

20th Century Economic Turmoil DBQ

Directions: Use Documents 1-12 to answer the following question. Your teacher may provide additional instructions and advice to use when answering the question below.

Prompt: Analyze the reasons for the growth of the totalitarian ideologies and regimes that existed in Europe during the interwar years.

Historical Background: The inter-war years (1918-1939) saw the growth of both left-wing (Communist) and right-wing (Fascist) movements and dictatorships in Europe.

Communism was imposed upon the USSR in 1917 and fascist regimes were created in Italy in 1922 and Germany in 1933.

Document 1

Source: Béla Kun, Hungarian communist, *Marx and the Middle Classes*, published in Pravda,* May 4, 1918.

The roots of the dilemma created by Imperialism are to be found in the economic relations on which Imperialism is based. There are only two classes capable of governing: the class of great capitalists, and the proletariat.

Every compromise with the *upper* bourgeoisie is treachery to the proletarian revolution. Every compromise with the lower middle-class after the victory of the revolution would mean the restoration of the supremacy of the upper bourgeoisie — the restoration of capitalist rule.

* official newspaper of the Soviet Communist party

Document 2

Source: Rosa Luxemburg, co-founder of the Spartakusbund ("Spartacus League"), the Communist Party of Germany, *The Russian Revolution*, 1918.

Freedom only for the supporters of the government, only for the members of one party – however numerous they may be – is no freedom at all. Freedom is always and exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently. Not because of any fanatical concept of "justice" but because all that is instructive, wholesome and purifying in political freedom depends on this essential characteristic, and its effectiveness vanishes when "freedom" becomes a special privilege.

Document 3

Source: Vladimir Lenin, Dictator of Russia, Speech defending the proletarian dictatorship before the Communist International Congress, 1919.

Workmen know very well that “freedom of meetings,” even in the most democratic bourgeois republic is an empty phase, for the rich have all the best public and private buildings at their disposal, and also sufficient leisure time for meetings and for protection of these meetings by the bourgeois apparatus of authority. The proletarians of the city and of the village, and the poor peasants, that is, the overwhelming majority of the population, have none of these things. So long as the situation is such, “equality,” that is, “pure democracy,” is sheer fraud.

Document 4

Source: German statistical office, *Germany's Economic and Financial Situation, An Exhibit of After-Effects of the World War*, 1923

The greater part of the population has been forced down far below their old standard of living, even with regard to the most important necessities of life. Consequently the foreigner...must not forget either that many people are influenced by the psychological fact that saving is no longer of any use; 100 marks today will perhaps be only 50 marks tomorrow. He who before the war, for example, had saved 5,500 marks could purchase for that amount furniture for a middle-class flat of three rooms...In the middle of February 1923...the same person, for the same articles, would have to spend 26.3 million marks in paper money...Does the stranger realize, moreover, that such violent changes in the valuation of Germany money have meant for many thousands of German savers the annihilation of their savings?

Document 5

Source: Article in the Enciclopedia Italiana,* *Fascism: Doctrine and Institutions*, 1932.

It [Fascism] is opposed to classical liberalism which arose as a reaction to absolutism and exhausted its historical function when the State became the expression of the conscience and will of the people. Liberalism denied the State in the name of the individual; Fascism reasserts the rights of the State as expressing the real essence of the individual....The state guarantees the internal and external safety of the country, but it also safeguards and transmits the spirit of the people, elaborated down the ages in its language, its customs, its faith. The State is not only the present, it is also the past and above all the future.

*Although the article was officially listed as by Mussolini himself, most of it was written by Giovanni Gentile, a noted philosopher who was an early supporter of Fascism.

Document 6

Source: Alice Hamilton, a prominent American physician and social activist who studied in Germany early in the 20th century, a letter to Jane Addams, another social activist, regarding her observations upon returning to Germany, July 1, 1933.

I don't care what faults a democracy has, it is a safe and human and liveable system and nothing else is. As the days go on, Germany gets more and more unreal, nightmarish, and it is hard to believe that eight days ago I was really in Hamburg, talking with people who were living in fear, who woke every morning with dread of what they might see in the papers, who would buy nothing and could make no plans because any day they might have to fly. You see, it has been growing worse instead of more lenient.

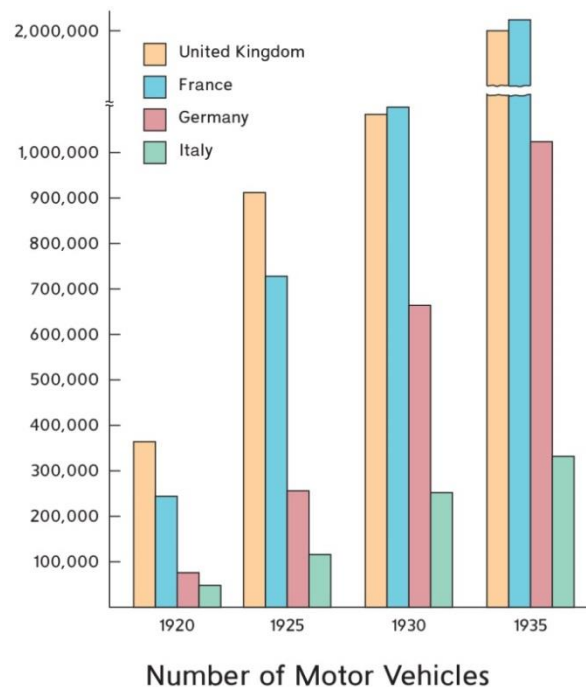
Document 7

Source: Benito Mussolini, Dictator of Italy, Speech broadcast to the public on the eve of the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, Oct. 2, 1933.

When in 1915 Italy threw in her fate with that of the Allies, how many cries of admiration, how many promises were heard? But after the common victory, which cost Italy six hundred thousand dead, four hundred thousand lost, one million wounded, when peace was being discussed around the table only the crumbs of a rich colonial booty were left for us to pick up. For thirteen years we have been patient while the circle tightened around us at the hands of those who wish to suffocate us.

Document 8

Source: Graph: The Number of Motor Vehicles in the UK, France, Germany, and Italy



Document 9

Source: Everett Collection, Inc., photograph of poster "*The Nationalists*," presenting Republican anti-Franco propaganda of the 1936 Spanish Civil War, 1936-39.



Source credit: Everett Collection/age fotostock

* The poster presents Republican anti-Franco propaganda. Five figures represent the interest backing the Nationalists and in the lower part of the ship are three men with rifles.

Document 10

Source: Adolf Hitler, Dictator of Germany, Speech delivered before the Reichstag, Feb. 20, 1938.

There are more than 10,000,000 Germans in states adjoining Germany which before 1866 were joined to the bulk of the German nation by a national link. Until 1918 they fought in the great war shoulder to shoulder with the German soldiers of the Reich. Against their own free will they were prevented by peace treaties from uniting with the Reich.

Document 11

Source: Arthur Koestler, prominent journalist, novelist, and former Communist Party member, *The God That Failed: Six Studies in Communism*, 1950.

A considerable proportion of the middle classes in central Europe were, like ourselves, ruined by the inflation of the twenties. It was the beginning of Europe's decline. This disintegration of the middle strata of society started the fatal process of polarization which continues to this day.

Document 12

Source: Ronald Hilton, Professor of Latin American Studies, *Spain, 1931-36, From Monarchy to Civil War, An Eyewitness Account*, referring to events in Madrid after the founding of the Spanish republic and prior to the outbreak of civil war in 1936, 2000.

It had really faded soon after the proclamation of the republic, which had not brought instant utopia, in fact conditions had got worse. However, it was the church issue which triggered unrest. Prime Minister Manuel Azaña must have realized that he would offend the mass of Catholics when he proclaimed that "España ha dejado de ser católica"—"Spain has ceased to be Catholic"; he expressed the fierce anti-clericalism of liberal intellectuals, and especially of the Masons.