

# Fascism and the great depression

[History](#)



Fascism and the Great Depression The Great Depression of the 1930s resulted in the most significant economic upheaval since the advent of the industrial revolution. Highly industrialized nations that had developed the concept of specialized labor were put into a severe hardship. England, France, Germany, and Italy were all similar in demographics and industrialization when the Depression began. Yet, each reacted differently. England and France were able to maintain their parliamentary form of government, while Germany and Italy turned to totalitarian fascism. Countries who had a long tradition and history of democracy and representative government were able to persist with freedom, while countries that did not have that history were quick to abandon the parliamentary process in favor of fascism.

The totalitarian governments of Germany and Italy were made possible by the creation of a political void when the depression set in. There was no long history of cooperative politics to base a future of compromise and sacrifice on. Both Germany and Italy fit this mold. Germany became an extreme form of totalitarianism with the practice of genocide and a policy of ethnic cleansing. Italy was less authoritarian in that it did not have world domination as a policy goal. However, Italy did wish to dispose of capitalism and put the power into the hands of the working class. This called for extreme measures to push their socialist agenda. Mainstream and moderate political ideas were shut out and in the process total control was given over to the fascist rulers.

#### The Rise of Adolph Hitler

Adolph Hitler was able to rise to unquestioned authority in Germany, which resulted in one of the most brutal dictatorships in the history of the world. He <https://assignbuster.com/fascism-and-the-great-depression/>

was able to rise to power as a part of the Nazi party machine. The Nazis had gained popularity after World War I and the resulting sanctions that were placed on Germany at that time. The Nazi party was based on an intense feeling of nationalism and patriotism. It emphasized that the German people stood alone against the rest of the world and the true Germanic race was superior. Hitler was able to exploit these feelings when he came to power at the beginning of the Great Depression. The time was right for a strong leader and Hitler capitalized on the economic misfortunes.

Hitler fueled his rise by the skilled use of propaganda, the media, and oratory skills. He made numerous propaganda films that depicted the German people as united and strong. This image of Germany was popular with the people and opened the door for an ever increasing level of dictatorship. His oratory presentation was inspirational to the German people at a difficult time. He was able to convince them that he had an economic plan for today and a master plan for Germany's future. Once he was able to gain control of the government he turned to violent repression to maintain his authority. A segment of the German population believed in his master plan for the future and those that opposed him were silenced by intimidation, fear, and death. The German people had allowed Hitler to seize control by failing to maintain an eternal vigilance over their freedoms.