

# Depression and the Rise of Dictators

TOWARD A GLOBAL COMMUNITY (1900 – PRESENT)



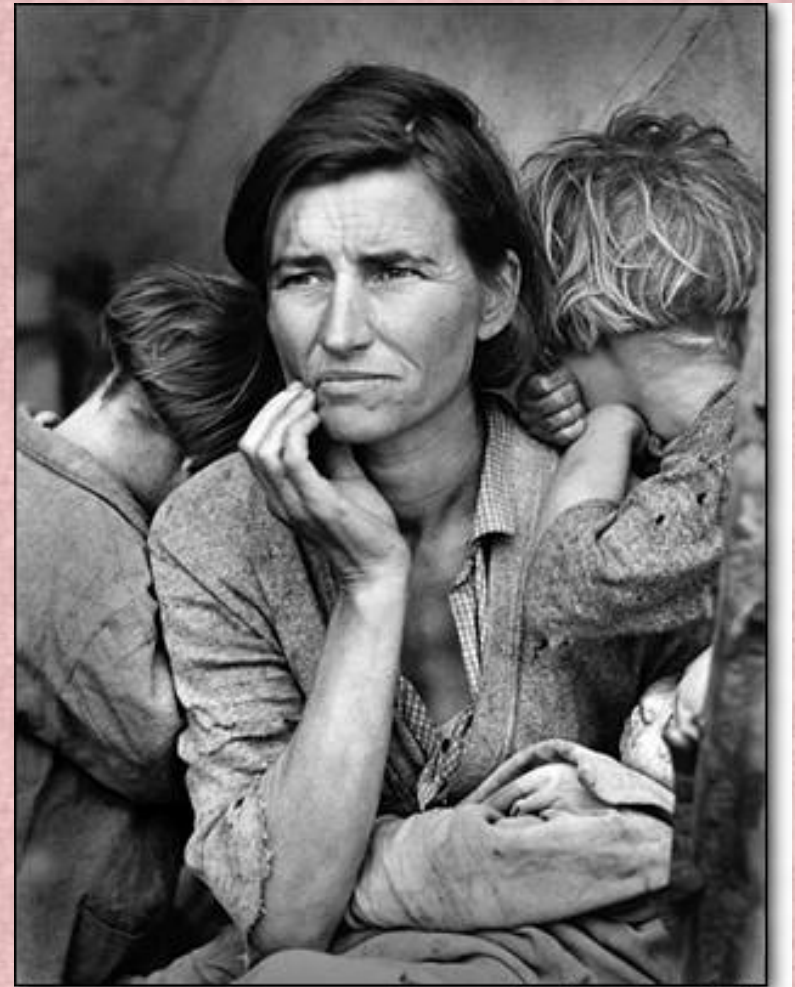
- The roaring twenties in America ended with the stock market crash of 1929, which began a severe period of economic calamity known as **the Great Depression**.
- As the stock market plummeted investors lost millions of dollars causing more and more investors to withdraw their money (Some people had borrowed money to invest in the stock market, as a result the shares they paid \$5 for were now worthless, yet they still had to pay someone back).



- Consumer spending slowed down, companies laid off workers, which had a snowball effect on employment and the overall economy (25% unemployment!)
- Americans rushed to their banks to withdraw money; in many cases the banks were simply out.
- Some jobless men left their families or committed suicide out of shame.



- Farmers were double hit with not being able to pay their mortgage & also the Dust Bowl that destroyed farmland.



Dorothea Lange / Corbis

- The U.S. passed the Smoot-Hawley tariff as a way of protecting American industries from foreign competition, however other countries countered with raising their own tariffs. The result was a 62% drop in world trade from 1929 – 1932.
- Half of Germany was living in poverty, farmers' salaries in Japan dropped, Britain forced their colonies to buy British products in order to weather the storm.
- Even non-industrialized nations were hit hard because they depended on exporting materials to the industrialized world (ex: Egypt w/ cotton; East Indies w/ rubber; Brazil w/ coffee). South Africa was the notable exception of nations who were not hurt by the global depression (why? because of gold).



- In 1932 **Franklin Roosevelt** was elected U.S. president. Unlike his predecessor, FDR implemented massive government spending (**ex: public works projects**) to put people back to work; the plan was known as **the New Deal**.
- As a whole, the strong leadership exhibited by FDR was something many nations resorted to. Although Britain, France, & the U.S. governments became more hands-on, they remained democratic.
- Whereas, in Latin America military officers took the reins of power, and in other regions fascism came about.

# Joseph Stalin

- By 1929 Stalin had risen as the master of the Soviet Union. (He only played a small part in the 1917 revolution, but over time he rose within the Communist party's ranks and ousted his rivals).
- His plan was to turn the U.S.S.R. into an industrialized nation. However, unlike the British or American industrial movement this was a government top down approach and it was not his goal to mass produce consumer goods, but rather to make the country as a whole more powerful.



- His intentions were laid out in a series of **Five-Year Plans**, which involved rapid industrialization to meet goals (Industrial centers were started from scratch – environmental effects were dramatic).
- Private farms were taken over by the government to form “collectives” for which farmers were to supply the government with a fixed amount of food.
- Farmers who resisted this new policy often destroyed their own livestock & farms. Stalin retaliated against these “kulaks” by executing them and putting them to work in slave camps.





- The labor camps known as gulags saw a million deaths a year due to malnutrition and execution.



- Under the Five Year Plans life for the average Russian got worse as food and consumer goods were more scarce than they had been under Lenin.
- Stalin used propaganda and a secret police (the NKVD) to terrorize and force the citizenry into compliance.
- His paranoia led to the arrest and murder of millions of Russians (people who worked too hard or not hard at all, relatives of other criminals).
- Despite these costs, the U.S.S.R. was rapidly industrializing & new employment opportunities did arise for women (ex: steelworkers, physicians, office managers) and men because so many people were now “gone.”

# Benito Mussolini

- By 1922 the Fascist Party took control over all aspects of the Italian government (Mussolini threatened to march on Rome with his followers if he was not appointed prime minister).
- Similar to the U.S.S.R., Mussolini used a mix of secret police & propaganda to rule Italy. He used his oratory skills to give bombastic nationalistic speeches & instill pride in a country that felt cheated after WWI.



# Francisco Franco & the Spanish Civil War

- Beginning in the 1920s Spain's government (parliamentary monarchy) began to be taken over by leftist (Socialists) and rightist (Fascists) political factions. This competition for power led to the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) between the Popular Front ("Republican" Socialists aided by the U.S.S.R.) and Fascists ("National") led by Franco.
- Franco won and established a conservative dictatorship that aided large landowners & the Catholic clergy (it would last until 1975).



## Adolf Hitler & German expansion

- Between the loss of WWI and the hyperinflation in the postwar years, Germans felt humiliated. They often blamed Jews, Socialists, and others for their troubles.
- Hitler, a veteran of WWI, was an admirer of Mussolini's and like some other world leaders he attempted to imitate his style and fascist tactics.



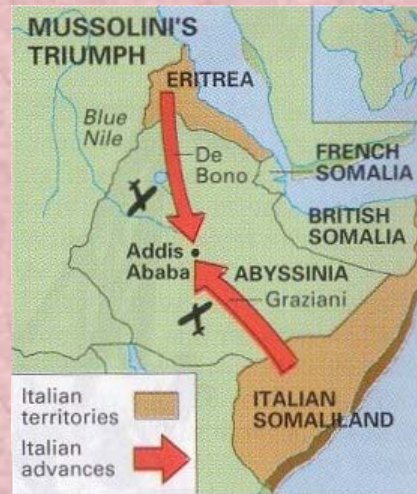
- His 1925 book *Mein Kampf* (he wrote it while in jail) he outlined his vision for Germany, which included annexing German speaking lands and support for the master race (the Aryans).
- By the time of the Great Depression, the Nazi party was gaining followers amongst the unemployed (who like Hitler, blamed the Jews for their problems) & property owners (who feared communist politicians would take their land).



- In 1933, German President Hindenburg made Hitler “chancellor.” Hitler assumed dictatorial powers and put his fellow Nazis in positions of power. By 1934, he was known as the Fuhrer.
- Jews and others were deprived citizenship. Women were forced to give up jobs to men. However, the economy was improving and his popularity soared.



- Hitler also began to violate the Treaty of Versailles by building up the German military. The “*Third Reich*” also withdrew from the League of Nations (Britain & France failed to respond and the U.S. was taking on a policy of isolationism).



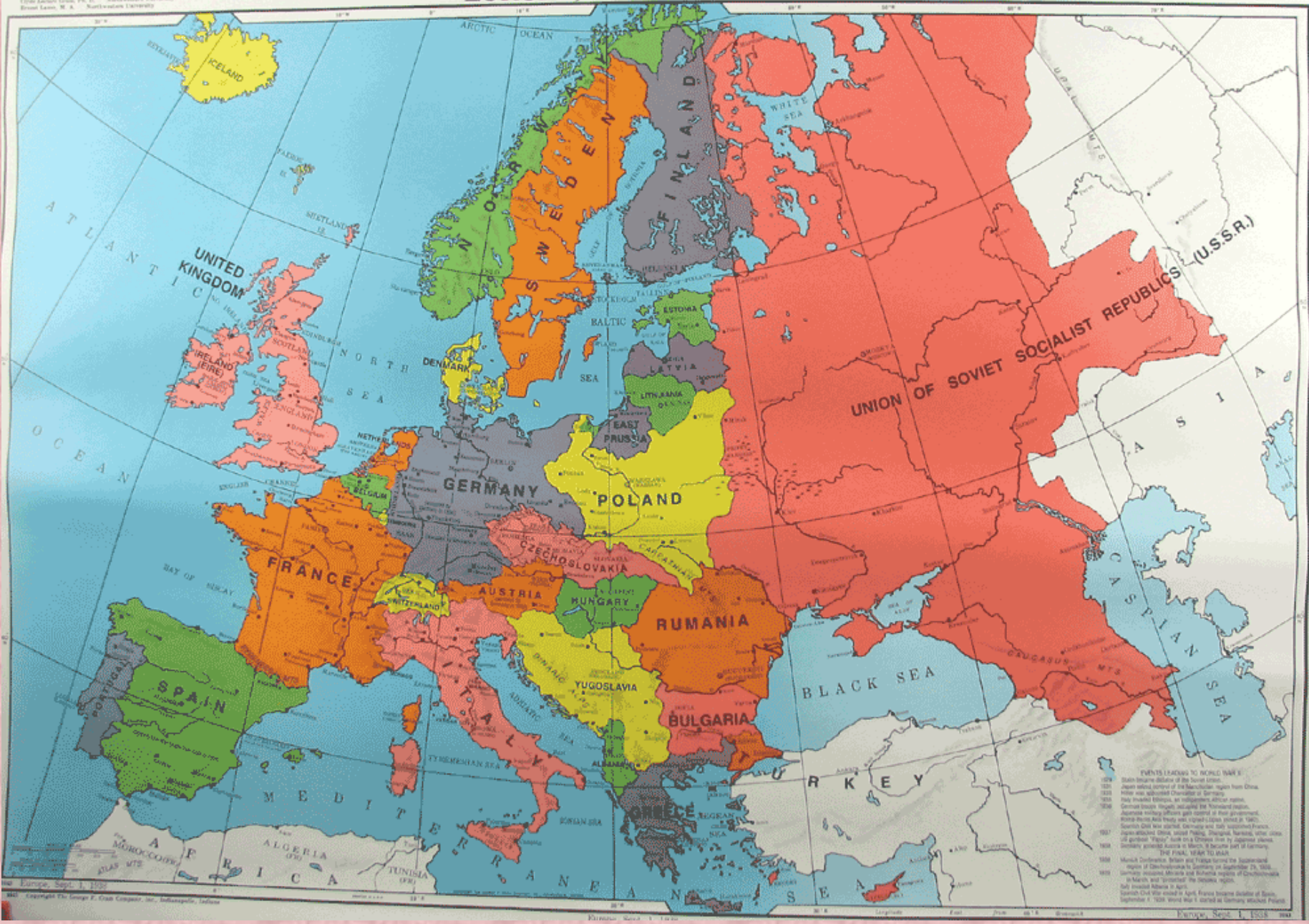
- Even when Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1935, the League of Nations failed to respond.
- In 1938 Germany annexed Austria; his reasoning was that the German people needed more “living space” to grow and prosper (many Austrians favored the move because they felt culturally connected to Germany).



# EUROPE, SEPT. 1, 1938

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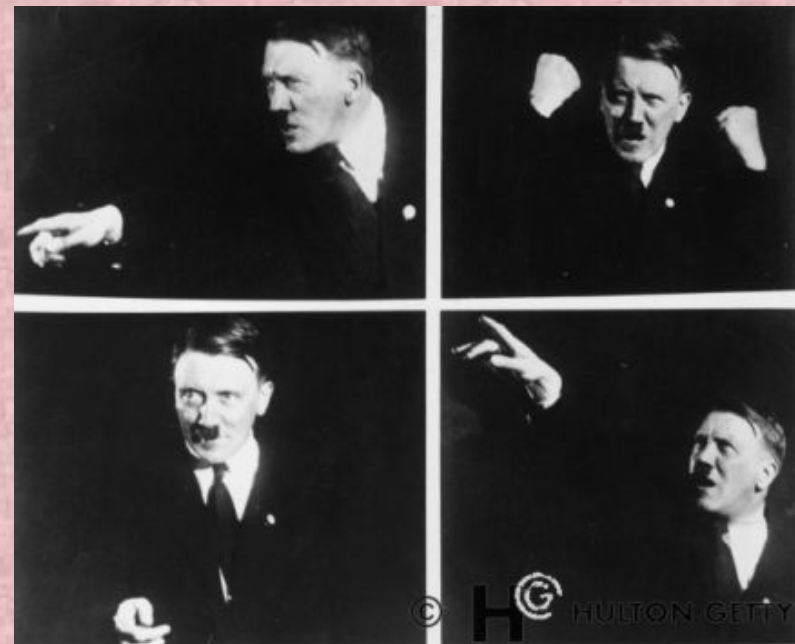
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Europe, Sept. 1, 1938

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- Hitler then set his eyes on the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia (This was an area in the west where about 3 million German speaking people lived. Hitler claimed the Czechs were abusing Sudeten Germans and his plan to annex the Sudetenland would not only protect them, but give Germans more living space).

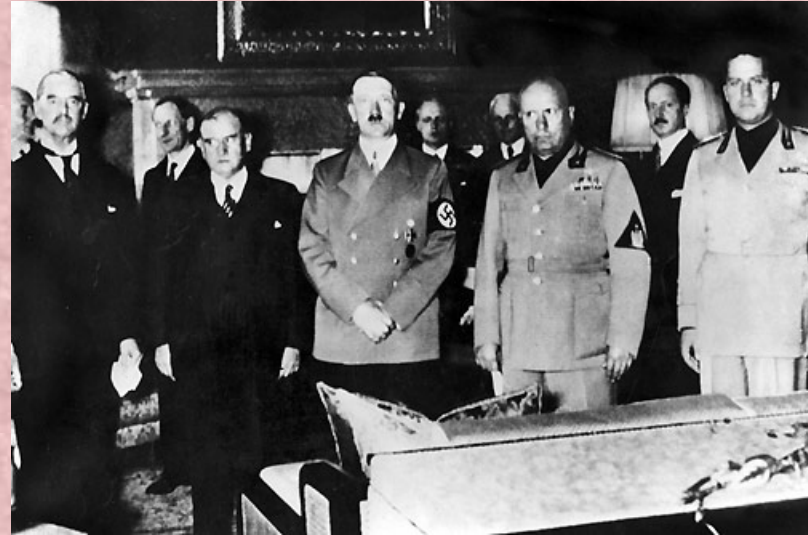


Russian cartoon:  
Chamberlain and Daladier  
act as traffic policemen;  
the sign-post reads 'Left -  
Western Europe, Right -  
USSR'



- Great Britain and France had both promised to protect Czechoslovakia from Hitler's advances, however both were not ready to start another world war.

- In September of 1938, Hitler invited the leaders of Great Britain and France to Munich to discuss the situation.



- Out of the conference came the **Munich Agreement**, where Hitler would be given the Sudetenland by agreeing to make no more territorial demands.

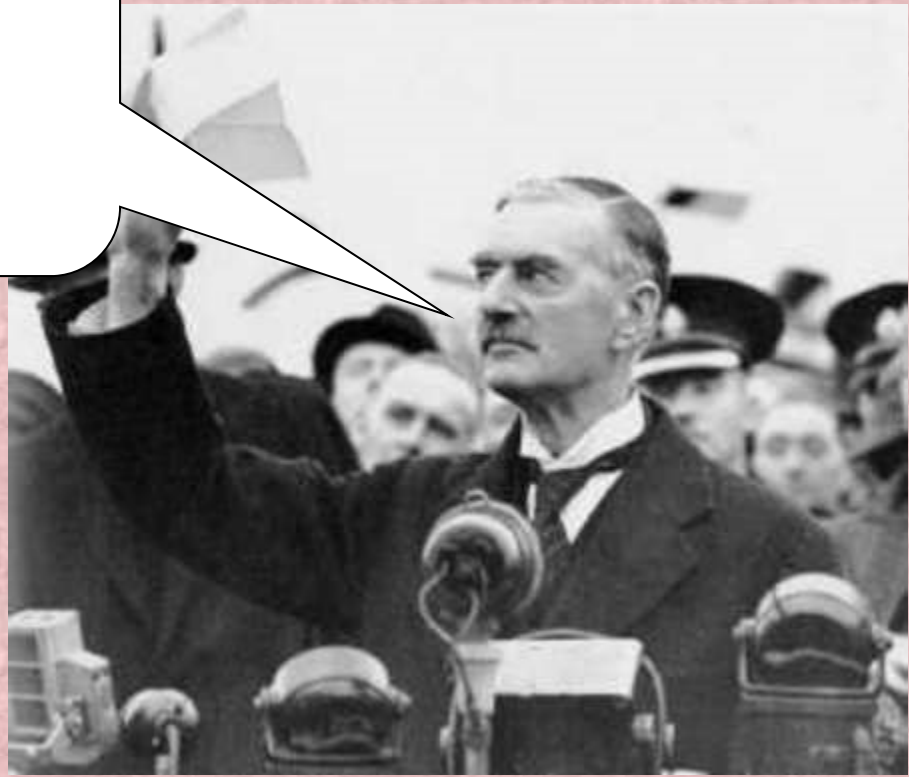
- Therefore, war had been avoided and all parties seemed satisfied.

Except for some of the people living in the Sudetenland.



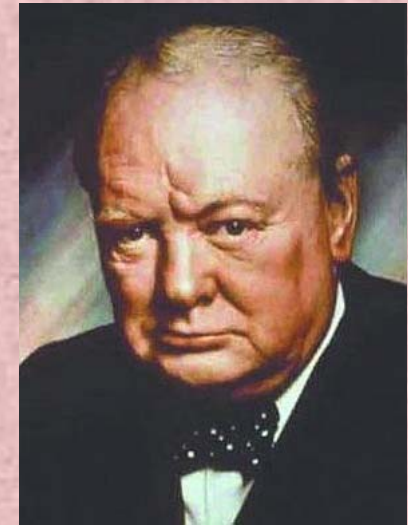
- British prime minister Neville Chamberlain proclaimed . . .

“My friends, there has come back from Germany peace with honor. I believe it is peace in our time.”



- Not everyone was satisfied with the Munich Agreement, which was being called **appeasement**.

- Winston Churchill thought Europeans were giving up principles to satisfy an aggressor.



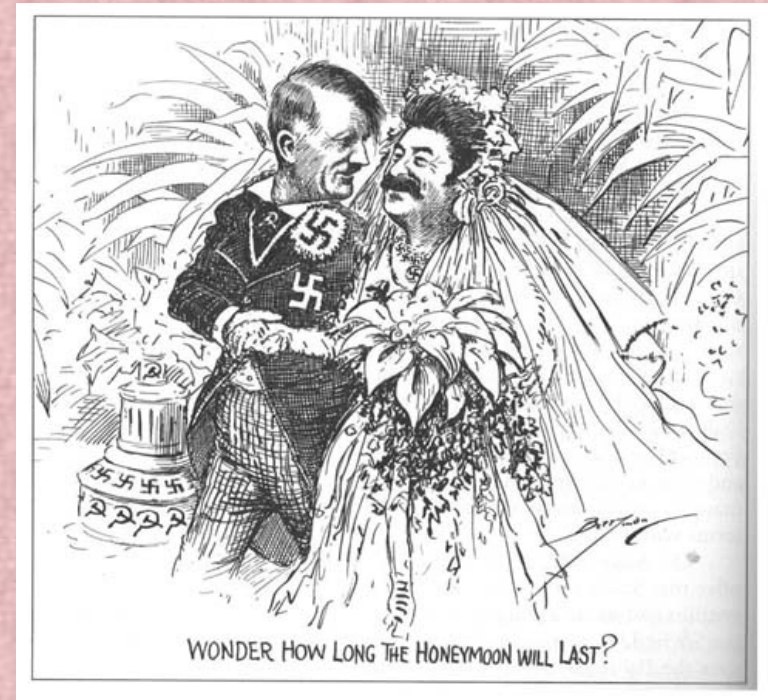
- However, even if France and Great Britain chose war they would not have been prepared (military scale backs put them behind Germany, not enough men in uniform) and appeasement had several causes:
  - Fear of communism, they distrusted the Soviets more than Hitler who claimed to protect private property
  - In democracies, the will of the people rules and the people did not want war

- As predicted, Hitler was not done with his conquests. By March of 1939 he had taken over the rest of Czechoslovakia.





- By the spring he was looking to take over Poland.
- In order to ease tensions with the Soviet Union Hitler signed a nonaggression pact with Stalin promising not to attack one another (even though both nations were led by dictators, they held different political ideologies fascism and communism).



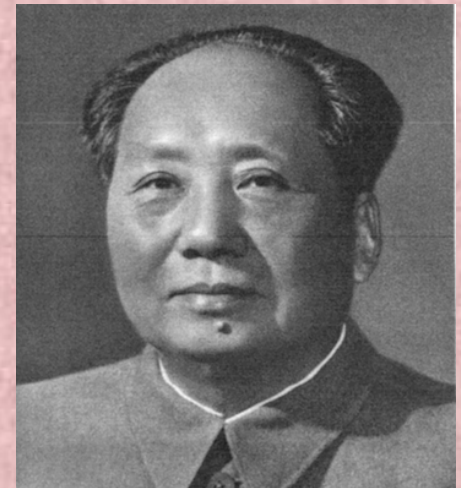
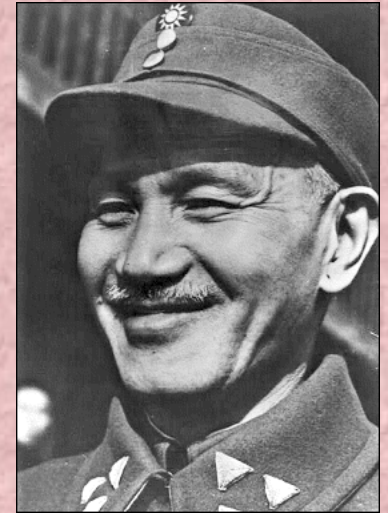
# Japan

- The drop in demand for silk & rice during the Depression badly hurt the Japanese economy.
- Nationalists resented their country's dependence on foreign trade and desired to create an empire of their own. In 1931, they invaded Manchuria, a Chinese province rich coal and iron. (The League of Nations protested so Japan simply dropped out of the League).
- Militarism was on the rise (army officers had openly killed senior statesmen), in 1932 General Tojo took control of Japan.



# China

- Although the Chinese government led by the Chinese Nationalist Party ([Guomindang](#)) leader **Chiang Kai-shek** was helping China recover from a dismal century, by the 1920s Communist ideology was growing in China.
- A Communist leader named **Mao Zedong** wanted to redistribute land to peasants. [In contrast to Lenin who thought a revolution should come from industrial workers, Mao put his hopes in the peasants.](#)
- Mao was also an advocate of women's equality ([foot-binding & arranged marriages became illegal](#)).



- Chiang's government went after the Communists forcing them to flee in mountainous regions. Mao and his followers responded with guerilla warfare.
- A more pressing matter was the Japanese invasion of 1937. Poorly led & armed Chinese troops took heavy losses to Japanese planes and soldiers who destroyed villages.
- Within the first year of the **Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945)** Japan had taken over the richest and most populated regions of China.



- The warfare between the Chinese and Japanese was brutal as thousands of women were raped, hundreds of thousands of men were killed, and millions were left homeless.
- The Chinese government led by Chiang Kai-shek fled to the center of the country and attempted to raise a large army; while Mao and the Communists won over distressed peasants and began to present itself as China's only hope of defeating the Japanese.



# Depression and the Rise of Dictators

TOWARD A GLOBAL COMMUNITY (1900 – PRESENT)



*in a . . .*



- The Great Depression caused a decline in world trade.
- The aftermath of WWI & the Great Depression brought about the rise of “strong men” in politics and more government “hands on” control of economies.
  - Stalin brought rapid industrialization to Russia at the expense of its citizens
  - Mussolini & Hitler (fascism)
- Japan, Italy, & Germany began to acquire new territory and Western democracies failed to thwart those efforts.
- Mao & Communism grow in popularity in China especially as the Guomindang fails to stop Japanese advances.