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**Topic: Chapter 26 – The Futile Search for Stability: Europe between the Wars**

**Key Individuals:**

Ramsay McDonald: First Labour Party Prime Minister in Great Britain, but was overthrown due to conservatives believing he was moving too close to Communism.

Stanley Baldwin: A conservative who replaced Ramsay McDonald and guided Great Britain through its “prosperous years” (even though they weren’t really because unemployment was at10%).

John Maynard Keynes: Economist that made the argument that unemployment was caused from a decline in demand, which could increase through a public works system financed through deficit spending to stimulate production.

Raymond Poincaré: Set up the Conservative National Bloc government to use German reparations from World War I to rebuild North and Eastern France, invasion of the Ruhr caused him to raise taxes and got him kicked out of office. However, Poincaré returned when the government that replaced him couldn’t agree on economic issues; he stabilized the economy.

Benito Mussolini: Fascist leader of Italy.

Adolf Hitler: Nazi dictator of Germany.

Vladimir Lenin: Russian revolutionary leader.

Joseph Stalin: Took control of the Communist party in Russia.

**Key Events:**

France Occupying the Ruhr Valley: Caused by Germany violating the peace treaty because Germany couldn’t pay the $2.5 billion marks owed by 1922; Effected Germany’s government by them continuing to print money causing inflation to continue to rise, did not affect France positively so a new conference reassessed the reparations problem in 1924.

The Great Depression: Caused by a downturn in domestic economies, and an international financial crisis caused by the collapse of the American stock market; It’s effects were an increase in the homeless and unemployed, increased government activity in the economy, a revival of communist (Marxist) doctrines, and an increase in dictatorships (Fascism).

Decline of the Weimar Republic: Caused by no great political leaders to guide them, internal uprisings, runaway inflation, middle class moving to support rightist parties, pensions and lifetimes savings disappeared, and the rise of unemployment due to the Great Depression; It’s effect was it set up the conditions for the rise of Nazism.

**Abstracts:**

* The League of Nations wasn’t effective because the United States failed to join, they avoided dealing with European affairs, and economic fatality.
* France formed the “Little Entente” because of fear of going to war with Germany and Communist Russia.
* The policy of “passive resistance” after World War I led to political and economic problems in Germany by rising inflation (from the Ruhr Valley occupation event), and Communist upheavals followed by Hitler’s attempt at taking power.
* The Dawes Plan (the Ruhr Valley settlement) reduced reparations and stabilized Germany’s payments on the basis of its ability to pay. It granted Germany a $200 million loan for German recovery which aided American investments and European prosperity.
* The Treaty of Locarno guaranteed Germany’s new borders with Poland were absent from the agreement; those borders were not permanent, but were viewed by many as a start to a new era of European peace.
* The Kellog-Briand pact consisted of 63 nations agreeing to the pledge “to renounce was as an instrument of national policy.”
* Modern totalitarianism expected the active loyalty of its citizens to the regime’s goals. Mass propaganda was used to control not only the economic, political, and social aspects of society, but intellectual and cultural, too. It was led by a single leader and party that subjected all individual freedoms to the collective will.
* Totalitarianism in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany grew out of extreme rightist ideas of Nationalism, and in Germany racism. Communism in Soviet Russia came out of Marxist Socialism, a radical leftist program.
* The Beer Hall Putsch (Hitler’s arresting) made Hitler more determined, and made him re-evaluate his tactics.
* Hitler gained emergency powers when a fire broke out in the Reichstag; he convinced Hindenburg to grant him the power to suspend all citizens’ rights for the duration of the “emergency” so the Nazis could arrest anyone. This led to Hitler gaining dictatorial powers through The Enabling Act.
* The Enabling Act “empowered the government to dispense with constitutional forms for four years while it issued laws that would deal with the country’s problems”; Hitler antagonized the government for more power after the fire in the Reichstag, he claimed to be protecting the officials. This caused Hitler to gain dictatorial powers.
* Gleichschaltung was the Nazis coordination of all institutions under Nazi control. The civil service was rid of Jews and democracy, concentration camps were set up for those who rebelled, autonomy of federal states was eliminated, trade unions disappeared, and all opposing political parties were abolished.
* The Nazis were successful so quickly because they were ruthless and prepared. Germany was weak from the Great Depression and its defeat in World War I, the Nazis provided a strong, new Germany above classes and parties.
* Hitler’s final steps to creating the Third Reich were killing the SA leader Ernest Röhm and others who spoke of a second revolution, this time against Hitler, and Hindenburg’s death allowed Hitler to finally succeed him.
* Nazi policies towards women: child bearers who would further the Aryan race, they must be protected- excluded from heavy industry, university teaching, medicine, and law; women should pursue careers in social work, nursing, etc. Overall: restrictive legislation against females.

**Key Themes/Movements:**

Political Developments in Great Britain from 1921-1931: The Labour Party became the second most powerful political party after the Conservatives in 1923. Ramsay McDonald became the first Labour Party Prime Minister but was overthrown 10 months later when conservatives thought he was leaning too close to Communism. Stanley Baldwin replaced him as prime minister, a conservative, and guided Great Britain through its “prosperous years”, even though they really weren’t. A National government (coalition of all 3 parties) brought Great Britain out of the Great Depression by 1936.

Political Developments in France from 1924-1936: A Conservative National Bloc government was set up, with Raymond Poincaré at the head, to use German reparations to rebuild Northern and Eastern France, but the Ruhr invasion made Poincaré raise taxes-this caused him to be kicked out by the Cartel of the Left. The Cartel of the Left was a mix of Radicals (a democratic party of small property owners) and Sociats (Marxist Socialism), but differences on economic issues made them unable to rule and Raymond Poincaré returned to stabilize the French economy. Once the Great Depression hit it caused 6 different cabinets to form spiralling France into political chaos, during this time French Fascist groups were demonstrating. This caused the first Popular Front government to form a coalition (of communists, socialists, and radicals) that established a “French New Deal” (right to collective bargaining, a 40 hour work week, 2 week paid vacations, and minimum wages). However the Popular Front government failed in the Great Depression.

Rise of Socialism in the Scandinavian States in the late 19th-early 20th centuries: The Social-Democratic governments were in Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Finland between the wars; they encouraged the growth of rural and industrial cooperative enterprises, avoiding the pitfalls of pure Communist/Capitalist systems. They also increased social services by increasing old age pensions, unemployment insurance, subsidized housing, free parental care, maternity vacations, and paid vacations.

Fascist Italy: Benito Mussolini started Fascism in 1919, it received little attention at first but because of a stalemate in Italy’s parliament and strong nationalism kept his ideas going. Mussolini began gaining the support of middle-class industrialists and large landowners who were scared of the working-class agitation. Mussolini then entered into a political alliance with the Liberals and the Prime Minister Giovanni Giolitti in exchange for his bands of armed fascists suppressing anything related to the Socialists. Fascists became known as the party of order and gained mass support from the middle and upper classes (white-collar workers, professionals and civil servants, landowners, merchants and artisans, and students made up 60% of the membership). As Italy’s political system continued to dwindle Mussolini organized a march on Rome to seize power; this scared the government and King Victor Emmanuel III declared Mussolini prime minister of Italy. By the time the Fascists won a majority of seats in parliament Mussolini had created the “institutional framework” for his dictatorship. The prime minister was the “head of government” and could legislate by decree, the police could arrest anybody for crimes without due process of law (accompanied with a secret police), mass media was completely controlled by Fascists for propaganda, and a Fascist educational policy was set up in youth organizations that formed a new Italian, hardworking, physically fit, intellectual single-minded community. However Mussolini didn’t create complete totalitarianism because the old power structure was never destroyed (ex-the armed forces and the monarchy were independent) and he promised to help workers/peasants but worked with industrialists/landowners instead. Overall Fascism was not as strong as other regimes because it “promised much, but delivered considerably less.”

Nazi Germany: Hitler took control of the German Worker’s Party, an extreme right-winged nationalist party, and renamed it the National Socialist Workers’ Party aka Nazi, and that is where Nazi Germany’s story starts. By 1923 the party had a following of 70,000 all together (55,000 members and 15,000 Storm Troopers, or SA-the Nazi’s police force). When the Weimar Republic almost collapsed in 1923, the Nazis marched on Berlin to overthrow it (Beer Hall Putsch). This movement was quickly crushed and Hitler was arrested, and while in prison he wrote Mein Kampf, a book filled with extreme German nationalism, anti-Semitism, and anticommunism all supported by a social Darwin theory of struggle that believes superior nations establish authoritarian leadership over the masses. Hitler came back better than ever from imprisonment and restructured the Nazi party strictly on the principle that it was a “single-minded party under one leader.” In 1932 the party’s members accumulated to 800,000 (the SA had 500,000 members) and with a mixture of the poor economic and psychological impact of the Great depression, the dying of parliamentary democracy, and Hitler’s speeches to the masses the road for the Nazi party was paved. The right-wing elites of Germany, the industrial magnates, landed aristocrats, military establishment, and higher bureaucrats supported Hitler in an authoritarian regime , and because of this pressure President Hindenburg made Hitler chancellor and allowed him to form a new government. Within 2 months Hitler had laid the foundations for the Nazis’ control of Germany (i.e. the fire in the Reichstag followed by The Enabling Act). Next the Nazis instituted Gleichschaltung and Hitler soon followed with taking out Ernest Röhm accompanied with Hindenburg’s death FINALLY allowed his Third Reich to begin. Hitler’s totalitarian state came to be through mass demonstrations (celebrations) to mobilize people, while conflicts within in the party and then those between the party and the state allowed Hitler to be the sole decision maker. Unemployment dropped due to public works projects and rearmament (industry wasn’t nationalized), and the Labour Front being controlled by the state , only if a person submitted completely to the Nazi controlled Labour Front’s policies could a worker receive a workbook-which was mandatory to have to get a job. Hitler then had his controlling body of the regular and secret police forces, the SS, that operated on terror and racial ideology; its primary goal was to further the Aryan race. Other institutions (Catholic and Protestant churches, primary and secondary schools, and universities) were brought under Nazi control. Organizations were set up for the youth, civil servants, teachers, women, farmers, doctors, and lawyers much like those in Fascist Italy. Hitler then began instituting anti-Semitic policies and policies towards women. Hitler was ready for a German empire.

The Soviet Union: Another totalitarian state, but based on Communism. The civil war in Russia ended in 1921 but Lenin’s “war communism” policy (government nationalization of transportation, communication facilities, banks, mines, factories, businesses, and the requisitioning of produce from peasants) kept on and soon peasants were sabotaging the program followed by an industrial collapse. Vladimir Lenin then instituted his New Economic Policy (NEP) which was a modified version of the old capitalist system. Peasants could now sell their produce openly, and retail stores/small industries that had fewer than 20 employees could now be privately owned. Lenin died in January 24, 1924, and the Politburo, the leading institution of the party, was divided over the future of the nation. The Lefts, led by Leon Trotsky, wanted to end the NEP and begin rapid industrialization and carry on the revolution of Communism abroad. The Rights didn’t want a world revolution, but to concentrate on the construction of a socialist state and to continue Lenin’s NEP. Joseph Stalin was a the party’s general secretary who appointed secretaries in regions, districts, cities, and towns, because of this he gained mad respect from everyone else and eventually supported the Rights. He used his position as general party secretary to take control of the Party and set up his dictatorship. Stalin’s first five-year plan was to move Russia from an agricultural state to an industrial one; it emphasized max production of capital goods and armaments (heavy machinery quadrupled, oil production grew to twice its original size, steel moved from 4 to 18 million tons, and coal went from 36-128 million tons). However there were social and political costs; small provision was made for the expanded labour force in the cities and wages declined, Stalin used propaganda to pacify the workers. Stalin collectivized agriculture and pushed people into collective farms, too. Stalin then strengthen party bureaucracy by sending those who resisted him to labour camps in Siberia, and purging of Old Bolsheviks in the government and army officers, diplomats, union officers, party members, intellectuals, and citizens who resisted his rule. Stalin made a dictatorship old tsars could envy.

Political Developments in Eastern Europe between the Wars: Conservative, authoritarian governments rose. Wide police powers were used to defend the existing social order. They limited the participation of the masses and settled for passive obedience. Poland, Austria, Yugoslavia who adopted parliaments in 1920, Romania and Bulgaria adopted parliaments constitutions in 1920 became authoritarian by the late 1920s due to fears of land reform, Communist agrarian upheaval, and ethnic conflict.

**Cultural and Intellectual Movements:**

Radio and Movies: With the discovery of wireless radio waves, radio broadcasts were available for mass audiences. Public corporations were being set up with mass production of radios. Movies became a new form of entertainment for the masses, as well, many motion pictures were used for political purposes for propaganda by Hitler and others. Radio and movies increased their viewing audiences size and provided a shared experience to mass culture. Soon actors/actresses were becoming celebrities. Both revolutionized people’s lives.

Mass Leisure: Mass leisure activities were not new, but work week hours were and much more free time was provided for everyone. Professional sporting events had a huge increase in attendance and more travel opportunities were available because of airplanes.

The Dada Movement: focused on the purposelessness of life. Dadaists were “revolted by the insanity of life”, and so they created anti-art. Much of the art resembled collages.

Surrealism: Looked for a reality beyond the material world and found it in the unconscious world by portraying fantasies, dreams, and nightmares.

Modern Functionalism: Architecture became constructed with a “purpose for which they were constructed.”

The Search for the Unconscious: Literary techniques also reflected looking for reality beyond the material such as the stream of consciousness, where the writer would write almost a report of the characters inner thoughts. Psychology also was hugely affected by the thought of the unconscious. Sigmund Freud was embraced and psychoanalysis transformed into a major career.

The “Heroic Age of Physics”: After Max Planck and Albert Einstein more discoveries were happening. Seven subatomic particles had been discovered and the atom had been understood well enough to start the development of the atomic bomb.

**Necessities:**

* Hitler took Germany and shook it up. He’s crazy and bad and partly caused WWII.
* Nations were not sticking to the plan after WWI and totalitarian regimes spring up easily everywhere (Italy, Germany, and the Soviet Union) because of it.
* WWII was a comin’.