Chapter 25
Communism, Fascism, Democracy, 1917–1939

People

Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov: a communist known as Lenin, he led the November 1917 Revolution in Russia.

Leon Trotsky: key leader of the Red Army in the Russian Revolution; wanted “permanent revolution.”

Josef Stalin: ruthless successor to Lenin, who industrialized Russia with Five-Year Plans.

Benito Mussolini: Fascist dictator in Italy, referred to as “Il Duce,” who used intimidation to get to power.

Adolf Hitler: leader of German Nazi party appointed to head government, but held power as “Der Fuhrer.”

Francisco Franco: a General in the Spanish army who led Nationalists to victory in the Civil War, with help.

Raymond Poincaré: French President granted extraordinary powers to end the financial slump in his country.

Franklin D. Roosevelt: elected President of United States during the Depression and implemented his New Deal.

Ramsay MacDonald: Labour Party leader in Britain expelled by his party for modifying the program.

Léon Blum: Popular Front leader and Premier of France for a short time, but could not hold on to power.

Terms

soviet: workers’ councils that emerged to challenge the legitimacy of government in Russia in the revolutions.

Mensheviks: Russian communists who opposed Lenin in the split in the party; means “minority.”

Bolsheviks: Marxist followers of Lenin who believed in dictatorship of the proletariat and a single-party state; means “majority.”

Comintern: international organization of communist parties requiring acceptance of Lenin’s 21 Conditions.

Fascism: political movement of the right led by a charismatic leader; systematic violence and intimidation tactics used.

Reichstag: home of German parliament, burned in 1933 (used by Hitler to begin eliminating opposition).

Aryan: a supposedly “pure and superior” European race, claimed by Hitler to be the German people.

Black Tuesday: New York stock exchange took a spectacular drop on this day, sparking the Depression.

New Deal: legislation and executive action designed to end the economic slump in the United States, under Roosevelt.

Popular Front: a coalition of parties of the left in France, cooperating for a time to oppose Fascism.
1. 
- Russia’s loss in the Crimean War led to reform as Czar Alexander II emancipated the serfs in 1861.
- Defeat by Japan in 1905 led to a revolt that compelled Nicholas II to introduce Russia’s first constitution.
- World War I was a disaster for Russia. Troops lost heart and then would not fire on rioting workers, so the Czar abdicated. (Provisional Government tried to rule and continue the war, but was opposed by workers Soviets.)

2. 
- Concern for Russia, rather than world-wide revolution.
- A portrayal of the leader (Stalin) as a larger-than-life hero figure.
- People forced to work for the state in perpetual terror of secret police, etc.
- An élitism of the Party, and a totalitarian society.

3. 
- Initially, socially radical, anti-clerical and monarchist, and into land redistribution.
- Later, Mussolini cooperated with land owners not Socialists, made peace with Church, allowed king to remain, and became anti-Semitic.
- What remained was only extreme nationalism and a pragmatic hold on power.

4. 
- The Weimar Republic was Germany and its government during 1920s: a liberal, democratic republic headed by a Chancellor and a President.
- Moderate political parties governed in a coalition.
- Challenges included danger from the military and nationalists (who accused the government of a “stab in the back,”) economic troubles, French occupation, and inflation.

5. 
- Frustrated by Vienna art school refusal, he became an ultra-nationalist and anti-Semite.
- Successful in the First World War, but resented the surrender.
- Joined the Nazi Party and became a powerful speaker.
- In 1923, tried a coup in failed Beer Hall Putsch.
- The trial brought publicity; in jail he wrote Mein Kampf.
- On release, he added the SS to his SA as a military arm.
- The Depression led to a rise in his popularity, so a coalition was put together and he became Chancellor.
- Reichstag was set on fire, then issued the Enabling Act, which gave Hitler dictatorial powers.
- President Hindenberg died and Hitler became the chancellor and president.
6. Nazism was a secular religion: messiah, emblems, rituals.  
- Books were burned, education and the press were controlled.  
- Propaganda, entertainment, and rallies all served the state.  
- Hitler Youth groups indoctrinated youth with singing and working.  
- People were taught that their duty on earth was to obey and follow Hitler totally: self-sacrifice, devoted to collective.

7.  
- The Popular Front was elected (coalition of republicans, socialists, Catalan nationalists and communists).  
- They were opposed by parties of the right with regional alliances and military support (who launched a coup).  
- Civil War erupted; Republicans versus Nationalists (led by Franco).  
- Both Hitler (Germany) and Mussolini (Italy) came to the aid of the Nationalists. France started selling the Popular Front military equipment but stopped when it was clear this was not popular at home. Mexico and the Soviet Union were the only two countries to aid the republican government in the war, though foreign individuals did join international brigades.

8.  
- There was false prosperity as investors borrowed heavily and drove stock prices up.  
- The United States credit facilities were integral, but its banking was in shambles.  
- World trade collapsed and unemployment misery spread through the democracies.

9.  
- FDR promised to end the economic slump and was willing to experiment.  
- He took oversaw strong government intervention in ways not seen before.  
- He regulated business; showed capitalism was flexible.

10.  
- In Britain, MacDonald and Baldwin charted a middle course. The public supported this; extremists were never a real danger.  
- In France, leftists in the Popular Front government of Blum tried moderation but voters were polarized and he eventually resigned.