

THE GIANT EHAP REVIEW OUTLINE!

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World War II

1933-1935: The Nightmare Begins

- Beginning in 1933, foreign policy leading up to the war was slowly approaching the inevitable. All the players could see it coming, but many still attempted to prevent it. Remember, just like the escalator descending into the mess below: you can't turn around and you can't run away.
- In 1933, Hitler comes to power. As he still has not secured his position in Germany his only move is to drop out a disarmament conference (not very nice).
- By 1934 Hitler has consolidated his position in Germany and is ready to begin his aggressive foreign policy. His first move is very strange and surprising: he forms a 10-year non-aggression pact with Poland (obviously no intention of living up to it, does it to give people a false sense of security).
- In 1934 his only foreign policy flop occurs: his attempt to create the *anschluss* (union of Germany and Austria) through a Nazi putsch in Austria fails. He was stopped b/c Mussolini (then allied w/Austria and not friends w/Germany) threatened to invade.
- Then came 1935, a big year. On **March 9** (Saturday Night Special) Hitler announces he will build an air force. There are no protests. On **March 16** (SNS) he announces that Germany will build a navy and a ½ million man army. France freaks, asks England what to do, English protest, so Hitler promises Germany will never have more than 35% of the English navy. The English agree in essence throwing out the Treaty of Versailles. Also in this year Italy invades Ethiopia and gets kicked out of the League of Nations. Hitler congratulates him (suck-up).

1936-1937: Things Get Worse

- In March 1936, Hitler tells his Generals that he wants to remilitarize the Rhineland (breaking the Versailles Treaty and Locarno Pact, which was signed freely and says if single German soldier there then it will be considered a Germany invasion). Even Generals think this is going too far (the French will lose it, they warn) but Hitler insists, though he says if single French soldier attacks they will turn around. France springs into action and asks England, who says let them have it (!) so in one fell swoop they gain back the entire Rhineland. How stupid could they be?
- Also in 1936, the *Spanish Civil War* breaks out. In it the *Loyalists/Republicans* (liberals, socialists, communists, etc.) fight the *fascists* (army and Franco). Hitler and Mussolini send equipment and troops to the fascists, France asks England what to do, England says stay out so they do. During this time, Hitler and Mussolini form the *Axis Alliance* (axis of evil). The only person, ironically enough, defending the Republicans was the USSR (Stalin) so the gov't got labeled as Stalinist. In 1939, Franco won but refused to join the Axis in WWII although he hoped they would win.
- Nothing big happens in 1937, but Hitler does call a secret meeting of his advisers (known now through secret documents captured) and says he wants a war of conquest between 1938 and 1943. The advisers who objected were kicked out. The meeting was called the *Hossbach Protocol*. Also, during this time the English Prime Minister **Neville Chamberlain** (a.k.a. the moron) introduced (though he had already been using it) his policy of *appeasement* – give them what they want anything is better than war – and he replaces people who don't support the policy w/those who do.

1938: A Horrible Year

- Now the big issue (again) is the *Anschluss* but this time Mussolini is Hitler's ally and will not support Austria. Hitler wants a full German nation (finish what Bismarck started). So he has Nazis go to Austria and has the SA start making trouble. When the SA riots are put down, Hitler says that the German people are being persecuted.
- Then in November the Austrian Chancellor **Kurt von Schussnig** ("no Anschluss for Schussnig") banned the SA/SS. Hitler freaked and threatened him, forcing him to lift the ban and put Nazis as heads of police and army. Now the Nazis can hold all their rallies and beat people up.
- As a last resort, Schussnig calls a plebiscite on the Anschluss but Germany mobilizes and at the last minute Schussnig calls off the vote and resigns. So in March the new Nazi "chancellor" (he appointed himself) invites the German army in to "put down disturbances" (which they caused) and Austria falls to Germany.
- Then, Hitler decides he wants the Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia. He uses the tactics he used w/Austria but in May the Czechs mobilize and he can't respond, so it looks like he backed down (oh the humiliation). Hitler is so mad he declares: "If I don't have Czechoslovakia by October 1, WAR!" at least to his generals.

- Remember, Czechoslovakia is the Versailles success story: the only democracy that works, w/a strong economy, great border defenses and a well-trained army. It is allied w/Yugoslavia, Romania, France, England, and the USSR. If Germany invaded *it would lose*.
- On **September 15**, Neville Chamberlain goes to Berlin and talks to Hitler, who says he wants the SDL ("last territorial demand"). NC goes home, tells Daladier (France) and the Czechs they should let him have it. A week later, NC goes back and finds out Hitler now wants ½ of Czechoslovakia by October 1. Everyone is preparing for war (remember how much easier it would be to defend Czechoslovakia than Poland) but then Mussolini chickens out and calls the...
- **Munich Conference** (9/29/38) → Hitler, Chamberlain, Daladier and Mussolini (no Russia or Czechoslovakia) meet. Germany gets *everything* it wants: ½ of Czechoslovakia as protectorate, all fortifications and stuff there, etc. By 1939 he has taken all of Czechoslovakia.

1939: War Begins

- Now he wants Poland. Although he had a better claim to Poland, the West wakes up (it's about time, folks) and realizes Hitler doesn't just want to conquer German people – hey he wants to conquer all of us! So, they decide to back Poland.
- By August everyone knows war is coming, but Hitler has one last trick up his sleeve: a non-aggression pact w/Stalin! Of course he is only thinking for the short run to avoid the two front war. Stalin is thinking the West wants the USSR and Germany to mutually eliminate e/o by not supporting him against Hitler. He doesn't want this to occur. Stalin and Hitler also make a deal to split Poland.
- On **September 1, 1939** the war begins through a phony invasion of Germany by "Poland" (really the Germans in Polish army suits). Appeasement is finally over.

The Course of the War

- So on September 1, 1939 the war began over Poland. Britain and France gave Hitler 48 hours to evacuate Poland and on September 3 major war began. Poland was beaten in a really short time by the German tactic of Blitzkrieg.
- Then the so-called "Phony War" began. For six months neither side made any big moves on land b/c they didn't want to waste troops and make the mistakes of WWI. This break was ended when the Germans attacked on the Western front on May 10, 1940.
- At the same time, Russia was fighting Finland b/c Stalin wanted Finnish territory for defensive purposes against his "ally" Hitler. Finland wasn't too hot on the idea, Stalin wanted to rush in and kick their butts, but it proved to be harder than expected as the Finns held the Russians back for weeks. Finally the Russians won (they had more people). Hitler (and Stalin who then reorganized the army) realized the Russian army was in bad shape.
- Meanwhile the Germans were wiping out one country after another: France fell in six weeks, as did Belgium and the Netherlands. Italy joined the war on Germany's side, so the British were the last ones left against Hitler. Their fate was decided by the **Battle of Britain**, which was an air battle in the summer of 1940. Luckily, the British won out using their radar technology and the Germans turned their sights to (just like Napoleon)...Russia!
- Hitler's attack on Russia totally surprised Stalin, and the Germans were kicking the Red Army's butt. Millions of Russian troops were killed or captured (sent to Germany to be slaves). But they still couldn't capture Moscow or Leningrad. Then on December 6, the Russians suddenly counterattacked the Germans at Moscow (troops were in reserve for fighting the Japanese).
- Then on December 7, Pearl Harbor. The US declares war on Japan, and then Germany declares war on the US (really stupid move, they were just asking for it).
- The German army was barely surviving the Russian winter. Their plan was to capture the oil fields in the southern USSR. The crucial battle to get there was the battle of Stalingrad (if the Germans did not win there would always be the threat of a Russian attack). This is the decisive battle and both sides knew it.
- In November 1942, the Red Army was able to surround the Germans at Stalingrad and they are cut off. Hitler does not allow his troops to retreat, but by January 1943 remaining troops surrender. Now it is just a chase heading back to Germany with the Russians pushing the Germans out.
- Things go from bad to worse for the Germans and Germany surrenders unconditionally on **May 8, 1945** (VE Day). Hitler had killed himself (4/30/45) to avoid being captured by the Russians.
- The other WWII fronts included:
 1. **North Atlantic** → Allies were battling U-boats to ensure that they would be able to attack Europe from Britain.
 2. **North Africa** → British and Americans against Rommel's Afrika Korps, Axis driven out in 1942. Then Americans were told to go after Italy, which was stupid.

3. **Italy** → Americans land there and take over Sicily, so the Italians get rid of Mussolini and surrender. But then Germany took over Italy and continued the war there to great effect as they kept lots of Allied troops busy and accomplishing nothing.
 4. **France** → Because of the Italy campaign the invasion of France was delayed until 1944. Then D-Day was on June 6, 1944. Led by Eisenhower, the allies caught the Germans by surprise and moved across northern France. They met up with the Russians in central Germany in March 1945.
- Then the war with Japan continued for a while until, after the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Japanese surrendered unconditionally on September 2, 1945 (VJ Day).

The Aftermath of the War

- After the war, all of Europe was in shambles. Major cities had been destroyed as a result of bombing, industry was really messed up, there were refugees everywhere, etc.
- There was no big peace conference after WWII, but along the course of the war several meetings of the allies had helped decide policy:
 1. **Casablanca** → In 1942 FDR and Churchill met and agreed that their goal was to be unconditional surrender, only.
 2. **Teheran** → In 1943 FDR and Churchill met and promised to start a second front in France.
 3. **Yalta** → In 1945 FDR, Churchill and Stalin met. This meeting was important for it is often considered the beginning of the cold war. At Yalta, it was decided to divide Germany into 4 zones (US, USSR, British, French) and Berlin into zones as well. The Allies decided to occupy and demilitarize Germany. Since US didn't have bomb yet it was thought Japan war would go on for several years, so the US wanted USSR support and got it in exchange for Russia getting the land it lost in the Russo-Japanese war. It was agreed Eastern Europe would have free elections but the governments would have to be "friendly" to the USSR.
 4. **Potsdam** → After the war was over, in July 1945, the Allies met and outlined the future of Germany. The borders in Eastern Europe were changed a little and the zones of occupation in Germany were established. They also worked out terms of peace w/Japan.
- Then there were a series of trial, the **Nuremberg Trials**, which tried the Nazi war criminals in 1945 and 1946. Several international agencies, including the United Nations, were created after WWII. Mainly, after WWII, there was an era of slow (but steady) recovery helped by the US. Of course, there was also the threat of the Cold War.