

World War I (The Great War)

How it Has Shaped Us

Cultural & Political Legacies

- The death of faith in “Progress”
- The birth of chemical warfare
- The birth of aerial warfare
- The onset of a deep pacifism
- The death of a powerful force for peace
- Its replacement by a weak force (LON)

The European Scene in 1919

- The death of four empires (German, Austrian, Ottoman, Russian)
- A continent of nation-states takes its place
- Three internally-divided democracies
- Two dynamic outcasts (USSR, Ger.)
- Europe, get ready for a wild ride

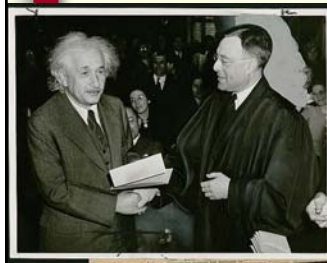
Europe’s Slide Toward WW II, 1919-1939

- The European power vacuum worsens
- Early efforts at Versailles enforcement
- These worsen Germany’s economy
- The Great Depression’s impact
- Nations look homeward...
- ...Away from or “Appeasing” a rising Hitler

Let’s Back Up Again to Look at the Question of the Great War’s Causes

- So far: Unfulfilled nationalism, Imperialism, Intellectuals’ flight from reason
- Einstein: another example of the latter
- The Alliance System
- Assassination in Sarajevo, Bosnia, June 28, 1914

Einstein: “God Wouldn’t Play Dice with the Universe!”



Einstein, on becoming a U.S. citizen, 1940

- The General Relativity Theory (1905)
- Einstein on Space, Time and Natural Law
- Einstein and Niels Bohr Debate Intelligent Design
- Einstein’s Failed Quest, 1905-1955

The Role of the Alliance Systems

- Three Emperors League (1873- G/A/R)
- Triple Alliance (1884- G/A/I)
- Reinsurance Treaty (1887- G/R)
- Departure of Bismarck (1890)
- Dual Alliance (1894- R/F)
- Entente Cordiale (1904- GB/F)
- Triple Entente (1907- GB, F, R)

Assassination in Sarajevo, 1914

A Small flame but all a tinderbox needs

Expectations of 1914

- A Short, Quick War
- Schlieffen Plan
- The Relief and the Cheering
- The Reality: Sir Edward Gray
- The Reality: First Battle of the Marne (1914)

The War's Enduring Events

- Trench Warfare
- Poison Gas
- Disillusionment
- Communist Revolution in the Crumbling Ashes of Three Empires (the German, Austrian And Russian)
- Worldwide Influenza *Pandemic* (instructive in the hunt for SARS)

The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917

- Mensheviks
- Bolsheviks
- Vladimir Lenin
- Lenin's Pragmatic Legacy – a Slippery Slide to Stalinism
- Differences Between Lenin and Stalin

Question of the Day: Having Been engulfed in One World War (1914-1918), what drove Europe

to the brink of suicide with its decision to wage another (1939-1945)?

The Answer is Found in the Nature of the Interwar Years

1919-1939

Years of Anomie, Years of Appeasement

Definition, Anomie

- Definition: social instability resulting from a breakdown of standards and values;
- also : personal unrest, alienation, and uncertainty that comes from a lack of purpose or ideals
- The mood of Europeans (and many Americans) after “the Great War”

Definition: Appeasement

- PACIFY, CONCILIATE; especially : to buy off (an aggressor) by concessions usually at the sacrifice of principles
- Eugen Weber “The practice of throwing your friends to the wolves, hoping the wolves will be sated before they get to you”
- It was the democracies that did the “throwing,” hurling their “friends” (Czechoslovakia) to the “wolves” (Germany and Italy), out of guilt for Versailles and fear of another World War
- The result of appeasement was the very thing they feared, only worse: an even bloodier World War than the first war

The Poisonous Legacy of World War I

- Anomie spreads among victors and losers alike (Oswald Spengler’s Decline of the West, at right)
- Pacifism and All Quiet on the Western Front
- The “Lost Generation” and the Flight of the Idealists

The Insane Treaty of Versailles (1919)

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Germany forced to admit war guilt■ Germany forced to sign a blank check for reparations■ The reparations bill (\$33 billion) was impossibly high to pay and a recipe for postwar economic crisis■ Germany’s army was capped at 100,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Germany was forbidden from having an air force■ East Prussia was sundered from the rest of Germany by the new Polish corridor■ The fledgling new Democratic Republic that was forced to sign this treaty in 1919 lost credibility with the German people by so doing |
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Economic Chaos in almost all the European states, 1919-1923

- Communist Revolution Strikes or Threatens Germany, Italy and most Central and East European States
- Germany’s Huge Reparations Burden becomes Crushing in the Wake of US Demands on Britain and France to Pay Off War Debts in Full– a Horrendous Inflation Shatters the Solid German Middle-Class

Democracy in Crisis, 1919-1939

A World Turned Upside Down:
Why the Winners of the Great War
were on the Defensive and the
Losers were on the March

The Reasons for Democracy's Crisis of the Twenties and Thirties

- The international balance of power was seriously unbalanced: Russia, like Germany, was an international outcast and no longer a counterweight to Germany
- Making matters worse: the USA retreated to a traditional isolationism that was now, for the first time, fatal to world peace
- A Warped Demographic Profile in France -- an ingredient in Appeasement
- The Great Depression (1929-1940) turned the attention of every nation inward, energized the communists within each nation and caused the solid middle class to gravitate to the parties of the far Right (Fascism) as a defense against communism
- When Hitler, in 1935 and after, vowed to take revenge against the Versailles treaty and proceeded to break the treaty, Britain and France -- well aware of the previous four factors and feeling a sense of guilt about Versailles, chose to appease Hitler rather than confront him
- The result was an aggressive Germany that no one stopped until September 1, 1939, when Britain and France finally saw the light and responded to the German attack on Poland by declaring war

Let's Review the Main Influences on the Interwar Years

- The Poisonous Legacy of World War I
- Economic Chaos in almost all the European states (the winners and losers alike)
- Disappointment and Guilt arising from the Treaty of Versailles (1919), immobilizing Britain and France as they confronted a rising Germany
- The Disappearance of Russia and the United States as Counterweights to Germany
- The Rise of Fascism as Insurance against Communism
- The Devastating Impact of the Great Depression, 1929-1940

The Soviet Union, 1919-1939

- Lenin's "Temporary" Totalitarianism, 1919-1924
- Stalin's Maneuverings to Power, 1922-1929
- The Exiling of Leon Trotsky
- First Five Year Plan (1929-1934)
- Collectivization of Agriculture
- The Purges of the 1930s
- The West's Utter Blindness to the Meaning of these events



STALIN

Six Features of Fascism (the most dynamic of interwar ideologies, it existed in 60 countries and took over two)

- It is easiest to define Fascism in terms of what it was against rather than what it was for

Six Features of Fascism

- 1. Anti-Liberal and Anti-Parliamentary Democracy, they believed that the individual should submit to the all-powerful leader who knows best
- 2. Anti-Modern, Opposed to Most Trends Since the Enlightenment
- 3. Violently Anti-Marxist
- 4. For a *Volksgemeinschaft* (Folk Community) and a Return to a Supposedly "Golden Age" when the community nurtured the individual -- Vaguely Anti-Capitalistic
- 5. Violently Nationalistic and Romantic (The Violent and Racist Character of fascists are what principally sets them apart from old-nineteenth-century conservatives)
- 6. Racist and Believers in Superiority Based on Race and Nationality

What Germans and Italians among the following would be attracted to Fascism – and why? Which Four of these Groups would be attracted to Fascism and why?

- Industrial workers
- Big Business
- Farmers
- Middle-class (Bourgeoisie)
- Old Aristocracy
- Lower-middle class
- Veterans of the First World War

What Germans and Italians among the following would be attracted to Fascism – and why? (The answers are in BROWN)

- Industrial workers
- Big Business ← In the depths of the depression
- Farmers ←
- Middle-class (Bourgeoisie)
- Old Aristocracy
- Lower-middle class ←
- Veterans of the First World War ←

Hitler, Germany's Fascist

- 1889-1945
- Orphaned as a teenager, he spent his formative years (1903-1914) in Vienna, capital of a once-proud empire that blamed its problems on ethnic minorities and Jews
- Absorbed racist nationalist ideas and political tactics from Vienna's popular Mayor, Karl Lueger
- Hitler was a wastrel and a bum until World War I gave him his first taste of excitement and success
- The war gave him a purpose– revenge-- and revealed a talent – that of rabble-rousing and oratory
- 1919: Establishes the NSDAP, or Nazi, Party
- 1923: A failed attempt to duplicate Mussolini's feat landed him in jail
- 1925: Writes Mein Kampf revealing his plan to destroy the Weimar Republic through the electoral route
- Only the Great Depression gives the NSDAP the popularity to win the Parliamentary elections of 1932

Nazi Germany Timeline, 1933-1939

- Hitler as Prime Minister: A Two Month Charade
- Assumes Emergency powers, Feb. 1933
- Purges His S.A. Supporters to win Army Support, Aug. 1934
- Begins to Test Allied Resolve Over Versailles, 1935
- Violates the Treaty on Multiple Fronts, 1936
- Invades Austria (1938)
- Presses for the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia, Oct. 1938
- Munich Agreement (1938)
- Kristallnacht (November, 1938)
- Seizes all of Czechoslovakia, March 1939
- Nazi-Soviet Pact (August, 1939)
- Invades Poland, Starting WW II

