

# Interwar Years & WWII (1930-1945)

## POLITICAL: STEPS TO WAR

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### STEPS TO WAR

During Hitler's rise to power, the Western Nations practice a policy of Appeasement to placate Hitler and avoid war.

1933 Fall -Germany withdraws from League of Nations; supports draft and rearming 1936 – Hitler sends troops into the demilitarized zone of Rhineland (even says later that he was surprised he wasn't stopped) 1937 German planes bomb Guernica in Spanish Civil War; Hitler and Mussolini draw together and Mussolini allows the 1938 Austrian Anschluss 1938-October – Hitler demands autonomy for Germans living in the Sudetenland, Czechoslovakia. By 1939 March, Germany invades all Czechoslovakia. 1939 August, German signs non-aggression pact with Soviet Union and secretly agree to divide Poland and Baltic States. War begins with Poland Sept. 1939.

### World War II

Blitzkrieg begins war with airplanes, tanks, and motorized infantry. Pause for the winter, then in April 1940, Denmark, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands fall. France falls by June. Troops were rescued from Dunkirk, but France was split between a Northern occupied zone, and a southern zone with President Pétain. France lost 200,000 men in these two months.

Europe was now virtually under Axis domination (*Festung Europa*, or Fortress Europe). Winston Churchill resists Nazis in the Battle of Britain: 1940-41. Germany occupies Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria. By June 1941, the Germans invade the Soviet Union. Numerous strategic errors bog down the Germans by fall of 1941. Germany expands into North Africa, but by late 1942 and early 1943, German defeat at El Alamein Egypt, and Stalingrad, USSR, put Germany in retreat. Landings in Sicily in July 1943, and Italian peninsula in April 1945, D-Day landings in June 1944, push Germans back to Germany. Tenacious fighting in last year led to high German death tolls. Germany prostrate by May 1945. Hitler commits suicide in his bunker, May 1945.

### War and Post War Settlements

1941: Roosevelt Churchill Atlantic Charter, Collective security 1943: Casablanca: Roosevelt, Churchill plan for D-Day 1945: Yalta, Soviet Union: Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin make postwar Europe plans, set

conditions for Russia's entry in war against Japan 1945: Potsdam, German: Truman, Stalin, Churchill: Plan for defeat of Japan, post-war Europe

East-West friction develops with Soviet Union occupying Poland and East Germany.

### Cold War Begins

Soviet Union presses for a buffer zone of Soviet dominated Eastern European states: with communist rule as an –iron curtain (Churchill's words) of separation. Germany was divided in half, and while the West remains occupied by Britain, France and the United States, Berlin remains in East, but as a free city. The Berlin Blockade of 1948-49 results in an airlift that thwarts Stalin's effort to starve the city into submission. The Truman Doctrine of Containment sends money to Greece and Turkey to block Communist encroachment. Communist figureheads were placed as heads of government in Czechoslovakia. Tito of Yugoslavia, however, remains independent from Russia and subjugates nationalism in the Balkan States. NATO, a military organization of mutual defense was matched by the Warsaw Pact.

## ECONOMIC

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Great Depression: Reckless Investment, agricultural over-production and failure of market regulation led to the crash. Budget cuts and high tariffs compound the problem. John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946) advocates for interventionist economics, which has since proved to be at least somewhat correct. New Deal style programs and pump priming adopted by U.S., Sweden, Britain. In France, Leon Blum extends family subsidies and welfare under the Popular Front. Many of these programs were currently causing massive deficits among western economies 2010+. The economic legacy of World War I leaves many of the democracies weak and unable to lend economic support to growing Totalitarian threats. Germany-- Suspension of U.S. loans to Germany led to resurgence in Nazi party. Hitler stimulates economy by social programs, reduction of labor strife, and rearmament.

## ECONOMIC: WAR AND POST WAR REBIRTH

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During World War II, industry pulls the U.S. out of the Depression with the U.S. providing the material to wage war against Hitler.

The Marshall Plan (1947) gives money to struggling nations to prevent communist ideologies taking root among the unemployed and hopeless. Stalin sees this as a threat to his influence, and clamps down on the communist satellite states. The West rebuilds at a spectacular rate.

## RELIGIOUS

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Nazi Race policy of Aryanism led to greatest catastrophe in World History. Nuremberg laws of 1935 take away civil liberties from Jews and begin widespread confiscation of property (also a source of wealth for Nazis). Gypsies, handicapped, Christian groups, homosexuals also targeted for destruction. *Kristallnacht* November 1938, begins the Holocaust. Six million Jews were murdered by Germans and their accomplices. Some Jews flee to Palestine before the war, but after the Holocaust the situation became critical with hundreds of thousands returning to the Jewish Ancestral homeland.

JEWISH STATE of 1948. Hundreds of thousands of Holocaust survivors flee to Palestine after war. Jews prevail and Jewish state

declared in 1948. Continued friction over Suez Canal, Palestinian refugees occurs to this day. Each time attacked, Israel wins (1967, 1972) which fuels Arab resentment against US for their material support of Israel.

## **SOCIAL**

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Effects of Great Depression vary, but leave many scraping for existence. Unemployed young men, families migrate looking for work.

Germany was primed for a Nazi takeover as Jews were blamed for another economic downturn. Britain and France, along with other countries, move to expand Social programs.

WORLD WAR II: Allied countries generate wide-spread civilian participation. Propaganda used by all powers to restrict information about war news. Just as with World War I, rationing, scrap drives and war bonds support war on the home front.

*Women* provide vital work force in all sectors. Government controls rationing, provides propaganda for war effort. The Soviet Union endures brutal hardship and loses upwards to 25 million citizens. Industrialization and factories grow overnight in the United States. In occupied countries, resistance efforts were punished.

## **ARTISTIC**

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Totalitarian regimes constrict and warp cultural freedom. Hitler's disdain of modern art backfires with the display of "Degenerate Art", confiscated from Jews.