

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Between the Wars

Learn more about this topic! Each section gives more detail on one of the lyrics from the song. Read each section, and then respond by answering the question or taking notes on key ideas.

1. b''

Unlike most other countries involved in World War I, America emerged with a strengthened economy. The period of luxury, celebration, and growth that followed was known as the Roaring Twenties. But the prosperity didn't last. In 1929, the US stock market crashed, and the country fell into the Great Depression, a severe economic downturn that spread across the world. This resulted in massive unemployment.

\n

President Franklin D. Roosevelt introduced job-creation programs in an initiative called the New Deal. Several other countries, however, lacked effective leadership. Their political instability and weak economies provided a perfect breeding ground for dictators.

\n''

Notes

At the beginning of the 20th century, Russia was ruled by Tsar Nicholas II. Tsars, like kings, were born into royalty and had absolute power. In 1905, the Bolshevik and Menshevik rebel groups, who supported contrasting forms of government, tried to overthrow the tsar. Though they were unsuccessful, their attempt, called the Revolution of 1905, hurt the public's view of Tsar Nicholas II and sparked increased activity in the Communist Party.

\n

Like many nations, Russia lost millions of young men in World War I. Many people in Russia attributed this to Tsar Nicholas II's lack of military experience. In March 1917, most people could not afford the price of bread and began to starve. Thousands marched, holding signs that read "Peace and Bread."

\n

The Russian government forced Tsar Nicholas II to step down, and a temporary government was installed. However, it was soon overthrown by the Bolsheviks, who supported communism. According to communist ideology, society's means of production (such as factories and mines) should be owned communally rather than privately. The Bolsheviks were led by a revolutionary thinker named Vladimir Lenin.

\n''

3. b''

Some Russians didn't like the new communist regime. Fresh from the wounds of World War I, Russia sank into its own civil war. The communists, or Red Army, fought against the anti-communists, or White Army. The communists had secret police who terrorized those who disagreed with them. The Red Army won. Lenin and the communists now had total control over a country suffering a famine.

\n

Lenin died in 1924. Enter Joseph Stalin. He took complete control of Russia, now called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, or USSR. He began a Five-Year Plan, aimed to quickly change the USSR into an industrial nation. During the changeover, farming suffered, and people continued to starve. Stalin scapegoated well-off farmers called kulaks for the USSR's problems.

\n

In addition to persecuting kulaks, Stalin persecuted those he suspected of disagreeing with his policies. They were either executed or sent to the Gulag, a system of forced-labor camps in Siberia. Over 8 million people suffered this fate.

\n''

Notes

4. b'

Following the Russian Revolution, Italy's wealthy elite grew afraid of the possibility of a similar revolution in Italy. A communist revolution might improve life for very poor Italians, but people with money would lose their possessions. Benito Mussolini created the Fascist Party as a response to fears of communism. In a fascist government, the dictator has control of everything and people have no individual rights. This is also known as a totalitarian government.

\n

Mussolini used secret police called the OVRA to make sure that nobody could speak out or act out against fascism. He also used a campaign of propaganda biased, often false information designed to make people feel or believe a certain thing. Propaganda signs around town said, "Mussolini is always right." Mussolini built a cult of personality around himself, promoting an idealized version of himself through the media. He was not the only one to do this. Stalin, for example, had a biography of himself published in 1948, in which he was described as the greatest leader and most sublime strategist of all times and nations.

\n'

5. b''

No country felt the brunt of World War I like Germany did. The Treaty of Versailles forced Germany to accept primary responsibility for World War I. Additionally, Germany had to pay reparations to cover the losses of the Allied Powers. The acceptance of responsibility hurt Germany's morale, and the reparations hurt its economy.

\n

Things became even worse during the Great Depression, when Germany suffered severe unemployment. Many Germans were frustrated with their government, the Weimar Republic. In 1923, the National Socialist German Workers' Party, led by Adolf Hitler, staged an uprising. When the rebellion failed, Hitler was imprisoned.

\n''

Notes

Notes

During Hitler's nine-month imprisonment, he wrote a deeply antisemitic autobiography called *Mein Kampf*, or "My Struggle." In it, he blamed Jews for Germany's defeat in World War I, as well as for the country's economic troubles. He continued to spread his lies after his release.

\n

As Germany's economic situation worsened, people were eager for a scapegoat. In 1932, the Nazi Party gained a majority in Germany's parliament. Within a year, Hitler had been appointed chancellor, and Germany had passed the "Enabling Act," which authorized Hitler to enact laws without parliamentary approval. In 1935, Hitler passed the Nuremberg Laws, which stripped Jews of almost all civil rights. Hitler's ultimate goal, however, was genocide, or the killing of a large group of people. By the end of World War II, the Nazis had murdered over six million Jews.

\n'