

US History

Origins of World War II

Learning Target:

I can examine the rise of fascism and militarism in Europe prior to WWII.

3. The Rise of Militarism – Stalin & The Soviet Union

The Formation of the Soviet Union –

- Formed from Russian and several surrounding states in 1922
- Formed with a communist government run by Vladimir Lenin
- Lenin had led the Bolshevik Revolution and was now in poor health
- His death in 1924 spurred a fight for power

The Emergence of Joseph Stalin –

- Stalin prevailed in a power struggle with Leon Trotsky for control of the USSR
- Organized a totalitarian state where the government had complete control
- Ruled the Soviet Union with an iron fist

Stalin's Policies –

Stalin's Goal –

- Create the model communist country
- The main economic goals of the country were agricultural & industrial growth

Agricultural Policies –

- The government took control of privately owned farm lands and reorganized them into collectives (large state-run farms worked by hundreds of families)
- The government confiscated grains and other foods and caused a famine in the early 1930's
- Opposition to these government programs could lead to imprisonment in forced labor camps known as gulags

Industrial Policies –

- Stalin's plan to transform Soviet society into an industrial power came through his "five-year plans"
- All economic activity was placed under state control
- Included all business, factories, and even work camps
- By 1937 the Soviet Union was the second largest industrial power in the world behind only the U.S.

Opposition –

- Used the Red Army and the police to crush all opposition
- Led widespread purges of the government when he thought enemies were after his power
- Famine, execution, and forced labor led to the deaths of around 30 million people