Japan After World War I

AP World History
Chapter 21
“The Collapse and Recovery of Europe”
1914 – 1970s
Japan After World War I

- Limited participation in WWI
- Result: Economy grew during and after the war
- 1920s = Japan moving toward more democratic politics and Western values
  - 1925 = universal male suffrage
  - Emergence of two-party system
  - Greater gender equality and more freedoms of expression
  - Expansion of education
  - Development of an urban consumer society
  - Middle-class women entered new professions

A Japanese Woman in the 1920s
Japan After World War I

- Tensions/problems resulting from Japan’s modernization and industrialization:
- 1918 = “rice riots” = millions protested the rising price of rice
- 1920s = union membership tripled as Japanese workers started to fight more for workers’ rights
- Increased disputes between landowners and tenants
- Rising women’s movement → wanted the right to vote and the end of legal prostitution
Japan After World War I

- These tensions and problems were alarming, reminded many of how the Russian Revolution started in 1917.
- 1925 = Peace Preservation Law passed = promised long prison sentences, or even the death penalty, to anyone who organized against the existing imperial system of government or against private property.
Japan and the Great Depression

- Great Depression = what ultimately led to harsher authoritarian rule in Japan
- Japan = hit hard by the Great Depression
  - Shrinking world demand for silk = millions of silk farmers now impoverished
  - Exports fell by 50% between 1929 and 1931
  - More than a million urban workers left unemployed
  - Food = scarce
  - Families forced to sell their daughters to brothels
Japan and the Great Depression

- Many began to question whether democracy and capitalism could address Japan’s “national emergency”
- Growing movement in Japan = “Radical Nationalism”
  - Extreme nationalism
  - Opposed to parliamentary democracy
  - Commitment to elite leadership focused around an emperor
  - Dedication to foreign expansion
  - Especially appealing to younger army officers

Japan’s Young Women’s Patriotic Association
Japanese Authoritarianism

- 1930s = right-wing nationalist thinking continued to grow
- Parliament, political parties, and elections continued but major government positions now held by military or bureaucratic figures, not party leaders
- Military began to have a more dominant role in political life
- Censorship limited free expression
- Only ONE single news agency allowed to distribute national and international news to newspapers and radio stations
- Trade unions banned replaced with “discussion councils”
Japanese Authoritarianism

• 1937 = new textbook issued by the Ministry of Education
  • Used in all Japanese schools
  • Stressed the difference between Japan and “the West”
  • Stressed the divinity of the Japanese emperor

• Students required to do more physical training
  • Martial arts replaced baseball in gym classes

Japanese Students at Rifle Training
Japanese Authoritarianism

- Authoritarian state in Japan gained a lot of popular support because it was able to pull Japan out of the Great Depression
  - By the end of 1937 = “everyone was working”
  - State-financed credit to businesses
  - Government spending on armaments
  - Public works projects
### Differences between Japanese Authoritarianism and Fascism in Italy and Germany

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>Italy and Germany</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No right-wing party gained popular support or seized power</td>
<td>Fascist political parties gained support &amp; seized power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No charismatic leader</td>
<td>Mussolini and Hitler</td>
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<tr>
<td>No fascist party</td>
<td>Strong fascist parties</td>
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<td>People arrested for political offenses = “resocialized” = renounced their errors and returned to the “Japanese Way”</td>
<td>People arrested for political offenses = institutionalized, deported, or killed</td>
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<td>Less repressive than Italy and Germany</td>
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Japanese Imperialism

- Japan believed it should have been given more land in the Treaty of Versailles
- 1930s = Japanese imperial ambitions began to grow
  - Growing Japanese nationalism
  - Military became more powerful in Japan’s political life
Manchuria

- Japan acquired sphere of influence in Manchuria following victory over Russia in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905
- Japanese fear = growing Chinese nationalism would threaten this sphere of influence
- 1931 = Japanese military seized control of Manchuria
  - Set up a puppet state called Manchukuo
- Western powers = NOT HAPPY
  - Japan = broke with its Western allies and withdrew from the League of Nations
  - 1936 = Japan joined with Germany and Italy in an alliance called the *Axis Powers*
China

- 1937 = Japan invaded China
- Japanese forces = brutal and violent
- In many Chinese villages ➔ every single person and every single animal were killed
- 1937-1938 = Rape of Nanjing
  - 200,000 to 300,000 Chinese civilians killed or mutilated within a few months
  - Countless women sexually assaulted