

Chapter 12 World War II, 1939-1945

Legacy: West & the World

CONFLICT & WAR: EUROPE, 1939

- Versailles did not restore peace & stability in Europe.

The Politics of Appeasement: diplomacy used in the 1930s by Western powers of Europe. Attempt to avoid conflict through compromise. Easy to criticize in retrospect, but many Euro countries felt the Treaty of Versailles was too harsh anyway.

- 1935: Rome-Berlin Axis

- 1936: Germany reoccupies Rhineland

- 1937: Hitler declares Germany needs *Lebensraum*, greater living space to support the growing population & food needs.

- 1938: *Anschluss*- annexation of Austria.

Maintaining International Order: U.S. isolationist, many others were soft on Hitler, claiming he was restoring order & respectability to Germany. France built up defenses, built Maginot Line. Western countries unwilling to stand against Hitler and Germany. West also avoided Spain.

The Spanish Civil War: 1936-1939

- In 1936, General Francisco Franco led a fascist coup d'état. Republican government fought fascists. Franco was supported by Hitler & Mussolini. West stayed out, uninterested. Spain became a testing ground for Nazi technology and a "practice range" that honed Nazi military strategy. Guernica, made famous by Picasso, was an unthinkable bombing of a civilian city of little strategic importance. Britain and France still seemed to think appeasement could stop war.

Peaceful Coexistence? The Munich Agreement

Appeasement at pinnacle with signing of Munich Agreement of Sept 29th 1938. British PM Chamberlain strong supporter of appeasement. Initially seen as great diplomat, later seen as naïve & short sighted.

Hitler & the Sudetenland

- Hitler demanded Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia. Britain's Chamberlain & Daladier of France agreed. Hitler now targeted Jews with increased fury *Kristallnacht* Night of Broken Glass where Jewish Synagogues and stores were destroyed. March 1939: Hitler claimed rest of Czechoslovakia. War was imminent.

Nazi-Soviet Non Aggression Pact

- Germany & Russia resented creation of Poland at their expense. World was surprised when bitter enemies Hitler & Stalin signed pact, mainly for Hitler to avoid 2 front war & give Soviet Union time to mobilize.

- Sept 1, 1939 Germany rolls into Poland. Sept 3 Britain declares war.

WAR AGAIN

Total War Through Technology

- WWII saw the catastrophic consequences of a huge leap in technology. Aircraft & German "terror bombing" Targeting of civilians was a terrible feature of war.

- WWII was a total war... all resources for a country to destroy everything & everyone of the enemy.

The Invasion of Poland

- People surprised by how quickly Germany took Poland. German *Blitzkrieg* (lightning war) tore through Poland. By end of Sept Hitler controlled Poland, setting it up as a worker state to supply German war machine.

The Phony War

- In Western Europe allies mobilized into 1940. Hitler & Stalin eating up Eastern Europe... May 15th, Hitler smashed Netherlands & Belgium... ready to invade France.

THE FALL OF FRANCE

- came quickly, by June 1940. Why? Ill-prepared, French communists under-cut support... too much reliance on Maginot Line & old war tactics. Germany controlled Western Europe, Soviet Union the East. Britain was left standing alone.

The Miracle of Dunkirk

- Allies saved 338 228 troops when they only expected to save 45 000... fog hampered Luftwaffe, calm Eng channel helped all kinds of boats save soldiers. Churchill emerged as a great leader.

THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

Hitler tried to force an agreement with Britain... did not want to fight them... but had to issue Operation Sea Lion... an all out air war. Needed Luftwaffe to take control.

- Br. Developed RADAR... Hitler bombed London, taking pressure off airfields... Hitler thought operation was taking too long. Sept 1940, halted operation and turned focus to the East.

WIDENING AGGRESSION

The Tripartite Pact

- Germany, Italy & Japan signed Tripartite Pact in September 1940. Romania, Hungary & Slovakia also included.
- Italy's attack on Greece was hugely unsuccessful, forced Hitler to commit 500 000 of his best soldiers in a Mediterranean campaign he had not planned.

Operation Barbarossa

- Hitler's desire to acquire Lebensraum in the East... Hitler wanted to annihilate the Soviet populace. He demanded absolute cruelty. Hitler expected campaign to last six weeks. Soviet campaign came to be the beginning of the end for Hitler... spread his troops far from supplies, cold winter & terrain was extremely difficult. Hitler made a poor decision by stalling close to Moscow to pursue Ukraine. The winter hit... General Zhukov led a massive counterattack that made for a huge victory, militarily & psychologically.

WAR IN THE PACIFIC

The Sino-Japanese War

- Japan was strongly anti-West... wanted to establish its own sphere of influence in Pacific. Japan looked to China as big prize.

The Rape of Nanking

- Japanese entered with a fury, raping, looting & murdering. Estimated that 20-80 000 women raped by Japanese soldiers. Ruthless treatment with up to 300 000 killed. Japanese gov't has never apologized or offered compensation.

Attack on Pearl Harbor

- Britain pre-occupied in Europe, left Japan more freedom to act in East. USA was building its navy.
- Dec 7, 1941, famous attack on US naval fleet in Hawaii. US aircraft carriers had been out, otherwise hit would have been even more devastating. War was on...

DIPLOMACY & COALITION WARFARE

The United States Enters the War

- America not only wanted to win war, wanted to reshape post war world in democratic capitalist model. Although Pearl Harbor brought America into the war, Roosevelt knew Nazi Germany was first priority. Careful balancing act among coalition & differing ideologies would create challenging balancing act.

Strategic Disputes

- Britain, US & Soviet Union had different ideas of how to win war... The Critical Juncture: Stalin demanded a second front in the West to help draw pressure off his nation. Hitler tried to cut off oil in South near Stalingrad. Germany was bogged down, cut off, by January 1943 6th Army of 650 000 was down to 90 000 of which only 5 000 would return to Germany... major loss to Germany.

The Raid at Dieppe

- bloody chapter in Canadian military history... attacked shore and were massacred by German troops on the shore. Why? Appease Soviets, test run for later attack... many questions still remain, why??

1942: A Turning Point- The Casablanca Conference

- West was making progress in war. Churchill managed to argue with less experienced Americans that they needed to continue successful periphery war weakening Germany before attacking Europe... felt there would be fewer losses with a weakened Germany.

Operation Husky: Invasion of Sicily & Canada's Role in Italy

- In a clever plan of deception, Allied troops surprised Hitler by attacking Italy. Canadians & Allies fought a very determined German force into 1945... but were finally victorious.

Total War & Strategic Bombing

- Total war meant civilians were targets as strategy. Allies bombed German cities to break German will. Many still question morality of this strategy. Was the allied use of terror bombing morally defensible?

The Teheran Conference

- "Big Three": Churchill, Roosevelt & Stalin met in Persia in 1943 able to start planning for defeat of Nazi Germany. Roosevelt and Stalin pushed for Western attack... Churchill continued Mediterranean policy. Stalin pushed for concessions on his Western borders (Poland)... it was clear Germany would pay again in defeat.

OPERATION OVERLORD: THE NORMANDY INVASION

- planning of cross channel campaign began after Teheran Conference... Dwight Eisenhower supreme commander. June 6, 1944 allies pushed massive attack into Normandy, and by nightfall won the beaches giving Allies a foothold to attack Germans. Sacrifice was enormous, of 1.3 million Allied troops that landed, 120 000 casualties, and 500 000 German casualties.

Hitler's Last Stand

- Hitler was now being squeezed. He refused to admit defeat, attempt to assassinate him caused vengeful repercussions, 5000 officers & conspirators were executed, and Hitler bore on. In January 1945... Hitler was defeated by Soviets on the East, and British, American, Canadians and other Allied troops on the West.



REORGANIZING EUROPE

The Yalta Conference

- February 1945. Plans furthered. Roosevelt argued that "the German people as a whole must have it driven home that the whole nation has been engaged in a lawless conspiracy against the decencies of modern civilization". Also agreed that Germany would be divided into 4 zones (Big Three & France).

The United Nations is Born

- Many nations wanted to join in the defeat of Germany, and postwar. World Bank & IMF would also play critical roles in reconstructing post war world.

Hitler is Destroyed

- Hitler boasted about a 1000 year Reich, it crumbled in 1945. April 30th, Hitler and his mistress Eva Braun committed suicide... May 8th, 1945 (VE Day) German forces surrender unconditionally.



THE HOLOCAUST: A WAR WITHIN A WAR

- European Jews decimated by Nazi German. Europe was home to 12 million Jews at beginning of WWII, by the end 6 million killed, millions more homeless.
- Three phases: deportation, ghettoization, and extermination.

The Final Solution

- Nazi plan to exterminate all European Jews. Need to ask questions: why? How? When was it planned as a policy? Hitler is often seen as main perpetrator, but collaborators key as well.

The Death Toll

- approached 40 million people- horrifying...



PLANNING THE POSTWAR ERA

Postdam Conference

- Soviet role in war assured that they would be a major power in the post war period. The post war period would be the beginning of the Cold War. Stalin, Churchill and Truman met at Potsdam... Stalin was only leader that started and finished war, used this. America was nuclear power... Soviets took concessions in Eastern Europe.

An Iron Curtain Descends

- Trials in Nuremburg started after Nazi leaders & officials arrested. Germany sectioned to 4 zones... Clear Europe was now divided between Democratic West & Communist East. Churchill: "I view with profound misgivings... the descent of an iron curtain between us and everything to the eastward."

The Impact of War on Society

Changes in North American Society

Victory in the Pacific

The Nuclear Age is Born

(pages 483-485) – world changed with the dropping of the nuclear bombs at Hiroshima & Nagasaki