



**The 'Big Four' at the Paris Peace Conference
(from left) Lloyd George, Vittorio Orlando, Georges Clemenceau, Woodrow Wilson**

The Peace and Interwar Politics: Depression and the Rise of Fascism

The interwar era was marked by political and economic instability in both defeated and victor nations. The chaos that attended the collapse of empires at the end of WWI and continued fighting over territory brought authoritarian regimes to Eastern and Central Europe. High unemployment, depression, political polarization, and the breakdown of parliamentary politics against an overall mood of disillusionment and despair set the stage for the rise of fascist movements and parties across Europe, and the establishment of fascist dictatorships in Italy and Germany.

Paris Peace Conference and Postwar Economy Merriman – 955-989

What concerns on the part of the victors dominated the Peace conference and informed the terms of the treaties and territorial settlement? What new colonies did Britain and France acquire? What new nation-states, “**successor states,**” were created in Europe out of the dismantled empires? Did the borders align to ethnic self-determination and resolve the problem of disappointed nationalisms that had contributed to the tensions that led to war in 1914? How did the existence of Communist Russia inform the re-drawing of the map? What factors lay behind the interwar depression and how did governments respond to these conditions?

Stalinist Russia (1930s): Merriman1035-42: How did Stalin set up a dictatorship in the Soviet Union? What were its main features? What goals and policies did Stalin pursue to strengthen Soviet Russia in the 1930s? To what extent were they achieved? What were the costs of these policies?

Terms

German Revolution, Weimar Republic, Free Corps, Rosa Luxemburg & Karl Liebknecht, German Communist Party, Hungarian Revolution, Bela Kun 1919, Admiral Miklos Horthy, “revisionists, “mutilated peace” of Saint-Germain, Gabriele D’Annunzio, Fiume Crisis, League of Nations, Treaty of Versailles, War Guilt Clause, Cordon sanitaire, Mandate system, Irish Free State 1922, Corporatism, Third International/COMINTERN 1919, Leon Blum, French Socialist Party, British Labour Party, Kapp Putsch 1920, Ruhr Occupation 1923; Dawes Plan 1924, Locarno Treaty 1925, 1926 General Strike (Britain), British Commonwealth of Nations.

Documents

-- Treaty of Versailles, 1920: What were the main terms of this Treaty? Why would Germans be outraged by its terms? How can we use this with the previous document from the German Delegation to better assess Germany’s position after the war?

-- John Maynard Keynes, Economic Consequences of the Peace, 1920: What were Keynes’ criticisms of the Treaty of Versailles? What impacts did he see for Germany from the terms of the treaty? What does he tell us about Germany’s advanced economy that would make the terms a disaster? What was his forecast for the overall European economy?

Interwar Europe 1920s

I. Revolutions and Border Wars

- German Revolution – Weimar Republic
- Hungarian Revolution – Bela Kun
- Balkans – Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey

II. Paris Peace Conference

- Treaty of Versailles: Germany, War Guilt Clause
- *Successor States and “Revisionists” (Merriman Lecture)
- Treaty of Saint-Germain – Austria-Hungary
- Treaty of Neuilly- Bulgaria 1919
- Treaty of Sevres – Ottoman Empire – Middle East

III. Postwar Conditions 1920s

- Politics and Economy
- War debt and hyperinflation
- Strike waves
- Occupation of Ruhr Valley 1923
- Dawes Plan 1924, Locarno Treaty 1925

Freikorps (Free Corps)

cordon sanitaire

Sykes-Picot (secret) Treaty 1916

Little Entente & Balkan Entente

Poland, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia

Romania and Hungary

Treaty of Lausanne – Turkey 1923

British Commonwealth – 1926, 1931

League of Nations – mandates system

Balfour Declaration 1918 – Zionists

Irish Free State 1922, Irish Republic 1948

Indian National Congress

Amritsar Massacre, Rowlatt Acts 1919

Corporatism- cartels

German Right-wing parties



Reichstag Building, Berlin, 1919



	Occupied by the Allies and the United States to 1923
	Eupen and Malmédy, to Belgium by Plebiscite, 1920
	Saar Basin under the League of Nations, to Germany by Plebiscite, 1935
	Demilitarized Areas, a 30 mile-wide strip along the east bank of the Rhine

Germany was made to accept full responsibility for the war by agreeing to the War Guilt clause of the Treaty of Versailles. It lost territory and its most productive regions in the western Rhineland were occupied by France and productive resources taken to pay war debt. Its military was dismantled leaving only a small defensive force and a small navy. Germans suffered famine and shortages of needed medicines as a result of the ongoing British blockade, as well as the worst effects of the Spanish Flu pandemic that swept the globe after the war due to widespread conditions of malnutrition.

All Germans denounced the terms of the Treaty the new government had no choice but to sign under a continuing British blockade and the threat of allied invasion. Hitler played on this devastation and anger to fabricate lies and foment hate, claiming that Germany did not lose the war but was denied victory as the result of collusion of enemies within and without – Communists, socialists, Russian Bolsheviks, and Jews. Germany was never invaded so Germans did not see a defeat on their own soil. Hitler offered them easy explanations that some believed. See his Speech for examples.

See 1914 borders See 1956 borders



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Europe 1919- 1938



League of Nations Mandates, 1920

The Rise of Fascism in Europe 1920-1933

I. Italy

- ‘Mutilated Peace’ (of Saint-Germain)
- Fiume Crisis 1919 - Gabriele D’Annunzio
- Alpha Romeo Lockout– General Strike 1920
- Mussolini and the Fascist Party
- Parliamentary deadlock, failed coalitions
- March on Rome 1922

II. Germany - Hitler and the Nazis

- Beer Hall Putsch, Munich 1923
- *Mein Kampf*

III. The Third Reich

*How did Hitler come to power?

**How was the Nazi dictatorship established?

- Fall of Weimar 1930-33, parliamentary deadlock
- Enabling Act > *Gleichschaltung* – ‘bringing into line’
- Economic and Social Policies -- Autarky
- Re-defining Jewishness: Nuremberg Laws 1935
- Kristallnacht 1938

Red Years 1920-22

Black shirts – Ras, ‘punitive expeditions’

King Victor Emmanuel III (r. 1900-46)

Kapp Putsch 1920

General Erich Ludendorff

Storm Troopers (SA)

Matteotti Assassination

Paul von Hindenburg

Franz Von Papen

Reichstag fire



Rise of Fascism 1920-1930s Merriman - 993-1048

What is fascism? How can we account for its emergence and spread in Europe after WWI? What features did it share with traditional conservatism and other far right nationalist-authoritarian ideologies? How was it distinct from them, what was new about it? How did postwar economic and political instability contribute to fascism's success? What popular fears and concerns did fascist movements exploit to gain strength? What groups and social layers (classes) found it appealing, joined its ranks, and/or gave it political/financial support?

Fascist Italy: What conditions fueled the rise of fascism in Italy after the war? What social groups found it appealing? How did Mussolini and the fascists come to power in Italy? How did they exploit the mass social unrest and fears of communism among the propertied classes to seize power and create a dictatorship? What role did parliamentary deadlock and failed coalitions play in bringing Mussolini to power?

Terms

Stock Market Crash; Great Depression; Tariffs; Neville Chamberlain; Lausanne Conference 1932; Totalitarianism; Benito Mussolini; Red Years 1920-22; Black Shirts (squadri); Victor Emmanuel III (r. 1900-1946); March on Rome 1922; Concordat- Lateran Pacts 1929 > Pope Pius XI; Nazi Party, Brownshirts (SA); Beer Hall Putsch – Munich 1923; Mein Kampf; Chancellor Dollfus, Fatherland Party, Home Guard, Austria; Popular Front; Croix de Feu (Cross of Fire), Patriotic Youth, Action Francaise; Anti-Parliamentary Demonstrations (France) 1934, France - Popular Front Government 1936-1937, Leon Blum.

Rise of the Third Reich: Nazi Germany (1930s): How can we account for the rise in popularity of the Nazi party in the early 1930s? What factors led to the collapse of the Weimar government in 1930? What social groups voted for Nazi candidates to the Reichstag and why? How did Hitler become Chancellor of Germany? How did Hitler establish a dictatorship and what were its main features? How can we explain the mass popular support of the Nazi regime? How did ordinary Germans participate in its terror?

Expansion of the Reich and Appeasement: Historians often have speculated that there were missed opportunities to stop Hitler and the spread of fascism before Germany was ready for war in 1939. What were the different responses to fascism's spread and the Nazi regime in Germany? What was the Popular Front? How did the international community react to Hitler's foreign policy through the 1930s? What considerations drove the diplomatic policy of appeasement? What obstacles initially existed to an alliance between Hitler and Mussolini? Where did their interests come into conflict?

Documents: Fascism and Appeasement

- **Benito Mussolini, What is Fascism?:** Who was Mussolini and how did he define fascism? What were its main characteristics? Merriman writes that fascists defined their program of action against other political ideologies to illustrate what they were by what they were not (1002-1003). What evidence is there of this in the Mussolini document? What did fascists reject and why, according to Mussolini? What did it value? What were the overall aims of fascism? What was the relationship of the individual to the state, from the standpoint of fascist leaders like Mussolini?
- **Antonio Gramsci, Speech in Parliament (1925):** Who was Gramsci? What political party did he represent in Italy? What government policy was he protesting in his speech? What accusations did he make against the government? What did he claim was its main objective? How did Mussolini respond to his charges? Whose interests did Gramsci say fascism served in Italy? What political developments/figures in government in other countries did Gramsci compare fascism with as a parallel development in Italy? What names and parties are mentioned? How did Gramsci relate mass emigration to capitalism and the position of Italy compared to other powers? How did Gramsci portray the relationship between northern and southern Italy? How did he describe imperialism in Italy? What did Gramsci say about the difference between the revolution in Russia and its class basis and what the fascists were doing in Italy?
- **Hitler, Speech of April 12, 1921, and Mein Kampf (1923):** What are Hitler's main arguments about the war and the position of Germany in its aftermath? What did he argue about the German Revolution and the new Democratic Weimar government? Did he think it benefited Germans? How did he define capitalism? What did he claim were the implications of the Versailles Treaty? Who/what did he blame for Germany's condition? What "enemies" did he identify within Germany, what "enemies" or threats did he emphasize outside of Germany, and how did he associate them with each other? Are any similarities with Mussolini's views evident in Hitler's speech? What did they share in the way of fascist outlook? Where did they differ?
- In **Mein Kampf**, how did Hitler outline his views on nation and "race"? What future vision did he lay out for Germany? What did the Nazis stand for? What was significant about his "Eastern Orientation" or "soil" plan? How did he relate these plans to his anti-Semitic and race ideology? What historical allusions (distortions) did he invoke to make his case?
- **Eyewitness Accounts of the Bombing of Guernica (1937):** What does this document tell us about the Spanish Civil War? Who were the attackers and what was the aim and target of their mission?
- **Neville Chamberlain, Speech on the Munich Crisis (1938):** What does Chamberlain's speech tell us about the Munich Crisis and the events leading up to it? How did he justify the policy of appeasement to the House of Commons? What concerns did he address from other MPs? What sense do we get of public opinion from his speech? What does he tell about the terms of the agreement? What other preparations were going on in Britain at this time? What criticisms does he address?



Great Depression: Hunger Marchers (above and right)



Fascism in Britain: Sir Oswald Mosley and the BUF



Left: Election poster for President Paul von Hindenburg in 1932 (translation: "With him")

Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-R99203 / CC-BY-SA 3.0

Also in Library of Congress

<https://www.loc.gov/item/92510227/>



Nazi propaganda poster for 1936 sterilization laws aimed at Germans. “Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring” is written on the shield. Mandatory sterilization for certain categories of women: mentally ill, convicts, prostitutes, epileptics, the deaf and blind. 400,000 sterilized in Germany under the Nazi regime.

Flags represent all the countries with similar laws. It was modeled on US laws enacted in 28 states, 65,000 forcibly sterilized in US 1900-70 on the basis of varying criteria.



Nazi Party Rally 1937

<http://www.vintag.es/2013/01/1938-reich-party-congress-third-reichs.html>

Appeasement and the Road to WWII

I. International Diplomacy: Appeasement of Fascism

***** Why was fascist belligerence appeased? What were the main factors behind the policy of appeasement?**

-- Violations of international agreements

- **Japan: Manchurian Crisis 1931, Invasion of China 1937**
- **Repudiation of Versailles Treaty, Re-armament**
- **Italian Invasion of Ethiopia 1935**
- **Spanish Civil War & Popular Front: 1936-38**
- **Anschluss: unification of Germany & Austria**
- **Czechoslovakia: Munich Conference 1938**

Nazi Labor Front

Franco-Russian Alliance 1934

Anglo-German Naval Pact 1935

Falange

General Francisco Franco

International Brigades

Leon Blum (France) 1936

Nanjing massacre 1937

Neville Chamberlain

Eduard Benes



**Edward VIII and
Wallace Simpson with
Hitler**

British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and Hitler 1938

