The Road to World War II

“The Age of Anxiety”, AKA the “Interwar Years”

1919-1939
The Road to WWII Begins Where WWI Ended!

Recall- how were different countries affected by WWI (1914-1918)?
Aftermath of WWI (Review)

Recall- How were different countries affected by World War I (1914-1918)?

- **Russia** - Dropped out early, struggles in war helped lead to the Russian Revolution (Bolshevik (Communist) takeover) in 1917, followed by a civil war, high casualty rate on the Eastern Front
- **Britain, France, and Belgium** - High human and economic cost from the war, worn down from 4 years of fighting on the Western Front
- **Japan and US** - Actually benefited from war- increased credibility, not in war for very long, fighting took place on foreign soil, and the war actually spurred the economy (emerged in better shape than before!)
- **Germany** - Lost the war, worn down from 4 years of fighting on two fronts, post-war struggles and humiliation
- **Ottoman Empire and Austria-Hungary** - Lost the war, both empires were dissolved after WWI
THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES (1919) (REVIEW)

The Treaty of Versailles (1919), negotiated mainly by France, Britain, and the US in 1919 at the Paris Peace Conference, was a major leading cause toward World War II.

Make sure you understand what this treaty did, and especially how it impacted Germany!

Here are some helpful review videos that show the important aspects of the Treaty of Versailles.
Treaty of Versailles - Part 1
Treaty of Versailles- Part 2
**THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES (1919) (REVIEW)**

### The Treaty of Versailles: Major Provisions

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<th>League of Nations</th>
<th>Territorial Losses</th>
<th>Military Restrictions</th>
<th>War Guilt</th>
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<td>• International peace organization; enemy and neutral nations initially excluded</td>
<td>• Germany returns Alsace-Lorraine to France; French border extended to west bank of Rhine River</td>
<td>• Limits set on the size of the German army</td>
<td>• Sole responsibility for the war placed on Germany’s shoulders</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Germany and Russia excluded</td>
<td>• Germany surrenders all of its overseas colonies in Africa and the Pacific</td>
<td>• Germany prohibited from importing or manufacturing weapons or war material</td>
<td>• Germany forced to pay the Allies $33 billion in reparations over 30 years</td>
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### SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Charts

1. **Analyzing Issues** In what ways did the treaty punish Germany?
2. **Clarifying** What two provinces were returned to France as a result of the treaty?
Germany after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles

- **Post-1919 Germany**
- **Lost by Germany**
- **Demilitarized zones**

- **German boundaries in 1914**

- **Rhineland demilitarized**
- **Saar (under LN)**

- **Alsace-Lorraine**

- **Belgium**
- **France**
- **Switzerland**
- **Austria**
- **Czechoslovakia**
- **Poland**
- **Lithuania**
- **Danzig**
POST-WAR PROBLEMS

● League of Nations had issues from the start
  ○ US did not join- it did not ratify the Treaty of Versailles- returned to isolationism
  ○ Russia, Germany excluded (what problems might this cause?)
  ○ No enforcement power! (“toothless tiger”)

● Other nations felt excluded from Paris Peace Conference, didn’t get as much as they wanted (Japan, Italy)

● Colonies felt betrayed- colonialism continued

● Germany was severely punished! Led to bitterness and anger...
Europe before and after WWI - what changes do you see? Who was punished?

Before WWI

After WWI
Post-War Uncertainty During the Interwar Years

- WWI shook Western society to the core
- Many lost faith in the belief that progress and reason would prevail - became disillusioned, fearful of the future
- Art, literature, science and philosophy reflected this mood:
  - **Existentialism** - philosophy that states there is no real meaning to life, instead people create meaning through their individual actions
  - **Surrealism** - art movement that sought to link dreams with real life
  - **Einstein’s Theory of Relativity** - some things are constant (speed of light), while other factors are not (space and time) - uncertainty and relativity replaced Newton’s ideas of absolute laws
  - **Sigmund Freud** - Austrian Psychologist who believed that much of human behavior is irrational, driven by the unconscious
  - Literature criticized Western society
  - **Friedrich Nietzsche** - German philosopher - said reason and progress had stifled humanity - needed to return to values of pride, assertiveness, strength *(what might this influence)*?
Surrealism in art
WWI Also led to new changes, especially in US in the 1920s

- Mood was better in US after the war, reflecting the American experience in WWI relative to other countries
- Jazz, popular entertainment (movies, radio) reflected the enthusiasm of the age
- Women challenged convention- many cut hair short, wore more revealing clothing (“flappers”), many entered professions (why might many women have acted this way in the 20s?)
- Consumerist culture emerges in the US- automobiles, consumer products become big
- Air travel becomes more common
Economic Changes After WWI

- WWI left every major European country nearly bankrupt
- European countries attempted to rebuild war-torn economies with loans from the United States (US became a lender nation)
- Germany- had to pay reparations to Allies (Britain & France)- put a strain on the German economy and Germany’s ability to rebuild
  - Responded by printing more money- led to severe inflation
  - Inflation led to high prices- people suffered
- 1924- US helped Germany under the Dawes Plan- $200 million loan from American banks to help stabilize German currency, stabilize its economy
  - Slowed inflation, factories began producing again
The International Financial System Under the Dawes Plan and Young Plan 1924-30

$2.6 Billion in War Debt Payments

U.S. ← $2.5 Billion in Loans ← Germany → $2.0 Billion in Reparations Payments

Allies
Some Signs of Optimism in the Interwar Years

- 1925- FR & GER signed a treaty stating they would never again go to war with one another
- 1928- **Kellogg-Briand Peace Pact**- International agreement signed by most nations of the world renouncing war
THE GREAT DEPRESSION (1929-1939)

- US supported the world economy in the 1920s
- Economy was booming—seemed prosperity would never end
- A sign of strength of the American economy was the stock market—many people wished to invest in stocks (it was very popular)
THE GREAT DEPRESSION (1929-1939)

- What factors led to the Great Depression?
  - Uneven distribution of wealth- some got wealthy, but many were too poor to be able to afford what factories produced- many stores cut back orders, factories laid people off-those people couldn’t buy goods
  - Overproduction- increased worldwide production meant lower prices to farm commodities- many farmers could not pay back loans
  - Buying stocks on margin- since many people wanted to invest in the stock market, some put only a fraction of the price down, borrowed the rest (“buying on margin”)
  - Overinflated stocks- some began to see that many stocks were inflated (priced higher than they were actually worth)- this triggered many to begin selling stocks. When this happened, a panic ensued- by October 29, 1929, the entire stock market had crashed.
WALL ST. IN PANIC AS STOCKS CRASH

ATTEMPT MADE TO KILL ITALY'S CROWN PRINCE

High Duty Group Gave $700,000 to Coolidge Drive

Black and Orange Wreckage Indicates Daring Plane Was Missing

Fear 32 Perished in Lake Michigan; Ferry Is Missing

Piece of Plane Like Diteman's Was Found at Sea

Hollywood Fire Destroys Films Worth Millions

Assassin Caught in Brussels Mob; Prince Unhurt

Wall Street was in a panic today, with unknown soldiers' arms around the stock market. The crash was precipitated by the failure of a number of large institutions, including the Bank of England and the Bank of France. The panic spread rapidly, with the market closing for the day with a loss of over 100 points. The crash was attributed to the failure of the Bank of England, which had been unable to meet its obligations. The Bank of France was also in difficulty, and its failure would have had serious consequences. The crash was a blow to the world, and it was feared that it might lead to a general depression. The government took prompt action to restore confidence, and the market was allowed to reopen the next day.
THE GREAT DEPRESSION (1929-1939)

- Effects of the Great Depression
  - Businesses failed, banks closed
  - Many lost everything
  - By 1933, ¼ unemployed in the US
  - Collapse of the American economy triggered a global depression
    - US bankers demanded repayment of overseas loans
    - Investors withdrew money from Europe
    - Dawes Plan ended in Germany- recovery halted
    - US Congress put tariffs (taxes on imports) on imported goods (*why?*)- backfired
      b/c other countries put tariffs on US imports
    - Worldwide trade dropped by 65%
The Great Depression Overview Video
Causes of the Great Depression Video

3. The banking system was unstable
THE GREAT DEPRESSION (1929-1939)

- How did different countries respond to the global economic crisis?
  - France and Britain were still able to preserve democratic government
  - Britain- more dependent on foreign trade than FR- put in place high protective tariffs, regulated currency, lowered interest rates= slow but steady recovery
  - Socialist governments (Sweden, Norway, Denmark)- increased benefits to citizens, increased taxes to pay for them, put people to work in public works projects
  - USA- The New Deal (FDR)- Large public works projects provided jobs for unemployed, govt agencies gave help to businesses and farms, increased spending on welfare and relief programs, and regulations reformed the banking system and stock market
  - Germany and Italy- hardships led to more support for radical groups who promised to revive the economy
THE RISE OF FASCISM

- Many that were hit hard by the Depression lost faith in democratic government
- **Fascism** became more appealing to many in Italy and Germany
  - Promised to revive the economy
  - Promised to punish those responsible for hard times
  - Promised to restore order and national pride
  - Militant political movement
  - Emphasized loyalty to the state and obedience to the leader
  - Extreme nationalism- pledged loyalty to authoritarian leader
  - Held mass rallies
  - Usually wore uniforms of a certain color, had special salutes
The 14 Defining Characteristics of Fascism

1. Powerful and Continuing Nationalism
2. Disdain for Human Rights
3. Identification of Enemies As A Unifying Cause
4. Supremacy of the Military
5. Rampant Sexism
6. Controlled Mass Media
7. Obsession With National Security
8. Religion and Government Intertwined
9. Corporate Power Protected
10. Labor Power Suppressed
11. Disdain for Intellectuals and the Arts
12. Obsession With Crime and Punishment
13. Rampant Cronyism and Corruption
14. Fraudulent Elections
CHARACTERISTICS OF FASCISM

**Cultural**
- censorship
- indoctrination
- secret police

**Social**
- supported by middle class, industrialists, and military

**Economic**
- economic functions controlled by state corporations or state

**Chief Examples**
- Italy
- Spain
- Germany

**Political**
- nationalist
- racist (Nazism)
- one-party rule
- supreme leader

**Basic Principles**
- authoritarianism
- state more important than the individual
- charismatic leader
- action oriented
Communism and Fascism

**Fascism**
- Class Society
- Each group has its place and function
- Nationalists
- Fascists believed in extreme loyalty to the nation and its leader.

**Both**
- Single party dictatorship rule
- Denial of individual rights
- State/nation was supreme
- Non-democratic principles

**Communism**
- Classless society
- Internationalists
- Unification of all workers
ITALY BECOMES FASCIST

- While Italy was a member of the “Big Four” at the Paris Peace Conference (1919-1920), it was mainly BR, FR, and the US that led the meeting
- Many Italians were disappointed with Treaty of Versailles- didn’t gain territory
- Great Depression= high unemployment, high inflation = social unrest
- Benito Mussolini brought fascism to Italy- promised to rescue Italy
  - Played on fears of a workers' revolt- gained support of middle class and business leaders
- Mussolini’s supporters demanded King Emmanuel III put him in power- facing social revolt, the King agreed
- In power, Mussolini abolished democracy, outlawed political parties (except fascists), a secret police (the blackshirts) jailed or killed opponents, outlawed strikes, and heavily censored the media
GERMANY LEADING UP TO WWII

- After its defeat in WWI, Germany went through a change- Kaiser Wilhelm II stepped down, and Germany set up a provisional government called the **Weimar Republic**
- Germany didn’t have a strong democratic tradition, so the new republic was off to an uncertain start
- Many Germans blamed the Weimar Republic for the humiliating stipulations of the Treaty of Versailles and the misery of the Great Depression
- During the Great Depression, the Weimar government imposed **austerity** (strict spending measures)- making life more difficult, but intended to save money
RISE OF THE NAZIS

- Adolf Hitler, a WWI veteran, joined the National Socialist German Workers’ Party (Nazi Party) in 1919- it was just a small extremist group then
  - Believed the Treaty of Versailles must be overturned, and communism must be combated
  - Brownshirts (“stormtroopers”) - private militia
  - Hitler’s success as an organizer and orator led him to be chosen as the Fuhrer (leader) of the Nazi Party
  - Plotted to take power in 1923- failed- he went to jail- sentenced to 5 years, but served 9 months
  - While in jail, wrote Mein Kampf, which outlined his views- incorrectly called Germans “Aryans” (recall- who were the Aryans really?), said they were the superior race- “non-Aryans” (Jews, Slavs, Gypsies) he deemed inferior; he called the Treaty of Versailles an outrage and vowed to reclaim lost German land.

Hitler wasn’t taken seriously by most until later. What do you think changed this?
RISE OF THE NAZIS (1930s)

- Nazis were the largest political party by 1932, supported by more as the Great Depression wore on.
- Leaders of the Weimar Republic didn’t take Hitler as a threat, but noticed his growing profile- thought they could use him for their purposes.
- 1933- Hitler came to power legally after being appointed Chancellor of Germany.
- Once in power, called for new elections- Nazis won by a slim majority.
- Hitler turned Germany into a totalitarian state- banned all other political parties, had opponents arrested.
- Created the SS (elite protection squad) which arrested or murdered Hitler’s enemies and the Gestapo (Nazi secret police), which shocked most into obedience.
Hitler created a totalitarian state in Germany.
NAZI GERMANY

- Took command of the German economy- banned strikes, dissolved unions, gave the govt authority over business and labor
- Put millions to work building factories, roads, or joining military (unemployment rate dropped)
- Heavy use of propaganda: the press, radio, literature, painting, film- burned books that did not conform to Nazi ideas
- Children had to join the Hitler Youth (boys) or the League of German Girls.
- Hatred of Jews (anti-Semitism) is a key component that differentiated Nazism from general fascism. Jews (1% of Germany’s population) were blamed for Germany’s troubles since WWI- violence and discrimination mounted against them
- Nov 9, 1938- Kristallnacht- Nazi mobs attacked Jewish homes, buildings
Hitler with the Hitler Youth
JAPAN

- In the 20s, Japan signed treaties respecting China’s borders, and also signed the Kellogg-Briand Pact (renouncing war).
- However, Japan’s constitution put limits on the prime minister and cabinet- civilian leaders had little control over the military (the military reported only to the emperor).
- Civilian government held power until 1929, when the Great Depression hit. Like in Germany, many Japanese blamed the government.
- Military leaders gained support and took control of the government.
- Military kept Emperor Hirohito as head of state, but installed Hideki Tojo as Prime Minister.
- Unlike Germany, Japan didn’t create a new system of government, but instead attempted to restore traditional government power to the military.
JAPAN UNDER MILITARY RULE

- As in Germany and Italy, Japan was now ruled by extreme nationalists.
- Japan’s leaders wanted to solve its economic problems through foreign expansion—planned a Pacific empire that included a conquered China.
- Desired raw materials and markets for Japanese goods, also room for Japan’s expanding population.