

15 – Democracy, Totalitarianism, and the Second World War, 1919-1945

Europe struggled to return to peace after the First World War. Though the continent had never before boasted so many democratic governments, in the next two decades, most of these new democracies crumbled under the onslaught of the Great Depression and the rise of totalitarian ideologies, such as fascism and communism. Nineteenth-century intellectual trends combined with the extreme circumstances of the First World War to produce the totalitarian movements. Dictators exploited new technologies of mass communication to mobilize their populations. At the same time, themes of alienation and disillusionment permeated high culture. Ultimately, Europe's inability to deal with the dual crises of economic depression and extreme political movements culminated in the most destructive conflict in history—the Second World War.

Chapter 15 covers the following Key Concepts from the Course Description:

- **Key Concept 4.1:** Effects of the Versailles settlement on diplomacy and the balance of power
- **Key Concept 4.3:** Intellectual and cultural impact of the First World War
- **Key Concept 4.1 and 4.2:** Rise of totalitarian movements and the conflicts among fascism, Soviet communism, and liberal democracy leading to World War II
- **Key Concept 4.2:** Economic problems caused by World War I and the struggle of democracies to address the Great Depression
- **Key Concept 4.1 and 4.4:** Total war on the battlefield, home front, and resulting genocide

An Uncertain Peace: Enforcing the Treaty of Versailles

After the First World War, France attempted to enforce the Versailles settlement vigorously. This proved difficult without the active support of Great Britain and the United States, both isolationist in sentiment, and due to the Bolshevik Revolution, which eliminated Russia as a counterweight to a revived Germany. Many in Europe preferred to rely on the new **League of Nations** to ensure collective security. The League unfortunately lacked enforcement mechanisms as well as the membership of Germany, the Soviet Union, and the United States. For security, France turned to the less satisfactory alternative of allying with those new eastern European democracies sandwiched between Bolshevik Russia and a vengeful Germany. France's Little Entente with Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Romania proved no substitute for France's recent WWI allies in balancing Germany. When Germany agreed in 1922 with the Rapallo Pact to supply manufactures to the Soviet Union and engage in joint military maneuvers, it signaled the potential danger to France's security system and to the position of the new eastern European democracies.

The Advance of Democracy in Eastern Europe

Europe enjoyed a general but short-lived trend toward democracy after the First World War. Women earned the right to vote in many nations, labor unions gained power,

and governments enacted social legislation to benefit their citizens. An entire new region experienced democracy for the first time. In eastern Europe, the new states of Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Austria, Hungary, Poland, and the Baltic nations emerged out of the former empires. Other than Czechoslovakia, none of these new nations drew from a democratic tradition. Though these new states were formed around the notion of national self-determination, each confronted an ethnic minority problem (e.g., the presence of millions of ethnic Hungarians in Romanian Transylvania). More ominously, millions of ethnic Germans lived in Czechoslovakia and Poland.

In addition, conservative interests opposed the new democracies on one hand, while extreme socialists worked to overthrow them on the other. The specter of Bolshevism hung over eastern Europe, as in 1919 when radical leader Bela Kun attempted to establish a Soviet regime in Hungary, before his ouster in 1920. Even the great social change in the region – land reform – failed to solve the problem of underdevelopment. The new democracies lacked the integrated economies they had experienced as part of former empires. Though peasants were confirmed in ownership of their small farms, the development of a middle class—the traditional basis for parliamentary democracy—lagged far behind western Europe. Other than Czechoslovakia, the new eastern European democracies proved thin reeds and fell over easily with the crisis of depression and the threat of dictatorship.

Germany's Failed Experiment with Democracy: The Weimar Republic

Germany's Weimar Republic began with two strikes against it. Born amidst the turmoil accompanying the end of the First World War, the republic faced a myriad of economic and political problems. Many influential Germans, particularly military officials, judges, and civil servants, opposed the new government as a weak substitute for imperial Germany. Extremists on both the left and the right attempted to overthrow the government in its first years of existence.

Two parties helped found the republic and draw up its constitution—the Social Democratic Party (left-center) and the Catholic Center Party (right-center). The former had all but abandoned its Marxist rhetoric and seemed more concerned with advancing Germany's welfare system; both wished to avoid communist and rightist takeovers. In 1919, a Soviet-inspired communist movement, known as the Spartacists and led by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, attempted an overthrow of the Berlin city government but were captured and executed by the *Freikorps*, a right-wing paramilitary group. Then in 1920, the *Freikorps* itself attempted a takeover known as the Kapp putsch. Only the intervention of the working class saved the republic from an early death. Political violence seemed to mark the short history of Weimar, as when Foreign Minister Walter Rathenau was assassinated in 1922 by two conservative army officers.

According to the Weimar constitution, delegates to the Reichstag (the popular branch of the parliament) were chosen by proportional representation, meaning that if a party received 10% of the vote, it would earn approximately 10% of the seats in the Reichstag. Though this allowed for a diversity of views, the system also made it difficult to establish stable majority government and easier for extreme views to gain a political voice. Also, in times of "imminent danger," the president of the republic could suspend parliament and rule by decree. This so-called suicide clause (Article 48) provided a pretext for those who wished to undermine democratic rule.

Perhaps most damaging to Weimar was its association with the Versailles settlement. Even left-of-center Germans viewed the treaty as a *Diktat*, or dictated peace. Demagogues like Hitler perpetuated the myth that the German army in 1918 stood on the verge of victory when it was "stabbed in the back" by the "Jews, socialists, communists, and democrats" bent on establishing republican government at any price. No matter how untrue and unfair this charge, it allowed right-wing groups to scapegoat the Weimar Republic for Germany's problems. When this catalogue is added to the economic problems of reparations, hyperinflation, and the Great

Depression, Weimar's failure is not difficult to understand.

• THEME MUSIC AND SKILL SET

In this section, we address the factors explaining the failure of democratic governments, especially the Weimar Republic, whose failure held profound consequences for Europe's future. Americans may take for granted how natural democracy seems, but if you consult the SP theme, you'll realize the struggles many states have experienced along the road to or even away from democracy. When finished with the chapter, consider writing a focused paragraph explaining how and why democracy faltered during the interwar period (ARG and EVARG)

Reparations, the Ruhr, and Hyperinflation

In 1923 the Weimar Republic fell behind on its reparations payments. In response, the French and Belgians invaded the industrial Ruhr Valley to extract the payments in the form of coal and steel. The result benefited neither France nor Germany. Weimar leaders encouraged workers to engage in a campaign of passive resistance and refuse to operate the factories and mines. This action required the Weimar Republic to pay the workers' benefits and wages in ever-increasing amounts of paper money. By November 1923, the German mark had plummeted to catastrophic levels. At the worst of this hyperinflation, \$1 equaled 4 trillion marks. Overnight, middle-class savings, pensions, insurance policies, and interest income all become worthless. Confidence in the Weimar Republic plunged, emboldening **Adolf Hitler** (1889-1945) and his Nazi party to attempt to overthrow the Bavarian government in the Beer Hall putsch (1923); Though the coup failed, Hitler received only a 5-year sentence from a justice system always more lenient on right-wing than left-wing violence. While in prison, Hitler wrote his political testament, *Mein Kampf* (1924), which outlined his racial ideas and goals for Germany.

Great Britain and the United States criticized France for its provocative gesture. To defuse the situation, the U.S. intervened economically. Because America's former allies claimed that they could not pay back loans to the United States without German reparations, the U.S. extended loans to Germany and rescheduled the reparations payments in exchange for a French withdrawal of the Ruhr. Funds from the Dawes Plan aided a short-lived economic revival in Germany, while a new spirit of cooperation emerged from the French and Germans. However, the French learned an important lesson; its vigorous action brought down the government and earned it the criticism of allies fearful of another war.

The Spirit of Locarno

The period 1924-1929 produced optimistic hopes of peace and prosperity. Moderate leaders emerged in the

principal nations who were dedicated to resolving disputes through negotiation and diplomacy, most importantly, Gustav Stresemann (1878-1929) of Germany and Aristide Briand (1862-1932) of France. In 1925, these two leaders engineered the Locarno Pact, which contemporaries considered the true end to the First World War. Germany recognized its western borders as permanent (meaning the loss of Alsace-Lorraine) and agreed to revise its eastern borders with Poland and Czechoslovakia only by common agreement. As a result, Germany was allowed to enter the League of Nations in 1926. The “spirit of Locarno” culminated with the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928, by which the 65 signatory nations condemned war as an instrument of international politics. Like the Kellogg-Briand Pact, the League of Nations lacked the means to enforce its decisions. When Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931 and Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1935, the League made rhetorical protests and contemplated sanctions, but took few concrete actions to punish the aggressors. Such diplomacy left underlying issues unresolved and lulled some nations into adopting isolationist policies in deference to the league. In 1930, France began work on a set of defensive fortifications along the German border known as the Maginot Line, a term that symbolizes a false notion of security behind an imaginary strong frontier.

The Great Depression

Causes

The First World War and Treaty of Versailles sowed the seeds for the Great Depression. Before 1914, economic activity had become increasingly global, meaning that disturbance in one area was transmitted quickly to other areas: During the period of international stability, 1924-1929, the world economy was marked by prosperity, especially in new sectors such as automobiles, household appliances, and communications. This prosperity proved shallow, however, and was hindered by the following factors:

Strong inflationary pressures – During the First World War, governments engaged in rationing, borrowed money at record rates, and depreciated their currencies in an effort to reduce their debt. Inflation complicated the return to a peacetime economy and wreaked havoc on the world system of stable currencies that had existed before 1914.

Disrupted markets – While Europe fought World War I, competitors moved into its worldwide markets. For example, India developed its own textile industry and was less interested in British imports following the war. North America and Australia established themselves as major exporters of grain. When the war ended, European nations found it difficult to reestablish former trade patterns.

Agricultural depression – A glut of grain worldwide drove down prices and left many farmers bankrupt or destitute.

Economic nationalism – To protect fragile domestic markets and head off unrest, most states enacted high tariff barriers. The United States, in particular, refused to replace Great Britain as financial world leader; rather than lower tariffs to allow Germany to accumulate capital from trade and thus pay off reparations, the United States enacted some of its highest barriers ever.

Reparations – The cycle of world capital flowed from the United States to Germany, then from Germany to France and Britain, and finally back to the United States. This unnatural arrangement disrupted investment, while making world economic activity unusually reliant on American financial conditions.

Credit financing – The advent of the installment plan allowed consumers to defer payment on purchases. In addition, expanding American stock market activity occurred on margin, by borrowing up to 90% of the stock’s value. Any small economic downturn threatened to burst this speculative bubble.

When the U.S. stock market crashed in October 1929, it triggered the components of the above trap into place, causing a downward economic spiral.

Effects

Europe had experienced economic cycles throughout its history, but nothing compared with the Great Depression in the 1930s for length and depth of contraction. Stock values plunged from 1929 to 1932 as businesses cut back production and laid off workers. Investment and world trade plummeted. Unemployment reached shocking proportions, strengthening those parties who promised extreme solutions to problems. Germany and the United States were hardest hit; as many as 35% of workers were idled in both nations. Due to the unstable credit situation, the stock market crash rippled throughout the financial world, causing global bank failures. In 1931 the failure of the leading Vienna bank, the *Creditanstalt*, sparked additional financial collapses.

Most nations experienced a drain on their treasuries to pay off debts. Currency values depreciated even further, wrecking the stable gold-backed system dating from the mid-19th century. Investors lost confidence in the British pound, causing a massive sell-off. Long the world financial leader, Great Britain was forced off the gold standard in 1931, followed soon after by the United States and the rest of the industrialized world. In many cases, trade reverted to bilateral agreements and even barter, wherein one nation would exchange goods directly with another. Such arrangements hindered world trade and made it difficult

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for nations to obtain necessary products and to earn income from exports.

• THEME MUSIC

The Great Depression reveals the fragility of the post-WWI settlement. Also, the Depression represents a critical moment in the PP theme, in that it changed the relationship between the government and economy and laid the foundations for the modern welfare state.

Democratic Responses

The Great Depression created a crisis for democratic governments. Economy orthodoxy seemed impotent in addressing the downward spiral. According to Liberal economic theory, in times of depression, states should pursue austerity much like individual families: cut the budget and raise taxes. However, these policies failed to stimulate production and increased the misery of the unemployed. British economist John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946) introduced an alternate approach to economic stimulation in his *General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money* (1936). Contrary to accepted wisdom, Keynes argued that governments needed to “prime the pump” through deficit financing, by cutting taxes and spending on government programs to aid the needy. Though few nations consistently followed such policies before the Second World War, Keynesian economics emerged as the new orthodoxy after 1945. On the AP exam, questions tend to focus on the general structure of the economy during this period; however, the following brief review of democratic responses illustrates the depth of the crisis.

Great Britain: Of all the industrial nations, Great Britain depended most on trade. The First World War and Great Depression both struck a blow against Britain’s dominant position. Welfare legislation enacted before the war eased some of the burden on the unemployed. Despite the negative economic conditions, workers were reluctant to surrender gains made in wartime. Conflicts with industry led in 1926 to a General Strike, which was eventually squashed by government intervention. Politically, the Labour Party replaced the Liberal Party and, after gaining power in 1924 and again in 1929, aimed to extend the rights of workers. In 1931, former Labour Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald (1866-1937) joined with Conservatives in a National Government that attempted to reduce the budget deficit through traditional retrenchment. To address imperial issues, Britain provided autonomy for Egypt and the Irish Free State in 1922, and in 1931 formalized relations with former colonies such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa by granting dominion status. The combined problems of economic stagnation, diminished world status, and political tension placed Britain in a weakened position to confront Nazi aggression.

France: France escaped some of the worst effects of the Great Depression. Less dependent on trade than Britain, France was not as hard hit by the world downturn. In addition, the nation succeeded in stabilizing the *franc* at a fraction of its prewar level, making French exports cheaper on the world market. Amid the growth of right-wing and fascist groups, a coalition of left-wing parties, called the Popular Front, held power briefly from 1936 to 1938 and promoted a series of significant reforms—the 40-hour workweek, paid vacations, and stronger collective bargaining rights for unions. Socialist Prime Minister Leon Blum’s (1872-1950) government eventually fell victim to heightening ideological tensions, particularly after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. However, France preserved its republican government for the time being and enacted legislation that still benefits French workers today.

Scandinavia: The Scandinavian nations of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark demonstrated that governments could effectively combine elements of socialism and democracy. These states enacted the most social welfare programs to curb the worst effects of the Great Depression. Additionally, Scandinavian nations most eagerly embraced creative and Keynesian approaches, such as producers’ cooperatives to regulate the price of agricultural products and state ownership of key industries.

Totalitarianism

Totalitarianism arose during the interwar period, yet it also claims roots in the pre-1914 period. Mass politics and intellectual trends after 1870 fueled the development of irrational ideologies. You may recall the growth of political anti-Semitism, anarchism’s glorification of violence, and the rabid nationalism associated with imperialism. In addition, Darwinian evolution emphasized the importance of struggle, a notion taken up by racists and extremists to justify domination of the “weaker.” During the First World War, states grew significantly in their powers of regimentation and mobilization, employing propaganda to control public opinion. Communication advances in the interwar period, such as radio and motion pictures, provided additional means for ‘controlling the populace.

Dictatorship was not new to Europe, so how can we distinguish totalitarianism from the absolutism of the 17th and 18th centuries? Absolute monarchs like Louis XIV derived their power from traditional dynastic and aristocratic institutions, and it extended to those areas deemed essential to the state’s interest, such as trade, taxes, and religion. Even then, geographic and customary obstacles hindered centralization. Totalitarian dictators exploited mass media to mobilize the public to fanatical

support of the movement, not simply passive obedience, as with absolute monarchs. Twentieth-century dictators aimed at total control of society; any independent civic or social life must be subordinated to the party, movement, and leader. Modern communications allowed for such control but also increased the potential for catastrophic violence, as would be clear during the Second World War.

Fascism and Mussolini's Italy

The traumas of the interwar proved fertile ground for the European and even world phenomenon of fascism. For many, fascism provided a third way between faltering Liberal democracies and revolutionary, class-based Marxism. With its origins in 19th-century irrational ideologies but feeding on the unstable conditions of the 1920s and 1930s, fascism posed a genuine threat to supplant democracy as the wave of the future. Before turning to the Italian variant of fascism, the following list may prove helpful in understanding the nature of fascist ideology:

Militarism – Fascists extolled war as the proving ground of national identity and for sorting out the hierarchy of nations.

Glorification of the state – Not only was the state seen as all-powerful, it also represented the culminating force in historical evolution.

Führer principle – German for “leader,” the Führer principle stated that the voice of the people reached its highest expression not in assemblies or representation but in a single person, for example, Mussolini or Hitler.

Anti-democracy – Fascists scorned the weakness of democratic mechanisms of government and argued that the national spirit cannot be captured by specific institutions.

Anti-communism – Though communists and fascists shared many tactics, fascists condemned class warfare and upheld the importance of racial and national identity, in contrast to communists who condemned racism and nationalism.

One-party rule – In fascist states, democratic mechanisms such as elections, multiparty systems, and the free press were suppressed.

• THEME MUSIC AND SKILL SET

Totalitarian governments represent, on one hand, the culmination of the trend toward mass politics since the French Revolution, and on the other, a unique manifestation of the extreme conditions existing during the interwar period (SP). The entire 20th century might be viewed as a three-sided struggle among Liberal democracy, communism, and fascism—each representing a specific conception of legitimate government and manner of expressing popular will. If you consider the historical context (CTX), perhaps you can explain how and why totalitarian governments differed from absolute monarchies of the 17th and 18th centuries (COMP).

The Rise of Fascism in Italy Italy came out of the First World War as a victor, but in name only. Right-wing nationalists condemned the Versailles settlement for not allowing Italians to recapture unredeemed lands from Austria and the new nation of Yugoslavia. To make matters worse, the Italian economy suffered from unemployment, inflation, and high budget deficits. Workers engaged in numerous strikes, often fanned by extremist groups hoping to institute a socialist state. Already low before the war, respect for Italy's parliamentary democracy sank further.

Into this atmosphere strode **Benito Mussolini** (1883-1945) and his fascists (after the Latin *fasces*, or bundle of sticks carried by ancient Roman officials to symbolize state power). Named for a Mexican revolutionary, Mussolini began as a revolutionary left-wing journalist but moved rightward with the outbreak of World War I. Influenced by the writings of Sorel and Nietzsche regarding the irrational, Mussolini glorified the state and violence as a means of combating Italy's perceived enemies. To gain power, Mussolini used the paramilitary *squadristi* (or Blackshirts) to intimidate political opponents and promote the breakdown of parliamentary order. Though the Fascist movement won only a small percentage of parliamentary seats in the 1921 election, Mussolini continued to gain adherents, who ironically saw him as a champion of law and order against the threat from the left. By 1922, Mussolini decided the moment had arrived for his movement to seize power. In October of that year, thousands of fascists converged on the capital to intimidate the king into appointing Mussolini as head of government. The so-called March on Rome convinced Victor Emmanuel III to name Mussolini as premier.

The Italian Fascist State Under Mussolini Mussolini moved quickly to exploit the emergency powers he was granted to cement his hold on the government. To ensure a functioning majority, the parliament passed an amendment that granted two-thirds of the seats to the party gaining the most votes in elections. With help from this law and the tactics of the *squadristi*, the fascists in 1924 gained control of the parliament. Soon after the election, a respected Socialist deputy, Giacomo Matteotti, was assassinated by fascist thugs for exposing corruption and violence within the government. Public outrage demanded the resignation of Mussolini, who, nonetheless, used the incident to secure his hold on power.

By 1926, fascism had censored the press, eliminated all opposition parties, and employed a secret police, the OVRA, to ferret out dissent. In keeping with fascist ideology, Mussolini condemned laissez-faire capitalism, democracy, and Marxist appeals to class. National solidarity and glory, symbolized by Mussolini himself

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(called *Il Duce* – the Leader), replaced a pluralistic society. In economic affairs, Mussolini introduced corporatism, in which the economy was run as 22 separate corporations, with representatives from business, fascist-organized labor unions, and the state. State interest dictated actual policy and production priorities, though private property and profit were allowed.

In social and cultural life, the fascists worked to orient the lives of Italians around the state. To end the conflict with the Catholic Church dating from 1870, Mussolini signed the Lateran Accord in 1929, which recognized the sovereignty of the church over the Vatican in exchange for the papacy's promise not to interfere with the functions of the state. To address Italy's declining birthrate, Mussolini provided incentives for larger families, gave awards for fertile mothers, and created holidays to honor motherhood. In a fascist state, women were clearly to play the domestic role of rearing strong children for the state. A healthy race demanded a regimen of physical fitness. Schools required calisthenics, and the government sponsored recreational and outdoor activities through the state-sponsored *Dopolavoro*.

The fascist corporate state failed to address effectively the problems of the Great Depression. Mussolini turned to a program of public works to provide jobs—swamps were cleared, roads built, and self-sufficiency in wheat and power was attempted. Though it was said that Mussolini “made the trains run on time,” he was forced increasingly after 1935 to engage in imperialist adventures to revive support for his flagging movement. Despite fascist efforts, Italy was never able to realize the totalitarian state to the degree of Nazi Germany or Stalinist Soviet Union.

Nazi Germany

Hitler and the Rise to Power No political movement in history is associated more with a single person than Nazism under Adolf Hitler. Hitler came from a lower-middle-class Austrian family of unremarkable circumstances. The young Hitler moved to Vienna to pursue his artistic aspirations. After failing entrance to the Viennese art academy, Hitler survived by selling watercolors and postcards. While in Vienna, Hitler absorbed the anti-Semitism of its mayor, Karl Lueger, and grew to hate the “mongrel” Habsburg Empire with its ethnic diversity and aristocratic airs. To avoid being drafted into the Austrian army at the outset of World War I, Hitler crossed the border into Bavaria and enlisted in the German army; The young corporal served with distinction at the front as a message runner, and ended the war in a hospital the victim of a poison gas attack, where he heard the news of the armistice. Hitler believed his war experience the most significant of his life and joined a military-style political group in 1920 known as the

National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP), later known as National Socialists, or simply Nazis. The ragtag group of political misfits soon recognized the spellbinding quality of Hitler's oratory and made him their leader.

After the failed Beer Hall putsch of 1923, Hitler and the Nazis focused on a legality strategy of exploiting parliamentary politics to create a mass movement capable of taking power when democracy broke down. The Nazi message was simple: Weimar represented rule by the worst – democrats, socialists, Jews – and Germany needed a strong national state based on race. As Hitler laid out in *Mein Kampf*, Germany required *Lebensraum* (living space) in the east, as part of a new European order organized around a hierarchy of race. At every opportunity, Hitler blamed Germany's problems on the Treaty of Versailles and pledged to restore German honor. Members of the S.A. (Brownshirts or Stormtroopers) provoked street fights with rival political groups and received lenient treatment from sympathetic officials and judges. Initially, the Nazis pitched their message to workers but gained little support, earning less than 3% of the vote in 1928. Two developments caused a turnaround in Nazi fortunes: (1) the Great Depression and (2) a switch in Nazi tactics to appeal to the middle class.

The Nazis used modern electoral tactics to gain support. Nazi leaders gave speeches tailored to specific audiences and portrayed themselves as the party of the young and dynamic. Hitler made effective use of modern technologies, as with his Hitler over Germany campaign, in which he visited 50 cities in 15 days via airplane. By 1932, the Nazi vote total had increased to 37%, winning 230 seats in the Reichstag and making it the largest party. As early as 1930, the Weimar Republic already subsisted on life support, with the chancellor ruling by decree. Some old-line conservatives believed Hitler represented the best hope to defeat communism and restore order in Germany. Intriguers behind President Hindenburg convinced the aged and perhaps senile leader to appoint Hitler chancellor in January 1933. It was believed that Hitler could be controlled by other members of the cabinet, certainly one of the most egregious miscalculations in political history.

• EXAMPLE BASE

Example Base: Among the specific examples in this section, try to employ them to explain the nature and manner of totalitarianism and to test whether these regimes actually realized the degree of control claimed by the theory.

The Nazi Total State It did not take long for Hitler to consolidate his power. Soon after his appointment, the parliament building caught fire. The Nazis blamed the Reichstag fire on the Communist Party, which they banned as illegal, arresting its leaders. In response, the Nazis rammed through the Reichstag an amendment allowing Hitler to rule by decree for 5 years. This

Enabling Act essentially made Hitler a dictator, and it was followed by the 1933 Civil Service Act, requiring all government employees to swear a personal oath of loyalty to the Führer.

In 1934, Hitler removed the last obstacles to his power. First, all parties but National Socialism were declared illegal. All federal governments, such as Bavaria or Saxony, were eliminated in favor of a unitary state. To win over the army leadership, Hitler agreed in June 1934 to purge the leadership of the S.A., grown to 500,000 men and perceived as a threat to the army's monopoly of military force. With Hitler in power, the S.A. no longer seemed necessary, and its leader, Ernst Röhm (1887-1934), represented one of the last potential challenges to Hitler's unquestioned leadership of the party. On the night of June 30, 1934, top leaders of the Brownshirts, in addition to numerous other political opponents, were summarily executed in what became known as the Blood Purge. When President Hindenburg died 2 months later, Hitler assumed the position of president.

Terror comprised an elemental weapon of Nazi rule. Internally, a secret police, the Gestapo, arrested real and imagined opponents, committing thousands to a constellation of concentration camps. Following the S.A. purge, the S.S. (*Schutzstaffel*) emerged as the primary perpetrators of terror, eventually absorbing control of the Gestapo, running the death camps, and forming the leading edge of a new Aryan racial elite. Another ingredient of the total state involved coordinating independent social and civic organizations-charities, youth groups, unions-into Nazi organizations. Though only one-tenth of Germans belonged to the Nazi Party, all social activity was to be geared around the state and its goals. The Nazi Party also positively promoted loyalty through propaganda, such as the annual Nuremberg rallies, a spectacle of pageantry and regimentation captured effectively in the film *Triumph of the Will*.

To solve Germany's economic problems, the Nazis attempted to spend Germany out of the Depression with public works projects and rearmament. By 1936, the Nazis had developed a Four-Year Plan to promote the goal of self-sufficiency (autarky) in strategic commodities such as fuels and rubber. Hitler won over industrialists with the promise of government contracts for rearmament and eliminating the perceived socialist threat. In addition, the independent labor unions of the Social Democratic Party were replaced by the National Labor Front, a state-run union requiring each worker in good standing to carry a booklet in order to procure a job. With projects like the Autobahn, many Germans credited Hitler with getting Germany back to work, even if his pump-priming did not represent a long-term solution to Germany's problems.

Nazi racial policy touched all areas of life. Boys were enrolled in the Hitler Youth and girls in the League of German Maidens to reinforce traditional gender roles and build a strong racial stock. Women were expected to fulfill the domestic duties of "church, kitchen, and children," while their public and economic roles were limited by the state. Anti-Semitic policies reflected the Nazi racial vision. At first, Jews were excluded from the civil service and army. To clarify the position of Jews in Germany, the Nazis passed the Nuremberg Laws of 1935, which defined who was a Jew; stripped Jews of citizenship, and prohibited sexual relations with Aryans. Many Jews preferred to remain in Germany, hoping to ride out the Nazi tide. However, Nazi policies turned violent with the *Kristallnacht* (Night of Broken Glass) of November 1938, in which synagogues were burned, businesses destroyed, and hundreds of Jews killed or arrested. To further the goal of racial purity, the Nazis also engaged in campaigns of sterilization for the mentally unfit and euthanasia for the terminally ill, insane, and physically deformed. This so-called T-4 program killed approximately 200,000 between 1939 and 1941 before protests by religious groups slowed and eventually halted it. For the attentive, the genocidal program laid out in *Mein Kampf* was apparent before the onset of World War II.

The Soviet Union Under Stalin, 1928-1939

In the 10-year period 1928-1938, the Soviet Union under Stalin experienced one of the most rapid modernizations in history. After expelling Trotsky, Stalin ended the New Economic Policy (NEP; see Chapter 14) and began building "socialism in one country." It was clear by 1928 that world revolution was not imminent, and Stalin wished to push forward the Soviet Union's industrialization as rapidly as possible, appropriating Trotsky's ideas regarding strong central planning to accomplish it. As Stalin saw it, "We are fifty or a hundred years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this distance in ten years. Either we do it, or we shall be crushed."

To move forward, Stalin instituted the first of several Five-Year Plans in 1928. Its goals were to build a strong base of heavy industry, aim for self-sufficiency, and create a modern infrastructure of electricity, roads, and factories. Overseeing every intricate detail of production and resource allocation was Gosplan, a central government agency staffed by thousands of party bureaucrats. Because the Bolsheviks had repudiated the tsarist debt and could not draw on foreign capital, funds for industrialization had to come from the agricultural sector. During the NEP, a class of wealthy peasants developed who accumulated land and often hired labor among the landless. These kulaks

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were resented by many. To absorb the excess capital of the kulaks, Stalin forced them and all peasants onto collective farms. The kulaks resisted the forced collectivization of agriculture, often by destroying crops and slaughtering livestock. Though by 1932 almost all peasants lived on collective farms, the cost proved high—millions of kulaks were killed for resisting collectivization, and millions more died in the famine that ensued in Russia and Ukraine from the disruption in agriculture.

By some measures, the Five-Year Plans proved remarkably successful. The Soviet Union avoided the economic contraction of the Great Depression and soon became the world's largest producer of tractors and railway locomotives. Overall, only the United States and Germany surpassed the Soviet Union in productive capacity. Soviet authorities extolled socialist heroes like the miner Stakhanov, who exceeded his quota for coal by 1300%. However, many Soviet manufactures were of poor quality, and consumer goods lagged far behind. The exponential growth in the Soviet economy is explained partly by its start from such a low level.

Stalin imposed a rigid totalitarian system on the Soviet Union. Independent political parties; labor unions, and free expression were eliminated. Government controlled cultural life – art, literature, film – for propaganda purposes. The cultural experimentation of the 1920s was ended; socialist realism, glorifying factories and workers, became the accepted standard. Huge posters of Stalin adorned factories and street corners as part of a cult of personality. To rid himself of any real or potential enemies, Stalin initiated the Great Purges. Aimed at the Old Bolsheviks, the purges ultimately eliminated leftists who supported Trotsky, now in exile in Mexico, and rightists charged with supporting capitalism. During the Great Terror, from 1934 to 1938, it is estimated that almost 4 million were charged with crimes against the state, and close to 800,000 were executed. Though Soviet citizens experienced an improved basic standard of living, it came at a high cost. Ethnic minorities and perceived opponents, for example, filled Siberian gulags, or hard-labor camps. Women, also, found that many of the reproductive rights gained in the 1920s were reversed as part of a campaign to increase the birth rate, forcing them to balance work and family obligations. Regimentation of Soviet social life came as the by-product of its astounding economic successes.

The Culture of the Interwar Period

Cultural developments from 1918 to 1939 reflected two distinct trends: (1) the disillusioning effects of the First World War in high culture and (2) the further

development of a truly mass culture based on new communications technologies. We address both of these areas in turn.

Experimentation and Alienation in High Culture

The writers, artists, and intellectuals who came of age during the First World War became known as the Lost Generation. Prewar trends of irrationality, subjectivity, and alienation were confirmed by the experience of war. German historian Oswald Spengler (1880-1936) reflected this sense of pessimism in his book *The Decline of the West*, which argued that Europe's golden age was coming to end due to its tendency toward self-destructive acts, and was fated for eclipse by other civilizations. Writers of fiction worked in similar themes. Franz Kafka (1883-1924) described characters caught up in an incomprehensible world with no capacity to alter their fates. In one of the great antiwar novels, Erich Maria Remarque's (1898-1970) *All Quiet on the Western Front* showed matter-of-factly how war destroys innocence and meaning. T.S. Eliot's epic poem "The Waste Land" (1922) captured a similar sense of decline and the absurdity of human existence.

Many writers experimented with stream-of-consciousness styles and unstructured works to convey the subjective nature of experience. Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* explores the narrator's memories of childhood experiences amid a half-waking state. James Joyce's *Ulysses* stands as the masterwork of modernist literature, examining one day in the life of Dublin resident Stephen Dedalus through mental associations and word play. Virginia Woolf experimented with similar techniques but combined them with feminist themes. Expatriates (those who live outside their culture or nation) from the United States – Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Gertrude Stein – worked in similar styles and themes and demonstrated the growing influence of American culture as well as the profound sense of alienation in the western world as a whole.

• SKILL SET

As during the Enlightenment, elite and popular culture diverged strongly in the interwar period. Identify the themes and focus for both high and popular culture (COMP) and be prepared to explain how each reveals the mood and developments of the 1920s and 1930s (CTX).

Modern art grew incredibly diverse in the 20th century. Weimar Germany, and Berlin in particular, became a center of experimentation in the arts; in painting, German artists such as George Grosz and Hannah Hoch employed expressionist and Dadaist techniques to critique the perceived weakness and corruption of Weimar. Dadaism represented an anti-art movement, using artistic

media to show the absurdity of life. Examples include collages of disconnected images or distorted caricatures. Abstraction reduces reality down to its essentials—line, shape, and color. In the massive mural *Guernica* (1937), Pablo Picasso conveys the horror of a fascist atrocity during the Spanish Civil War through the spare use of symbols and Cubist multiple perspective. Furthermore, Freud's ideas regarding the unconscious began to influence painting with the artistic movement of surrealism. Spanish surrealist Salvador Dalí (1904-1989) gained fame for his bizarre juxtaposition of objects and dreamy landscapes, as in his ubiquitous *The Persistence of Memory* (1931). In architecture, modernists from the Bauhaus school worked with concrete, steel, and glass to design straightforward "boxes with windows." When the Nazis took power in 1933, they condemned the works of such architects and other artists as degenerate and drove them out of the country.

The sciences and the social sciences confirmed prewar trends toward the irrational and the uncertain. In *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1931), Sigmund Freud argued that aggressive human drives inevitably lead to violence and war, an observation given credence by the First World War. Building on Freud's ideas, Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung (1875-1961) developed the notion of the collective unconscious, the part of a person's psyche common to all human beings and made up of archetypes, basic character types grounding all experiences. Physicists continued to explore the structure of the subatomic world and time. Werner Heisenberg (1901-1976) demonstrated with his uncertainty principle how one could not observe *both* the position and momentum of a particle, as the act of observation itself alters the behavior of what is observed. Heisenberg's theory supported the quantum notion of probabilities over objectively determined realities.

Mass Culture and Leisure

The experience of shared suffering during World War I provoked a shift in public morals. During the Roaring Twenties, displays of sexuality grew more open, women smoked in public, and dance halls gained popularity. Fashion challenged traditional gender roles, as women wore less defining and more revealing clothing. In many European states, laws against the distribution of birth control were abandoned. Germany's Cabaret culture featured sultry jazz music along with frank themes of sexuality. African-American Josephine Baker took Europe by storm with exotic and erotic dance routines. These developments divided Europeans between those who celebrated the new openness as part of a general democratization and those who condemned it as a decadent feature of post-WWI society.

During the prosperous 1920s, many businesses developed installment plans and allowed buying on credit. Advertising, often using celebrities and sports figures, fed a new consumerism in household appliances, beauty aids, and automobiles. Governments openly encouraged the purchase of radios and attendance at motion pictures. New communication technologies offered opportunities to shape public opinion and promote propaganda. Nazi Germany ensured that all citizens owned a radio so as to hear Hitler's speeches. Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels (1897-1945) elevated visual spectacle to new heights in Nazi films and festivals. Democratic states also recognized the potential of mass communication; in 1927, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) was chartered. Ironically, filmmakers like Charlie Chaplin with *Modern Times* (1936) and Fritz Lang with *Metropolis* (1927) used the medium to critique the modern obsession with technology.

With increased leisure time, Europeans engaged in more air travel and tourism. Totalitarian states encouraged such activities around state-run agencies, such as *Kraft durch Freude* (Strength Through Joy) in Nazi Germany, which sponsored camping, hiking, and boating trips. In tune with racial ideologies and eugenics, governments promoted a "cult of the body" through organized sports, such as gymnastics, soccer, and track and field. Nazi Germany held the 1936 Berlin Olympics as a showplace for the superiority of the Aryan race. Though Germany did win the most medals, African American track star Jesse Owens stole the Show with five gold medals.

The Road to World War II, 1933-1939: Appeasement

Though historians still debate the causes of the First World War, those of World War II lack controversy—the ambitions of Nazi Germany to overturn the Versailles settlement. Seemingly every year after taking power until the commencement of hostilities in 1939, Adolf Hitler provoked an international crisis related to his goals of creating a New European Order around race. Hitler sought first to regain those lands lost at Versailles; second, to subdue France and bring Britain to friendly terms; third, to turn east and conquer Slavic Europe as a vast granary and slave labor force; and finally, in the process, to eliminate "culture destroyers" such as Jews and Gypsies. That Hitler almost accomplished these goals demonstrates the fragility of the post-WWI diplomatic order.

To avoid another war, the western democracies engaged in appeasement, or an attempt to meet Hitler's demands through diplomacy. Today, the term suggests cowardice and folly, but at the time was driven by several concerns: (1) lack military preparedness due to budget

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constraints created by the Great Depression, (2) a greater fear of Soviet communism, and (3) the genuine feeling that the horrors of Verdun and the Somme must not be repeated. The following chronology serves to demonstrate the evolution of Hitler's goals and tactics, as well as the application and eventual abandonment of appeasement. Without the active diplomatic support of the Soviet Union (due to its exclusion) and the United States (due to its isolation); it seemed an almost impossible task to deter Hitler or Mussolini, not to mention the Japanese.

1931: In pursuit of natural resources, Japan invades the Chinese province of Manchuria. Rhetorical denunciations by the League of Nations provoke Japan's withdrawal from that body. 1933: Hitler withdraws Germany from the League of Nations and Geneva disarmament conference, primarily to consolidate domestic support for his regime.

1935: Hitler openly repudiates the Versailles provisions related to demilitarization. Great Britain rewards Germany's rearmament with a naval agreement, allowing Hitler to build up his fleet.

To avenge Italy's defeat in 1896, Mussolini invades Ethiopia without provocation. In a failure of collective security, Britain and France's half-hearted economic sanctions and military actions fail to prevent Italy's conquest of Ethiopia.

1936: Rejecting Versailles and the Locarno Pact, Hitler boldly remilitarizes the Rhineland. France and Britain do nothing, convincing Hitler of their weakness.

Since 1931, Spain had been ruled by a republic. The republican government moved against the entrenched power of the Catholic Church and large landowners. Elections in 1936 lead to the creation of a Popular Front of leftist parties aimed against monarchists, clerical supporters, and army officers. Military officers, led by General Francisco Franco (1892-1975) and aided by the fascist *Falange* movement, attempt to overthrow the republic, plunging the nation into a vicious civil war between Nationalists and Loyalists. The Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) becomes a test of rival ideological forces-fascism vs. communism-and a warm-up for World War II. Other than a few idealists from the democracies, the only nation willing to commit significant resources to the anti-fascist battle is the Soviet Union. Fascist forces launch aerial bombardments aimed at civilians in Madrid, Barcelona, and Guernica, a preview of the horrors to come. By 1939, Franco gains control of the nation, but only at the cost of 600,000 lives – Spain's deadliest conflict.

In the wake of the Spanish Civil War, Hitler signs the Rome-Berlin Axis with Mussolini and the Anti-Comintern Pact with Japan.

1937: Japan launches an all-out invasion of China proper, leading to its control of China's coastal cities. Though China moves inland to continue the fight, Japanese forces capture Nanking, in the process indiscriminately killing 250,000 civilians and raping thousands of women in an atrocity known as the Rape of Nanking.

1938: With Mussolini's approval, Hitler marches into his native Austria, directly incorporating it into the German Reich. In a subsequent plebiscite, the Austrian people overwhelmingly approve the annexation (*Anschluss*).

Hitler demands incorporation of 3 million Germans of the Czech Sudetenland. Czechoslovakia represents the most democratic, industrial, and strategically vital nation of Eastern Europe. Tied to France through the Little Entente and with strong defenses, Czechoslovakia seems an ideal place to stop Hitler's aggression. Nonetheless, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain (1869-1940) urges compromise at a four-power meeting (Britain, France, Germany, Italy). The western democracies excluded the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia itself at the Munich Conference, which signs over the Sudetenland to Germany. Upon arriving back in Britain, Chamberlain proclaims he has achieved "peace in our time."

1939: Violating the Munich Agreement, Hitler in the spring marches into Moravia and Bohemia, creating a Czech protectorate, while making Slovakia a puppet government. In addition, Mussolini moves into Albania to establish a foothold for his *mare nostrum* ("our sea") project of controlling the Mediterranean. These actions cause a decisive shift in public opinion within the west against appeasement; however, France and Britain prove unable to win over a suspicious Soviet Union into a joint alliance against Nazi Germany.

Shocking the world, Hitler and Stalin in late August conclude the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, giving Hitler a free hand for his next project-an invasion of Poland to regain the Danzig corridor, which cuts off East Prussia from Germany proper. A secret protocol provides for the division of Poland, the Baltic States, and Finland between the supposedly bitter ideological enemies. A week later, Hitler invades Poland to begin World War II.

World War II, 1939-1945

The Second World War stands as the most destructive conflict in history, killing an estimated 60 million people. It involved the nations of six continents and decisively altered Europe's position in the world. As with any war, new technologies-radar, rockets, jet airplanes, atomic weapons-played a major role. Never before had the line between soldier and civilian been so blurred, with civilians

and entire ethnic groups targeted for extermination. The chart below provides a general understanding of the nature and course of the conflict.

• SKILL SET

Total war's effects extend beyond the death toll and material destruction. As you read this section, apply selected examples to this prompt: "To what extent was the Second World War a turning point in the government's relation to the economy, society, and science?" In addressing this question, you will draw on the ARG, EVARG, and PER skills.

Phases of the Conflict

Blitzkrieg, 1939-1941		
Goals and Strategy	Actions and Results	Assessment
<p>*In the early phase of the war, Hitler takes the initiative and attacks Poland. The following spring, the Nazis move against Norway, the Low Countries, and France.</p> <p>*In its first defeat, Germany is unable to bring Britain to its knees. Without directly entering the conflict, President Franklin Roosevelt of the United States provides aid to Great Britain with the Lend-Lease Act and signs the Atlantic Charter with Winston Churchill (British PM), outlining Anglo-American war aims.</p> <p>*By the end of 1941, Japan's attack on the United States and Hitler's invasion of its former ally, the USSR, cements the Grand Alliance against the Rome-Tokyo-Berlin Axis powers.</p>	<p>*With armored divisions and aerial bombers, Hitler's <i>blitzkrieg</i> ("lightning war") defeats Poland in a matter of weeks.</p> <p>*Soviet troops move into the Baltic states, eastern Poland, and attack Finland.</p> <p>*In the Spring of 1940, Hitler secures his northern flank vis-à-vis Britain and supplies of iron ore by taking Norway. The Nazis next defeat the Low Countries and France. German forces occupy the northern two-thirds of France, allowing the creation of the collaborationist Vichy government in the south. Free French forces under Charles de Gaulle (1890-1970) continue resistance.</p> <p>*Under the strong leadership of Prime Minister Winston Churchill (1874-1965), Britain defeats Germany in the Battle of Britain. The German Luftwaffe loses twice the planes of the Royal Air Force (RAF). Bombing of cities by the Nazis only hardens British resistance.</p> <p>*Mussolini's attempted invasion in 1941 of Greece falters, drawing German forces into the Balkans.</p> <p>*In the largest land battle in history, Hitler invades the Soviet Union in June 1941, capturing huge swaths of territory before stalling in front of Moscow in December.</p> <p>*The Japanese capture French colonies in Indochina, leading the United States to cut off oil and scrap metal shipments. In retaliation, the Japanese launch the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, drawing America into the war.</p>	<p>*By the end of 1941, Hitler still holds the initiative. Nazi Germany continues to dominate Europe and works toward a joint strategy with Japan to link forces in Central Asia.</p> <p>Churchill and Roosevelt agree to concentrate on the war in Europe, with the Pacific theater taking a back seat. Hitler's invasion of the USSR takes Stalin by surprise and also allows for the beginning of the systematic genocide of Slavs, Roma, and Jews</p>

Turning of the Tide, 1942-1944		
Goals and Strategy	Actions and Results	Assessment
<p>*Hitler divides his armies into three groups in the Soviet Union- aimed at Lenin-grad (formerly St. Petersburg), Moscow, and the Caucasus oil fields.</p> <p>*The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor is followed by the expansion of its empire throughout the Pacific, which reaches its height in 1942.</p> <p>*German and Italian forces attack British forces in North Africa, threatening the Suez Canal.</p> <p>*In a series of counterattacks, the Allies defeat the Axis in North Africa, the Soviet Union, and in the Pacific.</p>	<p>*Soviet forces regroup and capture an entire German army in February 1943 at Stalingrad. At the tank Battle of Kursk, the Soviet Union decisively turns the tide and begins an inexorable advance toward Germany.</p> <p>*The German-Italian advance toward the Suez Canal in North Africa is stopped in July 1942 at El Alamein. An Anglo-American invasion pushes German forces under Erwin Rommel out of North Africa.</p> <p>*Anglo-American forces launch an invasion of Sicily and move slowly up the peninsula of Italy. Mussolini is captured by Allied forces in Spring 1943 but rescued by German paratroopers. The Allied drive up the peninsula stalls outside Rome as German forces take up the fight.</p> <p>*The American naval victory at Midway deals a decisive blow to Japan's surface fleet. At Guadalcanal, the U.S. amphibious</p>	<p>*By 1943, the tide turns against the Axis powers. In late 1943, the Big Three (Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin) meet at the Teheran Conference and agree on the unconditional surrender of the Axis powers, and the Anglo-Americans plan to open a second front in France. Before launching an amphibious assault, the United States must secure control of the seas from German submarines, accomplished by early 1944.</p> <p>*In the Pacific, American forces begin the strategy of "island hopping" to</p>

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	invasion blunts Japan's threat to Australia.	gain a base of operations directly against the Japanese home islands
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End Game, 1944-1945		
Goals and Strategy	Actions and Results	Assessment
<p>*Anglo-American forces establish a second front in France and along with the advance of Soviet forces, move toward the German homeland. Soviet forces divert into the Balkans to ensure Soviet control of Eastern Europe following the war.</p> <p>*U.S. forces close in on the Japanese home islands. Following fierce fighting, the Pacific war ends with the dropping of two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.</p>	<p>*At the D-Day invasion of Normandy (June 1944), the United States and Britain establish a beachhead in France, which leads to the liberation of Paris by August. Soviet forces advance toward but pause outside Warsaw in September 1944 to allow the Nazis to destroy the western-backed Polish Home Army during its effort to liberate the city, a bloody precursor to Cold War conflicts over Eastern Europe.</p> <p>*In the Pacific, U.S. forces retake the Philippines, capture Iwo Jima and Okinawa after fierce fighting, and begin aerial bombing of Tokyo.</p> <p>*Widespread targeting of German cities begins, exemplified by the fire-bombing of Dresden in February 1945.</p> <p>*A last-ditch German advance in Belgium (Battle of the Bulge) is turned back, and Anglo-American and Soviet forces end the war in the Germany in May 1945.</p> <p>*After the dropping of the atomic bombs, Japan sues for peace in September 1945.</p>	<p>*The combined manpower and economic potential of the Allied powers exercises a decisive influence on the course of the war. In addition, strategic errors by the Axis powers as well as the unification of numerous groups opposed to the brutal rule of the Nazis eventually works in the Allies' favor.</p> <p>*America's use of the first atomic weapons ends the Second World War but also marks the beginning of the Nuclear Age and the Cold War.</p>

Mobilization of the Home Fronts

The Second World War required an even higher level of mobilization and sacrifice among civilians than did the First World War. Many governments centralized production, instituted rationing programs, and called on all citizens to contribute to the war effort in some way. The following are several examples of such mobilization:

Germany: Despite the perception of Nazi efficiency and invincibility, Germany did not mobilize effectively for wartime production. Hitler was reluctant to employ women in the workforce or call on German citizens to sacrifice consumer goods, recognizing the collapse of the war effort in 1917-1918. Nazi Germany relied extensively on slave labor from conquered and occupied territories for armaments production. It was not until 1942 that Hitler appointed a young architect, Albert Speer (1905-1981), to centralize production as Minister of Armaments. Only in 1944, when the war was nearing its end, did Germany move toward full mobilization, closing down popular amusements and rationing goods. German women never did enter the work force in large numbers.

Soviet Union: For the Soviet Union, the conflict was known as the Great Patriotic War, a fight for its very survival. Over 20 million Soviet citizens perished in the war, by far the most of any combatant. Once the Nazis had captured some of the best agricultural lands and threatened key industrial cities, the Soviets moved entire factories inland, which commenced production before the walls went up. Stalin promoted supercentralization of the

economy around the war effort and reduced the already paltry production of consumer goods, allowing the USSR to win the “battle of the machines.” The city of Leningrad endured a 900-day siege, its residents often surviving on mice; spring thaws revealed thousands of corpses in the streets. Women also served in the armed forces, unique among the combatants as with the famous Night Witches fighter pilots protecting Stalingrad.

Great Britain: Great Britain effectively centralized its economy for wartime production. Almost every able-bodied adult assisted the war effort—women went into armament production and older citizens joined the Home Guard. The government created ministries to oversee and distribute fuel, food, and war supplies. In addition, citizens were encouraged to develop self-sufficiency in food production, as with Dig for Victory gardens. Citizens received ration books with coupons and received only those goods assigned to them. The shared sacrifice of rationing continued until after the war, ending only in 1951.

United States: President Roosevelt urged the United States to become the “arsenal of democracy” for the Allied powers. Though no nation was producing more tanks, planes, and ships by the end of the conflict, the United States never entered a complete wartime production footing. Though rationing was practiced, it did not reach the levels of European control, particularly with fuel consumption. After Pearl Harbor, thousands of Japanese citizens of the U.S. on the west coast, were forced into

internment camps for fear of their conspiring with the Japanese Empire.

Collaboration and Resistance

Europeans of occupied nations faced stark choices—to collaborate or resist. A major reason for Nazi success militarily and with genocide involved the active cooperation or apathetic acceptance of many in occupied lands. Conservatives in many nations welcomed the Nazi takeover as a solution to indigenous political problems. To assist in ruling occupied lands, Nazi Germany created puppet governments. In Norway, Vidkun Quisling lent his name, as a synonym, to those who betray their nation by assisting a foreign power's conquest. Though nominally independent, the Vichy regime in France cooperated with Nazi authorities, assisting in the Nazi Final Solution (see below). Reprisals against thousands of collaborators followed right after the armies of liberation. In the complex Balkans, the Ustashe, a nationalist and Catholic government of Croatia, assisted the Nazis in taking reprisals against Orthodox Serbs.

Anti-Nazi movements gained momentum as the tide of war turned. Resistance groups engaged in acts of sabotage and assassination, hindered production, rescued ethnic minorities, and spread anti-Nazi or nationalist propaganda. Strongly organized movements arose in France under Charles De Gaulle and in Yugoslavia under Joseph Broz Tito (1892-1980). Due to the latter's efforts, Yugoslavia became the only nation in eastern Europe that did not require the aid of the Soviet army to liberate itself from Nazi rule. The Polish council, Żegota, saved hundreds of Jews in Poland, while Denmark was able to engineer the rescue of almost all 8,000 of its Jewish population. Within Germany, a group of idealistic university students, named the White Rose, distributed pamphlets against the Nazis before being caught and executed. Conservative army officers attempted but failed to assassinate Hitler in July 1944, leading to the execution of thousands.

The Holocaust

• THEME MUSIC

Total war requires regimentation of societies, and in the process, the individual is subsumed. This is no more true than with genocide. During the First World War, Armenians were targeted; during the Second, the Nazis took these efforts to an even higher level of industrialized murder in their policies toward Jews and other ethnic minorities. The Holocaust reveals a frightening level of political control (SP) but also the power of propaganda and racialism to create a sense of “otherness” (IS) toward a vulnerable and outsider group.

Soon after taking power, the Nazis established a network of concentration camps to punish political prisoners and other undesirables. From that point, Nazi policy moved step by step, from exclusion to concentration to extermination, or the Final Solution—the elimination of all of Europe's Jews, as well as Roma, Slavic intellectuals,

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Russian prisoners of war, Jehovah's Witnesses, and homosexuals. Mass killing began with the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941; mobile killings squads, known as *Einsatzgruppen*, machine-gunned thousands and buried them in mass graves.

In 1942, top Nazi officials met at the Wannsee Conference. Led by Reinhard Heydrich (1904-1942), the head of the S.S. security office, the meeting decided on the implementation of the Final Solution to the "Jewish problem." The Nazis erected a system of death camps in Poland-Auschwitz, Treblinka, and others—designed to kill thousands per day in gas chambers, their bodies destroyed in crematoria. Even as the war turned against the Nazis on the battlefield, Hitler continued to pour resources into this race war, stepping up the extermination as Allied armies approached. Only the participation of thousands of people, including those in the occupied nations, made such a massive and systematic process possible. By the end of the war, 6 million Jews had been killed (the Holocaust), along with another 5 million from the above categories, in the Nazi genocide.

Results of the Second World War

By 1945, much of Europe lay in ruins; some cities, like Warsaw, experienced complete devastation. The Second World War represents the lowest point for European civilization. Some of the results can be measured in numbers; others would become clear only in subsequent years.

- 60 million dead, mostly civilians
- Widespread destruction of infrastructure
- 30-50 million displaced persons (DPs) wandering the continent
- Europe's hold on its colonies nearly broken
- Traditional values questioned in postwar Europe
- Economic activity brought to a standstill
- Conditions laid for the Cold War

All analyses aside, the Second World War stands as the single largest event in the history of the human race.