924 – France agrees to another approach
  - B. *Hopeful Years (1924-29)*
    1. New governments take over in Britain, France, and Germany
      - a. More conciliatory – sense of optimism for a peaceful future
    2. League of Nations
      - a. Created to avoid another war
      - b. Too weak to stop big powers
        1. U.S. refused to join
    3. Locarno treaty (1925)
      - a. Germany, Italy, Britain, Belgium, France agree not to go to war over boundaries (border)
    4. Germany admitted to League of Nations (1926)
    5. Kellogg – Briand Pact (1928)
      - a. U.S. – France and 61 other nations agree to ban war as part of national policy
    6. All will fail - no way to enforce any of it without a strong League
  - C. *The Great Depression (1929)*
    1. Stock market crashed in NYC 1929 (Oct.) – caused by stocks being priced beyond their real value & people buying on margin
    2. American investors recall European loans
      - a. Without American loans, Germans can’t pay reparations
      - b. Without reparations, allies can’t pay debts to U.S.
    3. In industrial world – prices fall, factories close, masses out of work
      - a. Germany hardest hit – others bad – France least – Russia exception
    4. Between 1929-1934, world trade shrinks by 65%
    5. Seen by Marxists worldwide as a step toward the collapse of capitalism – all countries to fall to communism
    6. Govts. Spend huge sums to relieve suffering of homeless and hungry
      - a. Pass laws to stimulate their own economies without regard to other countries – raised tariffs
      - b. To accomplish these goals, govts. became more centralized and authoritarian
      - c. Some look to cast blame and establish dictatorships

7. Communism and Fascism become popular
  - a. Democracy questioned, particularly in new nations

#### D. *New Economics*

1. John M. Keynes (British) -- Keynesian Economics
  - a. money goes in a circular pattern
    1. requires consumption
  - b. Great Depression caused by hoarding finances
  - c. "prime the pump" - government injects money
    1. usually to poor - because they spend it
    2. also by controlling interest rates

## II. Retreat from Democracy: Authoritarian and Totalitarian States

### A. *Fascist Italy*

1. Fascism defined
  - a. Fascist comes from Latin – “bundle of sticks” – Roman symbol of State power
  - b. Authoritarian - dictatorship
  - c. Totalitarian – entire life of people controlled by government
    1. people expected to give everything - lives, time, heart & soul - to state
  - d. Conflict necessary
    1. Social Darwinism
    2. Saw the West as pacifist sissies
    3. Hated communists – workers rule is antithesis of "pure" society
2. Benito Mussolini
  - a. Came from modest family
  - b. Charismatic
  - c. Gave impression of vigor and activity – speed on motorcycle
  - d. Black Shirts - formed in 1919, when Italy unhappy with Versailles
    1. raised hand salute, black uniforms
    2. not official military
3. 1922 – socialists call strike – fascists oppose violently
  - a. Mussolini presses his Black Shirts for march on Rome – seize power by violence – invited by the king to restore order
4. Made premier for Victor Emanuel III 1924 – Mussolini sells him on the idea of the preservation of the Italian state – had won power through legal election process
5. 1925 – Italy is totalitarian state
6. Mussolini introduced the “corporate state” concept (substitute for unions)
  - a. Everyone expected to sacrifice for the good of the state
7. Mussolini becomes "Il Duce"

### B. *Hitler and Nazi Germany*

1. The Weimar Republic
  - a. Established for Germany – July 1919 – to replace the Empire
  - b. Germany had no experience in republican government
    1. Simply replaced emperor with a president
    2. Increased the power of the Reichstag
    3. Centrist – attacked from left and right
  - c. Economic chaos – inflation and depression
  - d. Provided chaotic environment for Hitler to take advantage
2. Rise of Hitler
  - a. Early Life
    1. 1923 – year after Mussolini’s march on Rome – Adolph Hitler attempts coup d’état in Germany – Beer Hall Putsch

2. Failed – imprisoned – writes Mein Kampf in jail – “My Struggle” – his ideas of Germany’s past and future
  3. Orphaned, lived in Vienna – developed hatred for nobility, people of wealth, Marxism, Jews
  4. Served in German army – identified with Germans
  5. Settled in Bavaria – became leader of National Socialist Party (Nazi) – developed oratory talent – emotional – inflaming
- b. On the national stage
1. 1929 Depression – second chance
    - i. Hitler attacks Treaty of Versailles and Weimar Republic, Communists and Jews (blamed for Germany's defeat)
  2. Nazi Party gets more and more power in Reichstag – gains majority – Lower house of German parliament
  3. President Hindenburg
    - i. Appoints Hitler Chancellor in January 1933
    - ii. Reichstag burns Feb. 1933 – Hitler blames communists, stirs up terror
      1. Hitler declares national emergency - takes dictatorial power provided by Weimar constitution
    - iii. Hindenburg dies August 1934
  4. August 1934 Hitler holds plebiscite
    - i. 85% of Germans support Hitler as dictator
    - ii. Office of president abolished
- c. The third Reich had begun – all legal, all supported by majority of Germans
3. The Nazi State (1934-39)
- a. Eliminated unemployment by govt. spending programs
  - b. Govt. becomes propaganda machine – brainwashes the nation
    1. Control of press and radio
    2. Mass meetings excite crowds
    3. Constant repetition
    4. Nazi flag (Swastika) replaces Weimar flag
    5. Pushed extravagant devotion to Hitler – der Fuhrer (leader)
  - c. Nazis have total control -- SS (Schutzstaffel [black uniforms ] - police
    1. people feel the illusion of participation in other ways
    2. 1934 – Nazi party purge – disloyal members killed by Gestapo – secret state police (part of SS) – leftist dissenters killed – Brown Shirts destroyed
    3. Pressure against church – intent to dominate lives of young – (*Swing Kids* movie)
  - d. Key leaders – Herman Goering (air force), Joseph Goebbels (propagandist), Heinrich Himmler (Head of SS & Gestapo)
  - e. Anti-Semitism
    1. Believed in pure Aryan race – caused persecution of Jews
    2. Nuremberg Laws of 1935 – removed Jews from public service – not citizens – prohibited marriage with others – total outcasts
    3. Kristallnacht – 1938 (night of broken glass) Jewish businesses destroyed, many beaten and murdered, synagogues burned, many arrested due to a killing of a German diplomat by Jewish boy – further isolation
  - f. The Nazi Woman
    1. Dedicated to love, marriage, family, motherhood

2. Create a mood in which German men must want to live or die for the German woman

### C. *The Soviet Union*

1. Existing conditions
  - a. Civil War's over – communists pay attention to condition of the country
    1. Greatest difficulty – economics
2. The New Economic Policy (1921-1927)
  - a. Lenin flexible enough to see the problem
  - b. Slows drive to communism 1921 – introduces the “New Economic Policy” (NEP)
    1. Govt. maintains control of big industry (factories, transportation, banking, foreign trade)
    2. Allows peasants some ownership of business and land and sell surplus
      - i. Peasants were taxed rather than being subject to requisition of material
    3. Foreign engineers and scientists hired to help – capitalists
    4. Terrorism and censorship lessened
    5. Economy begins to recover
  - c. Lenin dies (of stroke) 1924
3. The Stalin Era (1928-39)
  - a. Power struggle between Trotsky and Joseph Stalin
    1. Stalin had job of detailing party organization – had his supporters in key positions
    2. Wanted “socialism in Russia” as opposed to Trotsky’s international socialism
  - b. Defeats Trotsky and in solid control of Russia by 1928
    1. Trotsky in exile – moves about working against Stalin – finally murdered in Mexico - 1940
  - c. The Five-Year Plans - Command Economy
    1. 1928 – Stalin begins first 5-year plan
    2. 1928-33 and 1933-38 – interrupted by WWII
    3. Believed Lenin had gone soft – enough force and terror could get anything done
    4. Agricultural Plan
      - i. Collectivization of farms
        1. Excess labor forced to move to cities
        2. Apartment complex description
      - ii. Opposition - mostly by peasants - vocal peasants killed
      - iii. Millions die from famine in early 1930s
    5. Industrial Plan
      - i. Forced rapid industrialization - people forced to move to do the work
  - d. The Purges – 1934-38
    1. 4M accused of crimes against the state – nearly 800K executed – countless others die in concentration camps
    2. Stalin solidifies his hold on Russia
    3. Eliminate potential problems (class, plots, revolution) before they can start
    4. Wipe out any possible future competition
  - e. Total dead under Stalin's regime: Between 14 - 30 million
4. Communist Society in the U.S.S.R.
  - a. U.S.S.R. official in 1924

- b. First of the modern totalitarian states
  - 1. No limits to its control in the work, lives, thoughts of its citizens
  - 2. The Communist Party dominated the State
  - 3. Stalin dominated the party
- c. “Party Line” (policy) determined by small control organ of the party – Politburo (political bureau)
  - 1. All parts of govt. – local to national – controlled by Communist Party
- d. Secret Police
- e. Command Economy
- f. Excessive focus on military
- g. Administrators better paid – more privileges
  - 1. Ordinary workers – little freedom – made party membership an envious thing
  - 2. Church forced underground – govt. was the religion
  - 3. All education keyed on communist propaganda – strong emphasis on engineering and science
  - 4. Press strictly controlled Pravda (truth) official line – music, art, ballet to reflect and glorify working class

D. *Spanish Civil War (1936-39)*

- 1. King deposed 1931 –
  - a. Replaced by a republican government that collapses in 1936
- 2. General Francisco Franco
  - a. Nationalists (ultra right wing party & army) - fascists
    - 1. join Berlin Axis in 1936
- 3. Loyalists (left wing) supported by U.S.S.R. – Communists
- 4. Western democracies stand by and watch – some mercenaries there from western nations
- 5. Good way to try out new weapons & warfare style
- 6. Franco victorious – sets up fascist regime – lasts until 1975 – stays neutral in war