Dictators of WW II
E. America Enters World War II (1945-Present)

a. Describe circumstances at home and abroad prior to U.S. involvement in World War II

b. Identify the significant military and political aspects of World War II
Past Problems Persist

-Nationalism is the belief that your country and ethnic group are superior to all. This was a problem during WW I as well.

-The Treaty of Versailles gave very strict consequences to Germany. A massive war guilt clause of debt was placed on the nation.

-Germany also lost imperialistic territories. This was a main source of revenue for the nation, further increasing their problem of paying off the war guilt clause.
Woodrow Wilson’s Optimism Meets Reality

- Wilson felt Democracy would spread after WWI, since the victors were mainly Democracies. This was why he wanted the League of Nations to try and achieve world peace.

- In fact, to gain support for America joining World War I, he called the conflict, “The War to End All Wars.”

- Yet, democracy did not spread to other regions. Massive inflation in Germany crippled their economy and made the citizens of Germany desperate for an answer.
Inflation became so drastic in Germany, after World War I, that bank notes and cash were literally used to burn in fireplaces.

People needed wheel barrels full of cash just to go buy items at a store.
Children stacking banknotes and cash in Germany. Money was so worthless that it was used as a toy.
Joseph Stalin, the dictator of the Russian Soviet Union.
Stalin and the Soviet Union

-In 1924, Vladimir Lenin died. Yet, his Communist revolution continued. Russia was an ally to Britain, France, and the USA in WW I. Afterward, Russia drifted from cooperation with these nations.

-Joseph Stalin rose as the dictator of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Industry and agriculture became his main focus. In Communism, the government controlled the economy.

-This gave Stalin a massive amount of power and took power away from entities that used to be private businesses. Capitalism was removed from Russia.
Stalin’s Vicious Tactics
-Whenever a dictator rises to govern a nation, the people lose rights and become mistreated.

-In the Soviet Union, millions of people were viciously murdered and millions of others died from famines while Joseph Stalin was in power.

-Joseph Stalin ensured there would be no rights for citizens and ruled with an iron fist.
The Soviet Union tried to control its people with various forms of propaganda during the Communist reign in Russia.
Propaganda was also created to convince the Russians to support Joseph Stalin.
Benito Mussolini, the Fascist Dictator of Italy.
Fascism in Italy: Benito Mussolini

- Fascism is a government system that places the nation and/or race above the individual. It is typically headed by a dictator.

- Fascism allows for private property. Therefore, Fascism is NOT Communism.

- Mussolini rose to power as the Fascist dictator of Italy. He played off the fear of Communism spreading out of Russia to gain control. He was a strong ally of Adolf Hitler.
Prior to World War II, Benito Mussolini had established a Fascist government in Italy. Likewise, Adolf Hitler had established a Fascist government in Germany.
Adolf Hitler, the Fascist dictator of Germany
The Epitome of Evil: Adolf Hitler

- In 1919, an unemployed, German veteran named Adolf Hitler joined the National Socialist German Workers Party, the Nazi Party.

- Hitler wrote a book called Mein Kampf “My Struggle.” In the book, he asserted that Germans were the master race and that all others were inferior to the Germans.

- Hitler desired national expansion to conquer neighboring lands to grow the nation of Germany. He sought to restore the power that Germany had before the Treaty of Versailles.
The Nazi’s Control Germany

- By 1932, Nazis led the politics of Germany. By 1933, Hitler was made chancellor of Germany.

- Eventually, he dismantled the Weimer Republic (a representative government) and replaced it with the Third Reich dictatorship.

- Hitler practiced murderous racism known as Anti-Semitism. This form of racism was focused on Jews. He was responsible for the murder of over six million Jews in Europe.
Why did the Germans follow Hitler?

- Hitler’s ideas seem irrational, immoral, and insane. So, why would anyone follow him?

- He claimed that Jews were the reason for the economic troubles of Germany. This gave the Germans an excuse to deflect blame for their economic problems.

- The real reason for their failed economy was that Germany lost WW I and could not pay off their WW I debts.
Hitler’s Cult of Personality

-Germany’s economy was devastated. The people were desperate and turned to a dictatorship to fix the economy.

-When people are pushed to the brink of economic disaster, their awareness of morality fades. They become more vulnerable to accepting unethical courses of action.

-Hitler rose to power because German citizen’s wanted out of economic and political devastation. He committed unspeakable evil once in power.
Hitler started the Hitler Youth program in Germany to indoctrinate youth to be obsessed with him and to always remain loyal to the Nazi cause.
German citizens developed a cult of personality around Hitler.
Nazi propaganda was found all around Germany during Hitler’s reign.
Francisco Franco the Fascist Dictator of Spain
Spain’s Civil War

- In 1936, Francisco Franco fought against the government and wanted to spread Fascism in Spain.

- Hitler and Mussolini sent troops to help Franco since he supported Fascism.

- By 1939, half a million had died in the Spanish Civil War. Franco emerged as the dictator.
Francisco Franco brought Fascism to Spain.
Hideki Tojo rose to become the leader of Japan’s Military
Japan’s Expansion

-Japan desired more land due to being an island nation. In 1931, Japan tried to violently take Manchuria from China to gain more living space.

-The League of Nations requested that they refrain from this action. Japan quit the League when they were told to leave the area.

-Hideki Tojo was the Prime Minister of Japan during WW II and when Pearl Harbor was attacked.
Japan took Manchuria from China to gain more resources for their own nation.
The USA and Neutrality

- WW I was devastating and many were not ready to send more Americans to die in a European conflict.

- The USA had the Great Depression to deal with and many were more concerned about the economy.

- Factors such as these created an atmosphere in the USA in which citizens wanted to avoid war at all costs.
Dictators Seek More Land

-When Japan was not stopped by the League of Nations, Hitler and Mussolini felt emboldened and sought to gain more land for their countries.

-Hitler claimed Germany needed more *lebensraum* (living space). He began to strategize to gain the Sudetenland in neighboring Czechoslovakia.

-Mussolini attacked Ethiopia in Africa to gain more land for Italy. Due to actions like these, war was inevitable in Europe.
The rise of various dictators created tension in the world and massive potential for another World War.
Congress, FDR, and Neutrality

-In 1935, Congress, seeing that conflict was coming to Europe, passed the Neutrality Acts that prohibited the selling of weapons to nations at war.

-Roosevelt did not want Japan to gain sections of China, but national attention was still focused on the economy, which prevented him from intervening.

-FDR began to pursue ways to help and ensure the Allies of the USA, especially France and Britain, were protected.
THE END