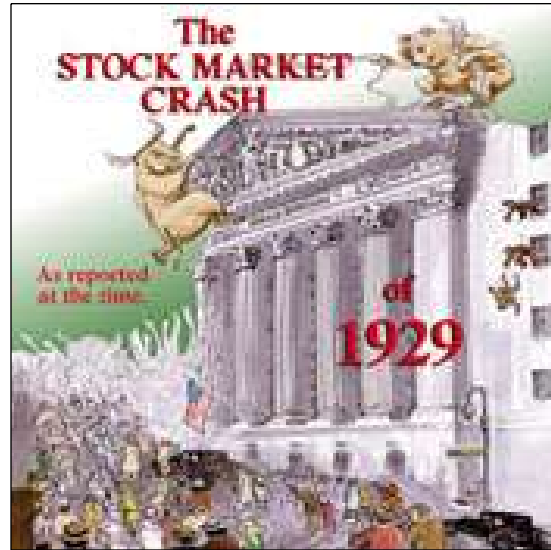
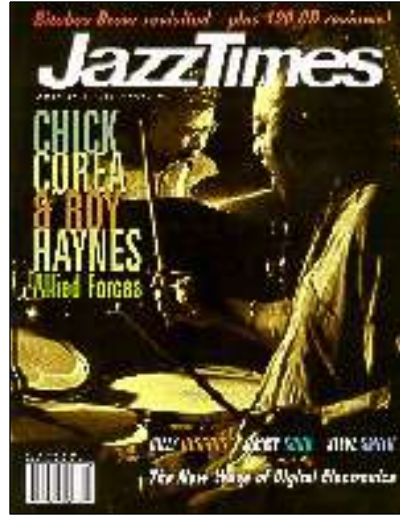
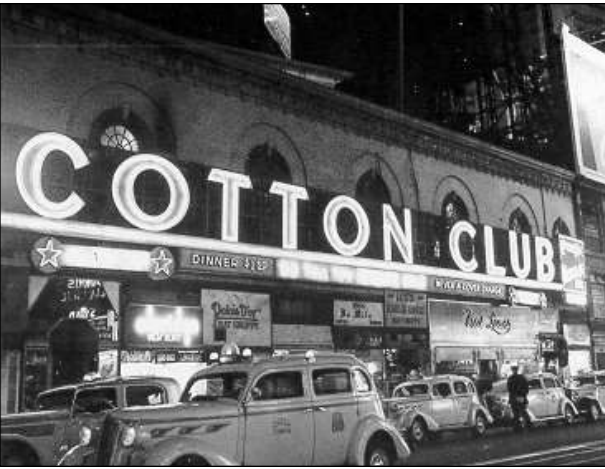
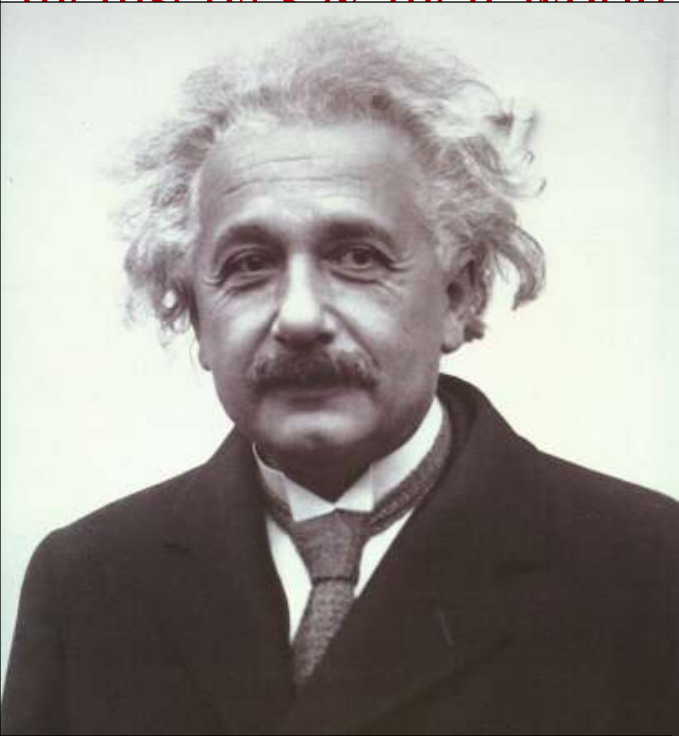


Pre WWII - Years of Crisis

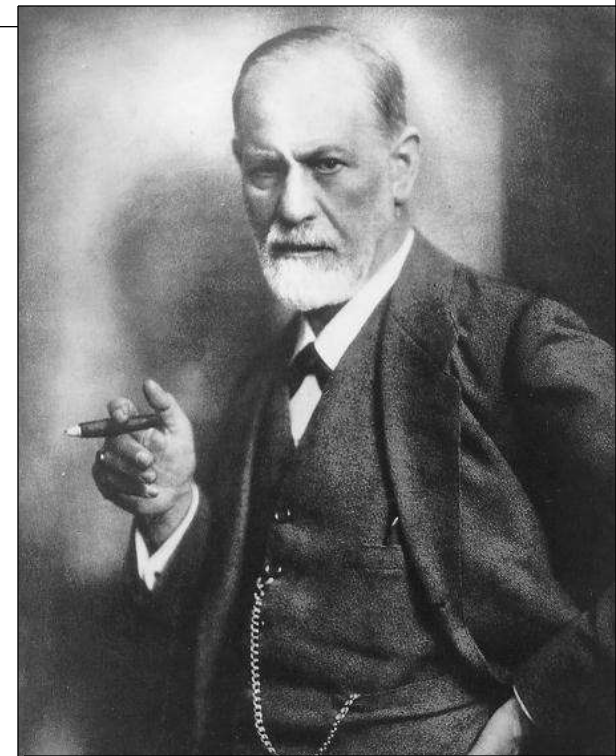


New Ideas & patterns of life developed in the 1920's that changed the way people looked at the world

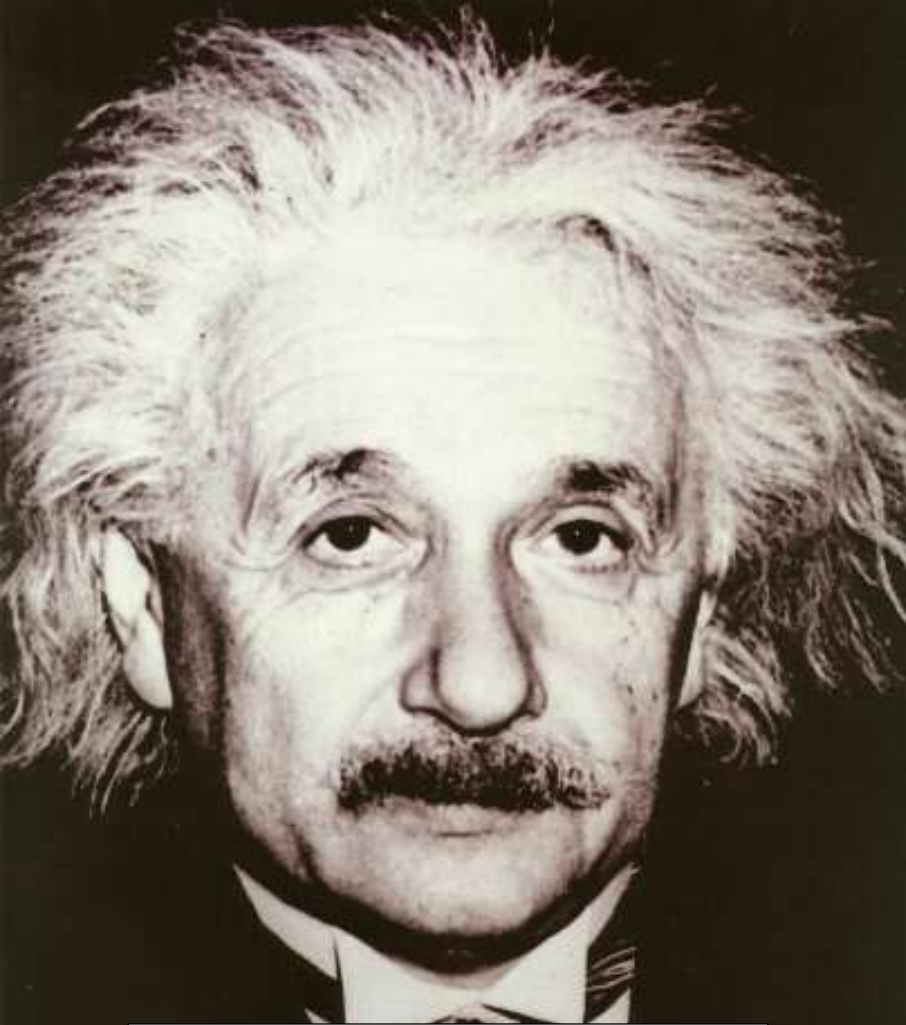
The ideas of two remarkable thinkers became widely known during this “age of uncertainty.” They were Albert Einstein & Sigmund Freud. Both had an enormous impact on the 20th century Einstein & Freud challenged some of the most deeply rooted ideas that people held about themselves & their world.



Albert Einstein



Sigmund Freud



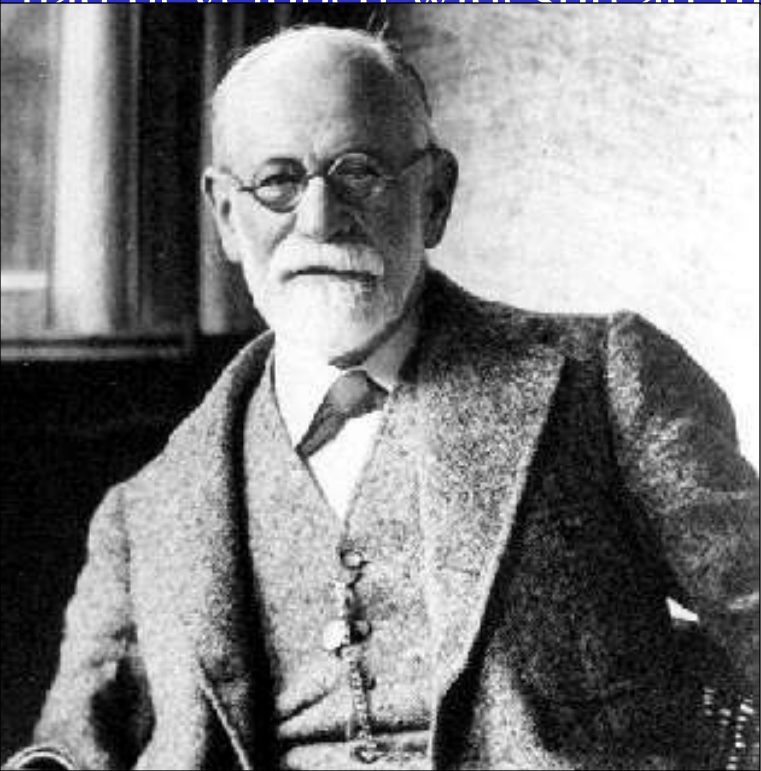
Albert Einstein

A German-born physicist, Einstein offered new ideas on space, time, energy & matter. In 1905, Einstein theorized that while the speed of light is constant, other things that seem constant, such as space & time, are not. Space & time can change when measured relative to an object moving near the speed of light - about 186,000 miles per second. Since relative motion is the key to Einstein's idea. It is called the **“Theory of Relativity”**

Einstein's ideas had implications not only for science but for how people viewed the world. Now uncertainty & relativity replaced Newton's comforting belief of a world operating according to absolute laws of motion & gravity

The Austrian, Freud, was a physician who treated patients with psychological problems. From his experiences, he constructed a theory about the human mind. He believed that much of human behavior is irrational, or beyond reason. He called the irrational part of the mind the unconscious. In the unconscious, a number of drives existed, especially pleasure-seeking drives of which the conscious mind was unaware.

Freud's theories, first met opposition, but by the 1920's, Freud's theories had developed widespread influence.





The Brutality of WWI caused philosophers & writers to question accepted ideas about reason & progress.



In 1922, T.S. Eliot, an American poet living in England, wrote that Western society had lost its spiritual values. He described the postwar world as a barren waste land drained of hope & faith.



In their search for meaning in an uncertain world, some thinkers turned to the philosophy known as existentialism. They believed that there is no universal meaning to life. Each person gives his or her own meaning to life through choices made & actions taken.



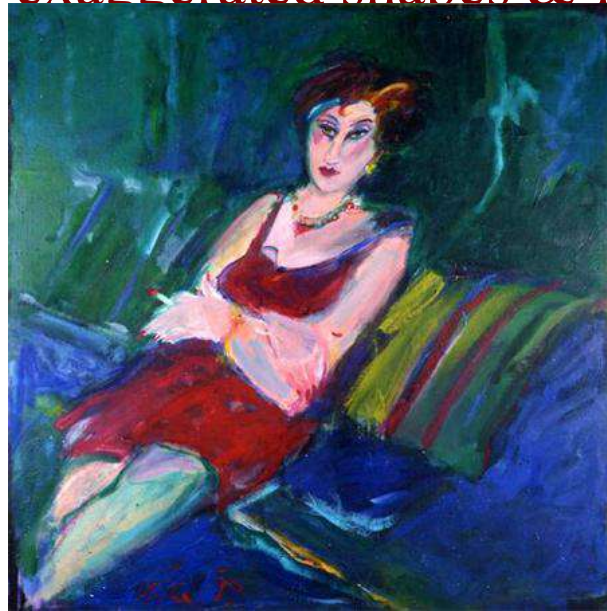
Existentialists had been influenced by the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (NEE-chuh). In the 1880's, he wrote that western society had put too much stress on such ideas as reason, democracy & progress. This stifled actions based on emotion & instinct. As a result, individuality & creativity suffered.

He urged a return to the ancient heroic values of pride, assertiveness & strength. He wrote that through willpower & courage, some humans could become supermen. They could rise above & control the common herd.

His ideas had a great impact on politics in Italy & German in the 1920's & 1930's.



Artists rebelled against earlier realistic styles of painting. They wanted to depict the inner world of emotion & imagination rather than show realistic representations of objects. Expressionist painters used bold colors & distorted or exaggerated shapes & forms.



Inspired by traditional African art, Georges Braque of France & Pablo Picasso of Spain founded Cubism in 1907. Cubism transformed natural shapes into geometric forms. Objects were broken down into different parts with sharp angles & edges.

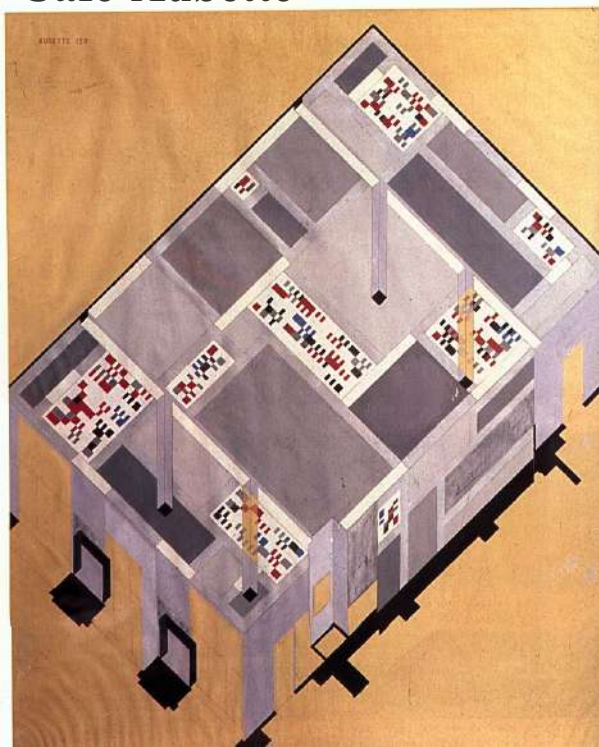


Often several views were depicted at the same time

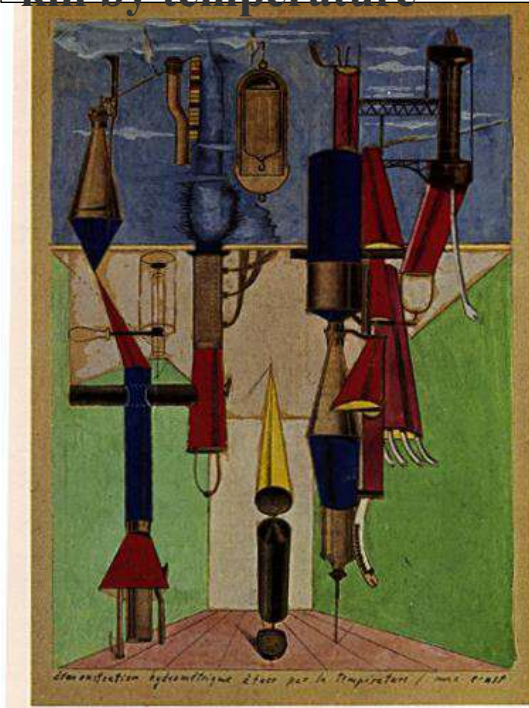


The Dada movement (1916-1924) was much a protest as an art movement. Its message was that established values had been made meaningless by the savagery of WWI. The term *DADA*, French for “hobbyhorse,” was reportedly picked at random. Sounding like a nonsense work, it fit the spirit of the movement. Dadaist works were meant to be absurd, nonsensical & meaningless.

Draft for the tearoom on the ground floor of the Café 'Aubette'



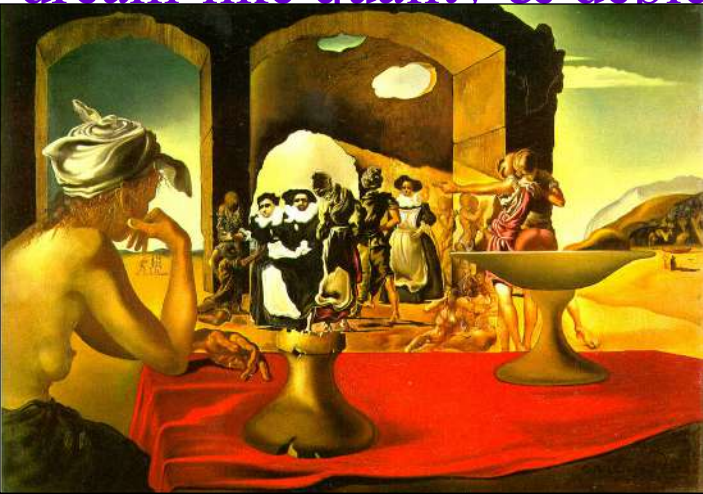
Hydro metric demonstration of how to kill by temperature



Merz picture with Rainbow



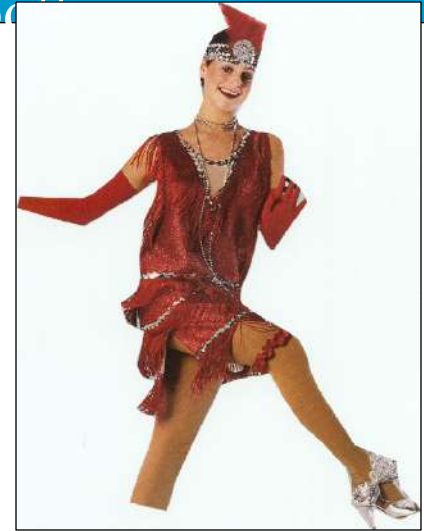
Surrealism followed Dada. Inspired by Freud's ideas, surrealism was an art movement that sought to link the world of dreams with real life. The term surreal means "beyond or above reality." Surrealists tried to call on the unconscious part of their minds. Their paintings frequently had a dream-like quality & depicted objects in unrealistic ways.



An Architectural revolution occurred when architects rejected traditional building styles for completely new forms. Instead of highly ornamented structures, they constructed buildings in which the design reflected the building's function or use. The American architect Frank Lloyd Wright pioneered this new style, known as functionalism. He designed houses featuring clean, low lines & open interiors that blended with the surrounding landscape.



A new popular musical style called jazz came out of the U.S. It was developed by black musicians in New Orleans, Memphis, & Chicago. It swept the U.S. & Europe. The lively loose beat of jazz seemed to capture the new freedom of the age. The new jazz music also brought about new dances such as the Charleston & The Black Bottom.



«Eine Idee zu anstößig», Black Bottom 1926

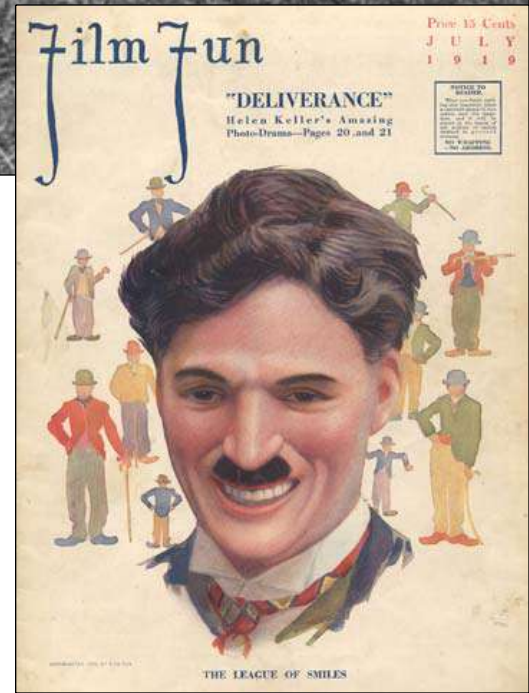
The Independent spirit of the times showed clearly in the changes women were making in their lives. The war had allowed women to take on new roles. Their work in the war effort was decisive in helping them win the right to vote.

After the war, women's suffrage became law in many countries, including the U.S., Britain, Germany, Sweden & Austria.

"The word flapper described a young woman who rebelled against convention." After finally obtaining the right to vote, women felt empowered. They began wearing their skirts above the knee (how scandalous!) & cutting their hair in a "bob." Flappers were central to parties of the vibrant nightlife of the 1920's. Despite prohibition, parties were a frequent occurrence. "Like jazz music, the gangster, & the speakeasy, the rebellious & fun-loving flapper was a product of 1920s urban America."



Technology Changes Life



The Automobile Alters Society: The automobile benefited from a host of wartime innovations & improvements – electric starters, air filled tires & more powerful engines. Cars no longer looked like boxes on wheels. They were sleek & brightly polished, complete with headlights & chrome-plated bumpers. After the war, prices on cars dropped & the middle class could afford cars.

Increased auto use by the average family led to lifestyle changes. More people traveled for pleasure. In Europe and the U.S., new businesses, from motor hotels to vacation campgrounds, opened to serve the mobile tourist. People could more easily move to suburbs & drive to work.

Airplanes Transform Travel: The war also brought improvements in aircraft. By 1918, planes could fly hundreds of miles. In the postwar era, daring fliers carried the first airmail. International air travel became an objective after the war. In 1919, two British pilots made the first successful flight across the Atlantic, from Newfoundland to Ireland. The next major crossing came in 1927, when an American pilot named Charles Lindbergh captured world attention with a 33 – hour solo flight from N.Y. to Paris. Most of the world's major passenger airlines were established during the 1920's.

Amelia Earhart an American, was the first woman who, in 1932, flew solo across the Atlantic.

Radio:

The real push for radio development came during WWI, although the first successful experiments with radio came in 1895 with Guglielmo Marconi. The advantages of wireless communication in battle were so great that all countries gave radio research a high priority. Armies developed a wide range of radio equipment that would also have uses in peacetime.

In 1920, the world's first commercial radio station – KDKA in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania – began broadcasting. Almost overnight, radio mania swept the U.S. Soon every major city had stations broadcasting news, plays & even live sporting events. In many European nations, unlike the U.S. radio broadcasting was controlled by the government.

Movies Revolutionize Popular Entertainment

In the 20's, motion pictures were a major industry. Many countries, from Cuba to Japan, produced movies. In Europe, film was a serious art form. They tended to explore psychological or political themes.

However in the Los Angeles suburb of Hollywood, movies were entertainment.

From Hollywood in the 20's came the zany, slapstick comedies of Mack Sennett & his Keystone Kops, and dramas that starred Mary Pickford or Rudolph Valentino. But the king of the silent screen was the English-born Charlie Chaplin, a comic genius best known for his portrayal of the lonely little tramp bewildered by life. In the late 20's, the addition of sound transformed movies. By the mid 1930's nearly 90 million Americans escaped from the hardships of life by attending movies each week.



Charlie Chaplin



Mack Sennett



Keystone Kops



Mary Pickford



Rudolph Valentino

A Global Depression

By the late 20's, European nations were rebuilding war-torn economies. They were aided by loans from the more prosperous U.S. In the U.S., Americans seemed confident that the country would continue on the road to even greater economic prosperity. One sign of this was the booming stock market. Yet the American economy had serious weaknesses that were soon to bring about the most severe economic downturn the world had yet known



The cost of the war was immense in both human loss & suffering and in economic terms. WWI left every major European country nearly bankrupt. Only the U.S. & Japan came out of the war in better financial shape than before:

- Neither had been a wartime battlefield.
- Both countries had expanded their trade during the war.
- Europe's domination in world affairs had declined since the war.
- The long brutal fight had drained the continent's resources.

The end of WWI saw the sudden rise of new democracies. From 1914 to 1918, Europe's last absolute rulers had been overthrown. The dynasties in Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia & the Ottoman empire all ended. But because these countries had monarchies for so long, they had problems forming new democracies. Some countries had a dozen or more political groups, which made it almost impossible for one party to win enough support to govern effectively.

When no single party won a majority, a coalition government or temporary alliance of several parties, was needed to form a parliamentary majority. Because the parties disagreed on so many policies, coalitions didn't last long. And because they didn't last long, it became hard for these countries to develop strong leadership & move toward long-term goals. Voters in several countries were then willing to sacrifice democracy for strong, totalitarian leadership.

Germany's new democratic government was set up in 1919; known as the Weimar Republic. It was named after the city where the national assembly met. It had serious weaknesses from the start:

- Germany lacked a strong democratic tradition
- Postwar Germany had several major political parties & many minor ones
- Millions of Germans blamed the Weimar government for the country's defeat & postwar humiliation.

Note: It was the Weimar government that signed the Treaty of Versailles.

Germany also faced enormous economic problems that began during the war. Germany did not increase taxes during the war to help pay for the war, they simply printed money. After Germany's defeat, the paper money steadily lost its value.

To pay their reparations payments to the Allies & other economic problems, Germany printed even more money. The result was that the value of the German mark fell sharply.



Severe inflation set in. Germans needed more & more \$ to buy even the most basic goods. For example, in Berlin a loaf of bread cost less than a mark in 1918, more than 160 marks in 1922 & some 200 billion marks by late 1923.

People took wheelbarrows full of \$ to buy food. The mark had become worthless.

Consequently, people saw their life savings become worthless. The money that people had saved to buy a house now barely covered the cost of a table.

Germany recovered from the inflation largely thanks to the work of an international committee, which was headed by an American banker – Charles Dawes. The Dawes Plan provided for a \$200 million loan from American banks to stabilize German currency & strengthen its economy.

The plan was put into effect in 1924 & it helped slow inflation. As the German economy began to recover, it attracted more loans & investments from the U.S. By 1929, German factories were producing as much as they had before the war.



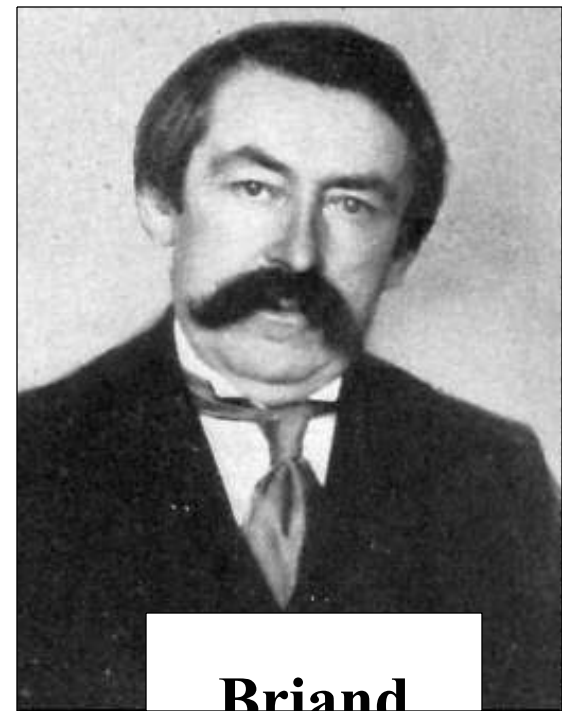
As Germany's prosperity returned, Germany & France tried to improve relations between their countries. In 1925, they met in Locarno, Switzerland, with officials from Belgium, Italy & Britain. They signed a treaty promising that France & Germany would never again make war against each other. Germany also agreed to respect the existing borders of France & Belgium. It was then admitted to the League of Nations.

In 1928, the hopes raised by the “spirit of Locarno” led to the Kellogg-Briand peace pact. Frank Kellogg, the U.S. Secretary of State, arranged this agreement with France’s Briand. Almost every country in the world, including the Soviet Union, signed. They pledged to renounce war as an instrument of national policy.



Kellogg

Unfortunately, the treaty had no means to enforce its provisions. The League of Nations, had no armed forces & the refusal of the U.S. to join also weakened it.



Briand

The Stock Market

Stocks are shares of ownership in a company. Businesses get money to operate by selling “shares” of stock to investors, or buyers. Companies pay interest on the invested money in the form of dividends to the shareholders.

Investors hope to make more \$ on stocks than if they put their \$ elsewhere, such as in a savings account with a fixed rate of interest, but if the stock price goes down, investors lose \$ when they sell their stock at a lower price than when they bought it.

In the 20's, European countries invested in the stock market, not realizing that if the U.S. economy weakened, the whole world economic system could collapse.

In 1929 it did

By 1929, about 4 million Americans – 3% of the nation's population – owned stocks. As they continued to buy, stock prices rose & wealth was generated on paper, but it bore little relation to the real worth of companies or the goods that they produced.

During this time, many investors began buying on margin- paying a small % of the stock's price as a down payment & borrowing the rest. Stockbrokers were willing to lend buyers up to 75% of a stock's purchase price. This system worked as long as prices continued to rise, because investors could sell their inflated stocks to make a profit & then pay off their debt to the stockbroker. But if stocks declined, there was no way to pay off the loan.

In early September 1929, stock prices peaked & began to decline. Confidence in the market started to waver & some investors sold their stocks & pulled out. On October 24, the market took a plunge, as panicked investors unloaded their shares.

Stock Market Crash

In late October 1929 – just a few days before Halloween – investors in New York City began to panic. Stocks that they had bought at high prices began to drop. More & more investors sold their stocks at whatever price they could get. Over two days, the value of companies being traded on the stock exchange fell almost 13 % on Monday & another 12 % the next day. That day became known as "**Black Tuesday.**" Fortunes were wiped out. **The stock market had crashed.**

All across the country & all around the world, people paid attention to the news closely. Some investors killed themselves. Millions of people from all over the world who owned stocks waited helplessly as stock values crashed.



10/24/1929 New York. Thousands mill around the New York Stock Exchange after the worst break in the history of the exchange occurring on Oct. 24th.

The stock market downturn continued for at least three years. By the time it was over, the average value of companies in the Dow Jones Industrials Average had dropped almost 90 percent – from a high of 381 to a low of 41. In other words, companies were worth barely more than 10 percent of their former value.

Jobs were hard to find.

Farmers and rural residents felt the stock market crash as well – people and companies that used to buy food and other agricultural products no longer had the money to buy much of anything. The crash, along with other factors, produced an economic slowdown that lasted over 10 years. Investors had lost \$30 billion, an amount equal to American spending in WWI

Bank Failure

In the 1920s, Nebraska & the nation as a whole had a lot of banks. At the beginning of the 20s, Nebraska had 1.3 million people & there was one bank for every 1,000 people. Every small town had a bank or two struggling to take in deposits & loan out money to farmers & businesses.

As the economic depression deepened in the early 30s, & as farmers had less & less money to spend in town, banks began to fail at alarming rates. During the 20s, there was an average of 70 banks failing each year nationally.



People milling about outside of a bank that closed, ca. 1933.
National Archives photo.

After the crash during the first 10 months of 1930, 744 banks failed. In all, 9,000 banks failed during the decade of the 30s. By 1933, depositors saw \$140 billion disappear through bank failures

After the crash, many Americans panicked & withdrew their money from banks forcing some banks to close. Many banks could not cover their customers' withdrawals, because the banks had invested and lost money in the stock market, just as individuals had.

As a result, 659 banks shut their doors in 1929. By 1933, around 6,000 banks or 1/4th of the nations total had failed! And because there was no federal insurance to protect the bank accounts, around 9 million individual saving s accounts were completely wiped out.

Also some 85,000 businesses went bankrupt, causing millions of workers to lose their jobs.

"When the stock market went down to nothing there was people jumping out of two-story, three-story buildings in New York. That's what we heard anyway. Just jumping out!"



In cities like New York after the crash long lines of people waited to be fed. There were no government relief programs during 1932, so free food was distributed by private groups.
National Archives.

Worldwide Depression

The depression that began in the United States in 1929 went around the world in the years that followed.

By 1932, more than 30 million people could not find a job. That same year, industrial production worldwide was 38% less than it had been in 1929.

Just as in the U.S., unemployment rates in Germany & Great Britain reached 25% in 1932. In Germany that meant that over 5.5 million people were out of work. Some historians point to that fact as one of the reasons that democracy broke down and Adolph Hitler gained dictatorial power.

What caused the Great Depression to become a worldwide event? Some economists say that the fact that there was an international monetary system tied to the price of gold made the different economies closely related. Problems in one large economy were passed on to others and eventually back to the country where the problems began.



The Depression in Germany helped bring Adolph Hitler to power.

To make matters worse, in 1930, Congress passed the **Hawley-Smoot Tariff Act**, which was designed to help American farmers and manufacturers by protecting their products from foreign competition. But what it did in reality was it reduced the flow of goods into the U.S. and it prevented other countries from earning American currency to buy American exports. In this way, the tariff made unemployment worse in industries that could no longer export goods to Europe.

Many countries retaliated by raising their own tariffs. Within a few years, world trade had fallen more than 65% - a severe reduction in overall economic activity.

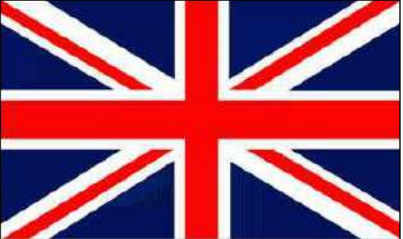
Also, because of war debts & dependence on U.S. loans & investments, Germany & Austria were particularly hard hit. In 1931, Austria's largest bank failed. This started a financial panic in Central European countries & sent their economies plunging.

In Japan the economy also slumped. Japanese farmers suffered greatly. In the crop growing areas of the northeast, crop failures in 1931 led to famine. Starving families ate tree bark & the roots of wild plants.

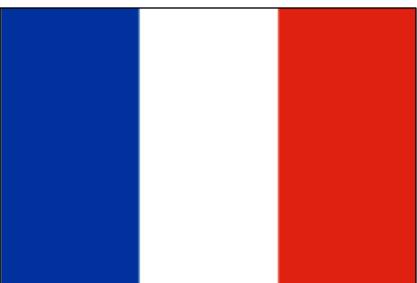
In Latin America, many of its nations were tied to the global economy by trade in such cash crops or raw materials as sugar, beef, copper & tin. During the 20's, world prices & market demand for these products were already dropping. As European & U.S. demand for Latin American products dried up in the 30's, prices for these goods collapsed.

Latin American nations that had borrowed heavily from other nations could not repay their debts.

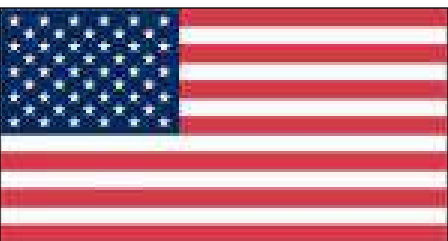
The Depression confronted democracies with a serious challenge to their economic & political systems. Each country met the crisis in its own way.



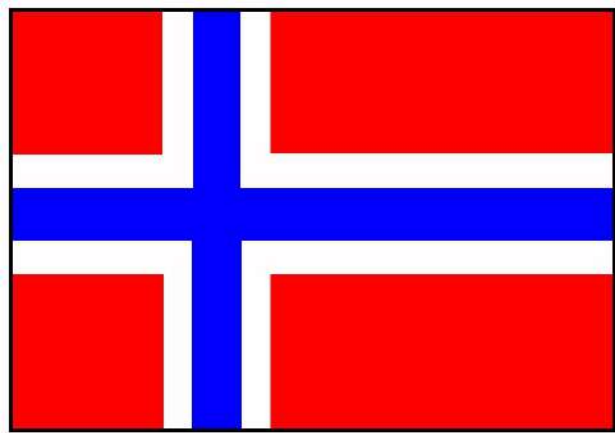
In Britain, they voted for a multi-party coalition known as the National Government. This government then passed high protective tariffs, they increased taxes & regulated the currency. They also lowered interest rates to encourage industrial growth



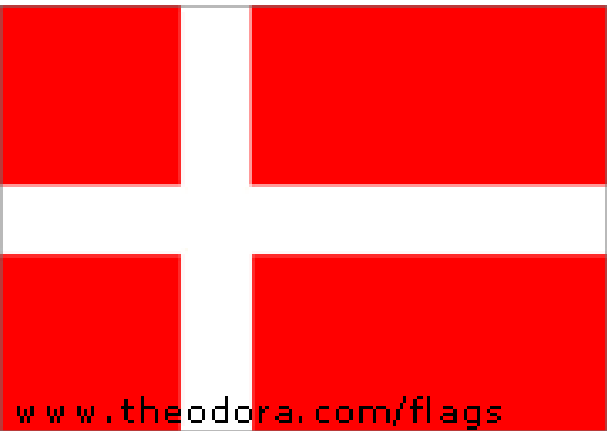
In France, they were not as hard hit by the depression because they didn't rely as much on foreign trade as other countries. They were still a heavily agricultural country. But nevertheless, by 1935, one million French workers were unemployed. In 1936, moderates, Socialists & Communists formed a coalition – The Popular Front. They passed a series of reforms to help the workers. Reforms such as pay increases, holidays with pay & a 40 hour work week.



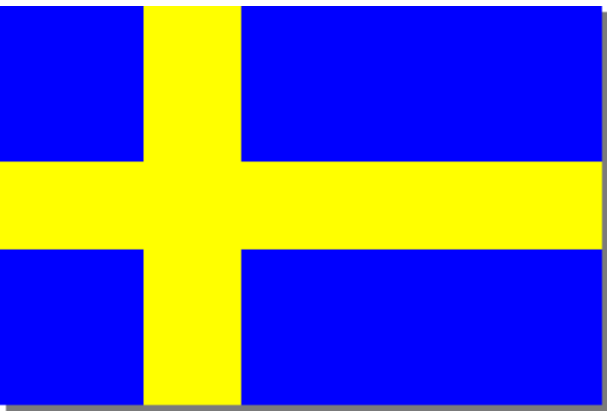
In 1933, the U.S. President – Franklin Roosevelt began a program called the New Deal, which started large public works projects which helped to provide jobs for the unemployed. New government agencies gave financial help to businesses & farms. Large amounts of public \$ were spent on welfare & relief programs



In Scandinavian countries of Denmark, Sweden & Norway, they built their recovery programs on a tradition of cooperative community action.



They raised pensions for the elderly, increased unemployment insurance, subsidies for housing & other welfare benefits.



To pay for these benefits, the governments taxed all citizens, but both private & cooperative businesses prospered and their democracies remained intact.

During the 20's, the Japanese government became more democratic being ruled by a prime minister, similar to that of Great Britain. Japan also signed the Kellogg-Briand Pact renouncing war.

As long as Japan remained prosperous, the civilian government kept power, but when the Great Depression hit in 1930, the government was blamed and military leaders gained support & soon won control of the country.

They wanted to restore traditional control of the government to the military and not try to establish a new system of government. Instead of having a forceful leader like Mussolini or Hitler, the militarist made the emperor the symbol of state power.

Japan kept Hirohito as the head of state which won support for the army leaders who ruled in his name. Similar to Germany & Italy, Japan's militarists were extreme nationalists.



- They wanted to solve the country's economic problems by foreign expansion:
- They planned a Pacific empire that included a conquered China.
- The empire would provide Japan with raw materials & markets for its goods.
- It would also give Japan room for its rising population.



Japan Invades China

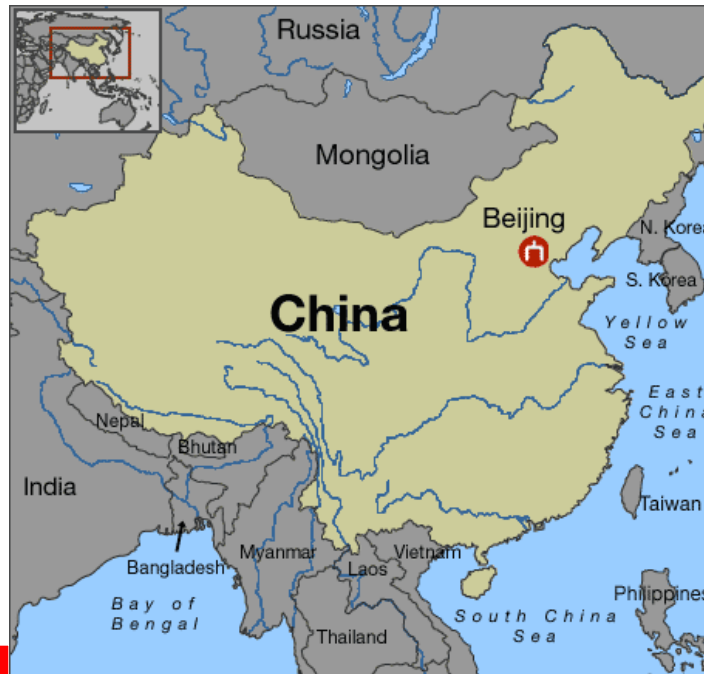
Japanese businesses had invested heavily in China's northeast province, Manchuria. It was an area rich in iron & coal. In 1931, the Japanese army seized Manchuria, despite objections from the Japanese parliament. The army then set up a puppet government. Japanese engineers & technicians began arriving in large numbers to build mines & factories.

When Japan attacked Manchuria it was the first direct challenge to the League of Nations. The League condemned Japanese aggression, but it had no power to enforce its decisions. Japan ignored the protests & withdrew from the league in 1933.



Four years later, a border incident touched off a full-scale war between Japan & China.

On July 7, 1937, the Japanese & the Chinese exchanged shots at a railroad bridge near Beijing. Japanese forces then swept into northern China. Despite having a million soldiers, China's army led by Jiang Jieshi was no match for the better equipped and trained Japanese.



Known in English as: Chiang Kai-shek



Japanese Imperial Army troops pushed up the Yangtze River from Shanghai, which had fallen that November. On December 13, 1937, they marched into what was then called Nanking, the capital of China.

The Chiang forces had already fled far upriver, to establish a new capital. The people of Nanjing stayed behind, and suffered in what historians call **“The Rape of Nanjing”**.

Historians say up to 300,000 of them died.

For six weeks, chaos consumed the city. The Japanese lined people up by the hundreds and killed them en masse. Firing squads and beheadings became common scenery. As many as 57,000 people died during one execution, according to Rong Weimu, a researcher at the Institute of Modern History at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

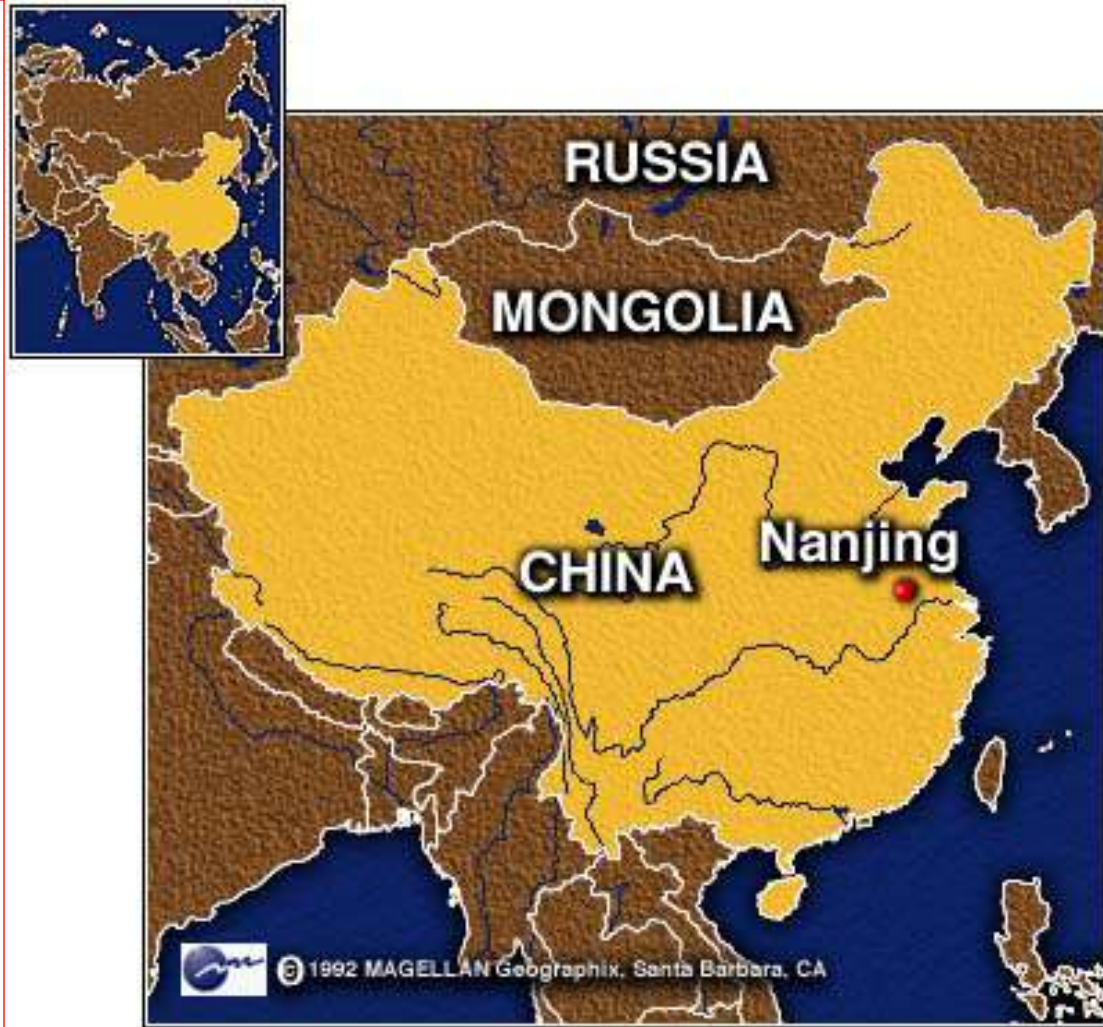
An estimated 20,000 to 80,000 women were raped; many were disemboweled and left to die. Some soldiers even cut off the breasts of their victims, then nailed the women alive to walls.

"December 14th, noon, Japanese soldiers broke into a house in JianYin street, they kidnaped four girls, raped them for two hours.

In the night of December 15th, a large group of Japanese soldiers broke into the dorm of Jingling University, raped over thirty women, several women were gang raped by more than six Japanese.

December 16th, Japanese soldiers kidnaped seven girls from Infantry University, aged from sixteen to twenty-one. Five of them were later released.

According to the report of 18th, they were raped over six times a day.





Pan Kaiming, now 80, and a former autoworker, carries a calling card that reads "Nanjing Massacre Survivor." Pan says that on December 14, 1937, he was among about 300 people who were lined up to face a firing squad. The Japanese sprayed the group with machine gun fire. Pan awoke beneath a pile of bodies.

"Slowly, slowly, I made my way out," he recalled. "My coat was completely soaked with blood. I thought I was a ghost."

He went to the river to clean the blood from his body, but the river was red -- filled with blood running from hundreds of corpses tossed into the water. Pan escaped by pretending to be a messenger for a Japanese officer.





Five Chinese prisoners being buried alive.

Forced to retreat, Jiang Jieshi set up a new capital at Chongqing. At the same time, Chinese Communist guerrillas led by Mao Zedong continued to fight in the conquered area.



Since the League failed to stop the Japanese, Mussolini became encouraged to plan an aggression of his own. He had his eye on Ethiopia which was ruled by Haile Selassie.

Mussolini dreamed of building a colonial empire in Africa like that of Britain & France.

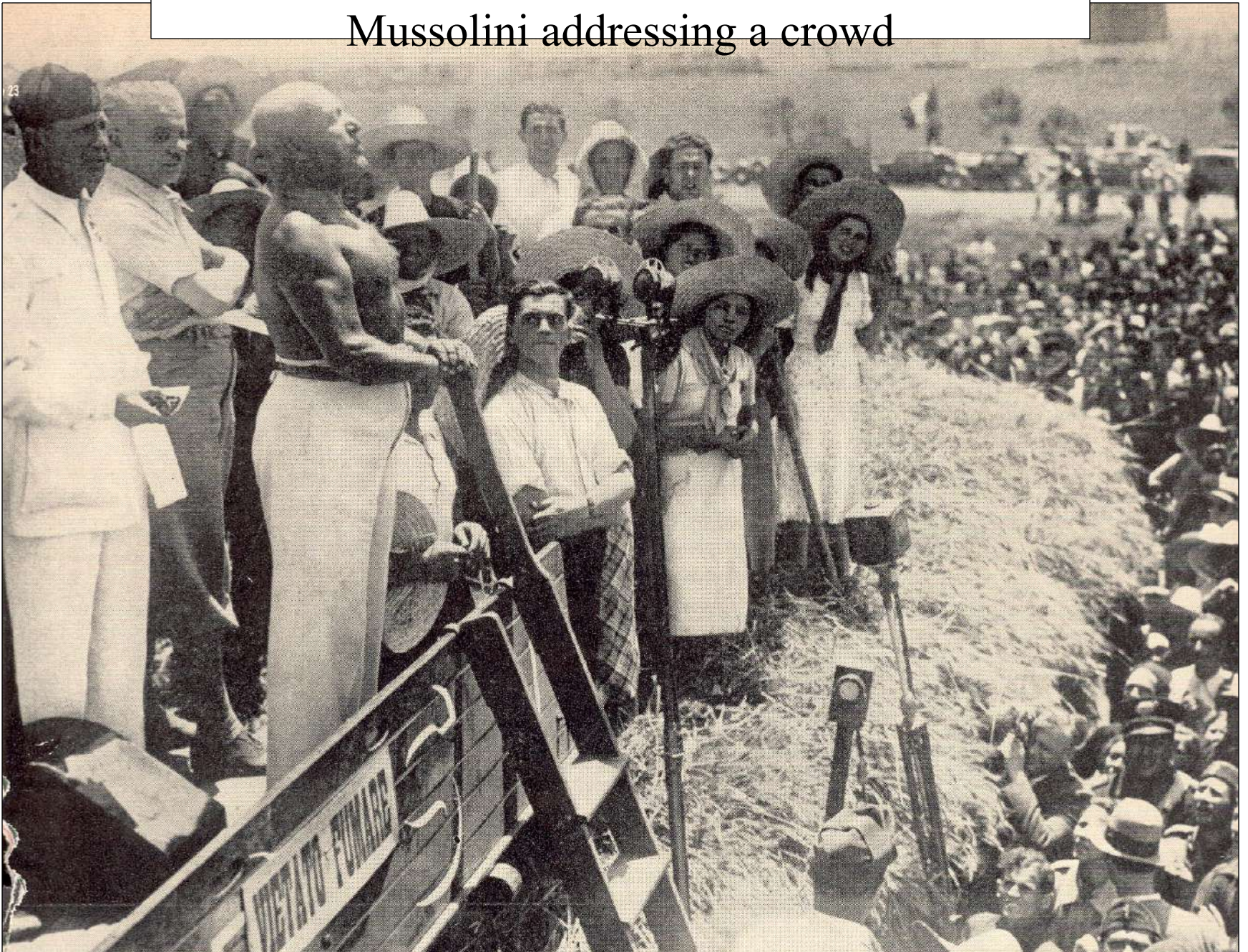


Mussolini AKA Il Duce



Haile Selassie

Mussolini addressing a crowd



The Ethiopians had successfully resisted an Italian attempt at conquest during the 1890's. To avenge that defeat, Mussolini ordered a massive invasion of Ethiopia in October 1935, which was no match for the Italian army.

In May 1936, Mussolini told a cheering crowd that "Italy has at last her empire...a Fascist empire."

The Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie urgently appealed to the League for help. Although the league condemned the attack, its members did nothing. Britain continued to let Italian troops & supplies pass through the British controlled Suez Canal on their way to Ethiopia. By giving in to Mussolini in Africa, Britain & France hoped to keep peace in Europe.

The Emperor's speech to the League of Nations denouncing the Italian invasion is remembered more than the aggression itself. It prompted essentially ineffectual international trade sanctions against a European nation but, like the Battle of Adwa four decades earlier, represented in a tangible way one of the few occasions in the modern era that an African nation defied the arrogance of a European one. There were very few world leaders of the post-war era who had actually led troops in combat. Haile Selassie and Dwight Eisenhower were exceptional in this respect, which partially accounts for their close friendship.



Hitler had long pledged to undo the Versailles Treaty. One of the provisions of the treaty was that it limited the size of Germany's army. In March 1935, Hitler announced that Germany would not obey these restrictions. In fact, Germany had already begun rebuilding its armed forces.

The League issued only a mild condemnation. Banners throughout Germany announced, "Today Germany! Tomorrow the World!"

The league's failure to stop Hitler from building up its armed forces only convinced him to take even more greater risks. Hitler decided to have the German troops move into the Rhineland on March 7, 1936, which according to the treaty, they were forbidden to enter.



The French were unwilling to risk war. Hitler later admitted that he would have backed down if the French & British had challenged him.

The German reoccupation of the Rhineland marked a turning point in the march toward war.

- First it strengthened Hitler's power & prestige within Germany.
- Second, the balance of power changed in Germany's favor.
- Third, the weak response by France & Britain encouraged Hitler to speed up his military & territorial expansion.

According to the treaty, German troops were forbidden to enter a 30-mile wide zone on either side of the Rhine River. It formed a buffer zone between Germany & France. It was also an important industrial area

Hitler's growing strength convinced Mussolini that he should seek an alliance with Germany. In October 1936, the two dictators reached an agreement that became known as the Rome-Berlin Axis. A month later, Germany also made an agreement with Japan. Germany, Italy & Japan came to be called the Axis Powers.



On Nov 5, 1937 Hitler announces to his advisors his plans to absorb Austria & Czechoslovakia into the third Reich (German Empire).

In March 1938, Hitler sends his army into Austria and annexed it, which was in direct violation of the Treaty of Versailles, which prohibited a union between Germany & Austria. Many Austrians supported unity with Germany.

Hitler next turns to Czechoslovakia, who had developed into a strong democratic country with a strong army & a defense treaty with France. About 3 million German-speaking people lived in the western border regions of Czechoslovakia called the Sudetenland, which formed the Czechs' main defense against Germany. In 1938 Hitler demands that the Sudetenland be given to Germany. The Czechs refuse & ask France for help.

To avoid war, Germany, France, Britain & Italy meet in Munich, Germany (which was proposed by Mussolini) in what was called the Munich Conference. They met on Sept. 29, 1938. The Czechs were not invited. During the conference Britain & France agree that Hitler could take the Sudetenland; in exchange, Germany would respect the Czechs new borders. Less than 6 months after the conference, Hitler's troops take Czechoslovakia. Soon after, Mussolini takes nearby Albania. Hitler then demands that Poland returns the former German port Danzig. The Poles refuse & turn to France & Britain for aid

Britain & France ask the Soviet Union (Russia) to join them in stopping Hitler's aggression.

Negotiations proceed slowly because France & Britain do not trust the Communist government of Russia & Stalin resented having been left out of the Munich Conference.

While Stalin talked with France & Britain, he also bargained with Hitler. Both Hitler & Stalin reached an agreement. They publicly commit to never attack one another. On Aug. 23, 1939, they sign a nonaggression pact.

Hitler & Mussolini again test the will of the democracies of Europe in the Spanish civil war. Spain had been a monarchy until 1931, when a republic was declared. The government, run by liberals & socialists, held office amid many crises. In July 1936, army leaders, favoring a Fascist-style government, joined General Francisco Franco in a revolt. Thus began a civil war that dragged on for 3 years. Hitler & Mussolini sent troops, tanks & airplanes to help Franco's forces, who were called the Nationalists.



Francisco Franco

The Western democracies remained neutral. Only the Soviet Union sent equipment & advisors to aid the Spanish Republicans. An International Brigade of volunteers fought on the Republican side but had little chance against a professional army. Early in 1939, Republican resistance collapsed. Franco became Spain's Fascist dictator.



NATIONALIST FLAG



REPUBLICAN FLAG

Spanish Civil War



The U.S. follows an isolationist Policy: Many Americans resisted accepting the nation's new position as a world leader. They believed that political ties to other nations should be avoided – Isolationism. They argued that entry into WWI was a costly error & they were determined to prevent a repeat of this mistake.

Beginning in 1935, Congress passed 3 Neutrality Acts. These laws banned loans & sale of arms to nations at war. The isolationists believed this action would keep the U.S. out of another foreign war.