



REVISION – WORLD WAR TWO



1. *Causes of WWII*
2. *WWII*
3. *Results of WWII*

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Causes of WWII

- **Two major interpretations of the causes of W.W.II exist:**
 - Hitler's desire for the expansion of Germany
 - Policy of appeasement
- **Other important interpretations are:**
 - The isolation of the USA and the USSR
 - Nationalism
 - Reorganization did not produce more democratic states
 - The Depression (esp. after the Wall Street Crash 1929)
 - Weakness of Britain and France
 - The failure of the League of Nations
 - The Soviet Union and the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact 1939
- **Hitler comes into power**
 - Germany would not make any further reparations payments (June 1933)
 - Withdrew Germany from the League of Nations (October 1933)
 - Hitler denounced the disarmament clause of Versailles and introduced conscription and began building an air force (March 1935)
 - Anglo-German Naval Treaty (June 1935) gave Germany the right to increase the size of her naval forces (and it “ruined” the Stresa Front!)
- **The build-up to war during the period 1936-1939**
 - Reoccupation of the Rhineland (March 1936)
 - Hossbach Memorandum (November 1937)
 - Anschluss (union) with Austria (March 1938)
 - Sudetenland is given to Germany (September/October 1938)
 - Czechoslovakia is occupied by Germany (March 1939)
 - The Invasion of Poland (September 1st 1939)
- **Historians and the Causes of WWII**
 - Cause – Hitler and Germany
 - The Hitler Factor
 - Continuity in German foreign policy
 - Cause – Chamberlain and appeasement
 - Cause – French Foreign Policy
 - Cause – Mussolini and Italy
 - Cause – Stalin and Soviet
 - Cause – Paris Peace Settlements
 - Cause – A.J.P. Taylor...
 - Cause – Economical interpretations
 - Cause – Ideology

WWII

- September 1st 1939 POLAND
- November 28th 1939 FINLAND
- BRITAIN & FRANCE
- AT SEA
- April 9th 1940 DENMARK & NORWAY

- May 10th 1940 LUXEMBOURG, HOLLAND & BELGIUM
- June 5th 1940 FRANCE
- Summer 1940
- War in the Atlantic
- The Eastern Front
- World War, 1941
- German domination of Europe
- Soviet victories in the east, 1943-45
- The Second Front, 1944-45
- War in the Pacific, 1941-45
- Total dead: 36.6 million

Results of WWII

- caused some 50 million deaths
- divided Europe between the areas liberated from the Nazis by the Soviet Red Army and those liberated by the Western Allies, and so created the basis for the Cold War
- led both to the redrawing of many Eastern European frontiers, notably those of the Soviet Union, Poland and Germany, and, by 1949, to the division of Germany into two separate states
- led to the re-creation of the republics of Czechoslovakia and Poland which had disappeared in 1939
- saw the Baltic Republics reabsorbed back into the Soviet Union
- created a serious post-war refugee problem arising both from voluntary flight and, far more importantly, from forcible relocation, usually from east to west
- established the USA and the Soviet Union as superpowers
- destroyed the economies of many European countries
- hastened the end of European empires through the process of post-war decolonization.
- **The Effects of the Second World War**
 - Eclipse of Europe (control of world affairs moves to the USA and USSR who emerged as superpowers)
 - International relations after the war come to be characterized by their bipolarity.
 - Sweeping Social changes (Prof. Thomson: 'Modern War is revolution') i.e.: right to vote to women, demands for social change (i.e.: through election of Labor party)
 - Completed the work of WWI: final destruction of the 'old order' w/ abolition of monarchies and ending of the power of the traditional elite.
 - Gave great impetus to decolonialisation - both new superpowers opposed to colonialism, major colonial powers exhausted by the war, break up of the Myth of European superiority and invincibility.
 - Rapid spread of Communism: b/c of occupation of eastern and central Europe by the USSR and communism had played a leading role in the struggle against Nazism.
 - Rapid growth in regional and world organizations: attempt to create a more co-operative world order (UN/EEC)
 - Boost for economic principles (through discrediting of fascism)
 - meant a continuation of human right violations but that democracy was not challenged in the way it had been in 1930s
 - War became condemned as morally wrong - attempts to limit the use of warfare in international relations, conventions on use of certain weapons (since 1945 no country actually declared war on another!)
 - Brought in the Nuclear Age with the changing of the 'balance of power' into the 'balance of terror'.
- **Other less important effects:**
 - Massive refugee problem (i.e.: Stalin expelled minorities)
 - Major Boundary Changes
 - Constitutional changes imposed by the Allies
 - War Crime Trials

● **Paris Peace Treaties, 1947 - Italy, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Finland.**

- **War reparations**
- **Allied Commission**
- **Germany** - The Allied Control Council (ACC) for Germany oversaw the Allied Occupation Zones in Germany.
- **Austria** - The Allied Commission for Austria was established by the Agreement on control machinery in Austria signed in the European Advisory Commission in London on July 4, 1945.

Causes of WWII

Two major interpretations of the causes of W.W.II exist:

1. The major cause of the Second World War was **Hitler's desire for the expansion of Germany** (this interpretation was used by the prosecution judges in the international military tribunal in Nuremberg 1945-1946)
 2. The major cause of the Second World War was the **policy of appeasement** (Appeasement: making peace by concessions or by satisfying demands. During and after the Second World War, it was used in a derogatory sense to describe the efforts, especially those of the British Prime Minister Chamberlain to keep peace with Nazi Germany from 1937 to 1939, most notoriously by the Munich Agreements to which the French Prime Minister Daladier was also a party. The sharpest critic of the policy was Churchill and, as war did in fact come in 1939, his view of the folly of the policy held sway for 20 years after the end of the Second World War. Only after that time was a more considered view taken, by historians such as A J P Taylor, suggesting that Hitler may not have had such a clear-cut master plan for European conquest as Churchill had insisted.)
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Other important interpretations are:

1. **The isolation of the USA and the USSR**
 - USA refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles and join the League of Nations.
 - USSR was treated like the defeated Central Powers.
 - Neither power had an interest in maintaining the peace settlements of 1919-20.
2. **Nationalism**
 - New states determined by the concept of "self-determination of peoples" proved aggressive and expansionary (i.e.: Poland...)
3. **Reorganization did not produce more democratic states**
 - Dictatorships in Italy, Germany, Hungary, Rumania, Poland, Spain, Portugal...
 - Only Czechoslovakia established a stable democracy
4. **The Depression (esp. after the Wall Street Crash 1929)**
 - Led to governments to focus on short-term nationalistic measures instead of international co-operation - It saw the rapid spread of economic nationalism instead of international co-operation
 - Increased the isolationism of the USA (and demands of money – the war debts situation)
 - Western democracies did very little rearmament (meanwhile other countries spent a lot of the budget on rearmament... i.e. Germany)
 - Led to class conflicts -> which raised fear of revolution and fear of any war that could lead to a revolution -> which led to appeasement policies in order to avoid a conflict
 - Reparation payments ended
 - Led to the rise of extremists to power (i.e.: Rise of the Nazi Party)
5. **Weakness of Britain and France**
 - French and British failure to support the League of Nations
 - The appeasement policies
 - Led other countries to see dictatorship as a stronger and more effective form of govt.
6. **The failure of the League of Nations**
 - Wall Street Crash
 - Manchurian Crisis (1931)
 - Abyssinian Crisis (1935-36)
 - Spanish Civil War
7. **The Soviet Union and the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact 1939**

Official agreement The two states agreed not to go to war against each other and also to remain neutral if either were attacked by a third country!

Secret clauses (became public long after the war): It arranged for Germany and USSR to divide Poland and for the USSR to take what action it wished against the Baltic States (which included Finland!) The Pact may well have been encouraged by

- the slow pace of British and French approaches towards the USSR
- Britain's and France policies and actions in the Munich agreement
- earlier corporation between Germany and the USSR (during the Weimar Republic)

Hitler comes into power

- Germany would not make any further reparations payments (June 1933)
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The build-up to war during the period 1936-1939

- **Reoccupation of the Rhineland (March 1936)**
 - February 12th 1936. Hitler informs his Commander-in-Chief that he wants to send troops into the demilitarized Rhineland
 - March 3rd 1936. Mussolini tells Germany that he has no objections.
 - March 7th 1936. German troops enter the Rhineland.
 - March 8th 1936. France denounced the action but no military action was taken

Why did Hitler take this action?

1. The international circumstances were in his favor:

- France experienced internal problems
- Italy was seeking better relations with Germany (especially after they got criticized for the invasion of Abyssinia)
- Britain had no intention of intervening militarily all alone...

2. Hitler needed a success in foreign policy to turn aside growing criticism of his domestic policies

3. Hitler and Nazism/fascism requires action

What were the effects of the reoccupation?

Immediate:

- Austria began to seek better relations with Germany
- Marked the definite end of the "Stresa Front" (the anti-German alliance of Great Britain, France and Italy)

Long Term:

- Initiative passed to Hitler and Germany's position was strengthened
- Allowed the construction of the Siegfried Line which meant Great Britain and France could no longer intervene militarily without risking a major conflict
- Hitler was able to plan a more aggressive policy in the East because there was little danger of French or British action against him
- It encouraged Hitler and helped convince others of the strength of the Nazi system and the weakness of democracies

...after this Hitler worked to improve Germany's diplomatic position:

- October 1936: agreements signed between Italy and Germany ("axis powers"). Both agree to support Franco in the Spanish Civil War.
- November 1937: Germany and Japan sign an anti-Comintern pact combined with the deterioration of Japanese relations with the Western democracies after its invasion of Manchuria this brought Japan increasingly into the German camp.
- Non-intervention agreement signed with Austria.

- Hitler begins a campaign of anti-communist speeches to convince Europe he was her best defense against USSR threat.
- Hitler gave diplomatic assurances to Poland that Germany had no design upon her territory.
- November 1937: Italy signed the anti-Comintern pact.
- **Hossbach Memorandum (November 1937)**
 - Memorandum for a meeting of top ranking German leaders.
 - Hitler stated that Germany must expand her territory because of a growing population and inadequate resources (Lebensraum)
 - This was to be achieved through war.
 - War must come soon with the German advantage of having begun armament sooner than Western democracies.

Does the Hossbach Memorandum prove that Hitler planned war?

YES:

- Hitler talks as if war was inevitable in the meeting
- He talks of taking advantage of British or French weaknesses
- Talks specifically of dealing with Austria and Czechoslovakia
- Says that it is his political will

NO:

- Many of those present were not Nazis (why reveal his thoughts to such a group?)
- Hitler might only be pleasing the military
- Goering was meeting opposition in the armament program. Was this set up to remove opposition?
- Hitler showed no interest in Hossbach's minutes (was it really his political testament?)
- The situation he describes did not develop.

It is doubtful if Hitler had a 'timetable' for his aggression, he was encouraged though by international developments:

- Internal division weakened France.
- Britain was unwilling to give France guarantees.
- Stalin had purged the Soviet army
- The League of Nations and the concept of collective security was weakening.

- **Anschluss (union) with Austria (March 1938)**
 - Feb 12th 1938: Hitler threatened the Austrian Chancellor, Schuschnigg, in order for him to remove anti-Nazi measures and allow Austrian Nazis to enter the government.
 - March 9th 1938: Schuschnigg declares that he will hold a referendum concerning Hitler's measures.
 - March 11th 1938: Schuschnigg orders the Austrian army not to fire on Austrian troops. Hitler hears that Mussolini would not oppose a German move into Austria.
 - March 12th 1938: German Troops enter Austria
 - **March 13th 1938:** Hitler annexes Austria

The Result of the Anschluss:

- Balance of Power was now in Germany's favor.
- Ideally placed to dominate Balkans.
- Shared a common frontier with her Italian ally.
- Czechoslovakia had her defenses outflanked.
- 100,000 troops added to the German army

Gained in Economic Strength:

- Control of Austrian steel resources.
- Control of Austrian gold and foreign currency.
- France disliked the union but could not act alone.
- Britain disliked Hitler's methods but the feeling was that the original refusal to allow it had been a denial of the right of self-determination.

- **Sudetenland is given to Germany (September/October 1938)**
 - *March 1938:* Hitler meets with Sudeten Nazi leader (Konrad Henlein) and tells him to make unacceptable demands for autonomy so Hitler could intervene.

- *April 1938*: British and French (Czech allies) urge Czechoslovakia to make maximum number of concessions. France has a defense alliance with Czechoslovakia.
- *May 20th 1938*: Czech President orders partial mobilization. France warns Hitler against any invasion.
- *May 30th 1938*: Hitler orders generals to prepare for an invasion of Czechoslovakia by September if the issue had not been resolved.
- *Sept 7th 1938*: Article in the *Times* suggesting Czechoslovakia should hand over Sudetenland to Germany
- *Sept 12th 1938*: In a speech at a party rally Hitler attacks the Czechs.
- *Sept 13th 1938*: Neville Chamberlain (the British Prime Minister) suggests a meeting with Hitler.
- *Sept 15th 1938*: Chamberlain goes to Berchtesgaden in the German Bavarian Alps (Hitler's mountain residence, the Berghof, was located here. Berchtesgaden and its environs (Stanggass) were fitted to serve as an outpost of the Imperial Chancellery). Hitler agrees to wait for a peaceful settlement but orders generals to continue with invasion plans. Chamberlain agrees to the cession of the Sudetenland. Three days later, French Prime Minister Édouard Daladier did the same. No Czechoslovak representative was invited to these discussions.
- *Sept 19th 1938*: French and British persuade the Czechs to accept the transfer of territory with clear German majorities (French threat of withdrawing support)
- *Sept 22nd 1938*: Chamberlain-Hitler meeting at Bad Godesberg (close to Bonn in the Rhineland) to confirm the agreements. Hitler however, aiming at using the crisis as a pretext for war, now demanded not only the annexation of the Sudetenland but the immediate military occupation of the territories, giving the Czechoslovakian army no time to adapt their defence measures to the new borders. Hitler also wants compensation for other states with claims against Czech territory. Chamberlain refuses.
- *Sept 24th 1938*: Czechoslovakia mobilizes. France calls up reserves.
- *Sept 28th 1938*: British navy on war footing. To avoid a war and achieve a solution Mussolini suggested a conference of the major powers in Munich.
- *September 29-30 1938*: Meeting in **Munich**, Agreement between Germany, Italy, France and Britain that Germany will have the entire Sudetenland = the **MUNICH AGREEMENT**.

NOTE: Czechoslovakia (and Russia) was not invited...

Why did Chamberlain follow this policy of 'appeasement'?

- Genuine fear that another conflict on scale of WWI would be the end of European civilization.
- Guilt over the terms imposed upon Germany in 1919 (maybe Hitler's demands were simply to right this wrong?)
- Belief that Hitler's demands were of a limited nature.
- Fear of war in Europe while Japan was becoming increasingly aggressive.
- Knowledge of the French weakness (due to internal divisions)
- Suspicion of the USSR and thus unwillingness to enter into any form of alliance with the one power capable of checking German ambitions. (Western suspicions of communism were deeper than suspicions of Nazism)
- Desire to gain time so Britain could build up her military strength.
- Popular opposition to war in Britain.
- ***Czechoslovakia is occupied by Germany (March 1939)***. The policy proved to be mistaken because Hitler's aims were not limited and this only encouraged further expansion.
 - **March 1939**: What was left of Czechoslovakia came under German influence (the president, when trying to restore authority, was ordered by Hitler to request German help to end disturbances. German troops occupied the rest of Czechoslovakia except the parts granted to Poland and Hungary)
 - Both the British and the French became determined to resist any further move by Hitler.
- **The Invasion of Poland (September 1st 1939)**

- *October 1938*: Ribbentrop (German foreign minister) asks for the return of Danzig and the creation of an extra territorial corridor to link Danzig with the rest of Germany. Poland refuses.
 - *Jan 5th 1938*: Hitler offered the Ukraine (then Soviet territory) in return for Danzig and the Polish Corridor!
 - *March 1939*: Britain offers to guarantee Polish territory. Hitler decides to deal with Poland not as a possible ally but as a state to be attacked.
 - *April 3rd 1939*: Hitler orders the army to prepare for plans to attack Poland.
 - *April 28th 1939*: Hitler denounces the non-aggression pact made with Poland in 1934.
 - *May 22nd 1939*: **Pact of Steel** between Germany and Italy. USSR makes offers of an agreement with France and Britain but negotiations are so slow the USSR becomes suspicious of their motives.
 - *August 24th 1939*: **Non-Aggression Pact (Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact)** between Germany and the USSR contains a "Secret Protocol" whereby they agreed on the division of Poland.
 - *1st Sept 1939*: German troops invade Poland.
 - *3rd Sept 1939*: Great Britain and France declare war on Germany.
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Historians and the Causes of WWII

Cause – Hitler and Germany

The Hitler Factor

- *Orthodox view*: Hitler had a fanatical will and a consistent program of aggression (Hugh Trevor-Roper, Alan Bullock, Andreas Hilgruber, Klaus Hildebrand). Hitler was an unprincipled opportunist constrained by internal politics, and responding to the ebb and flow of events in a flexible manner.
 - *Revisionist view*: Most revisionists reject the idea of Hitler being an all-powerful leader in complete control of events. They portray him as a referee controlling bitter disputes between competing factions, individuals and organizations within Nazi Germany. Hitler's Germany was "a minefield of institutional disagreements and bureaucratic chaos". The revisionists have highlighted the high level of internal rivalry between competing centers of power within the Third Reich. They view Hitler as being more indecisive and weak than was previously thought (Karl-Dietrich Bracher, Martin Broszat, Hans Mommsen)
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Continuity in German foreign policy

Hitler's foreign policy played an important role in the outbreak of WWII. The historical debate has concentrated on the following question: Was Hitler's foreign policy unique or did it just represent a continuation of earlier German foreign policy?

- Hitler's foreign policy was unique (Friedrich Meinecke, Gerhard Ritter, Ralf Dahrendorf)
- Hitler's foreign policy was not very unique (some agree with A.J.P. Taylor's view that it followed earlier German traditions) (Detlev Peukert, A.J.P. Taylor, Lewis Namier, Fritz Fischer, Geoffrey Eley, Gordon Craig). Some of the arguments are:
 1. Lebensraum can be traced back to propaganda pamphlets produced by the Pan German League before 1914
 2. German dominance in eastern Europe and the subordination of the Slavs were key aims of the German government during W.W.I
 3. The restoration of the German Army power was a desire for the Army throughout the Weimar period
 4. Hate for socialism was a major feature of the old Junker class who welcomed the destruction of socialistic parties and trade unions

5. Several of Hitler's foreign policy aims was chaired by Weimar governments, especially the ones between 1930 and 1933
 6. "Hitler just represented a right-wing consensus in Germany over the basic goals and aims of German foreign policy"
 7. Geoffrey Eley also sees a continuation of Austrian policies... Anti-Semitism was common in Austria. So was the desire to control Eastern Europe and to weaken Slav nationalism...
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Cause – Chamberlain and appeasement

Orthodox view: Chamberlain's conduct of British foreign policy was "*diplomacy of illusion*". Chamberlain's inability to deal with Hitler and Germany made the aggressive German foreign policy possible. It also ensured that, when the war broke out, Britain and France had no major allies, and that they were also in a very weak military position (Cato - pseudonym for a number of British left-wing writers, John Wheeler-Bennet, Keith Middlemass, R.A.C. Parker)

Revisionist view: When the archives were opened on the subject of appeasement we can see a trend of treating Chamberlain and the policy of appeasement far more sympathetically. Most revisionists avoid moral judgments on Chamberlain and instead focus on social, economic and strategic factors:

1. The complex set of domestic, international, military and economical factors made a policy of standing up to the dictators impractical, and a policy of finding peace preferable - that's why the focus on Chamberlain and the leading figures of the "National Government" is misleading
2. British foreign policy during the 1930's should be viewed within an international context, which gives due emphasis to rival ideologies, economic systems and social groupings in Europe
3. The leaders who took the decisions were prisoners of circumstances beyond their control
4. It's wrong to blame Chamberlain exclusively - he was an able and realistic politician who realized that Britain and France could not keep order in Europe, and who wanted Britain to retain its world power status, which he believed would be lost in a second major world war
5. The British economy did not contain enough skilled workers to effect a large scale rearmament program without endangering the fragile British recovery from the great economic slump of the 1930's
6. The military and naval chiefs constantly warned that Britain was not prepared for a simultaneous war against Germany, Italy and Japan, and advised the government to follow a policy of appeasement
7. Public opinion consistently opposed rapid rearmament and a strong stand being taken against the dictators (David Dilks).

Today the supporters of the revisionist interpretation are in majority. Some "ultra-revisionists" claims that Chamberlain could have saved the empire and prevented a post-war decline if he hadn't loss nerve and allowed appeasement to continue.

Cause – French Foreign Policy

A great many studies link British and French policy during the late 1930's. France was deeply divided and politically unstable, which stumbled from crisis to crisis, from government to government (16 different coalition governments between 1932 and 1940), and from peace to war.

Orthodox view: French foreign policy during the 1930's was obsessed with security and defense. France had no intention of stopping Hitler by force, and therefore willingly allowed Chamberlain to march France along the road to Munich. France did this because they feared losing British support if they didn't (Anthony Adamthwaite, J-B Duroselle, René Girault). Just like in Britain many of the French leaders during the 1930's has been branded "guilty men" due to the policy of appeasement.

Contrary to Britain the French version of appeasement was negative - it was a grim realization of their past failures

Many historians highlight the lack of boldness in French planning and tactics. Robert Young shows that the French military planning was based on the defense of the Maginot Line, with no offensive plan

Cause – Mussolini and Italy

Mussolini was the first European fascist dictator: he undermined the Paris Peace Settlement, aided Franco during the Spanish Civil war, played a crucial role at the Munich Conference, signed the Pact of Steel, remained neutral in September 1939, and finally joined the war on Hitler's side in 1940...

Orthodox view: Mussolini's foreign policy was ineffective, immoral, designed to grab headlines and to please Italian public opinion, and it lacked any clear objectives (Gaetano Salvemini, Elizabeth Wiskemann, Denis Mack Smith, A.J.P. Taylor)

Revisionist view: Mussolini might have been an opportunist but he did have a coherent set of aims in his foreign policy. Most important were to achieve "*spazio vitale*" (living space) for Italians in north Africa and the Middle East. Some historians also mention that Mussolini used the aggressive foreign policy to divert public attention from domestic problems (MacGregor Knox, George Baer, Renzo de Felice's, Cassel). The weak position among the European powers is also an issue the revisionists bring up...

Mussolini and Germany: Two major opinions exist in this matter;

1. The Rome-Berlin Axis was a typical example of Mussolini's idea of always keeping his options open (D.C. Watt, Denis Mack Smith)

The Pact of Steel represented the expression of parallel desires in mind of the two dictators to achieve their aims by alliance in war (Philip Morgan)

Cause – Stalin and Soviet

Collective-security approach: Stalin's foreign policy attempted to uphold the principles of collective security against Hitler, and reluctantly moved towards signing the Nazi-Soviet Pact because Britain and France deliberately appeased Hitler, undermined the League of Nations, and delayed signing a triple alliance in 1939 to deter Nazi Germany (Soviet historians, A.J.P. Taylor, Jonathan Haslam, Geoffrey Roberts). After the Munich Agreement in 1938, Stalin viewed the League of Nations as a spent force, and became deeply mistrustful of the aims of the appeasers, whom, he felt, were happy as long as Hitler moved east

US historians: The Nazi-Soviet Pact was "Stalin's blank cheque" to Hitler, which virtually guaranteed that war would start in 1939. Stalin's support for collective security was a cynical ploy to mask an underlying desire for a Nazi-Soviet pact (William Langer, S. Everett Gleason, Robert Tucker...this view was deeply colored by the Cold War)

German school: This is a more recent school of historians, which uses primarily German archives. They think Stalin had significant responsibility for the outbreak of the war. Soviet foreign policy during the 1930's desired a reconstruction of the close Soviet-German relationship, established by the co-operative Soviet-German Treaty of Rapallo in 1922, and broken off by Hitler in 1933. This interpretation regard the Soviet Union as giving Hitler the "green light" for aggression in 1939 Ernst Topitsch:

- The view of Hitler as being the leading character in the events which led to the Second World War has been exaggerated and requires modification
- Stalin was the key figure in the outbreak of war and the key victor of the war
- Stalin was the only leader in Europe with clear aims

- Stalin set out to start a European war in 1939 between what he saw as aggressive and non-aggressive capitalist states, which left the Soviet Union in a neutral position and well placed to reap a rich reward

P.H.M. Bell does not agree... The Soviet Union's incredible lack of preparation for the German attack in June 1941 must raise doubts about whether such a plan ever existed (the plan of a Soviet attack on the Western capitalist democracies, with Hitler acting as Stalin's unwitting agent)

The recent opening of Soviet archives supports Bell's view (the Soviet entry into the League of Nations; its offer to save Czechoslovakia in 1938; the speeches by Litvinov, the Soviet foreign minister, at the League of Nations in support of collective security; the denunciations of fascism and appeasement by Stalin; and the preference, in 1939, for an agreement with Britain and France, do all appear to have been genuine)

Soviet internal politics: There was a key division within Stalin's regime over the direction of foreign policy: on the one hand, a significant group favored a return to a close Soviet-German friendship: on the other, a larger group supported collective security. The course of events allowed the pro-German group to shift opinion...

This view might be exaggerated since the major Soviet desire was to search for a foreign policy which would prevent it being involved in war. The role of the external events were more important. The Munich Agreement 1938 left a very deep impression on Stalin; that's where the foundations of the Nazi-Soviet Pact was laid (Hildebrand)

Cause – Paris Peace Settlements

Orthodox view: Many historians see the settlement in Paris 1919 as a **failed compromise between the idealism** of Wilson (the US President) and the realism and selfishness of the European powers: The peace conference divided Europe into those who wanted the peace revised [Germany, Italy, Japan and Hungary], those who wanted it upheld [France, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia] and those who were not that interested [USA and Great Britain]. (James Joll)

“The fundamental weakness of the settlement was that it failed to solve the “German problem”. (E.H. Carr)

The peacemakers did not seem to realise that the collapse of the Russian, Habsburg and Ottoman empires left Germany in a potentially stronger position in Europe than ever before. (Anthony Lentin)

Revisionist view: Other historians see the settlement in Paris 1919 as an **achievement but the architects failed to follow through** the principles laid down at Paris and by their failure ensured a German revival:

The refusal of the USA to become involved in upholding the Paris Peace Settlement was a crucial reason for the settlement's failure. (Paul Birdsall)

Huge difference between the 1920's when the settlement worked and the 1930's when it was crushed by the combined militarism of Germany, Japan and Italy. For Kennedy, the crucial reason for its collapse was the Great Depression of the early 1930's (Wall Street Crash!). This destroyed the international co-operation and encouraged extreme selfishness to dominate international relations. The Depression also helped to destroy German democracy and contributed to Hitler's rise to power, and it was his dictatorship which brought war. (Paul Kennedy)

Cause – A.J.P. Taylor...

In his book "*The origins of the Second World War*" (1961) A.J.P. Taylor stated:

- Hitler was not an "evil monster" who molded events to fit his master plan, but he was a man of "improvisation", "opportunism" and "the-spur-of-the-moment bright idea". His foreign policy followed earlier German tradition

- Appeasement was a logical and realistic policy, but the mistakes made by Chamberlain when he abandons this policy brought the war on

So... the Second World War according to A.J.P. Taylor broke out not because of Hitler's design, but because of Chamberlain's blunders. Hitler's foreign policy succeeded (for a while) because of his ability to seize opportunities and profit from the mistakes of his opponents.

Cause – Economical interpretations

Cause – Ideology

WWII – First Phase...

September 1st 1939 POLAND: German air assault against Polish airfields, army bases and railroads. Disrupted the Polish troops. The air attack was followed by the advance of infantry and armored divisions - some of them reached fifty miles into Poland within 48 hours - BLITZKRIEG. The Polish army was numerically superior (over 2 million men) but lacked modern equipment and methods of transport... On the 10th of September the Polish High Command ordered a general retreat towards the South-east (the border towards Rumania). This retreat was efficient when the USSR attacked Poland on the 17th of September. Peace negotiations started on the 28th of September. On the 5th of October Poland gave up. There was **no** direct assistance from Poland's allies Britain and France. Poland was divided in 3 parts; the eastern part became Russian, the western part became German and the "middle" (called Government General) was under German control.

Stalin and the Soviet Union had little faith in Hitler's promises and therefore they wanted to build a buffer zone between them and the enlarged Germany. To this end a series of treaties were made with the Baltic States; Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. They agreed to allow Russian troops and ships to be stationed in their countries. Finland refused!

November 28th 1939 FINLAND: Finland was attacked and two days later USSR declared war against Finland. The Finnish Winter War had begun. Finland appealed to the League of Nations and they asked for assistance from the Western world. Sweden and Norway sent some volunteers. France and Britain prepared an expeditionary force that officially should aid Finland. They wanted to travel through northern Norway and Sweden - and capture the Swedish ore mines (which stood for 51% of Germany's supplies...). This force was ready to sail when Finland decided to surrender in March 1940. Finland lost land in the peace treaty. Once again Britain and France decided to not be involved in the actual war. That's why some American journalists christened the war "**the Phoney War**".

BRITAIN & FRANCE: prepared for the type of war they expected to come;

- Industry and agriculture came under more direct government control
- Rationing was introduced
- Propaganda machinery was established (RAF dropped leaflets over Germany...)
- Children were evacuated to the countryside

In France the French Commander-in-Chief in the north General Gamelin decided that he did not have sufficient forces to launch a major assault on the German "SIEGFRIED LINE" so he stopped

in front of it! When the assault of Poland was over the French felt increasingly vulnerable - so most of them secretly withdrew to the "MAGINOT LINE". Then they sat down and waited...

AT SEA: Only at sea you could see some activity;

- German submarines began a campaign of unrestricted attacks in which not only combatant but also neutral ships were sunk
- December 13: the German battleship "Admiral Graf von Spee" was attacked by 3 British cruisers outside South America. "Admiral Graf von Spee" was damaged and limped in to Montevideo to make repairs - Uruguay limited the time she could stay. Before the time expired the ship was taken out of port and scuttled (December 17)
- February 19 1940: A German auxiliary cruiser - the "ALTMARK" with 299 British prisoners on board were in a Norwegian fjord. The British destroyer "COSSACK" went in to the fjord and freed the prisoners from the ship. Norway protested against this attack...

April 9th 1940 DENMARK & NORWAY: On this date Denmark allowed German troops to occupy the country. Two days before - April 7th - German ships were seen to be moving northwards. France and Britain started to mine Norwegian coastal waters. On April 9th German troops landed in the five main ports and cities of Norway: Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim, Stavanger and Narvik. The Norwegian resistance was greater than expected - two German cruisers were damaged. In the north (Narvik) the resistance was successful for some time (with the aid of British, French and Polish troops). In early June they withdrew. King Haakon VII and his government managed to escape to London. Norway was now in German hands.

The defeat of Poland, Finland and Norway led to a government change in both Britain and France! Public opinion and the elected representatives expressed their discontent at the lack of allied support for especially Finland and Norway:

- **In France**, the Soviet victory in Finland, led to the downfall of DALADIER. He was replaced by RAUL REYNAUD on March 20th 1940.
- **In Britain**, CHAMBERLAIN, was replaced by WINSTON CHURCHILL on May 10th 1940.
- Both these new governments were broad coalitions which included both conservatives and socialists.

May 10th 1940 LUXEMBOURG, HOLLAND & BELGIUM: Germany attacked Luxembourg, Holland and Belgium the 10th of May 1940. Luxembourg fell at once but Holland and Belgium expected an attack and they were prepared. They thought they would defend themselves along the rivers and waterways - but their armies were small and they lacked artillery and air support. Germany broke the Dutch defensive system within 3 days. On the 14th of May Rotterdam was systematically bombed (part of the city was destroyed). Cease fire came the same evening. Queen Juliana and her family fled to Britain and Holland surrendered. The allies had more hope of defending Belgium. The defense line went from the MAGINOT LINE along SEDAN to NAMUR and then along the river DYLE. Belgian troops were supposed to hold the northern part, British in the centre and French in the south. The Germans attacked the weakest point in the south through the ARDENNES. They met very little resistance and were soon on the south and west side of SEDAN. The allies could not agree on how and where to counterattack. Meanwhile a retreat of their troops towards the English Channel continued. On the 27th of May 1940 King Leopold III surrendered Belgium to the Germans. The allies decided to try to get out by the Channel in NIEUPORT and DUNKIRK. The "Miracle of DUNKIRK" - over 300,000 men were rescued by 222 naval ships and over 650 smaller private boats!

June 5th 1940 FRANCE: Germany attacked northern France the 5th of June 1940 (called *Fall Rot* - Case Red). Numerous French divisions were cut off and in retreat. Millions of French refugees were now making their way towards the south. German forces outflanked the Maginot Line to

attack the larger territory of France. Italy declared war on France on 10 June. The French government fled to Bordeaux, and Paris was occupied on 14 June. The French government sent out an appeal for armistice. As Compiègne had been the site of the 1918 Armistice, which had ended World War I with a humiliating defeat for Germany, Hitler viewed the choice of location as a supreme moment of revenge for Germany over France. The armistice was signed on 22 June in the very same railway carriage in which the 1918 Armistice was signed (removed from a museum building and placed on the precise spot where it was located in 1918). Hitler sat in the same chair in which Marshal Ferdinand Foch had sat when he faced the defeated German representatives. The French Second Army Group, under the command of General Pretelat, surrendered the same day as the armistice and the cease-fire went into effect on 25 June 1940 (the **Second Armistice at Compiègne**).

France was divided into a **German occupation zone in the north and west**, a **small Italian occupation zone in the southeast** and a nominally independent state in the south, to be based in the spa town of Vichy, dubbed **Vichy France**. The new French state, headed by **Marshal Pétain** (French WWI hero), accepted its status as a defeated nation and attempted to buy favor with the Germans through accommodation and passivity. **Charles de Gaulle**, who had been made an Undersecretary of National Defense by Reynaud, in London at the time of the surrender, made his Appeal of 18 June. In this broadcast he refused to recognize the Vichy government as legitimate and began the task of organizing the **Free French forces**. Numerous French colonies abroad (French Guiana, French Equatorial Africa) joined de Gaulle rather than the Vichy government. The British began to doubt Admiral Darlan's promise to Churchill not to allow the French fleet at Toulon to fall into German hands by the wording of the armistice conditions; they therefore attacked French naval forces in Africa and Europe, which led to feelings of animosity and mistrust between the former French and British allies. After growing resistance within occupied France Vichy France was occupied on 10 November 1942 and all of France remained under German occupation until after the Allied landings in 1944.

Summer 1940

German plans to invade Britain were thwarted when they failed, in the **Battle of Britain**, to win control of the air. However, Germany from 1940 to 1944 controlled the European Continental coast from the North Cape of Norway to the Spanish border. Italy entered the war in 1940, at the height of German successes against France. Its invasion of Greece spread the war into the Balkans and out from Europe into the Mediterranean and to the French and Italian colonies in North Africa. Italian failures both after invading Greece and in North Africa drew German forces into these regions in what was to become a costly diversion of resources away from the main European battlefields.

War in the Atlantic

Sea warfare had at the same time spread in the Battle of the Atlantic as German U-boats sought to cut British supply lines, and this led to the gradual involvement of the USA. Despite continued American isolationist feeling, President Roosevelt at least was aware that the German success in dominating Europe posed a growing threat to American interests, and he sought, particularly by the Lend-Lease agreement, to provide essential supplies to Britain. The US navy took up an increasingly active, if still technically neutral, role in the Atlantic, but often appeared to be willing to provoke incidents between US destroyers and U-boats, until, in 1941, US destroyers began to escort and protect British supply convoys.

The Eastern Front

In June 1941, Hitler created an entirely new war front when, in Operation Barbarossa, he ordered the invasion of the Soviet Union and so opened up an Eastern Front. The three-pronged invasion thrust proved remarkably successful:

- in the north, Leningrad was besieged
- in the centre, German troops were within 50 miles of Moscow
- in the south, the capture of the key city of Kiev opened up the rich resources, including oil, of the Ukraine.

Losses of men on both sides were enormous, and the German army, still just short of its objectives, became bogged down in the Russian winter.

World War, 1941

The most dramatic extension of the war occurred on 5 December 1941, when a Japanese air attack on the American Pacific naval base at Pearl Harbor destroyed much of the US fleet based there.

- The USA immediately declared war on Japan
- Germany and Italy followed with declarations of war against the USA
- These events turned what had been a basically European war into a world war, with Britain, less than a year earlier fighting alone, now joined by the world's two largest powers and increasingly a junior partner among the Allies.

The USA and the Soviet Union were now actively committed on the same side and this made the eventual outcome of the war quite predictable. It was largely Roosevelt's decision that the Allies should first defeat Hitler that decided the war's future pattern, with the build-up in Britain of a vast Commonwealth and American force preparing to invade the Nazi-dominated European Continent.

German domination of Europe

In Europe German domination lasted for four years, from 1940 to 1944.

- It was always oppressive and, for the Jews in particular, often fatal, with the establishment of over 30 concentration and death camps
 - The material resources of the occupied countries were plundered and their inhabitants forced into labor for the occupying power
 - In all the occupied Countries, there were those, like Laval in France, who collaborated with the occupying power and those, like the Maquis, also in France, who actively resisted.
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The North Africa and Italian campaigns, 1942-43

In 1942 and 1943, British and American troops drove the Axis Forces out of North Africa. In July 1943, they invaded and captured Sicily, and in September invaded mainland Italy. The Italians had forced the dictator Mussolini from office, and it was German, not Italian, forces which now provided stubborn resistance to every Allied advance northwards through Italy.

Soviet victories in the east, 1943-45

The bulk of the German forces, however, were committed on their Eastern Front against the Soviet Union. The 1943 campaigns were fought deep inside the Soviet Union, but with the Red Army increasingly wresting the initiative from the Germans, as at the Battle of Stalingrad. By July 1944, the Red Army had crossed into Poland, and before the end of the year, all of the Soviet Union was cleared of German troops. The Soviet forces were poised to attack Germany itself.

The Second Front, 1944-45

In June 1944, western Allied forces, largely American and British, invaded Continental Europe, with amphibious landings in Normandy, and created a Second Front in the west. Despite fierce resistance, the bridgeheads were consolidated and the Allied forces broke out into France. In August 1944 they liberated Paris and, after a major German counter-attack was repulsed in the Ardennes Campaign, crossed the Rhine into Germany in March 1945. The Allied advance, was accompanied by saturation day-and-night bombing of targets within Germany, including the later controversial bombing of Dresden. The Red Army had meanwhile pushed far into Germany, bypassing Berlin, to make the first link-up with American troops advancing from the west in April 1945. German resistance, resolute for so long, now collapsed totally. The new V1 and V2 rockets had come too late to save Germany, and Hitler's Third Reich collapsed with his suicide on 30 April in the ruins of Berlin, and with Soviet troops only streets away. Hitler's successor, Admiral Doenitz, surrendered unconditionally on 7 May, and the war in Europe was over.

War in the Pacific, 1941-45

In the Pacific theatre of war, early Japanese success had rivaled those of the Germans in Europe. Japan's military and naval forces:

- had been at war with China since 1937, and controlled large areas of that country
- conquered the British colony of Hong Kong in December 1941
- swept south early in 1942 to occupy Burma, the Dutch East Indies, British Malaya, Singapore and the American Philippine Islands, threatening Australia and New Zealand
- occupied many of the tiny island groups across the Pacific.

Their spectacular advance was checked in June 1942, when US planes inflicted heavy losses on the Japanese fleet at the Battle of Midway Island. From late 1942, the American fleet counter-attacked, eliminating the Japanese navy, and the costly business of recapturing occupied islands could begin. In 1944, the mainland of Japan was subjected to heavy bombing.

By August 1945, Japan was much on the defensive but, with its defensive capability intact, it still constituted a formidable enemy when the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki forced it to surrender

THE DEAD IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR			
Allies	Millions	Axis powers	Millions
Soviet Union	20.0	Germany	4.2
Poland	4.3	Japan	1.2
China	2.2	Romania	0.5
Yugoslavia	1.7	Hungary	0.4
France	0.6	Italy	0.4
USA	0.4	Austria	0.3
Britain	0.4	Total dead: 36.6 million	

Results of WWII

Results of the war:

- caused some 50 million deaths
 - divided Europe between the areas liberated from the Nazis by the Soviet Red Army and those liberated by the Western Allies, and so created the basis for the Cold War
 - led both to the redrawing of many Eastern European frontiers, notably those of the Soviet Union, Poland and Germany, and, by 1949, to the division of Germany into two separate states
 - led to the re-creation of the republics of Czechoslovakia and Poland which had disappeared in 1939
 - saw the Baltic Republics reabsorbed back into the Soviet Union
 - created a serious post-war refugee problem arising both from voluntary flight and, far more importantly, from forcible relocation, usually from east to west
 - established the USA and the Soviet Union as superpowers
 - destroyed the economies of many European countries
 - hastened the end of European empires through the process of post-war decolonization.
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The Effects of the Second World War

- Eclipse of Europe (control of world affairs moves to the USA and USSR who emerged as superpowers)
- International relations after the war come to be characterized by their bipolarity.
- Sweeping Social changes (Prof. Thomson: 'Modern War is revolution') i.e.: right to vote to women, demands for social change (i.e.: through election of Labor party)
- Completed the work of WWI: final destruction of the 'old order' w/ abolition of monarchies and ending of the power of the traditional elite.
- Gave great impetus to decolonialisation - both new superpowers opposed to colonialism, major colonial powers exhausted by the war, break up of the Myth of European superiority and invincibility.
- Rapid spread of Communism: b/c of occupation of eastern and central Europe by the USSR and communism had played a leading role in the struggle against Nazism.
- Rapid growth in regional and world organizations: attempt to create a more co-operative world order (UN/EEC)
- Boost for economic principles (through discrediting of fascism)
- meant a continuation of human right violations but that democracy was not challenged in the way it had been in 1930s
- War became condemned as morally wrong - attempts to limit the use of warfare in international relations, conventions on use of certain weapons (since 1945 no country actually declared war on another!)
- Brought in the Nuclear Age with the changing of the 'balance of power' into the 'balance of terror'.

Other less important effects:

- Massive refugee problem (i.e.: Stalin expelled minorities)
 - Major Boundary Changes
 - Constitutional changes imposed by the Allies
 - War Crime Trials
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Paris Peace Treaties, 1947

The **Paris Peace Conference** (July 29 to October 15, 1946) resulted in the **Paris Peace Treaties** signed on February 10, 1947. The victorious wartime Allied powers (principally the United States, United Kingdom, France and the Soviet Union) negotiated the details of treaties of **Italy, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Finland**.

The treaties allowed Italy, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Finland to reassume their responsibilities as sovereign states in international affairs and to qualify for membership in the United Nations.

The settlement elaborated in the peace treaties included payment of war reparations, commitment to minority rights and territorial adjustments including the end of the Italian colonial empire in Africa and changes to the Hungarian-Slovak, Romanian-Hungarian, Soviet-Romanian, Bulgarian-Romanian and Soviet-Finnish frontiers.

The political clauses stipulated that the signatory should *"take all measures necessary to secure to all persons under (its) jurisdiction, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion, the enjoyment of human rights and of the fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, of press and publication, of religious worship, of political opinion and of public meeting"*.

No penalties were to be visited on nationals because of wartime partisanship for the Allies. Each government undertook to prevent the resurgence of fascist organizations or any others, *"whether political, military or semi-military, whose purpose it is to deprive the people of their democratic rights."*

Particularly in Finland, the dictated border adjustment was perceived as a major injustice and a betrayal by the Western Powers, after the sympathy Finland had received from the West during the Soviet-initiated Winter War of 1939 - 1940. However, this sympathy had been eroded by Finland's decision to join in Nazi Germany's attack on the Soviet Union, making it one of Hitler's most valuable allies. The Soviet Union's accessions of territory were confirmed based on the Moscow Armistice signed in Moscow on September 19, 1944, which had ended the Continuation War between Finland and Soviet Union.

War reparations

The war reparation problem proved to be one of the most difficult arising from post-war conditions. The Soviet Union felt entitled to the maximum amounts possible, with the exception of Bulgaria, which was perceived as being the most sympathetic of the former enemy states. In the cases of Romania and Hungary, the reparation terms as set forth in their armistices were relatively high and were not revised.

The collapse of the Soviet Union has not led to any formal revision of the Paris Peace Treaties, although the wars of the former Yugoslavia have caused fundamental territorial change in south-eastern Europe.

Allied Commission

Following the termination of hostilities in World War II, the Allied Powers were in control of the defeated Axis countries, anticipating the defeat of Germany and Japan they had already set up the European Advisory Commission and a proposed Far Eastern Advisory Commission to make recommendations for the post war period. Accordingly they managed their control of the defeated countries through **Allied Commissions**, consisting of representatives of the major Allied Powers.

Germany

The Allied Control Council (ACC) for Germany oversaw the Allied Occupation Zones in Germany. The ACC was established by agreement of June 5, 1945, supplemented by agreement of September 20 of that same year, with its seat in Berlin. Its members were Great Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States of America. Decision could only be made by consensus. Cooperation by the ACC broke down, as the Soviet representative withdrew on March 20, 1948. After that date, the ACC, even though in existence, no longer met, thus paving the way for the partition of Germany into two states.

After the breakdown of the ACC, West Germany (and West Berlin) was ruled by the **Allied High Commission** with membership from Britain, France, and the United States, while East Germany (and East Berlin) was ruled by the Chairman of the Soviet Control Commission, later the Soviet High Commissioner. The role of the High Commissioners ceased when each German state gained full sovereignty.

The ACC convened again in 1971, leading to agreement on transit arrangements in Berlin. During the talks for unification of Germany in late 1989, it was decided to convene the ACC again as a forum for solving the issue of Allied rights and privileges in Germany. The disbanding of the ACC was officially announced by the Two Plus Four Agreement of September 12, 1990, effective as of March 15, 1991.

Austria

The Allied Commission for Austria was established by the Agreement on control machinery in Austria signed in the European Advisory Commission in London on July 4, 1945. It entered into force on July 24, 1945 on the day that the United States gave notification of approval, the last of the four powers to do so. It was supplemented by agreement of June 28, 1946, with its seat in Vienna. The Commission was dismantled following the conclusion of the Austrian State Treaty on May 15, 1955.
