

666 dusty
 WDW
 A good control
 B rich keep their money
 C so

D poor get work
 1935 - DRAFT
 500,000
 1936 Rhineland

A Background Italy/Mussolini
 B A good control
 C rich keep their money

Program 1, 2, 3, 4
 1935 Ethiopia

Legacy of WWI
 Hope - isolationist
 View

But ignored tangled reality
 Isolationist strong in old populated area - German-ancestors

Under the Nazis, the state increased its control over industry, while leaving it in private hands. This allowed Hitler to begin a massive rearmament program, which produced badly needed jobs. By 1934, German factories were producing tanks and military aircraft. A year later, Hitler proposed a 500,000-man army and instituted the draft. In 1936, Nazi forces marched into the Rhineland—a clear violation of the Versailles treaty—and reoccupied it without firing a shot. “Today Germany,” the Nazis chanted, “tomorrow the world.”

Hitler had modeled himself, to some degree, after Italian dictator Benito Mussolini, the father of fascism in modern Europe. Born in 1883, Mussolini had served in the Italian army during World War I. Playing on the social unrest and economic turmoil of the postwar era, he seized national power in 1922 and proclaimed Fascismo, a merging of state and business leadership under the banner of extreme nationalism. As the supreme leader, or Duce, he preached national unity and state management (though not ownership) of Italy’s industrial base. Like Hitler, he destroyed labor unions, censored the press, abolished all political parties but his own, and relied on a secret police force to silence his critics. In 1935, Italian forces invaded Ethiopia. For Mussolini, the attack was a way of restoring Italy’s ancient glory. The fighting in Ethiopia was brutal and one-sided, pitting Italian tanks and machine guns against local defenders armed with little more than spears and bows and arrows. At the League of Nations, Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie pleaded for support. The league responded by branding Italy the aggressor but sent no military help. After annexing Ethiopia in 1936, Mussolini signed a pact of friendship with Hitler, known as the Rome-Berlin Axis.

The Neutrality Acts Americans did not want to become involved in European squabbles as they had in the past. They were determined that history must not repeat itself—that American blood must not be shed again on foreign soil. There was only one way to avoid another war, most people believed, and that was to remain truly neutral in world affairs.

Although this sentiment had deep historical roots, running all the way back to George Washington, the key to understanding America’s anxiety in the early 1930s was the legacy of World War I—the belief that U.S. participation had been a mistake, that America had been lured into the conflict, against its vital interests, by a conspiracy of evil men. In 1934, the U.S. Senate set up a committee, chaired by isolationist Gerald P. Nye of North Dakota, to investigate the reasons for America’s involvement in World War I. The Nye committee highlighted a series of well-known facts: large banks and corporations had made huge profits during World War I by giving loans and selling arms to the various combatants. It followed, therefore, that the United States had been led into this conflict by greedy bankers and businessmen determined to protect their investments. The press dubbed them “merchants of death.”

This was a simplistic explanation, to be sure. It ignored the rather tangled reality of American intervention—from submarine warfare to the Zimmermann Telegram, from President Wilson’s rigid morality to the defense of neutral rights. Yet the Nye committee findings enjoyed wide popular support in a nation determined to avoid another war.

The isolationist impulse was particularly strong in the Great Plains and Upper Midwest, where populist suspicions of Wall Street and international bankers went back a long way. It attracted many Americans of German descent, who remembered