Road to World War II
Totalitarianism

Any absolute, oppressive single-party govt

- Extreme denial of individual liberties
- Requires mass conformity

-Chief objectives:
1. Rule without legal restraint or party competition
2. New leader effectively ends any past legal, social, and political traditions

-May have differing goals: industrialization, ethnic purity, expansion/conquest, etc.
Communism

- Left-wing
- Collective ownership of capital, land, farms, etc (distributed by the govt)
- Religion perceived as a threat to goal/authority
- Freedom exchanged for protection
- No opposition
- No private property or class system
- Governing body makes all decisions for the collective society
- Typically instated through a “Cult of Personality”
- Goal: worldwide revolution***

Leader: Lenin → Stalin
Fascism

- Right-wing

Militant: glory achieved through war; control of the military needed to gain and retain power

- Extreme nationalism: country over the individual

- Religion is intertwined and used to enforce

- Male-dominated

- Extreme “Social Darwinism” beliefs (can lead to Ethnic Cleansing/Genocide) there will always be an “enemy” group in the way of country’s progress

- Control of media and use of propaganda (use of fear tactics/threat to national security)

- Private ownership is allowed but contingent upon usefulness of the state; nationally self-sufficient

- Goal: achieving the greatness of the past through glory of the future

General Hideki Tojo of Japan

Benito Mussolini of Italy
Timeline of the Road to WWII
Treaty of Versailles (1919)

- Long-term cause of WWII

- Germany is punished: BRAT (Blame, reparations, Army demilitarized, territorial loss)

- Article 231 (“War Guilt Clause”) – Germans felt betrayed by this clause
1923 Beer Hall Putsch

- Failed attempt at revolution against the Weimar Republic; occurred evening of 8 November/early afternoon of 9 November 1923
  - Hitler and other heads of the revolt unsuccessfully tried to seize power in Munich, Bavaria, Germany

- Hitler writes Mein Kampf while imprisoned
  - Racist views
  - Plans to conquer Europe

- Nazi Party (National Socialist German Workers Party) gains greater following
Hitler’s Plan:

1. Overthrow the republic and establish Nazi fascism
2. Throw off the shackles of Versailles Treaty
3. Attain *Lebensraum*: “breathing space” for Germany by expanding eastward
   - Saw history as a racial struggle for race and space
4. Make Germany a nation of Pure Germans (Aryans)
Great Depression:
-Nazi & communist parties in Germany rise because of the suffering due to the Great Depression

1928: Kellogg-Briand Pact
- Signed by the U.S., France and Germany (afterwards many other nations signed) stating war would not be used to settle disputes & called for disarmament (signed by Coolidge)

1931: Japan conquers Manchuria in China

1932: FDR Elected in the U.S
Understanding the Third Reich

- 1932 Nazi Party receives 37% of vote in last democratic election
- 1933 General von Hindenburg, President of Weimar Republic, appoints Hitler as Chancellor

1933 campaign poster: “In the deepest need Hindenburg chose Adolf Hitler for Reich Chancellor. You too should vote for List 1.”
Reichstag fire: 1933 (German Parliament)

- Communists accused (fire could easily have been set by Nazis)
- Mass arrests to hunt down perpetrators
- *Schutzhaft*: protective custody — anyone can be arrested and held without charges or trial
30 June 1934: “Night of the Long Knives” – purge of major SA officials (Stormtroopers, Secret State Police) → SS becomes more powerful

British cartoon by David Low, 1934

They salute with both hands, now!
Hitler visits a factory and is enthusiastically greeted; many Germans were grateful for jobs after the misery of the depression years

1935
-U.S. policy: “isolation/neutrality”
-“Cash and Carry” Policy – U.S. sells arms on “Cash and Carry” basis (allowed the sale of materiel to belligerents, as long as the recipients arranged for the transport using their own ships and paid immediately in cash, assuming all risk in transportation)
-FDR felt that further help was needed in Europe after Germany invaded Poland in September 1939
-German Nuremberg Laws: race laws against Jews established
March 1936: German troops march into the Rhineland

Region of Germany that was ‘demilitarized’ after the Treaty of Versailles

- The Rhineland was Germany’s industrial region

- Hitler’s actions showed he was willing to directly challenge the treaty
April 1936
-Mussolini conquers Ethiopia (foothold in N. Africa)
-Olympics held in Berlin (the real Germany hides behind a peaceful façade)

1937
-Japan invades China
-“Rape of Nanking”: 300,000 Chinese civilians and disarmed/surrendered soldiers were murdered by soldiers of the Imperial Japanese Army; widespread rape and looting
-Atrocities were published in the media
-FDR’s “Quarantine Speech”
-FDR wants to end isolation and appeals to Congress to take action
-U.S. Embargoes oil and steel to Japan
-Japan secretly begins plans to attack Pearl Harbor
March 1938: Nazi Germany annexes Austria

-Germany had been banned from uniting with Austria in the Treaty of Versailles

(However, the arrival of German troops was met with great enthusiasm by many Austrian people)

-Britain and France try to appease Hitler at the Munich Conference (Sept. ‘38) by not acting against his occupation of the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia

-Why appeasement?
Kristallnacht: 9 November ’38 - Nazi violence against Jews (justification through retaliation regarding an assassinated member of the Nazi Party by a Polish Jew who had been expelled from Germany)
Precursor to the “Final Solution” aka the Holocaust
March 1939: Germany invades Czechoslovakia

- Many hoped that this would be the last conquest of the Nazis.
- March 1939, he ordered his troops to take over the remainder of Czechoslovakia.
- 1st aggressive step that suggested another war in Europe.
August 1939: Soviet German Non-aggression Pact

- Hitler and Stalin

- Neither country would attack the other in the event of war

- Stay out of each other's wars

- Stalin will sell military equipment to Hitler

- As part of the deal, Hitler promised Stalin part of Poland, which he planned to invade soon
The non-aggression pact was surprising

WHY?

When Hitler talked of taking over new land for Germany, many thought that he meant Russia.

Idealistically they were at opposite (but both extreme) ends of the political spectrum.
NAP allowed Germany to march into Poland without fear of an attack from Russia.

On 1 September 1939, Germany invaded Poland and on the 3rd Britain and France declare war.

German troops marching into Warsaw, the capital of Poland.
May 1940: Germany turned west and invaded France and the Netherlands

Germany implemented Blitzkrieg ("lightning war" forced breakthrough into the enemy's line of defense through a series of short, fast, powerful attacks; once in the enemy's territory, dislocates them using speed and surprise, then encircles) to attack France and the Netherlands.

British troops were forced to retreat from the beaches of Dunkirk in Northern France.

U.S. remains neutral.
June 1940: France surrenders to the Germans

Britain now stood alone as the last remaining enemy of Hitler’s Germany in Western Europe

← Adolf Hitler tours Paris after his successful invasion
The Blitz: September 1940 to May 1941

- Dead: 43,000
- Injured: 51,000
- Homeless: 2.25m+

30,000 tons of high explosives dropped in 127 raids

Key: Tons of high explosives
- 0-499
- 500-999
- 1,000-2,000
- 18,800
September 1940-May 1941: the “Blitz”

- German air force (Luftwaffe) launched repeated bombing raids on British towns and cities
- Lasted 9 months
- Attempt to bomb country into submission

-Sir Winston Churchill becomes Prime Minister of Britain – “I have nothing to offer but blood and sweat”
Agreement: 50 year old (but still serviceable) destroyers given to Great Britain in exchange for use of bases in the Caribbean

Significance: kept us out of the war but directly assisted Allied Powers
Lend-Lease Act: March 1941

It’s truly encouraging how much of this stuff drifts into British ports!"

The U.S. remains isolated but will lend military arms to GB and lease our bases around the world to them to use in the war effort.
Hitler decided to halt the bombing of Britain and launch an attack against the Soviet Union; ideological war (to enslave the Slavic population and exterminate the Jews)

- Betrayal of the non-aggression pact he signed with Stalin
- This was a bold move that would prove to be an important turning point in WWII
Atlantic Charter

-FDR and Winston Churchill
-How to fight the war
-Plan for post-war world
-Becomes the basis for N.A.T.O. (U.S.-led Cold War military alliance) in 1949

Atlantic Charter Between U.S.A. and Great Britain

1. Britain and the United States seek no territorial gains from the war
2. Any changes to a country's territory should only happen with the agreement of the people living there
3. It is the right of everyone to choose the government under which they will live
4. Self-government should be restored to those who have lost it
5. There should be free trade between all nations
6. Improvements in the economy and in living standards should be available to all
7. There should be peace following what the Charter calls "the end of Nazi tyranny"
8. Peace should enable freedom of movement around the world
9. A belief that aggressive nations must be disarmed if the world is to live at peace
6 Jan: FDR’s “Four Freedoms” Speech

“Freedom of Speech”
“Freedom of Worship”
“Freedom from Want”
“Freedom from Fear”

-FDR’s attempt to end isolation, work for human rights around the world, and make the world “Safe for Democracy”
-Japan launches a pre-emptive attack on U.S. Naval Base Pearl Harbor (Hawaii)
-8 December: U.S. declares war on Japan
-9 December: Germany declares war on U.S.

-FDR’s famous quote from his speech to Congress about the attack on Pearl Harbor: “Yesterday, December 7, 1941, a date which will live in infamy, the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan...”

-The Great Depression ends because the U.S. govt will spend $227 billion to create an “Arsenal for Democracy” to defeat fascism (2.7 trillion in 2009 dollars)