

# Origins of World War II

Class 1

William A. Reader

[williamreader40@gmail.com](mailto:williamreader40@gmail.com)

# What World War II Was

- World War II was a collection of five separate but interrelated wars (designated as theaters of operations)
  - The Japan-China land War in Manchuria and China
  - The British-Italian naval and land War in North and East Africa
  - The Atlantic Naval War with Germany on one side and Great Britain and later America on the other
  - The German-Russian land War in Eastern Europe and Russia with related land wars in Western Europe in 1940 and In 1944-45
  - The Pacific land and naval War in the Pacific and the islands contained therein
- What linked them was that all of the major combatants were fighting in more than one of these wars and that what happened in one of these wars had major effects on one or more of the others. All of them also involved air power

# Why Study World War II

- Many of us were small children or teenagers during the war and we were touched by it in many ways
- All of us grew up in a world the World War left behind, a Cold War world marked by diplomatic crises, wars, and the threat of atomic annihilation
- All of us have lived with and been affected by the social changes and technological innovations that came out of the war

# Some Things That Came Out of World War II

<b>Tee Shirts</b>	<b>Computers</b>	<b>Vinyl records</b>	<b>SPAM</b>	<b>Penicillin</b>
<b>Coffee breaks</b>	<b>Employer Health Insurance</b>	<b>Fed Income Tax Withholding</b>	<b>The Jeep</b>	<b>Population shifts</b>
<b>GI Bill</b>	<b>A-bomb</b>	<b>Radar</b>	<b>United Nations</b>	<b>Armed Forces Radio</b>
<b>Levittowns</b>	<b>Cruise missiles</b>	<b>DDT</b>	<b>Jet Planes</b>	<b>Federal Impact Aid</b>
<b>Cargo cults</b>	<b>Pentagon</b>	<b>Civil Air Patrol</b>	<b>Widespread Use of Plastics</b>	<b>Pizza as an American dish</b>

# Setting the Stage

- German Defeat in World War I
- The Russian Revolution
- The Treaty of Versailles
- The Rise of Fascism in Italy
- The Great Depression and its Social-Political Impacts
- The Rise of Nazism and Japanese Militarism
- A policy of appeasement by nations and leaders traumatized by World War I
- A series of events in the 1930s.

# Impact of German Defeat

- Germany's defeat came as shock to the German people
  - Followed the defeat of Russia
  - Came after the Germans had made significant gains on the Western Front
  - Came without any Allied occupation of German soil
- Gave rise to the *dolchstoß* (stab-in-the-back) legend
  - Germany was not defeated but betrayed by Weimar politicians
  - Led the German Right (and especially the Nazis) to deny the real reasons for Germany's defeat
    - The exhaustion and attrition caused by over four years of war and the Allied blockade
    - America's entry into the war

# Effects of a Communist Russia

- Led to a fear of Communist revolution among both political elites and the political Right in Europe
  - Blinded many to the dangers that Fascism and Nazism would later pose
  - Aided the rise of Mussolini to power
  - Led to the Freikorps (private armies) in Germany
  - Led to the “Red Scare” in the U.S.
- Removed Russia from the world economy
  - Helped pave the way for the Great Depression
- Split the World Socialist movement into a Communist wing and a Democratic Socialist wing.
  - Founding of the American and other Communist Parties as a response to the events in Russia

# Economic Impact of WWI

- European food production declined as agricultural manpower was drafted into military service
  - Led U.S., Canadian, Argentinian, and Australian farmers to vastly expand agricultural production
    - Mechanization and chemical fertilizers led to a vast increase in productivity
  - After the war, European agriculture (except in Russia) returned to normal levels of production
- Result: A Depressed agricultural economy in the 1920s and 1930s in both Europe and America
  - Pushed European (especially German) farmers to the political right



# Political Impact of World War I & Versailles - 1

- Created a weak Weimar Republic
- Created instability in eastern Europe
  - Strengthened Germany strategically by replacing two empires on its eastern and southern borders with a plethora of weak states
  - Created an Eastern European status quo that neither Germany and Russia supported
- Left Japan unsatisfied while increasing its strategic position vis-à-vis the United States
  - Gave Japan control of the Marshall, Caroline, and Marianas islands – all of which sat astride US sea routes to the Philippines

# Political Impact of World War I & Versailles -

## 2

- The American failure to ratify the Treaty of Versailles or join the League of Nations greatly weakened the League
- Fostered within the United States a sense of disillusionment
  - With World War I and its results
  - With U.S. participation in the war
  - With U.S. engagement with the world
- Fostered in turn a spirit of isolationism that was reflected in restrictive immigration laws, high tariffs, and the Neutrality Acts of the 1930s
- Paved the way for the rise of Mussolini in Italy

## Rise of Mussolini - 1

- World War I proved catastrophic for Italy
  - Italy Lacked the resources to fight WWI and gained little from it
  - Italy suffered acutely from the disruption that followed the war
    - Many landless and jobless demobilized soldiers
    - Large-scale inflation
- Between 1919-1922, one weak government followed another

## Rise of Mussolini - 2

- On 27 October 1922, squads of Blackshirts occupied key points in many rural areas of northern and central Italy,
- The Fascists then prepared to march on Rome although they were ill-equipped and unorganized
- The Italian government could have easily routed them
- But King Victor Emmanuel III refused to sign a proclamation of martial law
- The Premier resigned and Mussolini was invited to become Prime Minister

# Significance of Mussolini

- Saw that attacking Communism was politically profitable
- Saw that he could simultaneously pose as a champion of law-and-order while using goons to assault political opponents
- Made skillful use of charismatic appeal, propaganda, and violence as a means of achieving and retaining power
- Saw the value of pageantry as a means of retaining popular support
  - Parades of black-shirted men
  - The Roman salute
  - The Giovinezza hymn
- All of these techniques were adopted by Adolf Hitler

# Mussolini in Power

- Once in power, Mussolini created a one-party dictatorship by both legal and illegal means
  - Outlawing labor strikes & suppressing civil liberties
  - Arresting and, in some cases, murdering political opponents
  - Changing the electoral laws to ensure that the Fascist Party always had a large parliamentary majority
- Sought government control over the Italian economy
  - In 1938, instituted wage and price controls
  - Followed a policy of economic autarky, government public works, and high tariffs
- Tried to make Italy a nation that was “great, respected, and feared”
  - Ruthlessly repressed a revolt in Libya, consolidating Italian control of that country

# Benito Mussolini



# The Rise of Adolf Hitler - 1

- A few biographical points
  - **Born on 20 April 1889 in Braunau on the Inn in Austria to a domineering father and an indulgent mother**
  - **Went to Vienna to become an artist where**
    - He lived a bohemian life financed by orphans' benefits and support from his mother
    - Rejected twice by the Academy of Fine Arts for lack of talent
    - When the money ran out, he worked as a laborer and sold watercolors
    - Found life in Vienna miserable and developed a strong dislike of the polyglot Austro-Hungarian Empire
  - **Strongly influenced in his youth by**
    - George von Schonerer
    - Karl Lueger
    - Guido von List
    - Hans von Liebenfels



# The Rise of Adolf Hitler - 2

- Hitler was greatly influenced by his World War I experiences
  - Gave him a sense of acceptance and comradeship after life as a down-and-out
  - Gave Hitler the sense he was providentially guided
  - Desensitization to mass death
- After World War I, he was influenced by
  - Dietrich Eckart – introduced Hitler to influential and wealthy German nationalists and proto-Nazis
  - Alfred Rosenberg – introduced Hitler to the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (and its notion of an international Jewish conspiracy to rule the world), the will-to-power ideas of Friedrich Nietzsche, the geopolitical ideas of Karl Haushofer and Halford MacKinder, and the intellectual racism of Comte Arthur de Gobineau and Houston Stewart Chamberlain

# The Beer Hall Putsch and its Consequences

- The Nazi Party until 1930 was a minor party – one of several on the German Right
  - Appealed mainly to ex-soldiers, anti-Communists, anti-Semites, and a hodgepodge of downwardly mobile individuals
- Between 1919 and 1924, it was confined to Bavaria
- On 8-9 November 1923, Hitler and GEN Erich von Ludendorff attempted to seize power in Bavaria
- After Hitler's arrest, he was found guilty but managed to turn his trial into a verbal attack against the Weimar Republic

# Notes About Hitler's Personality

- Had some very distinctive personality traits that had major impacts on his career, attitudes, policies, and eventual failures
  - Showed certain infantile traits like temper tantrums
  - A tendency to choose associates he could dominate
  - Identified with the aggressor and despised the weak
  - Had a problem in forming close relationships with people
  - Strongly believed in the *dolsh* legend – that Germany lost the war because it was stabbed in the back
  - Had distinct paranoid traits
  - Was an extreme Racist who believed in the superiority of Aryans and the inferiority of everyone else

# Hitler's Path to Power- 1

- The hyperinflation of the early Weimar years created a fear of inflation among German bankers and economists that affected economic policy in the Great Depression
- With the Stock Market Crash of 1929, the U.S. and the world gradually sank into the Great Depression
- At the end of March 1930, President von Hindenburg appointed Heinrich Brüning as Chancellor
- Brüning who feared inflation followed a policy of raising taxes and cutting expenditures (especially welfare benefits)

Heinrich Brüning

ro



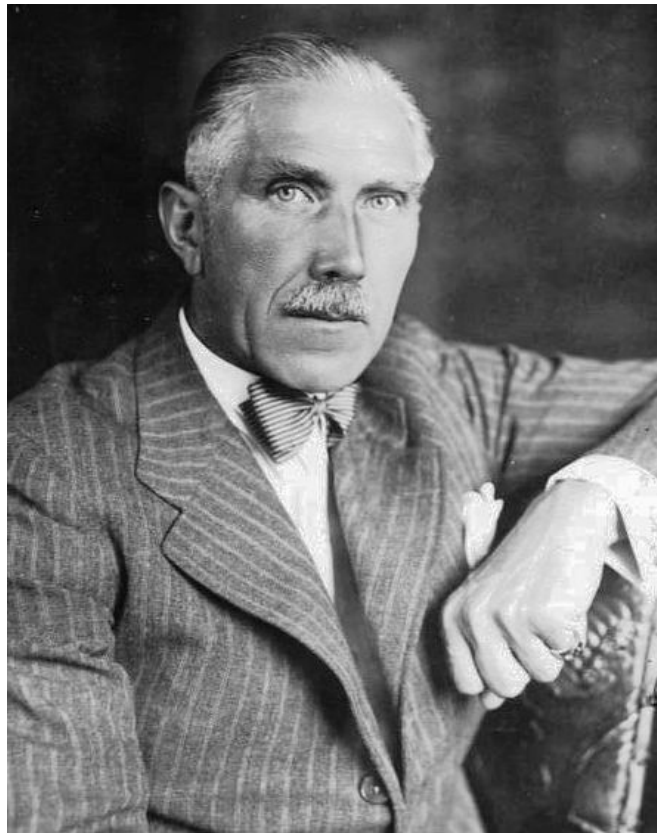
## Hitler's Path to Power- 2

- As the economic situation worsened, street brawls between Stormtroopers and Communists became common
- In May 1931, the Creditanstalt bank in Vienna, the largest bank in Austria, declared bankruptcy
  - This led to a global financial crisis, as banks in Germany and elsewhere also went bankrupt.
  - It provoked a run on the banks and a massive outflow of capital from Germany

## Hitler's Path to Power- 3

- In March 1932, Germany held a presidential election
- In July and November 1932, there were parliamentary elections
- The election results led General Kurt von Schleicher, a top confidant of Hindenburg, to become convinced that
  - That Germany needed a strongman to govern
  - That some accommodation had to be reached with the Nazis because of their popular support
  - Brüning had to go
- The inability of Brüning's successors – von Papen & von Schleicher – to govern led to Hitler's accession to power

# Von Papen





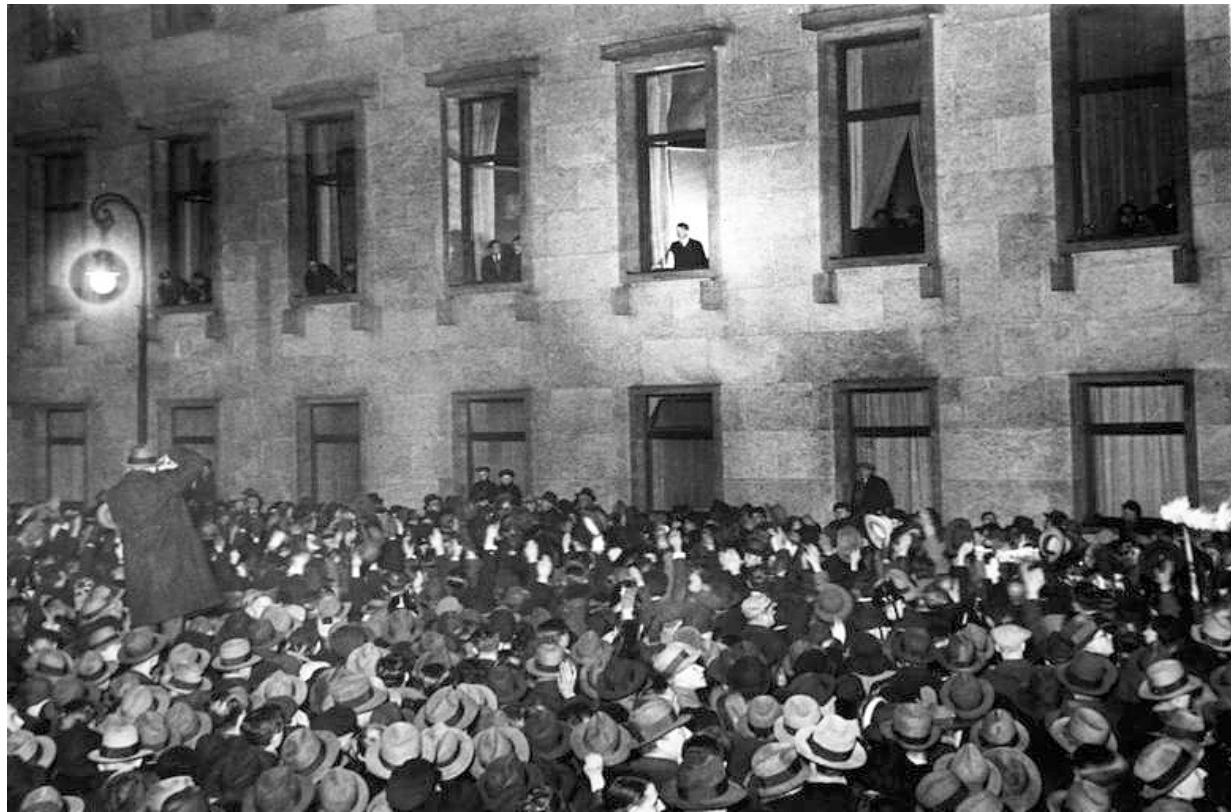
# Von Schleicher



# Hitler Becomes Dictator - 1

- When von Schleicher asked Hindenburg to dissolve the Reichstag, Hindenburg refused, forcing von Schleicher's resignation
- In a secret meeting between von Papen and Hitler, it was agreed that Hitler would become Chancellor
- Hitler became Chancellor on January 30, 1933
  - On the evening of the 30<sup>th</sup>, tens of thousands of SA members staged a torchlight parade through the Brandenburg Gate along the Unter den Linden and the Wilhelmstrasse, singing the Horst Wessel Lied
- To consolidate his power, Hitler insisted on another Reichstag election to be held on March 5<sup>th</sup>

# Hitler Celebrating his Inauguration as Chancellor



## Hitler Becomes Dictator - 2

- On February 27<sup>th</sup>, the Reichstag building burned down
- On February 28<sup>th</sup>, Hitler persuaded von Hindenburg to issue what became known as the Reichstag Fire Decree
  - Indefinitely suspended most of the civil liberties set forth in the Weimar Constitution
  - Allowed the Reich Government to assume police powers formerly reserved to the German states
  - Established draconian penalties for certain offenses
- By eliminating such freedoms as a free press, free expression, and the right of public assembly, it crippled Hitler's political opposition

Adolf Hitler

Hitler at a podium  
speaking



# Reichstag Fire



# Hitler Becomes Dictator - 3

- Despite the advantages the Nazis had, they still won only 288 seats and only 43.9% of the vote. This despite
  - The virtual outlawing of the Communists,
  - The handicaps under which the non-Nazi parties operated as a result of the Reichstag Fire Decree
  - The Nazi ability to use the power and resources of the state in their campaign,
  - The campaign contributions of German big business
  - The ability to use the SA and the Prussian police to intimidate voters and to monitor the vote process

# Hitler Becomes Dictator - 4

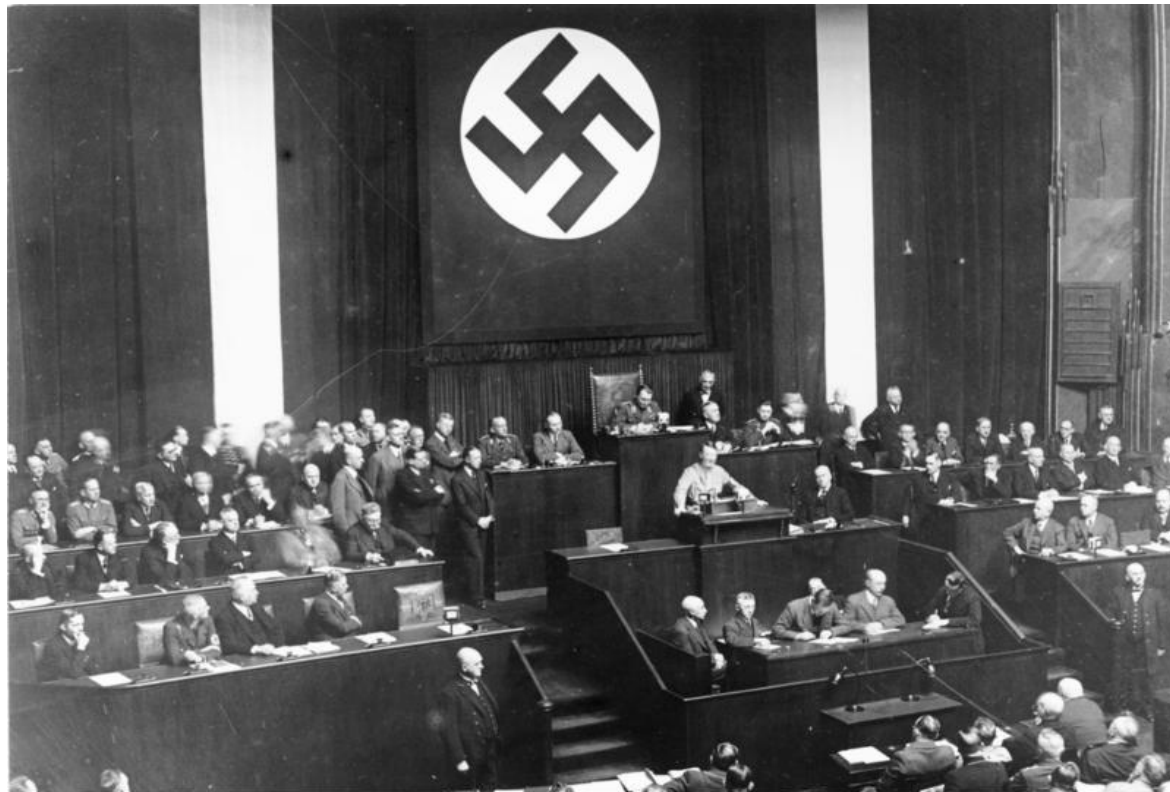
- The Enabling Act gave the Cabinet the right to enact legislation and approve treaties without the approval of the Reichstag
  - Because it was considered an amendment to the Weimar Constitution, it required a 2/3<sup>rd</sup> vote of the Reichstag
  - With the Nazis and the Nationalist allies having just a bare majority, the Nazis got their 2/3<sup>rd</sup> majority by
    - Arresting all the Communist and many of the Socialist deputies
    - Promising the Catholic Center Party that the civil and religious rights of Catholics and the Catholic Church would be respected.
    - Promising the other parties an end to political instability
- With the passing of the Enabling Act of 1933, a Nazi dictatorship was established in Germany



# The Night of the Long Knives

- The Purge, which took place on 30 June 1934, in which over a 100 people were murdered (including General von Schleicher, Ernst Rohm, and Gregor Strasser) was the result of the following
  - Rivalry between the Army officer corps and the leadership of the SA
  - Himmler's and Goring's dislike of Rohm
  - Hitler's fear that Rohm was planning a putsch against him
- Significance of the purge
  - Constituted Hitler's first descent into State-sanctioned murder
  - Greatly enhanced the position and power of Himmler and the SS
  - Solidified Hitler's position as Fuhrer
    - Greatly diminished the power of the SA – the SA's "heedless brutality" gave way to the SS's "systematic barbarism"
    - By implicating the German officer corps, it gave Hitler a hold over them

# Hitler Speaking to the Reichstag



Bundesarchiv, Bild 102-14439  
Foto: o. Ang. | 23. März 1933

# Hitler in Power - 1

- Hitler had four major policy goals prior to World War II
  - Bringing Germany out of the Great Depression by ending unemployment
  - Preparing Germany economically and militarily for its wars of conquest
  - Forestalling any Allied intervention against Germany before she was ready for war
    - This involved peace propaganda and diplomacy
  - Removing the Jews from German public life and forcing them out of Germany

# Economic Recovery - 1

- Hitler left the implementation of his goal of economic recovery to Reich Minister of Economics and President of the Reichsbank Hjalmar Schacht
- Bringing Germany out of the Great Depression
- Involved large-scale public investment in public works infrastructure and heavy industry
- Developed tourism as a major industry
  - Instituted paid vacations for workers
- Paid for by credit notes called Mefo bills
  - Paid 4 percent interest with principal payment after 5 years
- Involved deficit spending

## Economic Recovery - 2

- Economic Results
  - By the end of Hitler's first year in office, unemployment fell by 2 million
  - By 1936, Germany had reached full employment
- Made Hitler and the Nazi regime very popular both home and abroad
  - This blinded many foreigners to the evils of the Nazi regime
  - It also had a magnetic effect on ethnic Germans living in Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland who contrasted German prosperity with their own economically-depressed state

# Hjalmar Schacht



# German Rearmament

- Was aided by the Great Depression and aided in German recovery from the Great Depression
- March 1935 - Germany denounced the disarmament clauses of the Treaty of Versailles and reinstituted conscription
- June 1935 – Anglo-German Naval Agreement
- March 7, 1936 – German reoccupation of the Rhineland
- October 1936 – German Four-Year Plan -
- 1936-1939 – German participation in the Spanish Civil War

# Nazi Preclusive Diplomacy - 1

- To preclude a preventive strike against Nazi Germany before she could fully rearm
  - The Nazis launched a peace propaganda campaign and exploited people's fear of another war
    - Hitler spoke continuously of the desire of Germany to live in peace with its neighbors
  - The Nazis saw negotiations and treaties as a way of postponing troubles considered dangerous at the moment
    - Hence, the Nazis often made major concessions since they assumed that they would violate or abrogate the treaty when conditions were right



## Nazi Preclusive Diplomacy - 2

- Peace propaganda and diplomatic concessions had their own dangers
  - The first danger was that the German people would take the peace propaganda seriously
  - The second danger was that German rearmament would put the German government under time pressure
    - German rearmament would set off an arms race with its potential enemies
    - Germany would have a limited window in which to strike since its potential enemies had a greater resource base at its disposal and, starting later, would more likely have more advanced weapons systems
      - Thus ,Germany would have to strike before its enemies were fully rearmed
  - The third danger was that once countries lost faith in German professions of peace, it would be impossible to get them again to the negotiating table

# Preparing Germany for War

- Preparing Germany for war involved the following
  - Bringing the German military on board
    - The Night of the Long Knives
    - Rearmament
  - Remilitarization of the Rhineland
  - Seizure of Austria, the Sudetenland (and the rest of Czechoslovakia), Danzig, and the Polish Corridor
    - Increase the military manpower and economic resources available to Germany
  - Protection of his eastern flank
    - Getting Hungary and Poland to join the Anti-Comintern Pact
    - Agreeing to a Pact with Stalin

# More on Hitler's World Views

- Hitler was a racist who saw history as a sequence of race struggles
  - Progress in both the animal and human world was the result of selective breeding of the fit and elimination of the undesirable and inferior
  - Nations rose as a result of the dominance and efforts of racially pure Aryans
  - Nations fell when pure Aryans lost their dominance
  - Since nations and empires fell when their elites and populations saw their superior racial traits diluted or eliminated by marriage or sexual contact with racial inferiors, laws must be passed to prevent such dilution
- Since races were engaged in a continual struggle for existence (i.e. for living space which to Hitler meant agricultural land), war followed as a logical corollary in which Inferior races in turn would be eliminated

## More on Hitler's World Views - 2

- To Hitler, racial progress implied territorial expansion
  - People could either adjust the population to a given space or adjust the space to the population
    - Adjusting population to a limited space meant emigration, birth control, and abortion which meant racial decay
    - Adjusting space to population meant wars of conquest with the native but racially inferior population being either expelled or exterminated, not assimilated

## More on Hitler's World Views - 3

- Given Germany's location, initial geographic expansion should most logically take place in eastern Europe and Russia west of the Urals
- This view was reinforced by the notion that, except for the ethnic Germans residing in eastern Europe and the Volga Germans, the area was inhabited by racially inferior Slavs and Jews
- Territorial expansion meant war, especially war with Russia
  - Hitler saw the Russian Revolution as a boon to Germany since it had eliminated Russia's Germanic-origin ruling classes
  - As a result, Russia was now being ruled by Jews and Slavs who could easily be defeated

## More on Hitler's World Views - 4

- To Hitler, the problem with attacking eastward was France
- To Hitler, France was the great strategic enemy
  - To Hitler, the enmity between France and Germany was based on much more than the hatreds arising from World War I
  - To Hitler, France was an Aryan nation that had betrayed its Aryan heritage – i.e. was a race traitor
    - France, via the French Revolution, had contributed the concept of “égalité” to European culture
    - It had emancipated and granted equality to the Jews
    - It had introduced Blacks into Europe during World War I
- France had to be defeated before Russia was attacked

## More on Hitler's World Views - 5

- To Hitler, Britain was a fellow Aryan nation to which he felt a mixture of admiration and hate
  - He saw the British as fellow Aryans dominated by an upper class that was the product of selective breeding
  - He saw British rule in India as a model for his own schemes of conquest
  - He saw Jews as having great influence in Britain
  - It was a democracy, which by definition destroyed responsibility and leadership
  - It was a predominantly industrial and commercial society which Hitler saw as occupationally unhealthful and socially debilitating
- He was both frustrated, puzzled, and enraged that Britain aligned itself with Hitler's enemies rather than with Germany

## More on Hitler's World Views - 6

- While the U.S. had a large number of Aryans, it had become a mongrelized nation largely dominated by Jews and Blacks
- After the defeat of France (and Britain) and the conquest of Russia, Hitler saw the next war as a fight between a German-dominated Europe and the United States
  - Thus preparing Germany for war with the U.S. was one of the tasks of the Nazi movement
- The problem in defeating the U.S. was in engaging American forces on American soil
  - It was the Atlantic Ocean and the large American fleet that were the problems



# Hitler's World Views and Global Strategy

- From his world views followed Hitler's strategy for global conquest
- Conquest would take place in stages, with each stage allowing Germany to acquire the strength and resources necessary to succeed at the next stage
- The stages:
  - Incorporating the Germans of Austria, the Sudetenland, and Poland into the Reich – This meant conquest of Czechoslovakia and Poland
  - Conquest of France
  - Either the surrender of, or a negotiated peace with, Great Britain
  - Conquest of Russia
  - War with, and invasion of, the United States
  - Eventual war with Japan followed by a world under German rule

# Key Events on the Path to War in Europe

# Italian Conquest of Ethiopia

- Violated the Covenant of the League of Nations
- This outraged much of the British and French publics who demanded sanctions against Italy
- British and French governments wanted Mussolini as an ally against Hitler
- Result – ineffectual sanctions. These
  - Discredited the League of Nations and the concept of collective security
  - Made Mussolini an ally of Hitler rather than a potential enemy
  - Convinced Hitler that a policy of boldness pays
  - Demonstrated to Hitler that Britain and France lacked resolve
- It gave Mussolini delusions of power
  - Later led him into disastrous military operations against better-armed opponents
    - The Greeks
    - The British in North Africa

# Why Mussolini Invaded Ethiopia

- To erase the stigma of the defeat of the Italians by the Ethiopians at Adowa in 1896
- Mussolini believed that only an imperial power could be great
  - Ethiopia did not belong to any other imperial power
  - It bordered the Italian colonies of Somalia and Eritrea
  - Conquest of Ethiopia would be a triumph for Mussolini
- Ethiopia could do for Italy what Manchuria had done for Japan
- Divert attention from domestic economic problems
- Mussolini feared that Haile Selassie would transform Ethiopia from a prospective colony into a modern nation
  - Pose a potential threat to Somalia and Eritrea

# Remilitarization of the Rhineland

- Using the French ratification of the Franco-Soviet Pact, Hitler on 7 March 1936 sent a token force of 22,000 troops into the Rhineland
  - Demilitarized as a result of both the Treaty of Versailles and the Locarno Pact of 1925
- France had made no contingency military plans for dealing with a German remilitarization
  - The French had only prepared for a general mobilization and General Gamelin, the French Army CIG, saw such a move as dangerous, too slow, and too costly
- As Winston Churchill noted in *The Gathering Storm*, action now would have made the Second World War unnecessary.
  - The reason for inaction was, as Conor Cruise O'Brien noted, not the military risk but the political risk

# The Anschluss

- Post-World War I Austria suffered because it had lost many of its markets to newly-erected tariff barriers
  - The country was polarized between urban, socialist Vienna and the rest of Austria which was largely rural, Catholic, and conservative.
- The Great Depression made matters even worse
  - As a result, Austrian democracy broke down
- What prevented Anschluss before 1938 was Mussolini's opposition
- Between 1935-38, this opposition melted away
- As a result, Hitler moved against Austria

# The Anschluss - 1

- Post-World War I Austria was an artificial state created by the Treaty of Versailles which suffered because of that fact, having lost many of its markets to newly-erected tariff barriers
  - The country was polarized between urban, socialist Vienna and the rest of Austria which was largely rural, Catholic, and conservative.
- The Great Depression made matters even worse
  - The failure of the Rothschild Creditanstalt Bank seriously hurt the already-ailing Austrian economy and exacerbated an already poisonous anti-Semitism
  - A third of the workforce was unemployed and susceptible to the appeals of both Communists and Nazis

## The Anschluss – 2

- In the context of polarization and depression, Austrian democracy broke down
  - All major parties developed their own paramilitary organizations – the Social Democratic Workers Party (the *Republikaner Schutzbund*), the Christian Social Party (the *Heimwehr*) and the Austrian Nazis had their own paramilitary SA
  - With parliament at an impasse, Chancellor Engelbert Dollfus on March 4, 1933 suspended parliament, refused to reconvene it, and began ruling by decree
  - On 12 February 1934, a *Heimwehr* search of a Social Democratic building provoked a violent response, touching off a mini-civil war which led to several hundred deaths and provoked the intervention of the Austrian Army
    - This resulted in the outlawing of the Social Democratic Workers Party



# The Anschluss - 3

- To Hitler, annexation of Austria had always been a high priority
  - He complained that at the Berghof, he had to view his native land through field glasses
- When Dollfuss began to crack down on the Austrian National Socialist Workers Party (the Austrian Nazis), he was assassinated on July 25, 1934
- The assassination of Dollfuss outraged Mussolini who was both friends of Dollfuss and feared that Hitler had claims on the South Tyrol
  - Mussolini promised Austria military support, thus precluding any Anschluss in 1934

# The Anschluss - 4

- Between 1934 and 1938, several factors led Mussolini to withdraw his opposition to Austrian Anschluss with Germany
  - Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia alienated Britain and France, forcing them to apply sanctions against Italy
  - Italy's and Germany's intervention in the Spanish Civil War in support of Franco
  - Count Galeazzo Ciano, who favored close ties with Germany, became Italian Foreign Minister
  - In January 1937, Goring visited Rome, told Mussolini that Germany had no designs on the South Tyrol, and invited Mussolini to visit Germany
  - That visit, in the Fall of 1937, convinced Mussolini that Germany had a glorious future ahead of it and that Italy should ally itself with Germany

# The Anschluss - 5

- With Mussolini now willing to accept Anschluss, Hitler now proceeded to move against Austria
  - Aware that he was losing his protector, Kurt von Schuschnigg made a “gentleman’s agreement” with Hitler that in exchange for a guarantee of Austrian independence, Austria “recognized itself to be a German state
  - In 1938, Hitler felt he could move against Austria
  - Hitler invited Schuschnigg to Berchtesgaden and launched into a tirade, presenting an ultimatum that Schuschnigg had to sign
  - Hitler followed with a speech denouncing Germans who opposed union with the Reich as race traitors
  - Schuschnigg announces a plebiscite to be held on March 13<sup>th</sup>

# The Anschluss - 6

- Hitler reacted to the plebiscite announcement with fury, by mobilizing troops and threatening invasion
- Unable to get help from abroad, Schuschnigg cancelled the plebiscite and resigned
- Arthur Seyss-Inquart, a Nazi, now became Chancellor
- Acting on Goring's long-distance phone instruction, Seyss-Inquart requested that Germany send troops into Austria to reestablish law and order
  - Even though it was the Austrian Nazis who were causing the violence
- The Wehrmacht marches into Austria without any resistance
- On March 13<sup>th</sup>, Hitler returns to Vienna in triumph

# Conservatism & Fascism

# Conservatism & Fascism - 1

- Conservatives were authoritarian pluralists
  - Committed to the defense of the status quo
  - Believed that social hierarchies were inevitable and beneficial and that the lower classes should defer to their superiors
  - Did not believe in equality
  - Did not believe power should be invested in any single person or institution
  - Believed In a plurality of institutions – churches, regions, corporations, aristocracies, monarchies – each with its own proper sphere of authority
  - Were authoritarian but willing to allow freedom outside the political arena
  - Were committed to legality
  - Were defenders of the Church and traditional religion
  - Were strongly anti-communist
  - Were willing to resort to violence and war but regarded it as a necessary evil with often unpredictable and unintended consequences

## Conservatism & Fascism - 2

- Fascists believed in the concentration of power in the charismatic leadership of a single individual and the concentration of power in a single party in a strong state
  - Like the conservatives, they believed that social hierarchies were inevitable and beneficial
  - Like the conservatives, they did not believe in equality
  - Like the conservatives, they were strongly anti-communist
  - Tended towards Totalitarianism
  - Believed that violence and war were good in themselves as well as necessary means to the ends they sought
  - While they believed in elite rule, they were not committed to the defense of the existing political order
  - Were often racist and anti-Semitic
  - Were often anti-clerical and hostile to traditional religion
  - Believed in mass political mobilization of the population but not democracy

# Conservatism & Fascism - 3

- Conservatives and Fascists had some views in common:
  - A common hatred of Communism
  - A belief in social hierarchy and elite rule
  - Nationalism
  - Anti-Semitism to an extent
- Conservatives were often beset by a contradiction
  - While they believed they were protecting an established order hallowed by time, in practice they often tried to recreate an idealized past whose social arrangements were often creations of a relatively recent past
    - Many traditions they defended were the “invented traditions” of the late-19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries
- Conservatives tended to be naïve about Fascism and Nazism
  - Often did not perceive the revolutionary aspects of Fascism or Nazism
    - This often led to Conservatives following a policy of appeasement