

THE SECOND THIRTY YEARS WAR 1914-1945

In 1914 a series of wars broke that was destined to affect many of the movements that were occurring not only in Europe, but also throughout the world. More than almost any previous conflict, the warring governments had genuine popular support, clearly reflecting the nationalism that had solidified many people in the late nineteenth century.

CAUSES OF THE BEGINNINGS OF THE WARS

The underlying causes of the war were highly complex. They included imperialism, entangling alliances and chauvinistic nationalism. While the relationship between these and other casual factors will continue to be discussed at length by scholars, the immediate chain of events that led to the outbreak of war is clear.

Bismarck's Alliances. In Germany, Bismarck was concerned with maintaining peace, preserving the balance of power, and stemming the tide of political liberalism and the possibility that France might try to regain some of the prestige and territory it lost in the Franco-Prussian War. He became the guiding light behind a new system of alliances intended to deal with such problems. One was the Three Emperors' League, formed in 1873, which brought together Germany, Russia and Austria. In 1879, after Russia withdrew from the league, Bismarck signed a defensive treaty with Austria forming the Dual Alliance. Russia, in turn, sought reconciliation with Germany, and the Three Emperors' League was renewed in 1881. It lapsed again in 1887, but Bismarck negotiated a Reinsurance Treaty with Russia, whereby each power promised to remain neutral if the other were attacked. Meanwhile, with the addition of Italy in 1882, the Dual Alliance became the Triple Alliance.

Bismarck Undermined. With these defensive alliances in place, and with no territorial ambitions for Germany, Bismarck believed he had achieved a balance of power that would, indeed, keep the peace. However, in 1888 William II became kaiser (emperor), and his plans for Germany ran counter to those of the chancellor. Bismarck was forced to resign in 1890. Almost immediately most of his alliance systems disintegrated. Only the Triple Alliance remained, and Italy was a weak and wavering partner.

The Franco-Russian Alliance and the Entente Cordial. A new system of alliances soon appeared. The first was the 1894 Franco-Russian alliance against Germany – a practical arrangement for both countries since the kaiser refused to renew the Reinsurance Treaty with Russia, while France was seeking both an escape from its isolation and security from any possible German threat. By the end of the century Great Britain, too, was becoming suspicious of Germany, partly because it was building a new navy that could threaten Britain's overseas empire. In 1902 Britain entered into an alliance with Japan against Russian expansionism. The in 1904 Britain concluded a series of agreements, known as the Entente Cordial, with France. This paved the way for England and France, traditional enemies, to become allies against Germany.

The First Moroccan Crisis and the Triple Entente. Bringing England and France together under the same roof had seemed impossible only a few years earlier. It was not long, however, before German ambition threw them into each other's arms. In March 1905 Germany invaded the French protectorate of Morocco and then called for an international conference to settle the dispute. The conference was held at Algeciras, Spain, in 1906. There, to Germany chagrin, Spain, Italy, the United States, and Great Britain all supported France. In preparation for a possible German attack on France, the general staffs of Britain and France began to meet together in strategy sessions. The next step brought Russia, still allied with France, into this unlikely family. A 1907 agreement between Britain and Russia thus informally, at least, tied Britain and France together in what is known as the Triple Entente. Bismarck's alliances, well designed to keep the peace, had been replaced by a different system that had the potential for explosion.

Crisis in Bosnia and Morocco. The first crisis arose in 1908. In private negotiations Russia agreed to support Austrian annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in return for Austria's support for opening the Dardanelles (Turkish straits) to the Russian navy. These agreements were supposed to be made publicly, at a forthcoming international conference. When Austria went ahead with annexation before the conference, however, Russia was highly offended. It was further humiliated when it got no support at the conference from Britain and France (its allies in the Triple Entente) for its own demands.

The next crisis came in Morocco, where France intervened to put down a rebellion in 1911. Germany sent a gunboat into a Moroccan port to protect its own interests, which more fully convinced both France and Britain of Germany's greater potential threat. The security of the two former enemies seemed more inextricably linked than ever.

The Arms and Propaganda Race. European anxieties inevitably led to an arms race. The first Moroccan crisis persuaded many people in Britain, France, Russia and the United States that Germany had ambitions to dominate all of Europe. German leaders, on the other hand, pictured other European countries as involved in a villainous plot to encircle their country and stop its expansion. As such paranoia grew, Germany continued to expand its already powerful navy. Britain soon followed suit. Propagandists in each camp threw bitter epithets at the other; by the time war broke out many Britons were convinced that Germany was deliberately preparing to destroy their empire.

The Balkan Wars. The European tinder box became more volatile in 1911 after Italy attacked the Ottoman Empire and took Libya and the Dodecanese Islands. Thus softened up, the empire was more vulnerable to a successful attack from the combined forces of Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, and Serbia. The result was the Ottoman Empire ceded most of its territory to the Balkan states in 1913. The victors were soon at each other's throats over the disposition of the spoils, however. That same year a second Balkan war broke out, with Greece, Romania, Turkey, and Serbia allied against Bulgaria. Austria, determined to stop the expansion of Serbia, soon intervened. The Serbs were stopped, and the emergence of the independent kingdom of Albania kept them from an outlet to the Adriatic Sea.

Assassination and its impact. On June 28, 1914, the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, Archduke Francis Ferdinand, and his wife were assassinated in the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo. It was widely (and correctly) believed that members of the Serbian government were involved in the plot; the reaction of the Austrians was predictable. They urged an immediate attack, but Hungarians within the empire insisted on an appeal to their German ally. The kaiser answered with what is often referred to as the "blank check." It gave the Austrians the go-ahead to declare war on Serbia, promising to keep Russian sympathetic to the fellow Slavic people in Serbia, out of any war that might follow. On July 24, Austria delivered an ultimatum to Serbia. It deliberately made at least one demand that was more than Serbia could accept – that Austrians be allowed to participate in the investigation of the assassination and punishment of its perpetrators. The Serbs rejected the ultimatum, albeit in conciliatory language. In July 28 Austria declared war.

Chain reaction. With that the dominoes began to fall. Russia began to mobilize in support of Serbia. Britain attempted to call an international conference to settle the issues, but Austria refused any such suggestions. Austria prepared for war against Russia, Russia stepped up its pace of mobilization, and Germany, recognizing that France inevitably would be drawn in, began its own massive mobilization. Germany declared war on Russia on August 1 and on France on August 3. It immediately implemented the Schlieffen Plan, which had been in place since 1905 and invaded France by marching through tiny Luxembourg and then Belgium. Great Britain, fulfilling its obligation to France as well as a long standing guarantee of Belgian neutrality, declared war on August 4. Two days later Austria-Hungary declared war on Russia.

THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Neither side anticipated a long, drawn out war, for both expected to win quickly. As the months and years dragged on, however, neither gained a major advantage, and both suffered devastating losses. The Triple Entente became known as the Allies, and Germany and Austria as the Central Powers.

Stalemate on the Western Front. Most of the fighting took place along Germany's western front, an area extending through Belgium and into France and from the North Sea through Alsace-Lorraine. The German war plan contemplated sweeping around French defenses by attacking through Belgium, moving on to the English Channel, and then making a big sweep to the South to complete the conquest of France. Then troops would be free to fight on the eastern front.

After the initial German drive the French began a series of counteroffensives, but French troops were unable to withstand Germany's overwhelming numbers and its machine guns. Soon, however, the French and British joined forces and stopped the German advance at the Battle of the Marne in September 1914. At that point the war became a stalemate. Both sides dug in with trenches, barbed wire, and machine-gun nests. Massive attacks, supported by huge artillery barrages, were unable to make any permanent breakthroughs. Men were killed or wounded by the tens of thousands, reserves were continually

brought up to replace them, and neither side achieved any permanent breakthrough. The fighting simply dragged on.

The Eastern Front. The war in the east initially went worse for the Central Powers, as heavy losses were inflicted by the Russians advancing into Austrian territory. Before long, however, superior German forces turned them back, inflicting over 2 million casualties in the process. They also gained new allies as Turkey and Bulgaria joined the Central Powers. After the Allies secretly agreed to deliver certain coveted territories after the war, Italy joined with them and began fighting Austrian armies. Other Allies included Serbia, Albania, Romania, and Greece, while the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) and Bulgaria lined up with the Central Powers.

The Ottoman Empire. In 1915 the British attempted to break the deadlock by attacking the Central Powers through the Dardenelles, capturing Constantinople, and knocking the weakened Ottoman Empire out of the war. The plan was abandoned, however, after the Allies lost nearly 150,000 troops. In 1917 the British were more successful when Colonel T.E. Lawrence, soon to be known as Lawrence of Arabia, led an Arab revolt against the Turks. The following year, the British successfully destroyed the Ottoman Empire.

The Sea War. Control of the seas was important to both sides. The German navy, however, did not play a significant role in the war, mainly because it could not break out the blockade imposed by the Allies, which was enhanced by mines, that kept it bottled up in the North Sea. Its submarine fleet, however, was a different matter. To respond to the blockade, Germany turned to submarine warfare to starve out the British. Not even neutral ships were safe in the area around Great Britain identified by Germany as a war zone. Neutral nations were irate at both countries. But since Germany actually sank a number of neutral ships, its offense seemed the greatest.

The issue came to a head in 1915 after the Germans sank the *Lusitania*, a British liner carrying munitions as well as passengers. Twelve hundred people, mostly civilians, were drowned, including 118 Americans. American president Woodrow Wilson quickly issued a stern warning that a repeat offense would not be tolerated. The Germans backed off for about two years.

TOTAL WAR

Seldom, if ever, had European civilians been so totally involved in a war effort as they became in this one. As the war dragged on and shortages increased, it became clear to both sides that nothing short of total mobilization could avoid disaster. This led to a degree of governmental economic planning and control that would have been unthinkable only a short time before. The fact that governments on both sides succeeded in managing their wartime economies so well had the unintended effect of strengthening the cause of socialism in some countries. Germany went farthest in the direction of a planned economy, even passing a compulsory labor law in 1916. Rationing was imposed in Great Britain, and all the nation's effort was poured into production. A similar all-out mobilization took place in the United States once it declared war.

TECHNOLOGY

The technology of World War I increased mankind's potential for killing more than that of any previous era in history. Except for the atomic bomb, all the most important instruments of death employed in the Second World War and afterward were only improvements on the weapons used in World War I. The airplane, for example, had only minimal influence on the outcome of the war, but pilots on both sides pioneered tactics and theories that proved effective a generation later. Submarines were devastating when first used by the Germans. The armored tank, introduced by the British in 1917, became an important force in the ground war. The machine gun saw considerable improvement in the war and was a major killer in the stalemate along the western front. Important innovations in artillery included rapid firing, accurate field guns and high-explosive shells that could spray destructive shrapnel. The telephone became a military weapon by which spotters could help gunners hit targets they could not even see. Radio, too, made its wartime debut in WWI. Finally, poison gas perhaps inspired more terror in the hearts of soldiers and civilians alike than any of the death-dealing wonders of the age. Countermeasures were developed, however, that largely blunted its effectiveness.

AMERICAN ENTRY

In January 1917 Germany decided to resume submarine warfare and knock out the Allies before America had time to become involved. Wilson immediately broke off diplomatic relations with Germany.

Zimmerman Note. In February, Wilson received word from the British that they had intercepted a note from German Foreign Secretary Alfred Zimmerman to his ambassador in Mexico. It told the envoy to offer money, an alliance and former Mexican territory in the United States to the Mexican government in return for its declaring war on the United States. Wilson made the news public on March 1, which immediately aroused Americans to a fever pitch, demanding actions against Germany.

American Declares War. Wilson hoped the war could be turned into a crusade to make the world “safe for democracy,” but the fact that tsarist Russia was among the Allies made this seem impossible. However, the overthrow of the tsar in March gave Americans at least the temporary illusion that the Allies were all fighting to maintain democracy. On April 6, 1917, the United States declared war on the Central Powers.

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

In Russia, meanwhile, a revolution of major proportions helped change not only the course of the war but also the history of both Russia and the world.

Disillusionment. The Russians were quickly disillusioned with the war. Their poorly equipped armies suffered terrible losses; the tsar, Nicholas II, was ineffective as a leader. The Duma, as well as the people in general, became increasingly critical. In the summer of 1915 the demands in the Duma for a new, more democratic government reached explosive new heights.

Revolution. The tsar’s answer was to simply dismiss the Duma and depart to the front, where he hoped to rally the troops. The leadership void in Petrograd (as St. Petersburg had been renamed) was immediately filled by his wife, but unrest continued. In March 1917 riots spread throughout the city. The tsar also sent orders to fire on the rioters, but even the troops mutinied and refused to do so. Everyone had lost confidence in Nicholas II. On March 12, the Duma declared a provisional government, and on March 15 the Tsar abdicated.

Rule of the Moderates. The provisional government, consisting largely of moderates called Constitutional Democrats, responded quickly with a program of liberal reforms. It failed, however, to respond to the demands for land reform among the peasant population. In the meantime, socialist groups began organizing into councils, or soviets, which gradually became estranged from the government. Problems within Russia mounted as food shortages increased and demands for land reform grew louder. In addition, the people were becoming increasingly upset with the provisional government’s unwillingness to end the war with Germany.

Bolsheviks and Lenin. Due to the continuing war with Germany, the Bolshevik faction decided to strike politically against the provisional government before it could gain complete acceptance. On March 14, the socialist dominated Petrograd Soviet defied the government by issuing the notorious “Order No. 1.” The soviet’s power within the Russian army allowed the order to have much more impact. The order actually stripped military authority from officers and placed it the hands of committees elected by common soldiers. While the order had no real authority, it led to the complete collapse of discipline in the army and mass desertions. In addition, the Germans halted their Russian offensive so as not to encourage the Russians to reunite. They also smuggled revolutionary Vladimir Lenin, along with other socialists, from his exile in Switzerland (he had been exiled for anti-war protests by the tsar) to Petrograd, hoping he would create more internal difficulty for Russia.

THE BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION

Despite all the internal strife and chaos, in May the provisional government launched a counteroffensive against the Germans, which totally failed. At the same time, all over Russia peasants were expropriating land, and peasant-soldiers were deserting and heading home. In the cities, shortages led to factory closures, which in turn led angry workers to take over the factories in an effort to keep them running. At this time, Leon Trotsky, leader of the Petrograd Soviet, joined Lenin’s Bolshevik Socialist Party. Sensing the time was right to seize power, Lenin and the Bolsheviks moved to oust the provisional government in July. However the coup failed. In fear for his life, Lenin went into hiding and then into self-imposed exile in Finland. Other prominent leaders, except for Trotsky who had been able to keep his Bolshevik membership secret, were forced into exile also. In Finland, Lenin heard and believed a false rumor that the Germans and the British were about to make a separate peace. Fearing that they would then join together and invade Russia in order to destroy any vestige of revolution, he instructed his followers that the time was right to begin the revolution. “History will not forgive us if we do not assume power now,” he wrote. “We will win absolutely and unquestionably.”

Trotsky and the October Revolution. Trotsky was the man most responsible for engineering the successful Bolshevik Revolution in October 1917. First he seized military power in Petrograd by the middle of the month. Then, on the night of October 26, his forces seized the government and invaded the Congress of Soviets, whose meeting had extended into the early hours of the morning. Those opposed to the Bolsheviks left the hall. The remaining delegates immediately declared the Soviets to replace the provisional government. They then elected Lenin, who had secretly returned to Petrograd, as the new head of state.

Abandoning the War. One of the first acts was to end the war effort. In December 1917, a truce was signed with Germany. The price for peace was high. At the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918 Russia was forced to give up all its western territories, which included almost a third of its population. It also had to pay a heavy indemnity to Germany. But Lenin and the Bolsheviks were free to pursue their goal of building a new kind of society under the absolute control of a single party.

THE COLLAPSE OF GERMANY

With the collapse of Russian involvement in the war Germany was free to concentrate its efforts on the western front. It may have well achieved victory had it not been for American involvement.

The Last Offensive. In 1918 the Germans decided to put all their efforts into one last drive to Paris. But their reserves were running out, the nation was totally exhausted, and fresh troops from America reinforced the Allies enough that the Germans were stopped again at the Marne. The Allies then began a counteroffensive that demonstrated not only the vitality of the American fighting forces but also the almost total exhaustion and disillusionment of the German troops. There were massive surrenders. In at least one instance German soldiers ready to surrender were heard to call out to their reinforcements that they should go home because they were only prolonging the war. Austrian forces, also, were exhausted, and their fronts in the Balkans and Italy collapsed.

Surrender. The kaiser formed a new government and began suing for peace. But negotiations dragged on while everything else fell apart for the Central Powers. Bulgaria signed an armistice on September 29. Turkey did the same on October 30. Austria-Hungary surrendered on November 3 and immediately dissolved into several national states. Finally, early in November, military mutinies and political rebellion among workers and at home brought the government to a crisis. On November 9, Kaiser William II abdicated. A new government led by the Social Democratic Party asked for an immediate peace based American President Wilson's Fourteen Points (designed to restructure Europe in order to end the possibility of another war). It signed an armistice on November 11.

THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

The peace conference, meanwhile, opened officially in Paris on January 18, 1919. Seventy delegates attended, representing 27 victorious allied powers. The Central Powers were not represented, and neither was Russia. The principle actors were the so-called "Big Four" – President Woodrow Wilson of the United States, Prime Minister David Lloyd George of Great Britain, Premier Georges Clemenceau of France, and Prime Minister Vittorio Orlando of Italy.

Diverse interests and perspectives among the Big Four became apparent immediately. Wilson sought nothing but to implement his Fourteen Points. Clemenceau was determined to make Germany suffer and to make sure it would never wage war again. Lloyd George, too, was determined to punish Germany. Orlando pushed mainly for territories Italy had been promised when it joined the war.

German Territory and Disarmament. Germany was required to cede the long-disputed Alsace-Lorraine to France. Much of Germany along the Rhine was demilitarized and was to be occupied by allied troops for 15 years. Germany was also restricted to an army of 100,000 soldiers whose service was long term, thus thwarting the possibility of training a large reserve. In addition, Germany was forbidden to have a significant navy, submarines, war plans, tanks, heavy artillery, or poison gas. Overseas, Germany lost its African possessions to Britain, France and South Africa, while its Pacific possessions were divided among Australia, New Zealand and Japan.

Territorial realignments were also made in other parts of Europe. Silesia, Prussia and other eastern territories were cut off from Germany. Poland was made an independent state for the first time since 1795 with an all-important corridor to the sea. Austria-Hungary was eliminated and the Ottoman Empire disintegrated. Parts of the Ottoman Empire, specifically Palestine and Iraq, went under British control.

The League Covenant. The Treaty of Versailles included the Covenant of the League of Nations. In its broadest sense, the new organization was intended to be a deliberative body, where members could consult in their common interest, especially in the event of aggression or threat of war. Members agreed to submit their differences to arbitration. If a nation refused to abide by its agreement, it was subject to sanctions, including military ones. It sounded good on paper, but in practical terms there was no way, ultimately, to enforce the decisions of the league.

The League Covenant also called for the eventual independence of European colonies elsewhere in the world, but again there was no strength in this provision. The long-range effect, however, was to raise hopes in colonial areas, and thus intensify nationalistic movements.

The League had several problems but no quite so ironic or serious as the fact that the United States, whose president was almost single-handedly responsible for creating it, refused to join. Isolationist American leaders persuaded the American Senate to place reservations on America's acceptance of the League. Wilson refused to accept the conditions. As a result, the United States was never a signatory to the Treaty of Versailles and never a part of the League of Nations.

German War Guilt and Reparations. The treaty specifically states that Germany was responsible for the war and accepted the responsibilities for all losses and damages accruing to the Allies as a result. Being forced to accept such full-scale responsibility was a heavy burden indeed, but in the dictated peace the German representatives at Versailles had no choice.

The reparations were more frustrating than the guilt clause. No fixed amount was set at the conference, but Germany was to pay \$5 billion annually until 1921, after which it would have thirty more years to pay whatever final figure was determined. The German government finally signed the treaty, but only under protest. The German people also protested, and as a result, they began to lose some confidence in the newly created democratic government. They thought they had been betrayed.

THE BOLSHEVIK STATE

Though many doubted the Russian Revolution would be permanent, Lenin, with the aid of Trotsky, remained in power. The two eagerly began the task of building a socialist society on the ruins of monarchy, aristocracy and a short-lived attempt at political democracy.

Beginning the Transition. In moving toward a state-controlled economy, Lenin continued to the policy of taking land from aristocratic landholders and granting it to the peasants. He also supported workers' demands that they be given direct control of the factories. With these things accomplished, the peasants and the workers at least thought they had control of property and therefore had little stake in the revolution. In the long run, however, they had little or no personal control.

The problem of securing Bolshevik power was another matter. Free elections were held, but the Bolsheviks won only a minority of the delegates to the new Constituent Assembly, which met in January 1918. Lenin's response, with the use of Bolshevik soldiers, was to permanently disband the assembly after only one day.

Civil War. The immediate consequence was more civil war. Old vested interests and army officers organized the "Whites" in opposition to the "Reds," as the Bolsheviks were called. At least eighteen regions proclaimed their independence, and the war went on for three years. The Bolsheviks, renamed Communists, were more united, however, and had a superior army under the harsh but effective leadership of Trotsky. They also resorted to terrorist tactics, executing thousands of people who were even suspected of favoring the opposition. Among the victims were the deposed tsar and his family, who were executed on the night of July 16, 1918.

Lenin Triumphant. Red fighting forces gradually wore down White armies. The Allies attempted to intervene on behalf of the old order, but their seemingly halfhearted efforts did little except help the Communists by provoking a nationalistic response. The revolution ended in permanent triumph for Lenin and the Bolsheviks. In 1924, after the death of Lenin, Petrograd was renamed Leningrad.

THE COSTS OF WORLD WAR I

The human and material costs were overwhelming. The human slaughter, especially, left deep, long-lasting scars in the souls of nations that would take much more time to heal than the bombed-out cities and devastated countryside that stood like pockmarks on the face of Europe.

Human Costs. Russia paid the heaviest price in military loss of life – 1,700,000. Its wounded amounted to 4,950,000, which brought its total casualties to roughly 55 percent of the 12,000,000 ultimately mobilized for war. Germany came in second in this grisly toll, with 1,080,546 killed and

4,247,143 wounded. Total military casualties amounted to 4,888,891 killed and 12,809,280 wounded among the Allies and 3,131,889 killed and 8,419,533 wounded on the side of the Central Powers. The Allies also lost 3,157,633 civilians, compared with 3,485,000 among the Central Powers.

The Cost in Dollars. Economically, the heaviest cost of the war fell upon the Germans – an estimated \$58,027,000,000 of the total cost of \$86,238,000,000 born by the Central Powers. The total economic burden born by the Allies was \$193,899,000,000, with the British and French governments carrying the lion's share of \$51,975,000,000 and \$49,877,000,000, respectively. The United States spent \$32,320,000,000.

THE INTERWAR YEARS

After the war, hope for a sustained peace was high. Politically, the efforts of the Western nations to maintain democracy seemed to offer continuing hope, though there were serious problems beneath the surface. Among them were chronic unemployment in some areas, unstable economies, and continuing political unrest.

Weimar Republic. In Germany, a new republic was established in 1919, called the Weimar Republic after the city in which its democratic constitution was adopted. The nation faced serious economic problems that only brought continuous political unrest. At the heart of these problems was its heavy reparation and war debt payments.

France. Among France's chief postwar concerns was security. Still distrustful of Germany, the French were determined to strengthen themselves so as to ensure victory should war come again. France continued to draft young men into military service. It became involved in various kinds of alliances with Belgium, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Romania in the 1920s. It also resumed diplomatic relations with Russia in an effort to forestall a new Russo-German alliance. The Locarno Pact became an additional safeguard. In 1929 France began building the imposing Maginot Line, a system of fortifications along its eastern border designed to keep the Germans out. Ten years later, France had 5 million trained soldiers as well as its impressive line of fortifications.

Reparation Problems. At the heart of the problem of maintaining a lasting peace was Germany. While Germans chafed under the terms of the Versailles treaty, particularly the heavy reparation payments, France and Great Britain disagreed over its enforcement. France demanded strict implementation, not only to improve its own economy, but also to keep Germany weak. The British, on the other hand, had reasons for wanting a more prosperous Germany, for German trade was important to their economy.

The shaky Weimar Republic made its first reparations payment in 1921, but in 1922 it could pay no more and asked for a three-year moratorium. Britain was willing to accept. France was not.

Occupation of the Ruhr. France's response, early in 1923, was to occupy Germany's Ruhr valley, rich in the production of coal and steel, in order to ensure reparation payments. The beleaguered Weimar Republic, in turn, called for what amounted to a general strike in the area. The French took over the mines and railroads themselves.

The occupation benefited no one. In Germany it resulted in runaway inflation, as the government printed paper money to pay its bills and support its people in the Ruhr. The occupation was incredibly expensive for France. It also had no support from Britain or the United States. In 1923 the German government called off the strike, agreeing in principle to make payments but asking for a reexamination of Germany's ability to do so. France agreed.

Recovery. At that point the United States stepped in. France, England and Germany all accepted the "Dawes Plan" of 1924, hammered out by an international committee headed by Charles Dawes, an American banker. Reparations were reduced, and annual payments were placed on a sliding scale based on the annual performance of the German economy. The United States also began to provide low-cost loans to Germany, enabling it pay reparation (often in kind) to England and France. These countries, in turn, were able to make payments on the huge debts owed to the United States. Some economists have observed, however, that even though this cycle of loans, reparation payments, and war debt repayment seemed to work, it was actually a long-range mistake. It did little to create investment in long-term economic growth.

For a time, nevertheless, this innovative plan stimulated a major economic recovery in Germany and allowed it to begin making reparation payments again. These payments were further reduced by the "Young Plan" of 1929. By this time there had been enough of an economic recovery worldwide that leaders breathed a sigh of relief. Long-term peace seemed within reach.

POSTWAR ITALY – THE BEGINNINGS OF THE FASCIST MOVEMENT

Italy was a constitutional monarchy, with a king, a parliament and a prime minister appointed by the king. The government, however, was weak – too weak to deal effectively with the economic distress and political chaos that followed World War I. By 1922, in fact, it was in general disrepute. One was its refusal to support the actions of Gabriel D’Annunzio, who had raised a private army and seized the port of Fiume, located in northwestern Yugoslavia. Nationalists considered this an affront, for they believed the port should have been returned to Italy at the end of the war. More important was the government’s inability to deal with the unstable economy and to calm the factions, particularly members of the Socialist party, who were demanding various reforms. Unemployment was rampant, living costs were rising, and general discontent among the lower classes was rife. The Socialists, combined with the Christian Populists, became a parliamentary majority, but the prime minister elected in 1921 refused to consider any of the economic and social reforms they demanded. He resigned the same year, but his successors were no more successful.

Meanwhile, financial interests and other conservative groups became increasingly fearful that a Socialist government would undermine their property (like had happened in Russia) and bring about a totally unacceptable economic and social revolution. Benito Mussolini arrived at the right time to take advantage of the devolving situation within Italy.

The Rise of Mussolini. A masterful opportunist, Mussolini had a history of switching sides whenever it suited his personal ends. Among other things, he was once a socialist. After the election of 1919, however, he began to woo conservatives. He could gain the power he wanted, he realized, only by gaining the support of financial interests, the military and other conservative groups. That same year he founded the Fascist party. He soon set its terrorists squads, uniformed in black shirts, about the task of destroying the Socialist party. They went on a rampage, disrupting party meetings, destroying property, and attacking strikes and dissident farmers. Conservatives turned their backs on the lawlessness, since it played into their goal of destroying the Socialist party, which made the government unable to stop the violence. Finally, in October 1922 the Fascists marched on Rome. On October 29, still in his newspaper office in Milan, Mussolini received a telegram from the king inviting him to become the prime minister. The next day he arrived in Rome by train to greet his cheering followers as they marched into the city.

It was a short though gradual step from there to complete takeover. When he became prime minister, Mussolini’s party was only a small minority in the legislature. After manipulating the election laws, however, he obtained a Fascist cabinet in 1925 and was able to have all other political parties outlawed. He soon gained support of industrialists and workers alike, who believed he would bring a new era of prosperity.

Early Accomplishments. Mussolini’s accomplishments in the 1920s were impressive. Among other things, he established order (though at the price of continuing intimidation by his Fascist terrorists), suppressed the Mafia, and improved agricultural production. He also made an important political agreement with the Roman Catholic Church. Since 1870 the pope had been deprived of his historical sovereignty over Rome, and there had been little but hostility between the church and the Italian government. In the Lateran Treaty of 1929, however, Mussolini granted sovereignty to the Vatican over a small piece of land surrounding St. Peter’s Cathedral. The treaty also established diplomatic relations with the Vatican. In addition, the treaty made the church the religion of the state.

By 1938 Mussolini’s totalitarian government had entered into almost every aspect of public and private life. Even public manners became more harsh and militaristic in nature, as exemplified by the required public greeting, not a handshake, but an arm outstretched in the manner of the ancient Romans.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

Economic historians will probably never fully agree on the causes of the Great Depression. Among the contributing factors, however, was a serious economic imbalance within the United States, related directly to the fact that productivity rose much faster than wages. At the same time, falling agriculture prices reduced the real income of farmers. A disproportionate amount of wealth was being fed into the production of capital goods, but such capital investments could not be sustained for long.

Agricultural weakness continued in most countries. Various commodities, including wheat, sugar, coffee, rubber, wool and lard glutted the world markets. When prices dropped so low that farmers no longer had effective purchasing power, world credit and market collapsed. The flow of coal, iron, and textiles slowed, and unemployment in those industries skyrocketed. Efforts by governments to economize, and thus reduce spending, only weakened domestic buying power.

Nevertheless, people with money could hardly resist the temptation to invest it in further industrial expansion or in the stock market, creating the most “bullish” market in American history. American optimism was seldom higher than at the beginning of 1929; stock prices soared to unprecedented heights. The potential problem was only aggravated by the dangerous practice of buying stocks “on margin” – that is, paying only a fraction of the cost and borrowing the rest from one’s stockbroker. When prices fell, people who probably should not have been investing were forced to sell in order to pay their brokers. The result was financial panic. In a matter of days, paper fortunes resulting from such risky investment by countless speculators were wiped out.

The Crash. The great crash began in September 1929. By 1933, in a horrendous chain reaction within the United States, some 11,000 banks (44 percent of the total in 1929) failed, wiping out approximately \$2 billion in savings. As purchasing power plummeted, so did industrial production, prices (including farm prices), and, inevitably, employment.

Worldwide effects. At that point it became clear how much the United States was really involved in the economy of the globe. American financial institutions stopped making loans abroad and began to call in their short-term foreign loans. American President Herbert Hoover instituted a moratorium on the low-cost loans to Germany. The result was disaster in Europe. In 1931 major banks in Austria and Germany closed. The 500-year-old Bank of England closed its doors for a short time in 1933. World prices collapsed, resulting in a scramble by businesses around the world to dump manufactured goods and agricultural products in a frenzied effort to obtain cash. The result was a steep decline in prices in not only western countries, but throughout the emerging industrial countries in Asia.

NAZI GERMANY

The Weimar Republic was unable to meet the multiple challenges of the postwar world. The government was never very popular with the people. Many Germans still believed they had been betrayed by their government at Versailles. The French invasion of the Ruhr caused economic problems that made the government look even worse. Though it had weathered several attempted coups, when the Great Depression came, it had no chance at all of gaining popular support.

Hitler’s Rise to Power. Adolph Hitler was born in Germany, but spent much of his youth in Vienna, Austria. He served as a corporal in the German army during World War I, where his intense nationalism only intensified. By 1921 he had gained control of the National Socialist German Workers’ Party, or Nazi Party. After leading an abortive coup in 1923, Hitler spent several months in jail, where two important things happened. First, he wrote *Mein Kampf* (“My Struggle”), which soon became the guide to the future for all committed Nazis. He also made up his mind that he could not take over Germany through violence – he had to do it legally, from within.

By the mid-1920s the Nazis had what amounted to a private army, the SA (*Sturm Abteilung*, or storm troopers). Uniformed in brown shirts, they became instruments of intimidation and violence as the party carried out a campaign against communists, Social Democrats, Jews and others. By 1933 they had almost 1 million members. Through massive political rallies and effective propaganda, Hitler’s appeal grew. People of property, who were fearful of Social Democrats and communists anyway, found themselves listening to him seriously. The Great Depression played into his hands perfectly. With unemployment at over 6 million in 1930 (more than double of what it was only two years earlier), Hitler could raise the fervor of workers and businesspeople alike as he promised that his party would stop reparation payments (which only drained German resources), create jobs, stimulate business, and rearm the nation. People were attracted in droves. In 1932 the Nazis dominated the Reichstag. By then it was obvious that the existing government was powerless to deal with the deepening economic crisis. Hitler cultivated influential people in government, business, and military who mistakenly believed they could control him. With their support he finally manipulated his own appointment as chancellor on January 30, 1933. Within the year Hitler had taken Germany out of the League of Nations. He would simply ignore it as he changed the nature of the government, built up the economy, and created a military machine capable of carrying out his expansionist ideology.

Ideological Foundations of Nazism.

Several themes, most of them dealt with in *Mein Kampf*, provided the ideological underpinning for the Nazi movement under Hitler. One was anti-Semitism, based in part on the assumption that the Jews were involved in an international economic conspiracy against the German people. Closely related was a nationalistic racism. Hitler preached that the Germanic, or “Aryan,” people were truly superior to all other races – that they were a master race. This menacing theory was justified in Nazi propaganda on the basis of

certain nineteenth century biological theories. Even though largely outmoded, they were marshaled in defense of what became some unbelievable policies of the state. Hitler's racism was also related to his expansionism; he wanted to bring all the Germanic peoples together as one great nation. This meant taking over the regions they were. The expression he used was *lebensraum* ("living room"), suggesting the need for space in which the German nation could grow. The Slavs and other "lesser" races would occupy an inferior, almost servile position. To achieve all these ends, according to Nazi doctrine, the state must be headed by an all-powerful dictator (*Führer*); Adolph Hitler was that person.

The goals of the party also included a number of pragmatic internal reforms, such as bring major business concerns under the administration of the state and reforming land and agricultural policy. Although the Nazis did not think of doing away with private enterprise, they believed that all such activity should be both controlled and protected by the state. They were also committed to repudiating the hated Versailles treaty as well as uniting Germany and Austria under one state.

HITLER'S NAZI STATE

Control of the Government. Within a year and a half, Hitler was able to establish an absolute dictatorship. In March 1933 he was given the right to rule by decree for a period of four years. He made Germany a one-party state by outlawing the Communists and all other parties. He also outlawed labor unions. Nazis were installed at all levels of bureaucracy.

Germany became a police state. Hitler even purged his own storm troopers, the SA, when it became clear that they stood in the way of his gaining control of the army; the generals considered them rivals. He had several hundred of them summarily shot, along with other "undesirables," on the night of June 30, 1934, paving the way for the generals to swear allegiance to him. The executioners on the infamous "night of the long knives" were members of Hitler's elite personal guard, the SS (*Schutzstaffel*). This ruthless groups, led by Heinrich Himmler, together with the *Gestapo* (political police) became the dreaded enforcers of the *Führer's* will.

Racism and the War on the Jews. The Jews were objects of special attention. Doctors, lawyers, and other professionals lost their jobs or were not allowed to practice. Synagogues, homes and businesses were destroyed. Marriage between Jews and Germans was prohibited. Jews were stripped of their citizenship and forbidden to display the national flag. Perhaps a quarter of the 500,000 Jews who lived in Germany emigrated; others simply found themselves unable to do so.

Economic Policy and Rearmament. One reason Hitler retained popular support was that his government actually did something about the depression. German economic life turned around. A massive public works program, stepped-up food production, and rearmament eventually eliminated unemployment and stimulated business. The army, too, was never in better shape. By the time Hitler began his expansion he had a high disciplined, well-equipped fighting machine.

Culture, Religion, and Education. As in fascist Italy, Nazi regulation reached into every aspect of German life. Art, literature and the theatre were all pressed into every aspect of German life. School textbooks were rewritten to exclude "subversive" references (e.g. to Jews and Bolsheviks), and to promote Nazi ideals. Youth organizations marched, sang and played together under auspices of Nazi leaders, and in the process absorbed the most convincing propaganda the system could produce.

Propaganda, in fact, was essential to continued Nazi popularity. Under the hand of Joseph Goebbels, the idea of truth lost all meaning. Instead, the public media were used to justify in the most glowing terms every illegal, unethical or immoral act perpetrated by the party.

Religion, too, and especially Protestantism, suffered under Hitler's regime. No one was safe who did not support his racism or the other policies. One groups of 800 dissident Protestants was sent to concentration camps in 1937. Catholic schools and youth groups eventually were destroyed, though the churches remained intact. Worship services saw little interference, so long as they were not used to oppose the ideals of the Nazi state.

Hitler had his opponents in Germany, but they were never unified enough to provide effective political opposition. In general, rising prosperity and the pride they had not felt since WWI ingratiated him in the hearts of the German people.

STALIN'S SOVIET UNION

In Russia, meanwhile, the Bolsheviks were busily engaged in solidifying their revolution. The government was run by the Communist party after 1918. Its executive committee, the *Politburo*, determined policy. As a symbol of a complete break with tsarist past, the capital was moved from Petrograd to Moscow. In 1922 Russia was divided into four republics, known collectively as the Union of

Soviet Socialist Republics. Later these republics were further broken up, and others were added. Each had its own government, or Soviet, but in reality all came under the domination of central party rule.

Stalin's Rise to Power. Lenin died in 1924, leaving a party riddled with factionalism. A four-way struggle for power soon evolved into a contest between Trotsky and Joseph Stalin, a member of the Politburo since 1919 and, since 1922, secretary of the party. Using all the tactics of behind-the-scenes intrigue at his disposal, Stalin formed an anti-Trotsky coalition among the leaders and gained the support of rank-and-file members, which many had been recruited into the party by Stalin himself. Stalin and his supporters disagreed with Trotsky's continuing pressure for immediate world revolution. Rather, they thought it more prudent to strengthen communism at home first. By 1927 Stalin had won, whereupon the party expelled Trotsky, exiled him to Siberia, and eventually banished him from the country. In 1940, in Mexico, he was murdered – perhaps, some say, on Stalin's orders.

Stalin's Purges. Such action against Trotsky did not just stop with his execution. Even though his position was relatively secure, in the 1930s Stalin conducted a series of purges against anyone even slightly disloyal. Among the victims was one of his own close friends, Sregi Kirov, who was eliminated through outright murder. In other cases purge victims at least received trials, sometimes public and sometimes not, though the legality of the proceedings was often questionable. People were often hounded into making public confessions of error, after which they were quickly convicted and executed. In 1936, in the first trial to be held in public, 117 people were condemned to death for plotting Stalin's murder. In the end, everyone who had helped to establish the revolution was gone, and the party was firmly in the hand of Stalin. Unknown numbers of Russians were executed in the purges. Some historians have suggested the number could range as high as 2-5 million people by the outbreak of WWII.

The Five Year Plans. The economy, meanwhile, gradually turned around as a result of Stalin economic policy, but in 1927 economic policy was reversed. Stalin and his associates believed that the new Soviet Union had to become a strong industrialized nation. They took direction of all industrial production and announced the First Five-Year Plan. It was designed to promote basic industry. Quotas and goals were set, with special emphasis on mining, heavy industrial production and electrification. At the end of 1932 the party announced that the goals had been reached early. It also announced another five-year plan, this time placing more emphasis on the production of consumer goods.

At the same time, the party again took complete control of agriculture and collectivized it. Like industry, farms were regimented in an effort to increase production. Peasants who resisted this reversal of their hope for land ownership were consigned to labor camps for the purpose of "reeducation."

INDUSTRIAL JAPAN

Just as the Meiji Constitution seemed to guarantee multi-party democratic rule over an industrial society on the Japanese islands, the Great Depression hit Japan with an effect as devastating as anywhere in Europe. One consequence was the decline of the multi-party system in favor of militarism, leading to a military dictatorship that took Japan through the next world war.

The Manchurian Incident. The incident that eventually led to a military takeover took place in Manchuria in 1931. Japan had heavy investments in Manchuria, as well as thriving trade relations. When it appeared that Japanese influence and economic control might be challenged by a rising Chinese nationalist movement in the 1920s, there were many discussions in Japan as to what to do about it. The army, which still maintained some independence from the Diet and the prime minister, was particularly interested in establishing more firm control. Late in 1931 some army officers provoked an incident on a Japanese railroad and then blaming it on the Chinese. The army, with the reluctant support of the government and claiming "self-defense," immediately marched into Manchuria. The government was embarrassed, but could not stop the advance. In September 1932, Manchuria, or "Manchukuo," was recognized as an independent state by the Japanese and made a protectorate. The League of Nations condemned the action, whereupon Japan simply resigned from the League.

The Manchurian incident was the death knell of multi-party government. The cabinet was split over whether or not to support the army. A new prime minister, Inukai Tsuyoshi, was particularly irate at what he considered the army's usurpation of authority, but he was assassinated in May 1932. A number of young army officers, however, soon joined with other ultra-nationalists in a series of attempted coups. Their final defeat in 1936 was followed by a series of purges and executions that restored discipline in the army. At the same, the government also began to attack extreme liberals, including communists, in order to demonstrate its own continuing nationalism. During the next year the power of the army over the government only increased. In the meantime, pressures were mounting for the occupation of China, which

only added to the ability of the army to control the government, no matter who was prime minister. For all practical purposes, by the end of 1937 Japan was under the rule of the army. It was also at war with China.

THE OUTBREAK OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Weapons of Mass Destruction. Technological progress during the interlude between the wars brought the world's war machines to new heights of destructive power. Fighter planes, dive bombers, long-range tactical bombers, and parachute troops changed the nature of war itself by making the air a field of battle. Highly improved and more heavily armored tanks made warfare on the ground more lethal, as did improved weaponry of all sorts. On the seas, battleships with their vastly improved long-range guns, aircraft carriers, destroyers, and modern submarines all had greater destructive power than anything seen before. In addition, sophisticated electronic devices, such as radio, radar, sonar and code-breaking machines, all became essential to the conduct of the war. Finally, the atomic bomb, conceived long before the war and developed during the war, was unleashed in 1945 to end the conflict.

Reaction to German Rearmament. When Hitler announced his intent to rearm Germany in 1935, Britain, France and Italy immediately condemned the action. They did little about it, however, though Britain and France agreed to assist each other in case of German aggression. France also signed a pact with Russia against German aggression, even as Russia was making similar agreements with eastern European countries. None of these accords, however, influenced Germany, which continued to rearm.

Italy's Invasion of Ethiopia. In Italy, Mussolini was dreaming of creating his own empire, starting with Ethiopia in northeastern Africa. He invaded in October 1935, correctly expecting little opposition from other European powers. By May his armies had taken over. The League of Nations condemned the aggression, imposing sanctions against Italy, but the sanctions were ineffective.

Remilitarizing the Rhineland. In March 1936 Germany sent troops into the Rhineland, which was supposed to remain demilitarized. Again Britain and France did nothing but protest. Belgium soon withdrew from its military alliance with France, convinced that a reticent France would not protect it from German aggression anyway.

The Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis. In October Germany and Italy signed an agreement creating the "Rome-Berlin Axis." Both countries were then free to pursue their expansionist aims without fear of interference from the other. The next month Germany and Japan announced a new agreement, known as the Anti-Comintern Pact. Ostensibly for the purpose of fighting the expansion of communism, the pact was also a way to protect German and Japanese expansionism. Italy joined the pact a year later. The world's three main aggressive imperialist powers were thus linked in mutually compatible goals that were opposed to everything that the western democracies had hoped to create at the Versailles Peace Conference.

Anschluss. Hitler had long dreamed of unification between the two German-speaking nations, Austria and Germany. By 1938 he had cultivated considerable support for the Nazis in Austria. On March 12 his forces marched in – yet another violation of the Versailles treaty. In April a presumably popular Austrian plebiscite unified the two countries. The world saw images of cheering crowds and popular support for the *Anschluss* (unification).

Czechoslovakia. Hitler next turned to Czechoslovakia, where 3 million Germans lived in the border area called the Sudetenland. At Hitler's urging, these ethnic Germans began to demand autonomy, whereupon Hitler threatened to intervene on their behalf. Czechoslovakia mobilized for war, but then, prodded by Britain and France, Czech leaders finally gave in. Hitler support for autonomy, however, was only a ruse – his ultimate goal was to take over all of Czechoslovakia. He therefore quickly instructed his people to make even harsher demands. Hitler was aware that an invasion of Czechoslovakia could result in war with France and Britain. He also believed that, despite their treaty arrangements, they simply did not want to go to war over that issue. He was right.

Appeasement. Great Britain and France began to seek some kind of compromise. The British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, eventually took matters into his own hands. The result was a series of appeasements. In a mid-September meeting he accepted Hitler's demands that the Sudetenland be transferred to Germany, on the basis of "self-determination." After persuading both the British and French governments to agree, he met a second time with the German dictator only to find that Hitler's demands had changed again. Changing situations, Hitler claimed, required immediate military intervention. He agreed, however, to Mussolini's suggestion that one more meeting be held to try to settle the matter peacefully. The meeting took place in Munich on September 30, 1938. There Chamberlain, French Premier Edouard Daladier, Hitler, and Mussolini agreed to the whittling away at Czechoslovakia. Germany could have the Sudetenland, Poland and Hungary could claim certain territories in the eastern part of the

country, and Germany and Italy would guarantee the territorial integrity of what remained. Chamberlain and Daladier were received home with all the laurels of conquering heroes. They had achieved, as they claimed, "peace in our time."

The meeting at Munich, however, has gone down in history as the ultimate example of the perils of appeasement. The Czechoslovakian state was simply unable to maintain political stability after the agreement. Six months later, in March 1939, Hitler marched into Prague, declaring that intervention was needed to restore order. He then set up the puppet state of Slovakia and declared the remaining area German protectorate. Stunned, Chamberlain still found justification for not responding militarily. Czechoslovakia's political disintegration was not caused by external aggression, he rationalized, so there was no legal reason for Britain or France to go to war.

The China Incident. In July 1937 a border clash between Japanese and Chinese patrols near Peking resulted in a Sino-Japanese war that eventually became a part of World War II. Japan quickly turned the incident into an excuse to for a major sweep southward, and by the end of 1938 it had captured Nanking, Shanghai, Hankow and much of China's most populated area.

THE WAR IN EUROPE, 1933-1941

Poland. Britain and France gave Poland their assurance that in the case of further aggression by Hitler they would defend Polish independence. Similar promises were given to Romania, Greece, and Turkey after Mussolini invaded and annexed Albania in April 1939. But Hitler was secretly preparing to take over Poland, even though he had only recently courted that country's friendship in order to ease his conquest of Czechoslovakia.

Non-Aggression Pact. Hitler doubted that France and England would honor their commitments to Poland. Before invading, however, he assured himself that there would be no opposition from the Soviet Union. He negotiated a nonaggression pact, signed on August 23, 1939. This gave him free reign to move into Poland, while Stalin would have no opposition from Hitler with respect to his own plans for the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. In addition, it was decided that Germany and Russia would divide Poland between them.

Blitzkrieg. On September 1 Hitler's troops and aircraft invaded Poland. The German *blitzkrieg* provided the first taste of what modern warfare could mean. First came the Luftwaffe. Its bombers and dive bombers quickly destroyed Polish airfields and most of its warplanes. They also wreaked havoc with the army and civilians alike. Then came the tanks, or panzer units, followed by lighter mechanized units and then by foot soldiers – a total in all these units of a million men. Poland fell in less than a month and disappeared from the map.

Two days after the invasion of Poland, England and France declared war on Germany. At first, the British and Germans fought a sea war. The French occupied the Maginot Line, but did little more than wait for a German attack.

The Russo-Finnish War. First, however, it was Stalin's turn to take over someone else's territory. In November 1939, intent on strengthening his position in the Baltic, the Soviet Union invaded Finland. Unlike the other Baltic states, Finland had refused to give the Soviet the right to establish military bases on its territory. It was finally defeated in March 1940 and forced to give up the Karelian Isthmus (the connection between Finland and Russia). Also in 1940 Russia annexed Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Hitler on the March. By that time Hitler's forces were on the march again. In April they moved into Norway and Denmark, conquering those two countries almost immediately. During one week in May they overwhelmed the Netherlands. In another two weeks they took Belgium. The two lowland countries were key to Hitler's plan for invading both France and England. In Britain, the discredited Neville Chamberlain resigned as prime minister, to be replaced by Winston Churchill.

The Fall of France. It soon became clear that France's reliance on the Maginot Line was misplaced. The Germans simply swept around it from the north. By June 14, 1940, they were in Paris. The British troops on the ground to help France were miraculously rescued at Dunkirk. The French Premier, Marshall Henri Philippe Pétain, decided it was wiser to give into the German demands than to fight. He signed an armistice on June 22, turning over most of France to Germany. After that he headed a puppet government, operating out of Vichy.

North Africa and the Balkans. At that point Mussolini, emboldened by Hitler's success, got into the war, hoping to gain territories around the Mediterranean. In September 1940 he forced invaded Egypt but were driven back by the British. The Germans came to the rescue, however, and the Axis powers were in Egypt by April 1941. In another venture, Italy invaded Greece in October 1940, though it also took

German troops finally to bring that country into the Axis orbit. In the meantime, the Germans, with the help of Bulgarian and Hungarian troops, overran Yugoslavia. Russia was also active in the Balkans and gained some border territories from Romania.

Battle of Britain. In the meantime, an air war, commonly called the Battle of Britain, raged between Germany and Britain. At first Hitler had no plans for invading the British Isles. With France gone, he assumed that Britain would simply see no point in further prosecuting the war. When this proved false, however, he developed plans for "Operation Sea Lion," an invasion across the English Channel. He began by trying to soften up Britain with a series of massive air strikes. Beginning in August 1940, the Luftwaffe bombed British airfields, harbors and other key installations. In September it began raining bombs on London and other cities. The destruction was nearly overwhelming, but the British and the Royal Air Force held out, spurred on by the courage and determination of their new prime minister. In October, Hitler decided to postpone the invasion indefinitely. The air strikes, however, continued until the next June, when Hitler's attention was diverted to Russia.

The Russian Campaign. By 1941 Hitler's relations with Stalin, never very cordial, were deteriorating. Among other problems, they had conflicting interests in the Balkans. Besides, Hitler believed that a defeat of the Soviet Union would further demoralize Britain. On June 22, therefore, he turned on his ally in perhaps the most ambitious military campaign since Napoleon had attempted the same thing 129 years earlier. After initial success, however, Hitler's armies soon found themselves facing the same kind of problems that Napoleon's had: cold weather, determined Soviet fighters, and the impossibly long line of supply that accompanied deeper penetration into Russia. Early in 1943 the most ferocious battle of the campaign, the Battle of Stalingrad, ended in disaster for the Germans. In February the German commander surrendered, after 500,000 Axis soldiers had been killed, wounded or captured. In the spring, the Soviets opened a counteroffensive, and before the end of the year most of the territory held by the Germans had been retaken.

THE WAR IN THE PACIFIC, 1941-1942

In September 1940 Japan occupied much of French Indochina. It also signed the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy, hoping this would protect its almost unlimited objectives in Asia. The United States responded by placing an embargo on aviation fuel and scrap metals. Japan, however, encouraged by Hitler's continuing success against the Allies, was bent on systematically driving all western powers from Asia and establishing its own hegemony everywhere on the continent.

Pearl Harbor. So far as Japan was concerned, its relations with the United States had reached an impasse. It was not willing to give up anything in Asia, yet unless it did so the United States would not lift its embargo on badly needed oil. Negotiations with Washington were not succeeding. Under these conditions Japan's new prime minister, General Tojo, ordered an air strike on the headquarters of the American Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. This brilliantly planned attack occurred without warning on the morning of Sunday, December 7, 1941. The results were devastating. Eight battleships were in the harbor; three went to the bottom, one was grounded, and the others were badly damaged. Several other ships were destroyed or damaged, as were most of the airplanes at Hickam Field and other airfields. In addition, over 2,400 people were killed and nearly 1,200 were wounded. The Japanese lost less than 30 planes. On the same day, Japan also attacked other American and British positions in Asia and the Pacific. On December 8 the United States declared war on Japan. Three days later Germany declared war on America.

Japan's Pacific Empire. Shortly after Pearl Harbor, Japan took over American positions in Guam and Wake Island. Early in 1942 it took the Philippines. The Japanese also overran the Dutch East Indies, the Malay Peninsula and Burma. By May Japan's new Pacific empire included practically everything east of India and north of Australia. More importantly, the area was rich in all the strategic materials, including oil, needed by Japan to sustain its economic independence.

Stopping the Spread. The United States fought back with a vengeance, as it repaired the damage done at Pearl Harbor and began to rebuild its navy. American aircraft carriers continually harassed Japanese outposts. In June the American navy stopped the Japanese westward thrust at the Battle of Midway Island. In August a stand at Guadalcanal put a halt to Japan's southern progress.

THE WAR IN EUROPE, 1942-1945.

Beginning in November 1942 the Allies seized the initiative. American troops under Dwight Eisenhower saw their first action in the European theatre in a combined operation in North Africa. It ended

in May 1943 with the Allies in firm control of North Africa. In the summer they moved on to Sicily, and then in September they invaded the Italian mainland. By that time Mussolini had been overthrown. The new government asked for an armistice and then, cooperating with the conquerors, declared war on Germany. Germany, in turn, drove into Italy from the north, and fighting went on until the end of the war. This commitment, however, only weakened Germany, for it increased the number of fronts on which German forces had to fight. The stage was now set for the final assault on Hitler's "Fortress Europe."

The Air War. American and British forces began a long and devastating air war over Germany, intent on softening it up for invasion and destroying the Luftwaffe. At first Hitler was able to replace lost aircraft quickly, but by the end of March 1944 enough aircraft factories and other strategic installations had been destroyed that the air war was effectively won. By the end of the year there was no Luftwaffe left.

Invasion. June 6, 1944, "D-Day," was the day set for the invasion of France. American, British and Canadian troops landed in massive numbers on the coast of Normandy. They met opposition, but slowly worked their way inland. After another invasion in southern France, that county was finally liberated by the beginning of September.

Battle of the Bulge. The march toward Germany went well until December. That month, during Christmas week, the Germans launched a massive counterattack on the Belgian front, known as the Battle of the Bulge because they were able to drive so far into Allied lines. For a while the Allies were stopped, though with tremendous losses on both sides. The short-term victory turned out to be the last for the German army. The Allies quickly regained the initiative and March 1945 crossed the Rhine.

Victory in Europe. Soviet troops, meanwhile, swept relentlessly toward Berlin from the east. With the German army falling apart on both fronts, it was only a matter of time before a final Allied victory. Hitler had already committed suicide and on May 7 the German military accepted Allied demands for unconditional surrender. The next day was proclaimed V-E Day – the day of victory in Europe.

THE WAR IN THE PACIFIC, 1943-1945.

In the Pacific, American forces also gained the initiative in 1943. Beginning at Guadalcanal, one of the Solomon Islands, island after island was taken in a drive toward the Japanese homeland. Bombing raids on Japan began in June 1944, crippling Japanese industry as well as the navy. In October, the United States began reconquering the Philippines. The British, meanwhile, supported by the Americans, were back in Burma. Like Hitler, however, the Japanese government stubbornly refused to surrender.

The Decision to Drop the Bomb. President Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945. This left the new American President, Harry Truman, to make the most controversial and awesome decision of the entire war – whether or not to drop the fearful atomic bomb that had just been perfected. Several things persuaded Truman, among them the fact that Japan clearly would not surrender until it was invaded and conquered. His military advisers calculated that such an invasion would result in 1 million American casualties and even greater numbers for the Japanese. The cost was too high. On July 25, Truman made his decision and issued orders to drop the bomb if Japan did not surrender before August 3.

War's End. The deadline passed without a surrender, as Japanese leadership was still divided on how to respond. Two cities were targeted for the bomb, and leaflets were dropped on both of them warning the inhabitants of what was about to happen. On August 6 the first bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, killing over 70,000 people. On August 9 a bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, killing tens of thousands more. Even then the Japanese resisted surrender. Only the intervention of the emperor, Hirohito, persuaded the government to give in. On August 14 (V-J Day) Japan surrendered.

EFFECTS OF THE WAR

It was only after the war that the extent and implication of Hitler's "New Order" for Europe, and especially for the Jews, became fully known. Though the loss of life and property was horrendous, this was the most appalling aspect of all that happened during the six years of all-out war.

Hitler's imperialistic plans represented the worst extreme in the history of modern racism. In many places the population had been decimated by war or by exporting people to become forced laborers in German factories (more than 7 million suffered this fate). Ethnic Germans would colonize these areas in order to begin the process of Germanization. Peoples related racially to the Germans, like the Scandinavians, were to be absorbed and receive preferential treatment. Others, the "inferior" races, were to be exploited and, depending on their status, practically enslaved. Slaves were considered *untermenschen* (subhumans), good for little more than slavery. Many were simply worked to death in slave labor camps.

Holocaust. The worst fate of all was reserved for the Jews. Even before war broke out Hitler was having them placed in concentration camps. After taking over Poland, he separated Polish Jews from other people and persecuted them ruthlessly. During the invasion of Russia, special strike squads sought out Russian Jews; thousands were simply machine-gunned. By 1941, the SS was implementing Hitler's "final solution," the ultimate extermination of the Jews. In extermination camps located in both Germany and Poland, men, women and children were mercilessly put to death in gas chambers only superficially disguised as shower rooms. It has been reported that at Auschwitz, in Poland, up to 12,000 per day were killed. By 1945 over 6 million Jews had been slaughtered in what has rightly come to be known as the Holocaust – the ultimate example of how monstrous man's inhumanity to man can become.

Human and Material Costs. Beyond the massacre of the Jews, the cost in human lives was greater than any war in history. The best estimates suggest that between 15-20 million military personnel were killed in action. Of these, perhaps 7.5 million were Soviet, 3.5 million German, 2.2 million were Chinese, 1.5 million were Japanese, 300,000 were British, 292,000 were American, and 210,000 were French. The war also cost an estimated 50-75 million civilian lives, including 10 million Soviets, 6 million Chinese, 400,000 French and 65,000 British. The totals from the forced labor camps and attacks on civilians in the Slavic countries are even more staggering.

Total military expenditures amounted to at least \$1.154 trillion, in addition to untold costs in property damages. The United States spent the largest amount, \$300 billion, and Germany spent about \$231 billion.