

## Dictators Take Power

The Great Depression spread around the world. In Germany and Italy, dictators appealed to desperate citizens by promising to restore prosperity. In Italy, **Benito Mussolini** built a political movement called **fascism**—a system under which the government rules through terror and by appealing to racism and nationalism. Using black-shirted followers to enforce his rule, Mussolini became prime minister in 1922. He won over nationalists by promising to turn Italy into a new Roman Empire. In 1935 his fascist troops invaded Ethiopia in Africa. The League of Nations had been formed to halt such aggression. However, it had little success.

In Germany, **Adolf Hitler** joined the National Socialist German Workers', or **Nazi**, Party. He tapped the bitter anger many Germans felt about the unfairness of the peace agreement ending World War I. The treaty required Germany to pay millions for war damages. Hitler skillfully blamed the nation's economic woes on Jews and other groups. After coming to power in 1933, he jailed critics. His expansion of German territory began with a violation of the World War I peace agreement. He sent troops into the Rhineland, a part of Germany near the French border. In

1938, he invaded Austria and attached it to Germany. Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain of Britain met with Hitler in Munich, Germany, in September 1938. Chamberlain agreed to allow Germany to take parts of Czechoslovakia. In return, Hitler promised not to demand any more land.

During this same period, dictator **Joseph Stalin** controlled the Soviet Union. Communist parties loyal to the Soviet Union had followers throughout Europe. Both Nazis and Fascists won many supporters by opposing the Communists. People feared Communist governments would seize their businesses and outlaw private property.

In Japan, military leaders held a powerful position in the government. In 1931, Japan invaded Manchuria, a province of China. This signaled the beginning of a planned Asian expansion. The League of Nations did little. In 1940, Japan, Italy, and Germany formed the Axis Powers.

### Questions

- 1.) What is the connection between the rise of dictators and the Great Depression?
- 2.) What shared economic belief between Hitler and Mussolini made them at odds with Joseph Stalin?