

World War II

- I. Failure of collective security and peace
- A. **Treaty of Versailles** (1919) did not create an enduring peace
1. Severe punishment of Germany due to **Article 231** resulted in conservative German resentment against the "dictated peace" ("diktat")
 2. **League of Nations**, without the U.S. & USSR, didn't have the will nor the support to maintain peace.
 - During the 1930s, the League essentially stood by while aggressors like Germany and Italy invaded other countries and violated provisions of the Versailles Treaty.
- B. Washington Naval Conference, 1921-22: did not stop the naval arms race between the West and Japan
1. Five Power Treaty: created a 5-5-3 battleship ratio between U.S., Britain and Japan
 - Yet, smaller naval vessels were exempt from the agreement
 2. Four Power Treaty
 - a. Replaced Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902
 - b. Bound Britain, Japan, France, and the U.S. to preserve status quo in the Pacific, a concession to Japan's favor.
- C. "Paper agreements" of the 1920s had few enforcement mechanisms
1. **Locarno Pact, 1925**: Germany and other European nations agreed to settle all disputes peacefully.
 - a. Gave Europeans a false sense of security about the future
 - b. "Spirit of Locarno" was no longer relevant once Hitler took power
 - c. Provisions were not enforceable
 2. **Kellogg-Briand Pact, 1928**
 - a. 62 nations signed the treaty proclaiming "war is illegal" (unless for purely defensive purposes)
 - b. Once again, the treaty lacked enforcement provisions
 - c. Hitler later claimed that his aggressive military ventures were for "defensive purposes"

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D. Great Depression resulted in the rise of fascism in Japan and Germany

1. **Japan invaded Manchuria, 1931**
 - a. League of Nations condemned the invasion but did little by way of sanctions
 - b. Japan pulled out of the League
2. Hitler withdrew from League of Nations in 1933 and secretly began rearmament
3. London Economic Conference in 1933 failed to achieve international cooperation in remedying the depression
 - a. The U.S. played a major role in undermining the treaty
 - b. The conference's failure sent a strong signal to Hitler that the democracies lacked the organization and will to address international crises

E. Stresa Front, 1935

1. Mussolini and others grew concerned when Hitler withdrew from Versailles Treaty
2. Italy, France, and Britain protested strongly, understanding the danger
 - Agreed to use force to maintain the political status quo in Europe
3. Ironically, a year later Mussolini allied Italy with Hitler to help fascists win in the Spanish civil war.

F. **Italian invasion of Ethiopia, 1935**

1. Italy gained a measure of revenge for its earlier defeat by the Ethiopians in 1896.
 - 500,000 Ethiopians died in the war compared to only 5,000 Italians.
2. League of Nations imposed sanctions on Italy, but did not include oil on the list of embargoed goods.
 - a. No attempt was made to prevent Italy's navy from using the Suez Canal on its way toward Ethiopia.
 - b. France and Britain were not willing to press Italy because they needed Italy's help in keeping Hitler in check.
 - Britain, in particular, sought to appease Italy to end the crisis and only placed an embargo on the sale British weapons to Italy.
 - c. In 1936, the League lifted its sanction on Italy.
 - d. The Stresa Front was now defunct as Mussolini clearly defied the League of Nations
3. Hitler was further encouraged that the international community lacked the will to enforce peace

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G. **Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939**

1. Generalissimo **Francisco Franco**, a fascist, sought to overthrow the republican government in Spain
 - a. Franco sought to restore power of the Catholic Church & destroy socialism & communism in Spain
 - b. Civil War erupted between the fascists (Falangists or Royalists) and the republican Loyalists
2. Mussolini and Hitler supported Franco and used the conflict as a testing ground for their military forces
 - a. Italy sent 100,000 soldiers to Spain and the Italian army gained practical experience in warfare
 - b. Germany's airforce – the **Luftwaffe**—bombed republican-held cities
 - The bombing of innocent civilians in the city of Guernica prompted Pablo Picasso to paint his masterpiece—**Guernica**—in 1937.
3. Francisco won the war and imposed a fascist dictatorship in Spain
 - a. Help from Germany and Italy was a major cause for the fascist victory.
 - b. Britain and France officially recognized Franco's government
 - c. The League of Nations once again proved ineffective, this time in helping republican Loyalists against Franco.
 - Ineffective in patrolling Spain's borders to prevent supplies from reaching Franco's forces
 - d. Hoping to maintain peace, the British government did little to help the Loyalists
 - e. In France, the issue of the war split the government and led to the fall of the leftist Popular Front.
4. In response to military cooperation in Spain, the **Rome-Berlin Axis** was formed ("Fascintern"): an alliance between fascist Italy and Germany

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H. **Germany reoccupied the Rhineland, 1936**

1. Directly violated the Versailles Treaty (as well as the Locarno Pact)
 - a. The Rhineland—a region between the Franco-German border and the Rhine River—had been demilitarized in the Versailles Treaty.
 - This would guarantee France that German forces were not directly across the border.
 - b. The German military high command was very nervous: feared Germany was still too weak to effectively resist a Franco-British invasion and that Hitler was being reckless

- c. The League of Nation's futility in earlier crises convinced Hitler that France and Britain would do nothing
 2. France was unwilling to enforce the treaty without British aid
 - a. This may have been the turning point in the balance of power
 - France was still more powerful than Germany and may have been able to defeat and remove Hitler
 - b. **Pacifism** in Britain, stemming from the horrible memories of World War I, made the government reluctant to risk another world war with Germany.
 - By the mid 1930s, there were many in Britain who believed Germany had been unfairly punished by the Versailles Treaty
 3. For the first time since World War I, Germany now had troops close to the Franco-German border
 - Posed a major threat to France's security
- I. Japan invaded China in 1937
 - The League of Nations watched the "rape of Shanghai" but did little to punish Japan
- II. Germany's conquests in Europe lead to World War II
 - A. Hitler repudiated the Versailles Treaty and began massive rearmament in the mid-1930s
 - This was an important reason for Germany's economic recovery from the depression
 - B. **Anschluss** (March 1938): Germany annexed Austria
 1. Germany's threat of military action forced the Austrian Chancellor to resign
 2. Austrian Nazi party assumed control and requested that Germany annex Austria
 3. Germany marched into and absorbed Austria without firing a shot
 4. British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain rejected joining an alliance with France and Russia
 - a. Believed it to be too aggressive diplomatically and that it might destroy future attempts to negotiate peace with Hitler.
 - b. As a result, the international community did nothing in response

C. Czechoslovakia

1. Sudetenland

- a. Hitler demanded that Germany receive the German-speaking province in western Czechoslovakia or else there would be war
- b. Czechoslovakia refused
 - Had well defended borders along its border with Germany and had France as an ally
 - Another world war now seemed imminent

2. Munich Conference, 1938

- a. Issue of the Sudetenland was to be resolved in a conference arranged by British Prime Minister **Neville Chamberlain**
- b. Conference attended by Germany, Britain, France, and Italy
 - Czechoslovakia or its ally, Russia, were not invited
- c. Chamberlain adopted a policy of **appeasement**
 - Definition of appeasement: making concessions to an aggressor in order to achieve peace
 - Pacifist sentiment in Britain and France was very strong
- d. Solution: Czechoslovakia was forced to give away the Sudetenland
 - Germany, in return, guaranteed the independence of Czechoslovakia
 - Czechs were shocked that the fate of its country was decided by other countries
 - Hitler promised he would make no more territorial demands in Europe
 - If Czechoslovakia refused to comply, it would receive no military support from Britain or France
- e. Chamberlain returned to Britain a hero claiming he had achieved "**peace in our time**"

3. Germany invaded the rest of Czechoslovakia, March 1939

- a. Hitler had double-crossed Chamberlain
- b. Czechoslovakia did not resist the invasion
- c. In the space of a year, Hitler had taken both Austria and Czechoslovakia without engaging in war

- D. Germany's invasion of Poland began World War II
1. One week after taking Czechoslovakia, Hitler demanded the Baltic port city of **Danzig** (located in the **Polish Corridor** that separated East Prussia from Germany)
 - a. As he had done with Sudetenland, Hitler used the alleged poor treatment of ethnic Germans in Poland as a pretext for his demand
 - b. Chamberlain threatened that if Germany attacked Poland, Britain would fight a war to protect Poland
 - c. Hitler sought to avoid a two-front war against France & Britain in the west and Russia in the east
 2. **German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact**, Aug. 1939
 - a. Hitler sought assurances that Russia would not attack Germany if he invaded Poland.
 - A guarantee of non-aggression would ensure that Germany would only have to fight a one-front war against France and Britain
 - b. The world was shocked that the archenemies Hitler and Stalin would make such an agreement
 - c. Public provisions of the treaty: 10-year nonaggression pact between Germany and Russia
 - d. Private agreement: Germany and USSR would invade Poland and split the country in half.
 - Stalin would also get the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania
 - France & Britain had offered Stalin military risk without gain; Hitler had offered Stalin territorial gain without risk
 3. **Germany invaded Poland** on Sept. 1, 1939
 - a. Marked the beginning of World War II
 - b. September 3, Britain & France declared war on Germany

III. Germany's conquests: 1939-1941

- A. **Blitzkrieg** ("lightning war") used against Poland
1. New form of warfare used by Germany to quickly defeat an enemy by poking a hole in enemy line and cutting off front lines from the rear thus surrounding enemy.
 2. Used coordinated attack on one part of enemy line with air force, tanks, and artillery
 3. Strategy sought to avoid trench warfare of WWI
 4. Poland defeated in about a month
 5. Partition occurred when USSR attacked from east
 - a. Stalin invaded Finland (1939)
 - b. USSR annexed Estonia, Latvia, & Lithuania (1940) to create a buffer zone against Germany

- Believed Hitler would one day invade Russia
 - 6. *Sitzkrieg* ("phony war"): After Poland, a 7-month lull ensued, causing some to say WWII was a myth. The world waited to see where Hitler might strike next.
- B. 1940
1. April: Hitler invaded Denmark, Sweden, Norway
 2. May: Netherlands, Belgium & Luxembourg fell to Germany
 3. June: **Fall of France** occurred in less than six weeks
 - a. Dunkirk: thousands of French and British soldiers were trapped on beaches of France
 - Before Germans came in for the kill, thousands were rescued by an armada of British vessels
 - b. **Vichy France** created
 - Hitler did not wish to waste time subduing all of France
 - Puppet gov't created in southern France
 - Marshal Henri-Philippe Pétain in charge (later executed for treason by the French gov't)
 - Pétain had been a war hero in WWI at the battle of Verdun.
 - Vichy France eventually was taken over completely by Germany later in the war
 - c. The "Free French" were led by **General Charles De Gaulle**, who fled to Britain during France's fall
 4. **Tripartite Pact, 1940**: Japan added to Rome-Berlin axis for mutual defense and military support.
- C. **Battle of Britain**: one of most critical battles of the war
1. Hitler offered Britain peace if it accepted Germany's control of western Europe
 - British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who had replaced Chamberlain, flatly refused
 2. Hitler then planned a massive German invasion of England ("Operation Sealion")
 - Germany tried to soften Britain up for a German invasion with massive aerial bombings
 3. August, **Luftwaffe** (led by **Herman Goring**, one of Hitler's inner circle) was ordered by Hitler to destroy the **Royal Air Force (RAF)**
 - Britain effectively used **radar** (a new technology) to detect Germany's air attacks
 4. After almost destroying the RAF, Hitler ordered the bombing of London ("**the Blitz**"): fatal error
 - RAF recovered and ultimately defeated the *Luftwaffe*

5. Hitler forced to call off invasion of Britain in September
 - a. Germany lost 2,433 planes; RAF lost 900
 - b. The "Blitz" continued until May, 1941
 6. Significance: Hitler now had to guard against a future two-front war
 - D-Day in 1944 was launched from Britain
- D. **German invasion of the Soviet Union**, June 1941
1. Hitler all along had planned on invading Russia to fulfill his dream of "lebensraum" ("living space") in the east
 - Constituted Hitler's greatest blunder
 2. **"Scorched Earth"**: Soviets destroyed anything of value as they withdrew to deprive German army of resources; thousands of towns in the USSR destroyed
 3. By winter, Germans were at the gates of Moscow while laying siege to Leningrad (St. Petersburg) that lasted two years
 4. In the USSR, WWII became known as **"Great Patriotic War of the Fatherland"**
 5. **Atlantic Charter** (Aug 1941): Churchill and U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt met secretly after the invasion of Soviet Union
 - a. Agreement: once Axis Powers were defeated, there would be no territorial changes contrary to the wishes of inhabitants (self-determination)
 - b. Called for "a permanent system of general security": later became the United Nations
 - c. Stalin endorsed the agreement soon thereafter
 - d. Meanwhile, the U.S. remained militarily neutral until December, 1941
 - Neutrality Acts in 1930s prevented FDR from drawing U.S. into the conflict earlier
 - **Lend-Lease Act** (1941) gave large amounts of money and supplies to help Britain and Soviets; effectively ended U.S. neutrality
 - Japanese attack on **Pearl Harbor**, Dec. 7, 1941, resulted in U.S. entry into the war
- E. Hitler declared war on U.S. on December 11
1. Proved to be another fatal blunder
 2. Instead of focusing on Japan (who had attacked the U.S.), the U.S. (along with Britain) would now instead focus on defeating Germany first.

F. **The Grand Alliance** formed in 1942

- Consisted of Britain, the Soviet Union and the U.S. as well as two dozen other countries

IV. Nazi Empire in Europe

A. German victories by the end of 1941

1. Controlled all of western Europe (except for neutral Switzerland & Sweden): Austria, Czechoslovakia, western Poland, France, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Norway, western Russia.
2. Spain allowed Germany the use of its ports (although Spain remained essentially neutral)
3. German allies: Italy, Japan, Romania, Hungary, & Bulgaria.
4. Britain isolated, although gained much aid from U.S.

B. The Nazi "New Order"

1. Nazis exploited Europe for its economic value
2. Nordic peoples – Dutch, Norwegians, and Danes— received preferential treatment as they were racially related to Germans.
3. Hitler heavily taxed the French as they were seen as "inferior" Latin people; they were tolerated as a race.
4. Slavs in eastern Europe were seen as "subhuman"
 - a. Seized men & women for slave labor to work in German factories.
 - b. Hitler planned that Poles, Ukrainians, and Russians would be enslaved and forced to die out, while Germanic peasants resettled the resulting abandoned lands.
 - c. Polish workers and Soviet prisoners of war were transported to Germany where they did most of the heavy labor and were systematically worked to death.
 - 80% of Soviet prisoners did not survive the war.

C. Genocide of Jews, Gypsies, Jehovah's Witnesses, and captured communists

1. Businesses and property was confiscated
2. Jews had to register with gov't authorities & wear yellow ID stars.
3. In Poland, Jews were forced to live in **ghettos** (e.g. Warsaw and Krakow)
 - a. Deprived of adequate supplies
 - b. Several families crammed into a single apartment
 - c. Forbidden contact with the outside world

4. **"Final Solution" to the Jewish Problem:** began in late 1941
 - a. Formal plan came at Wannsee Conference in 1942
 - b. Six death camps built in Poland in addition to hundreds of concentration camps
 - **Auschwitz** was the most notorious
 - c. 6 million Jews killed (approximately 2/3 of the pre-war Jewish population)
 - d. Between 5-6 million others also murdered including political prisoners, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Gypsies

- D. Underground movements sprang up and increased during the war.
 1. Sabotaged Nazi supply depots, derailed trains, blew up bridges.
 - The French Underground is the most famous example
 2. Supplied allies with valuable information & aid: detailed troop movements, published secret newspapers, hid escaped Allied prisoners and downed Allied pilots

- V. Turning points in the war
 - A. **El Alamein**, Nov. 1942
 1. By November, British forces (led by Bernard Montgomery) drove the Germans (led by Erwin Rommel—the "Desert Fox") out of Egypt
 - German forces were pushed westward across North Africa.
 2. "Operation Torch" (Nov. 1942)
 - a. Meanwhile, U.S. and British forces landed on the beaches of Morocco and Algeria and engaged retreating German forces
 - b. Rommel's Afrikakorps were surrounded by Allied armies and defeated by May, 1943 and removed from Africa while suffering mass casualties and prisoners of war.
 3. Hitler's decision to invade the USSR instead of defeating Britain in the Mediterranean now proved disastrous
 4. Allied victory in North Africa opened the door for the invasion of Italy in July, 1943

- B. Stalingrad** (Nov. 1942—Feb. 1943)
- Critical battle of the Eastern Front
 - First German land defeat in Europe
 - Hitler sought to take the industrial city of Stalingrad en route to taking control of Soviet oil fields in the Caucasus Mountains.
 - German armies were eventually surrounded by Soviet forces.
 - Hitler refused to allow the German forces to surrender and thus the bulk of the German army in Stalingrad (300,000 men) was destroyed in the battle.
 - After the battle, the Soviets began the 2 ½-year campaign of pushing the German army back to Berlin
 - Subsequent battle of **Kursk** (July 1943) was the largest tank battle in human history ending in a Russian victory
 - By February 1945 Soviet armies had penetrated to the outskirts of Berlin.
- C. D-Day**, "Operation Overlord", June 6, 1944
- 120,000 troops crossed the English Channel from southern England and invaded France in an amphibious assault on **Normandy** (northern French coast)
 - Success of D-Day demonstrated how important the Battle of Britain had been in 1940 when Germany failed to defeat the RAF and invade England.
 - Western front established
 - Spelled the end of Nazi domination of Europe
 - Paris was liberated 1 month later
 - Hitler now fighting on three fronts: east against Russians; west against U.S. and Britain (& France); and in Italy against U.S. and Britain
 - By the fall, Allied troops reached the German border and were preparing an invasion of Germany.
- D. Battle of the Bulge**, Dec. 1944
- Hitler's last gasp offensive to drive Allies away from the western German border
 - Brutal fighting in the dead of winter resulted in frightful casualties on both sides.
 - After Hitler's counteroffensive failed, the Allies quickly penetrated deep into Germany in 1945.

- E. May 8, 1945: Germany surrendered (Hitler committed suicide a few days earlier)
- F. End of the war against Japan: Aug. 1945
 - 1. U.S. dropped atomic bombs on **Hiroshima** and **Nagasaki**
 - 2. Japan surrendered although the emperor was allowed to remain on the throne

VI. Diplomacy during the war

A. Casablanca Conference, 1943:

- 1. FDR and Churchill declared a policy of unconditional surrender for "all enemies"
- 2. Italy would be invaded first before opening 2nd Front in France
 - Stalin never forgave the Allies for putting off an invasion of France until 1944: it ensured the Russians would have to fight the brunt of the German army alone

B. **Tehran Conference**, 1943: First meeting of the "**Big Three**"—Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin

- 1. Allies agreed to an invasion of the Western Europe in 1944.
- 2. Stalin reaffirmed the Soviet commitment to enter the war against Japan once Germany had been defeated
- 3. Stalin insisted on Soviet control of eastern Europe and the carving up of Germany amongst the Allies
 - Churchill demanded free governments in eastern Europe and a strong Germany after the war to preserve a balance of power in Europe.
- 4. Roosevelt acted as a mediator and believed he could work with Stalin to achieve a post-world peace within the construct of the United Nations.

C. **Yalta Conference**, 1945: "Big Three" met again

- 1. Stalin agreed to enter Pacific war within 3 months after Germany surrendered
- 2. Stalin agreed to a "Declaration of Liberated Europe" which called for free elections.
- 3. Called for United Nations to meet in U.S. beginning in April 1945
 - a. Soviets would have 3 votes in General Assembly
 - b. U.S., Britain, USSR, France & China to be permanent members of Security Council.
- 4. Germany to be divided into occupied zones and a coalition government of communists and non-communists was agreed to for Poland.

5. U.S.S.R. allowed to keep its pre-1939 territory.
6. FDR accepted Soviet control of Outer Mongolia, the Kurile Islands, the southern half of Sakhalin Island, Port Arthur (Darien), and partial operation of the Manchurian railroads.

D. **Potsdam Conference**, July 1945: Stalin, Harry Truman and Clement Atlee

1. Issued warning to Japan of unconditional surrender or face utter devastation
 - During conference Truman ordered dropping of atomic bomb on Japan
2. Stalin reversed his position on eastern Europe stating there would be no free elections
3. Approvals given to concept of war-crimes trials and the demilitarization and de-Nazification of Germany.
4. Reparations from Germany could be taken from each respective zone.

VII. Results of the war

- A. Human losses: About 55 million dead (including missing)
 1. 22 million in the USSR alone
 2. **Holocaust** resulted in deaths of 6 million Jews and 6 million other
- B. Millions left homeless and millions relocated (especially Germans living outside Germany)
- C. Much of Europe lay in ruins: would take years to rebuild the economy
- D. Women played even larger role in the war economy than in WWI (gained more rights after the war)
- E. The U.S. and Soviet Union emerged as the two dominant powers in the postwar world.
 - Post-war competition for influence in Europe led resulted in the Cold War

VIII. Why did Germany lose the war?

- A. Three-front war: Russia, France and Italy
 1. German army stretched across an entire continent
 2. Eventually, Germany began running out of soldiers
 - Resorted to using children and older men near the end of the war
- B. Major blunders
 1. Allowed Britain to remain intact after the Battle of Britain
 2. Invasion of the Soviet Union (and later decision to engage Soviet army at Stalingrad)
 3. Hitler's declaration of war against the U.S.

- immediately after Pearl Harbor guaranteed the U.S. and Britain would focus first on Germany before defeating Japan.
- C. Industrial capacity not equal to Allies
 1. U.S. out-produced all the Axis powers combined
 2. Allied bombing of German cities destroyed factories
 3. Use of slave labor (Slavs, Jews) not as effective
 4. Much economic energy spent on the "Final Solution"
 5. Germany did not shift its economy to "total war" until 1943. By that time, the Germans were being severely out-produced
 - D. Axis alliance proved to be a liability
 1. Italy's failures in Greece and Yugoslavia drew Germany into the Balkans when it should have focused on the Mediterranean
 2. German forces eventually had to take control of Italy after the Allies began penetrating up the peninsula
 - Mussolini caught and executed by his own people in 1944
 3. Japan's attack on the U.S. drew Germany into war against the U.S.
 - E. Grand Alliance proved overwhelming
 1. Included U.S., Britain, Russia and over 40 other countries
 2. Alliance worked together to achieve "unconditional surrender" for Germany

Terms to Know

Treaty of Versailles	Charles de Gaulle
Article 231	Tripartite Pact, 1940
League of Nations	Battle of Britain: RAF vs. <i>Luftwaffe</i>
Locarno Pact, 1925	radar
Kellogg-Briand Pact, 1928	"lebensraum"
Manchuria, 1931	"Great Patriotic War of the Fatherland"
Ethiopia, 1935	Atlantic Charter
Spanish Civil War	Lend-Lease
Francisco Franco	Pearl Harbor
Rome-Berlin Axis	Grand Alliance
Rhineland, 1936	Holocaust
appeasement	Jewish ghettos
pacifism	Wannsee Conference
<i>Anschluss</i> , 1938	"Final Solution"
Sudetenland	Auschwitz
Munich Conference	El Alamein
Neville Chamberlain	Stalingrad
Polish Corridor, Danzig	D-Day
German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact	Battle of the Bulge
invasion of Poland	Hiroshima, Nagasaki
<i>Blitzkrieg</i>	Tehran Conference, 1943
fall of France	Yalta Conference, 1945
Vichy France	Potsdam Conference, 1945

Essay Questions

Note: This sub-unit is a medium probability area for the AP exam. In the past 10 years, 5 questions have come wholly or in part from the material in this chapter. Below are some practice questions that will help you study the topics that have appeared on previous exams or may appear on future exams.

1. Analyze political, economic and diplomatic factors for the failure of peace after World War I.
2. How did diplomacy during the war play a role in the war's outcome?
3. Analyze military, economic and political reasons for Germany's loss in WWII.

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