

The Inter-War Period (1918-1939)

The **inter-war period** of world history is the time between the end of World War I and the beginning of World War II. This was a time of enormous change. The First World War led to **the end of many empires and monarchies** - The Ottoman (Turkish), Austrian, German, Russian and Chinese. Many of these countries experienced the rise of **facism and dictators** who replaced the old kings and emperors. This was also the time when the **League of Nations** existed.

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The USA experienced an era of economic prosperity in the 1920s referred to as the **Roaring Twenties**. During this time, culture such as music and dance, for example Jazz, flourished. Then in 1929 there was the **Wall Street Crash**. This led to **The Great Depression** in the 1930s. This affected the rest of the world too and the whole world experienced a time of economic problems.



GERMANY

Germany faced many economic problems after WWI. The country was devastated by the war, had undergone a revolution, was not allowed to join the League of Nations, and was burdened with **reparations** (money they had to pay to other countries). The country experienced **hyper-inflation** when prices went sky high and German money became worthless. The country was destroyed and in 1932, **Adolf Hitler** came to power offering the country a better future.

ITALY



Italy saw the rise of a dictator called **Benito Mussolini**. Mussolini had a dream of creating an Italian empire in Africa and in 1935 he invaded **Abyssinia** (now called Ethiopia). Mussolini and Hitler were allies.



JAPAN

Japan also had a dream of an empire and especially controlling resource-rich areas belonging to China, such as **Manchuria**. Japan was a member of The League of Nations but withdrew in 1933. Japan slowly became more and more militaristic and took advantage of the Chinese Civil War to take over large parts of China and they also invaded countries in South-East Asia including Malaysia, Thailand and Burma. **Hideki Tojo** was the leader of the Japanese army.

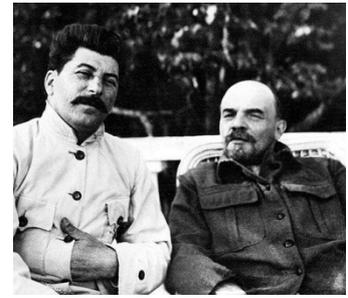
CHINA



For most of the inter-war period, China was involved in a **civil war (1927-1946)** between the **nationalists** and the **communists** which the communists finally won. During this time, Japan was invading China and killing many Chinese people. One of the most famous episodes was known as The Rape of Nanking.

RUSSIA

Russia did not join The League of Nations. The **Russian Revolution** took place in 1917 after which there was a **civil war from 1917-1922** between the communists (**Red Army**) and the Nationalists (**the White Army**). By the time Lenin died in 1924, the Communists had established control. Stalin took over after Lenin and sent Trotsky to Mexico where he was killed. Stalin then became total dictator of the **USSR**.



BRITAIN AND FRANCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Britain and France became the most powerful countries in The League of Nations because America and Russia didn't join. They were busy dividing up and fighting each other over the old **Ottoman Empire** and these countries became **'protectorates'**. Britain helped to create the new state of Israel and took control of Iraq and Palestine, while France took control of Lebanon and Syria. At the time, this part of the world was very important because whoever had it controlled access to India and both Britain and France wanted to stop Russia. Then later oil was discovered in Iraq.

