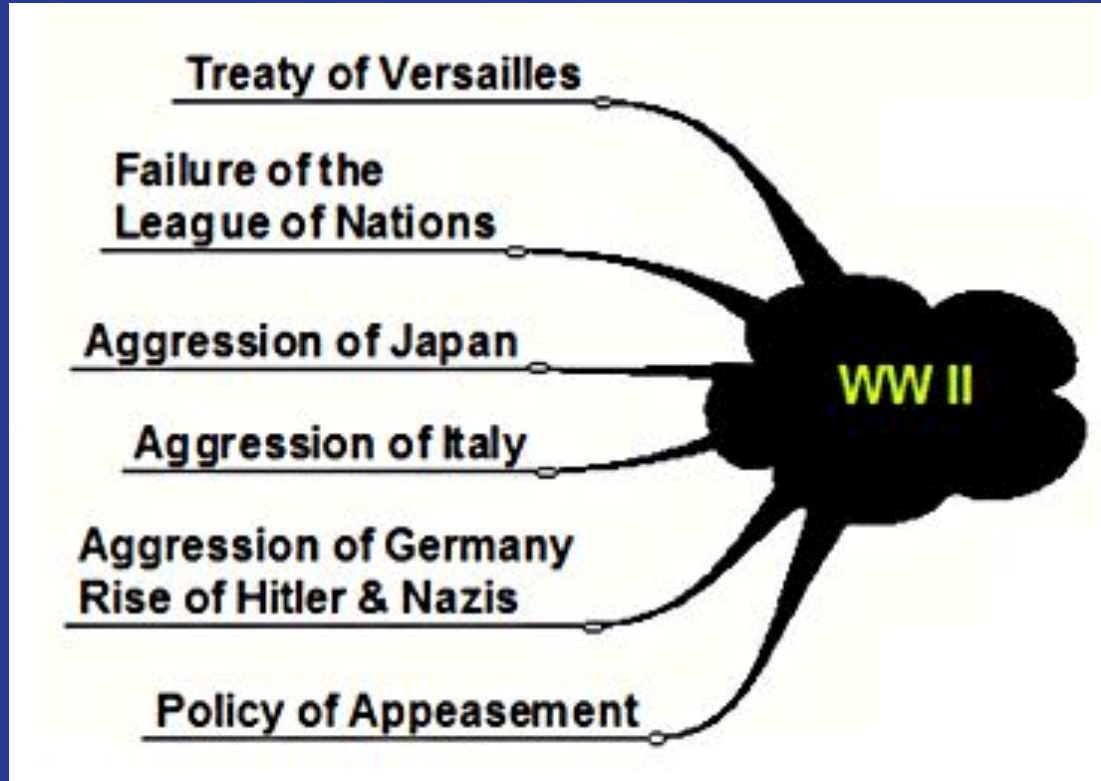


Causes of World War II

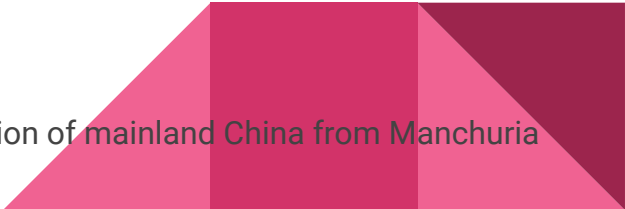


A Note About the Causes

During this lecture, we are going to discuss a number of long term, short term and immediate causes of World War II in Europe*. While it is important to understand each individual cause, you also want to try to understand how each cause influences the other.

We will also be practicing our skills of source analysis by looking at some primary sources (created at the time of the events) that are relevant to how this conflict began in 1939.

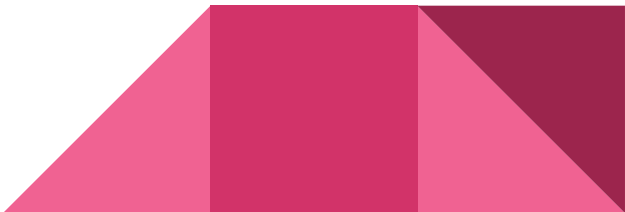
*World War II begins in Asia in 1937 with the Japanese invasion of mainland China from Manchuria



Setup Your Notes

In your notebook, you are going to create a structure to take notes throughout this lecture. You may choose to either create notes similar to our guided notes of last semester (Outline Format) or as a web with Causes of World War II in the center.

The main ideas that you will need to have historical details on are:

1. Impact of the Treaty of Versailles
 2. The Failures of the League of Nations
 3. Rise of Extremism and Impact of the Great Depression
 4. Italian Aggression
 5. German Aggression
 6. Appeasement
- 

Impact of World War I and the Conflicting Goals of the Big Three (Sorry Italy)

In 1919, Lloyd George of England, Orlando of Italy, Clemenceau of France and Woodrow Wilson from the US met to discuss how Germany was to be made to pay for the damage world war one had caused.


Each member nation wanted different things out of the Treaty:

1. Wilson (US) wanted to his 14 points to drive the peace
2. Clemenceau (France) wanted to destroy Germany so it could never attack again.
3. Lloyd George (GB) wanted to eliminate Germany as a military threat but have them be able to recover to balance France's power in Europe.



The Result: The Treaty of Versailles

The main terms of the Treaty of Versailles were:


- **War Guilt Clause** – Germany should accept the blame for starting World War One
 - **Reparations** – Germany had to pay 6.6 billion pounds for the damage caused by the war (roughly 400 billion USD adjusted for inflation)
 - **Disarmament** – Germany was only allowed to have a small army and six naval ships. No tanks, no airforce and no submarines were allowed. The Rhineland area was to be demilitarized.
 - **Territorial Clauses** – Land was taken away from Germany -- all colonies, East Prussia given to other countries. Union with Austria was forbidden.
- 

Reaction in Germany and Rise of Extremism

The German people felt the TOV was unfair in the way it had them accept full blame and cost of the war. Post-WWI Germany, known as the Weimar Republic, was plagued with **political uprising from the left (Communists) and the Right (Monarchist and Nazis)** from 1919-1924.

Experienced some **social and economic stability** during the second half of the 1920's and extreme political ideologies lost favor

The Great Depression had a devastating impact -- by 1932 over 6 million ($\frac{1}{3}$ of the labor force) were unemployed and political extremism was once again on the rise.

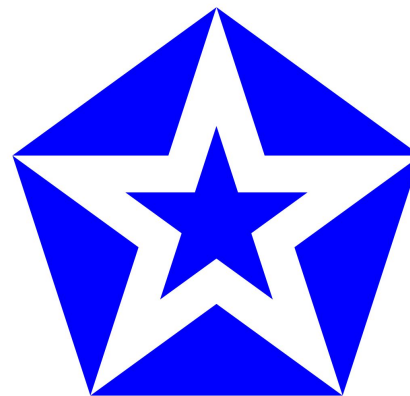


The League of Nations

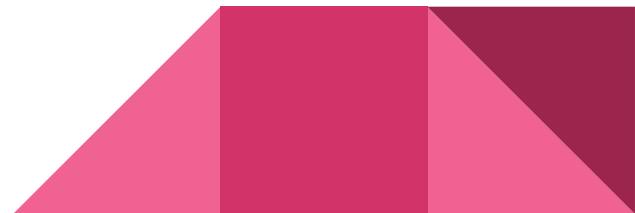
The League of Nations was an international organization set up in 1919 to help keep world peace. Inspired by Woodrow Wilson (it was point 14 of his famous 14 points), it was *intended that all countries would be members of the League and that if there were disputes between countries they could be settled by negotiation rather than by force*. If this failed then countries would stop trading with the aggressive country and if that failed then countries would use their armies to fight.

- In theory the League of Nations was a good idea and did have some early successes. But ultimately it was ill equipped to address the aggressive foreign policy actions of Japan, Italy and Germany in the 1930's.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS



SOCIETE DES NATIONS



Major Flaws of the League of Nations

1. Not all countries joined the League
 2. The League had no power
 3. The League had no army
 4. The League could not act quickly
-


Major Flaws of the League of Nations and its Attempts at Collective Security

Not all countries joined the League

Although the idea for the League of Nations had come from Woodrow Wilson, there was a change of government in the United States before the signing of the treaty and the **new US government refused to join**. As a punishment for having started WWI, **Germany was not allowed to join** and **Russia was also excluded** due to a growing fear of Communism. Other countries decided not to join and some joined but later left.

The League had no power.

The main weapon of the League was to ask member countries to stop trading with an aggressive country. However, this did not work because **countries could still trade with non-member countries**. When the world was hit by depression in the late 1920s countries were reluctant to lose trading partners to other non-member countries.



Flaws of the League of Nations


The League had no army

Soldiers were to be supplied by member countries. However, **countries were reluctant to get involved** and risk provoking an aggressive country into taking direct action against them and failed to provide troops.

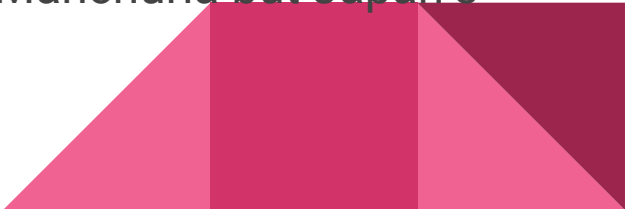
Unable to act quickly

The Council of the League of Nations **only met four times a year and decisions had to be agreed by all nations.** When countries called for the League to intervene, the League had to set up an emergency meeting, hold discussions and gain the agreement of all members. This process meant that the League could not act quickly to stop an act of aggression.

These characteristics made the League effective only when all member parties were willing to engage in the process to support collective security. **When they encountered the aggressive actions of the authoritarian regimes of Japan, Italy and Germany, they were unable to take steps necessary to deter them.**




The League Fails in Manchuria (1931)

- Japan began a modernization program (Meiji Modernization) that took it from a feudal state to a modern world power in one lifetime.
 - In 1931, Japan was hit badly by the depression. People lost faith in the constitutional monarchy and the representative government and turned to the army to find a solution.
 - The army invaded Manchuria in China, an area rich in minerals and resources.
 - China appealed to the League for help. The army took no notice of the government and continued its conquest of Manchuria.
 - The League then called for countries to stop trading with Japan. The League then made a further call for Japan to withdraw from Manchuria but Japan's response was to leave the League of Nations.
- 

Italian Aggression

Benito Mussolini rose to power in Italy in 1922 as leader of the Fascist party. Initially appointed Prime Minister, by 1927 Mussolini had become *Il Duce* (the Leader) and ruled Italy as an authoritarian.

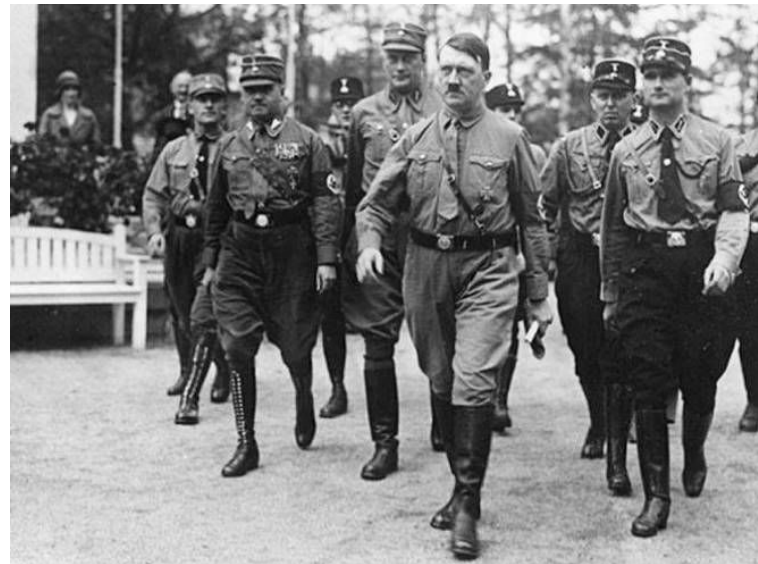
- During the 1920's and first half of the 1930's, Mussolini focused the Italian economy which brought him popular support.
 - In October 1935, **Italy invaded Abyssinia**. The Abyssinians did not have the strength to withstand an attack by Italy and appealed to the League of Nations for help.
 - The League condemned the attack and called on member states to impose trade restrictions with Italy. However, the trade restrictions were not carried out because they would have little effect. Italy would be able to trade with non-member states, particularly America. Furthermore, Britain and France did not want to risk Italy making an attack on them.
- 

Rise of Hitler and the Nazi War Machine

Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany in January 1933.

- Almost immediately he began **secretly building up Germany's army and weapons.**
- In 1934 he **increased the size of the army**, began building warships and created a German air force. Compulsory military service was also introduced.


Although Britain and France were aware of Hitler's actions, they were also concerned about the rise of Communism and believed that a stronger Germany might help to prevent the spread of Communism to the West.



The Spanish Civil War -- *Fascism Spreads*

In July of 1936, members of the Spanish military attempted a coup d'etat to overthrow the recently elected liberal government. While the coup failed, it began **a three year civil war between the Republican forces (Socialists/ Communists/ Anarchists) and the Nationalist (Fascists) forces** led by Francisco Franco.

Italy and Germany saw the Spanish Civil War as an opportunity to try out their developed military and to support another fascist government in Europe. **With Italian and German support, the Nationalist forces had the upper hand** and eventually defeated the Republican forces in 1939.



Hitler Challenges the Terms of the TOV and the League of Nations


In 1936 Hitler ordered German troops to enter the Rhineland. Yet neither France nor Britain was prepared to start another war and did nothing.

Hitler made two important alliances during 1936.

- The first was called the Rome-Berlin Axis Pact and allied Hitler's Germany with Mussolini's Italy.
- The second was called the Anti-Comintern Pact and allied Germany with Japan.

Hitler's next step was to **begin taking back the land that had been taken away from Germany**. In March 1938, German troops marched into Austria. The Austrian leader was forced to hold a vote asking the people whether they wanted to be part of Germany.

The results of the vote were fixed and showed that 99% of Austrian people wanted union with Germany. The Austrian leader asked Britain, France and Italy for aid. **Hitler promised that this was the end of his expansionist aims and not wanting to risk war, the other countries did nothing.**




Failures of Appeasement

Appeasement: making political or material concessions to an aggressive power in order to avoid conflict.

During the 1930s, many politicians in **both Britain and France came to see that the terms of the Treaty of Versailles had placed restrictions on Germany that were unfair. Hitler's actions were seen as understandable and justifiable.**

When Germany began rearming in 1934, **many politicians felt that Germany had a right to re-arm in order to protect herself.** It was also argued that a stronger Germany would prevent the spread of Communism to the west.


In 1936, Hitler argued that because France had signed a new treaty with Russia, Germany was under threat from both countries and it was essential to German security that troops were stationed in the Rhineland. **France was not strong enough to fight Germany without British help and Britain was not prepared to go to war at this point.** Furthermore, many believed that since the Rhineland was a part of Germany it was reasonable that German troops should be stationed there.



The Munich Agreement

In May 1937, Neville Chamberlain became Prime Minister of Britain. He believed that the Treaty of Versailles had treated Germany badly and that there were a number of issues associated with the Treaty that needed to be put right. He felt that giving in to Hitler's demands would prevent another war. (Appeasement)

The most notable example of appeasement was **the Munich Agreement of September 1938**. The Munich Agreement, signed by the leaders of Germany, Britain, France and Italy, *agreed that the Sudetenland would be returned to Germany and that no further territorial claims would be made by Germany*. The Czech government was not invited to the conference and protested about the loss of the Sudetenland. They felt that they had been betrayed by both Britain and France with whom alliances had been made. However, the Munich Agreement was generally viewed as a triumph and an excellent example of securing peace through negotiation rather than war.



Let's Take a Look at the Munich Agreement

The Munich Agreement was hailed by Chamberlain as a guarantee for “peace for our time”

Here is some context:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wKA-lhWFbsE>

With that in mind, let's examine the Munich Agreement and see its value and limitations as a source for historians studying the causes of World War II.



The Results and the Beginning of World War II

When Hitler invaded the rest of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, he broke the terms of the Munich Agreement. Although it was realised that the policy of appeasement had failed, Chamberlain was still not prepared to take the country to war over “..a quarrel in a far-away country between people of whom we know nothing.” Instead, he made a guarantee to come to Poland’s aid if Hitler invaded Poland.

In September of 1939, Hitler challenged Chamberlain’s guarantee and invaded Poland, beginning World War II.



How did the Allies defeat the Axis Powers?

In your notebooks, write one paragraph explaining how the Allies were eventually able to defeat the Axis Powers in WWII.

