Crises and Power

How hardship and political choices opened paths to dictatorship

MWH.C.6.4.C "Evaluate the economic, social, and political conditions that allowed the rise of Fascist militarist regimes in Germany, Italy, Spain, and Japan."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline economic hardships, circle social conflicts or fears, and box political choices or weaknesses that helped leaders gain power.

Four Paths to Military Rule

1. In Italy, the end of World War I brought debt, inflation, and anger over peace terms. Strikes and land seizures frightened business owners and landowners, while weak coalition governments struggled to respond. Benito Mussolini's Blackshirts attacked opponents; after the March on Rome in 1922, the king appointed him prime minister. In Germany, Depression-era unemployment deepened resentment of the Versailles treaty. Nazi promises of jobs and national strength won support, and conservative leaders persuaded the president to appoint Adolf Hitler chancellor in 1933.

2. Spain's Second Republic faced land inequality, bitter disputes over religion, and clashes between left and right. After a military uprising in 1936, a civil war followed; General Francisco Franco gained support from landowners, the Catholic Church hierarchy, and Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. His victory in 1939 created a military dictatorship, not a copy of Hitler's regime. In Japan, falling silk exports hurt farm families during the Depression. Military leaders argued that taking territory would secure markets and resources, while civilian cabinets struggled to control the armed forces.

3. These movements did not take power the same way. The Italian king and Germany's president gave leaders legal offices before those leaders crushed opposition. Franco won a civil war, while Japanese army officers seized Manchuria in 1931 without prior approval from their government. In each case, hardship created openings, and fears about disorder or national weakness made force seem attractive to some people. But political choices mattered too: officials and institutions failed to stop attacks on democracy or civilian control.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did hardship and fear of unrest help Mussolini, and what political decision completed his rise?

2. Why did Germany's economic crisis alone not guarantee Hitler's rise? Name a social appeal and a political choice.

3. Which social division and which military event helped Franco establish a dictatorship?

4. How did economic hardship and weak civilian control help Japan's military expand abroad?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a five-sentence museum caption arguing whether economic, social, or political conditions best explain these regimes' rise. Use evidence from three countries and explain one limit of your choice.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline economic hardships, circle social conflicts or fears, and box political choices or weaknesses that helped leaders gain power. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did hardship and fear of unrest help Mussolini, and what political decision completed his rise?	**Debt and inflation caused hardship, while strikes and land seizures frightened property owners. The king appointed Mussolini prime minister.**
2	Why did Germany's economic crisis alone not guarantee Hitler's rise? Name a social appeal and a political choice.	**The Nazis appealed to hopes for national strength, and conservative leaders persuaded the president to appoint Hitler chancellor.**
3	Which social division and which military event helped Franco establish a dictatorship?	**Disputes over religion or clashes between left and right divided Spain. A military uprising began the civil war that Franco won.**
4	How did economic hardship and weak civilian control help Japan's military expand abroad?	**Falling silk exports hurt farm families, while civilian cabinets struggled to control officers who seized Manchuria.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Political weakness best explains how these regimes rose, although economic pain mattered. In Italy, weak coalitions could not calm unrest, and the king appointed Mussolini prime minister. In Germany, conservative leaders pressed the president to appoint Hitler. In Japan, civilian cabinets failed to control the armed forces as officers seized Manchuria. Yet political weakness alone does not explain why people listened: unemployment in Germany and falling silk exports in Japan made promises of strength more appealing.

Accept other defensible choices in Part 3 if the caption uses accurate evidence from three countries and identifies a limitation. Do not require students to treat Franco's dictatorship or Japan's military rule as identical to Nazism.