

## Chapter 14: The Origins of the Second World War (WWII or WW2)

### 14.2 SYSTEMIC WEAKNESSES RESULTING FROM THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

Resentment due to the Paris Peace Treaties and the weakness of democratic governments

- The defeated Central Powers<sup>1</sup> were deeply resentful of the terms of the Paris Peace Treaties
- These countries turned to right-wing governments to redress these national grievances
- New democratic governments in Eastern Europe were unstable and fell to authoritarian regimes
- Established democracies e.g. France saw deep divisions between the right wing and left wing
- The political paralysis prevented decisive action from being taken

Economic weaknesses in Europe and the Impact of the Great Depression

- 1920s Europe never recovered to its economic heyday prior to World War I (WWI) and was affected by the Great Depression
- Protectionist and isolationist policies were implemented which undermined collective action
- The United Kingdom (UK) was able to fall back on its empire to tide them through the Depression
- Other countries e.g. Germany, Italy and Japan, believed they needed an empire

The inability of the UK and France to ensure international peace

- The UK adopted the Ten Year Rule where they disarmed swiftly
- When they needed to rearm, the British war industry found it hard to meet targets
- France became defensive minded and believed the Maginot Line<sup>2</sup> was able to keep the peace

Continued American isolationism

- The United States of America (USA) was the world's largest economy but refused to accept the responsibilities that came with it
- The American public felt that WWI was an unnecessary sacrifice for ungrateful Europeans
- The USA was focused on the domestic New Deal policy<sup>3</sup> to recover from the Great Depression
- President Franklin D. Roosevelt wanted to keep the USA out of war

Failure of the League of Nations and collective security

- Abuses by Japan and Italy destroyed the credibility of the League<sup>4</sup>
- The failure of the USA and the Soviet Union to play an active role hindered the effectiveness of the League

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<sup>1</sup> Germany, Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria

<sup>2</sup> a series of forts and trenches along the French-German border

<sup>3</sup> a form of Keynesian economics

<sup>4</sup> see the Manchurian Crisis and the Abyssinian Crisis

### 14.3 THE NATIONALIST AMBITIONS OF GERMANY AND ITALY

The aggressive nature of Nazi and Fascist ideologies

- There were ideological differences with democracy and communism – WWII an ideological war?
- Emphasis on extreme nationalism based on social Darwinism<sup>5</sup> – war was a natural consequence
- Emphasis on the individual leader – there were no restraints on their ambitions

Vaulting German ambitions

- The Nazi Party's 25 Points Programme
- Adolf Hitler's vision and Mein Kampf
- Hitler aimed to destroy the Versailles Treaty
  - He decided not to pay reparations
  - He wanted Germany to rearm
  - This would allow Germany to recover lost territory
  - This would be done through uniting all Germans under the Third Reich
- Hitler aimed to create a Lebensraum<sup>6</sup> in Eurasia and destroy Soviet communism in Russia
- Hitler sought to establish a racially pure Aryan state – was WWII a racial war?
- Hitler believed a world war was inevitable by the mid-1940s

Vaulting Italian ambitions

- Italy was to expand into the Balkans and the Mediterranean – its traditional sphere of influence
- Benito Mussolini originally supported the Western democracies, forming the Stresa Front
- The Stresa Front collapsed due to the UK and France's objection to the Abyssinian Crisis
- Italy was alienated from the West due to the Abyssinian Crisis and the Spanish Civil War
- Italy then moved closer to Germany – recognised that the West lacked the will to check Germany
- Italy signed the Pact of Steel with Germany in 1939 – committing Italy to any German war

**Hitler's** policy of aggression

- Hitler was a gambler – he had a plan but how it would be carried out is where the gambling was
- He originally had a cautious foreign policy – relying on opportunistic exploitation of the situations
- Every time he did an action, he would seek to convince the West of his peaceful intentions
- Hitler used divide-and-rule tactics against the West to keep them disunited
- His plans accelerated after 1937 as he was convinced he would not live long
- In 1938, he purged the Army generals who opposed his expansionist policies

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<sup>5</sup> Survival of the fittest, applied to geopolitics

<sup>6</sup> Living space

## Chronology of **Germany's** expansionism

### 1. Reintroduction of conscription in 1935

- Built up the German Army to 36 divisions – 3 times more than the Versailles Treaty allowed
- Suggested non-aggression pacts with neighbours
- Promised to observe the Treaty of Locarno

### 2. Remilitarisation of the Rhineland in 1936

- Violated the Versailles Treaty and the Treaty of Locarno
- The German troops were lightly equipped and were ordered to withdraw if resistance from French troops was encountered
- This took place at the height of the Abyssinian Crisis when the West was distracted
- In hindsight, this was the point where force should have been used by the West

### 3. Anschluß of Austria in 1938

- Violated the Versailles Treaty
- The Austrian Nazis plotted to overthrow the government
- The Austrian chancellor called for a plebiscite to undermine Hitler's claims to Austria
- The Anschluß was approved by a massive majority in the plebiscite
- Many Europeans felt that it was an expression of self-determination while Germans felt it was an expression of unity

## 14.4 THE FAILURE OF APPEASEMENT AND ITS IMPACT

### Reasons for Western adoption of appeasement

- To make concessions in order to avoid war
- Sympathy towards Germany
  - The British ruling class was sympathetic towards fascism and were anti-communist as well
- Economic difficulties and military unpreparedness
  - Western militaries faced cutbacks and were unprepared for another war
- Peace sentiment
  - There was widespread horror of another world war
  - Post-war literature harped on the futility of war
  - Terror of aerial bombing
- Threat posed by communism
  - It was unclear if the Soviet Union or Germany posed a greater threat then
- Issue of Dominion support
  - The UK had to convince its Dominions that a war with Germany was necessary
- Traditional British diplomatic practice
  - It had been a cardinal principle of British policy to use negotiations and compromise
- Naïveté
  - It was assumed that an agreement could be reached with Hitler
  - It was believed that Hitler was a rational leader

### The role of Neville Chamberlain

- Neville Chamberlain was the British Prime Minister in the 1930s
- It was thought that Chamberlain ran foreign policy alone and got rid of opposition
- He tried to win over Hitler with incentives
- However Chamberlain recognised the UK needed to buy time to build up their military capabilities
- He wanted to negotiate from a position of strength
- Chamberlain did not consider alternative policies like an alliance with the Soviet Union
- Germany would have backed off if confronted with a two-front war

### The German annexation of the Sudetenland and Czechoslovakia

- Czechoslovakia consisted of :
  - 7,500,000 Czechs (majority)
  - 3,000,000 Sudeten Germans
  - 2,000,000 Slovaks
- The Sudeten German Party represented the Sudeten Germans and was backed by the Nazis

- The Sudeten German Party instigated an attempt to break away
- Chamberlain and Hitler met to discuss the Munich settlement – the high point of appeasement
- The Sudetenland was handed over to Germany while the Czechs were not consulted
- The UK sacrificed Czech interests for keeping the peace
- Hitler then instigated the Slovaks to break away
- The Czechs moved troops to crush the breakaway – the Slovaks appealed to Germany for help
- Germany invaded Czechoslovakia in March 1939 – the rest of Czechoslovakia had no Germans
- Hence Hitler had no valid reason to invade Czechoslovakia
- Hitler invaded out of pure aggression

#### Reasons for the failure of appeasement

- Appeasement would only work from a position of strength, and if the revisionist states<sup>7</sup> accepted a degree of self-restraint
- The West failed to realise that Hitler's ambitions were unlimited, dangerous and unpredictable

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<sup>7</sup> Germany, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria etc.

## 14.5 THE IMPACT OF ALLIANCES

### **Stalin's** motivations

- Stalin was determined to avoid war at all cost
- There was great domestic instability in the Soviet Union as a result of the Great Purges

### Change in policy to the united front

- Stalin realised the German threat was growing
- He changed policy to encourage the communist parties to form united fronts in the West – instead of overthrowing the current governments

### Western democracies' reluctance to ally with the Soviet Union

- The West was convinced that the Great Purges had weakened the Soviet Union
- Chamberlain opened negotiations reluctantly in early 1939, but failed
- Poland refused to let Soviet troops to pass through its territory to attack Germany

### **Stalin's** reasons for allying with Germany

- Stalin was convinced that the West was not willing to ally with the Soviet Union
- He thought they were encouraging the Germans to turn their aggression on the Soviet Union

### **Hitler's** reasons for allying with the Soviet Union

- Hitler was concerned over the possibility of a two-front war
- He sought to win over Soviet neutrality

### The Nazi-Soviet Pact

- Also known as the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact
- Signed on 24<sup>th</sup> August 1939
- Both sides promised neutrality if attacked by a third party
- Divided eastern Europe into spheres of influence
  - The Soviet Union got Finland, Estonia, Latvia and eastern Poland
  - Germany got Lithuania and western Poland
- This essentially gave Hitler a blank cheque to advance into eastern Europe

## 14.6 THE GROWING ARMS RACE AND ITS ECONOMIC IMPACT

- Hitler's rearmament of Germany sparked off an arms race

### German rearmament and its impact

- Germany had been secretly rearming<sup>8</sup>, in violation of the Versailles Treaty
- In 1933, Hitler started to create a Luftwaffe and planned to create an army of 300,000
- In 1935, conscription was introduced in Germany
- In reality, Hitler was prepared for a series of short wars – not a long one
- German rearmament started to gear towards a total war from 1938 onwards
- Germany was not fully prepared when war started in 1939

### Economic pressures of rearmament on Germany

- Germany had a large deficit of 432,000,000 marks in 1938 – it was essentially bankrupt
- By 1938, Germany devoted 52% of government spending and 17% of GNP<sup>9</sup> to rearmament
- The anticipated financial crisis did not materialise due to close government control of capital and the currency market

### The rearmament of other countries

- The UK began to rearm in 1934
- France began to rearm in 1936
- Japan and Italy began to rearm in 1938
- Military spending rose more than 6 times in the UK, Germany and Japan
- Military spending rose more than 8 times in the Soviet Union
- Military spending rose more than 10 times in France

### Economic pressures of rearmament on the Western democracies

- The inability to sustain military spending could have forced countries to go to war
- A delay would have caused the economies of the Western democracies to collapse
- Germany did not go to war because their economy was overheating – the UK and France did

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<sup>8</sup> See the Treaty of Rapallo

<sup>9</sup> Gross National Product

## 14.7 **HITLER'S** INVASION OF POLAND

- Was Germany responsible for both the First World War and the Second World War?
- Difference between the First World War and the Second World War: the trigger – the First World War was triggered by the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand while the Second World War was triggered by the German invasion of Poland

### **Hitler's** reasons for attacking Poland

- Hitler assumed the West would not go to war over Poland
- He considered the Western governments spineless
- The UK and France gave a public guarantee to Poland to protect it – an alliance
- What was the role of alliances in the outbreak of the Second World War?

### **Hitler's** demands

- Poland was asked to give up Danzig and give Germany access to the Polish Corridor
- Poland was also to provide economic concessions for Germany
- Poland was unrealistically convinced that their military was strong enough to resist Germany

### Western **democracies'** reasons for going to war over Poland

- If the UK and France failed to stand up to Germany, it meant forfeiting their status as 1<sup>st</sup> class powers
- By 1939, the majority of the British and French public supported a fight against Germany
- The British and French military preparations peaked in 1939 – it was unsustainable and the economy would collapse if continued
- Received intelligence that the Axis Powers were facing economic problems – exaggerated

### The outbreak of the Second World War

- On 1<sup>st</sup> September 1939, Germany invaded Poland
- The UK and France then declared war on Germany
- If the West did not go to war now, they would not have had the chance to stop Germany
- Three main elements led to the war:
  - German illusion of Western **irresolution**
  - British and French fears of their status as great powers
  - Polish firmness



## 14.8 HISTORIOGRAPHY ON THE ORIGINS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Did Hitler have a master plan or was he an opportunist?

School of thought	Analysis
Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Argued by Hugh Trevor-Roper and Alan Bullock</li><li>• Hitler had a long-term consistent master plan</li><li>• This was detailed in <i>Mein Kampf</i> and the <i>Secret Book</i></li><li>• Hence war was inevitable</li></ul>
Opportunist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Argued by A. J. P. Taylor</li><li>• Hitler had no systematic plan and was a complete opportunist</li><li>• The <i>Mein Kampf</i> was a product of wishful thinking</li></ul>
Stufenplan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Argued by Andreas Hillgruber and Klaus Hildebrand</li><li>• Hitler had an overall plan but proceeded in stages</li><li>• These stages were developed as a response to external factors</li><li>• Hitler was not an all-powerful dictator</li></ul>
Post-revisionist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Argued by Ian Kershaw</li><li>• Hitler had a consistent aim</li><li>• But methods and tactics used to achieve this aim were opportunistic</li></ul>

Was Nazism a continuation of German authoritarianism?

- This can be used if the question asked for the comparison of the origins of both World Wars
- Was Hitler essentially the heir to Kaiser Wilhelm II?
  - Both had an aggressive foreign policy
  - Both wanted to control Europe
- Continuity with the past
  - Argued by A. J. P. Taylor, Fritz Fischer and Andreas Hillgruber
  - The orthodox position
  - There was continuity in German foreign policy – even before the First World War
  - German foreign policy sought to completely dominate Europe and expand eastward
  - The same elites which had backed this policy also backed Hitler's rise
- Discontinuity with the past
  - Argued by Gerhard Ritter
  - The revisionist position
  - Hitler and Nazism was a unique phenomena that rose from the events of the 1920s

- Pre-First World War Germany was very different from Nazism – Kaiser Wilhelm II did not support extreme German nationalism as a method to unite all Germans, did not support anti-Semitism which was a major part of Nazi foreign policy, and did not advocate genocide

## 14.8 SYSTEMIC WEAKNESSES IN THE JAPANESE POLITY

### The rise of Japanese militarism

- The Meiji Restoration took place in the 1860s – the Japanese Emperor was restored to authority
- Japan was threatened by European imperialism
- Japan adopted western technology to strengthen itself – it modelled itself on European societies
- The Japanese military was a early beneficiary – it was influenced by German military reforms
- The Japanese General Staff became independent and reported directly to the Emperor instead
- Japan entered a period of ultranationalism after the Great Depression in 1929
- The Japanese military frequently intervened in governmental affairs
- It also encouraged political assassinations of civilian politicians and civil servants
- The government thus became increasingly militaristic

### The drive for economic self-sufficiency

- Japan's industrialisation was rapidly expanding
- Limited by Japan's lack of raw materials
- Population density was high in Japan – little flat land to expand into as most of the land was mountainous
- Japan became unable to sustain its rapidly expanding population
- Pressure from zaibatsu<sup>10</sup> to expand
- Drive to create a self-sufficient empire – the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere

### Japanese nationalist ambitions and need for great power status

- Japan was not accepted as a great power by the Europeans
- Japanese pride was offended
- Japan defeated China in 1895 and Russia in the Russo-Japan War of 1905
- It later annexed the Korean Peninsula in 1910 and Manchuria in 1931 (the Manchurian Crisis)
- Japan felt that it was not rewarded by the Versailles Treaty despite supporting the Allies
- Its efforts to expand into China after the First World War were blocked by the USA
- Resented its naval inferiority resulting from Washington and London Naval Agreements

### The autonomous actions of the Kwantung<sup>11</sup> Army

- Annexed Manchuria in 1931 led by the Kwantung Army
- The annexation was not authorised by the central Japanese government
- The Army was physically far from Japan and thus had more autonomy
- Fait accompli – the central Japanese government had to accept it since the annexation had already been completed and they could not disavow involvement

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<sup>10</sup> Japanese business conglomerates e.g. Kawasaki, Mitsubishi etc.

<sup>11</sup> Also known as Guangdong (广东)

- The Marco Polo Bridge incident in 1937 was used as an excuse to invade China
- The Japanese were overly confident that China would be easily defeated
- They captured most of northern and eastern coastal China easily and quickly
- The Japanese advance was slowed by stiff Chinese resistance
- They controlled the coastal and urban areas – not the countryside
- They had no plans on how to end the war – they got into a war with no ultimate goal or plan

#### 14.10 JAPAN'S CONFLICT WITH AMERICA

##### Growing conflict with the USA

- Since 1900, the USA had defended China's territorial integrity and independence, preventing China from being split up and divided – the Open Door policy
- Influenced by American Christian missionaries who wished to evangelise the Chinese – they believed this would cause Christ to return faster
- The China Lobby was the most powerful of the foreign interest groups in the USA and had connections to the aforementioned missionaries
- The USA also had significant interests in Asia such as its colony in the Philippines
- However the American public still favoured isolationism
- The USA took a harder line in 1938 despite not being ready to go to war
- The USA started aiding China with economic and military aid
- Only the USA had the capacity to stop Japanese aggression – Western Europe was distracted with the Western Front of WW2
- The USA and Japan had very different views of their interests and rights – it was hard to accommodate through diplomacy

##### Japan's adoption of the southern strategy

- The Japanese Army favoured a northern strategy while the Japanese Navy favoured the southern strategy
- In May 1939, the Kwantung Army was defeated by the Soviet Army at the Battle of Nomonhan
- Hence the southern strategy was adopted
- The Japanese took advantage of the fact that France and the Netherlands had fallen to Germany and so the European colonies were defenceless – link between the Western Front and Pacific Front
- In 1941, Japan signed a neutrality pact with the Soviet Union and joined the Axis Pact – taking clear steps towards war

##### The lead-up to Pearl Harbour – the American strategy

- Adopted the use of economic deterrence against Japan – imposed an embargo
- This only caused a fatalistic response in Japan about the inevitability of war
- Japan had few natural resources and resources from Manchuria for war were insufficient
- The USA banned export of iron, coal, oil and steel to Japan and froze Japanese assets
- The USA demanded for Japan's withdrawal from Indochina and China
- The USA wanted Japan to accept the legitimacy of Chiang Kai-Shek's Nationalist government and to renounce the Axis Pact

##### The lead-up to Pearl Harbour – the Japanese strategy

- In July 1941, Japan decided on an expansionist policy regardless of the American response
- Hideki Tojo became the Japanese Prime Minister in October 1940 – he was pro-war, anti-communist and anti-western
- Launched a preemptive strike at Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941 – Pearl Harbour was the American Pacific Fleet base
- Did Roosevelt know about the incoming Japanese attack? Did he allow the Japanese to attack so that the USA could enter the war?
- The attack on the USA was a gross miscalculation on the part of the Japanese – expected that the Pearl Harbour attack would demoralise the Americans and that they would give into Japanese demands

#### 14.11 HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE PACIFIC WAR

- The lack of a clear leadership in Japan at that time makes assessment difficult
- Was it Emperor Hirohito, Prime Minister Tojo or the military that caused the war?
- Left-wing historians such as David Bergamini declared that Japan planned for war all along and Emperor Hirohito was closely involved in planning
- Others claim the Japan tried to achieve its aims through diplomacy and stumbled into war
- Right-wing historians such as Michiko Hasegawa, Tanaka Masaaki, Hayashi Usao and Ueyama Shunpei declared that Japan was trying to liberate Asia from Western imperialism
- Japan was provoked by the West, especially the Americans, and fought a defensive war
- The Western imperialists were racist

## Chapter 15: The Nature and Effects of the Second World War (WWII or World War II)

WHEN ANSWERING QUESTIONS, ALTERNATE USING EXAMPLES FROM THE EUROPEAN THEATRE AND THE PACIFIC THEATRE – SHOW KNOWLEDGE OF CONTENT

### 15.2 A GLOBAL WAR

- The United Kingdom (UK) and France had global colonial empires – these colonies became targets for the Axis Powers and provided manpower and resources
- World War II as a total war v. the First World War (World War I) as a limited war – World War I was still mostly constrained to Europe

### 15.3 THE IMPACT OF COALITION WAR

The nature of the Allied coalition

- Consisted mainly of the United States of America (USA), the UK and the Soviet Union
  - Were referred to as the Big Three
  - Included the US President Franklin D. Roosevelt
  - British Prime Minister Winston Churchill
  - Soviet leader Josef Stalin
- Coordinated a grand strategy through conferences e.g. Yalta, Cairo, Teheran, Potsdam etc
- The USA and the UK formed the Combined Chiefs of Staff – the supreme military decision making body
- The Allies were kept united by the policy of unconditional surrender demanded by the Axis
- There was no fear amongst the Allies that a partner would make a separate peace agreement

The nature of the Axis coalition

- Consisted of Germany, Italy and Japan
- There was no effort to coordinate their strategy
- Italy tended to get involved in disastrous military adventures e.g. Greece and North Africa
- Germany was forced to divert its resources to rescue Italy's troops – compare to World War I with Germany and Austria-Hungary



## 15.4 THE EUROPEAN THEATRE (1939 – 1945)

### THE ALLIED AND AXIS STRATEGIES AND THE COURSE OF THE WAR

#### Total war aims

- Hitler wanted the total domination of Europe and to take over the Soviet Union
- Hitler also wanted to eliminate what he considered inferior races
- The Allies were committed to unconditional peace which instead prolonged the war

#### The Polish Campaign

- The UK and France guaranteed Poland's independence
- On 1<sup>st</sup> September 1939, Germany invaded Poland based on an alleged Polish attack
- The Poles failed to get any support from the UK and France – the Phony War
- The Polish military was not prepared for modern warfare – it was poorly equipped and led
- The German military had greater mobility and firepower
- The German Armed Forces had close cooperation with the Luftwaffe<sup>12</sup> – combined arms tactic
- By 6<sup>th</sup> October 1939, Poland had fallen and was split between Germany and the Soviet Union via the Nazi-Soviet Pact

#### The German concept of Blitzkrieg<sup>13</sup>

- Step 1: Attack
- Step 2: Penetrate at weak points
- Step 3: Encircle
- Tanks were used for deep penetration attacks
- The air force would attack the air bases, anti-aircraft defences, communications, mobilisation centres and transportation systems
- The Germans created Panzer divisions – this combined armoured and motorised forces
- Focused on Schwerpunkten (breakthrough points) – the Germans would use overwhelming shock to break through the enemy's vulnerable points
- Air power used to target air bases, anti-aircraft defences, communications, mobilisation centres and transportation – this would paralyse the enemy and prevent them calling for reinforcements
- What role did technology play in the *Allies'* victory in the war?

#### Weaknesses of blitzkrieg

- Lack of a fully mechanised force as most German soldiers went by foot or horseback
- Blitzkrieg only worked on certain terrains – did not work in France
- Only had a range of 300 km
- Failed in Russia which was a large theatre of war
- Heavy logistical demands as supplies could not be transported to the tanks in time due to the sheer speed of their advance

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<sup>12</sup> German Air Force

<sup>13</sup> literally 'Lightning War'

- Development of anti-tank weapons such as armour piercing artillery shells, bazookas, land mines and specialised tank destroyers

Comparison of Allied and German forces in 1940:

Factor	Allies	Germany
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The British and French forces were confused and ill-coordinated – this was worsened through poor communications</li> <li>• The French Supreme Commander Maurice Gamelin was too old</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Germans had preserved their General Staff after World War I</li> <li>• Studied lessons from their defeat in World War I</li> <li>• Had a clear and simple chain of command</li> </ul>
Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopted the doctrine of methodical battle – based on World War I tactics and emphasised defence, firepower, rigid planning and centralisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopted storm trooper tactics and advocated the use of high quality mobile armies</li> <li>• This led to the development of blitzkrieg</li> </ul>
Status of forces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their militaries had suffered serious neglect during the interwar years due to partial demilitarisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The German forces had benefitted from high training and technical efficiency</li> <li>• The German forces had superior fighting skills</li> </ul>
Weapons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Allied tanks were more numerous and superior to the German tanks</li> <li>• However the tanks were dispersed to support the infantry</li> <li>• There was no cooperation with the air force</li> <li>• Their tanks were far less mobile and hence reserves could not be deployed quickly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Germans were outnumbered numerically and did not have superior weapons</li> </ul>

The Allied strategy

- They expected a replay of the Schlieffen Plan with the Germans attacking across Belgium
- The French strategy was very defensive minded based on the Maginot Line<sup>14</sup>, which was not extended to the Belgian border (Belgian Gap)
- Was designed to ensure a purely frontal defence against a frontal attack

<sup>14</sup> A fortified line along the French-German border

### The German strategy

- Hitler wanted a short and decisive war
- The Germans attacked through the Ardennes, a heavily wooded region with many rivers
- The Ardennes had been dismissed as a possible invasion route and was thinly defended
- They intended to envelop the Allied armies

### The war in the Low Countries and France

- On 10<sup>th</sup> May 1940, Belgium, France and the Netherlands were attacked by Germany
- The German Panzer divisions advanced far into northern France but Hitler held them back
- The Allies were deep inside Belgium and were exposed to this flanking manoeuvre
- The Allies fled to the Channel ports where they evacuated to the UK at Dunkirk – over 366,000 troops were rescued but their heavy equipment was left behind
- France surrendered on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1940 – a World War I war hero, Marshal Philippe Petain was forced to sign an armistice
- Northern France was occupied by Germany
- Southeastern France was occupied by Italy
- Southern France was under a nominal French Vichy government

### The Battle of Britain

- Example of the use of air power in warfare
- Germany launched Operation Sealion in August 1940 – it was intended to destroy the British Royal Air Force (RAF) and subsequently lead an invasion of the UK
- The Chief of the Luftwaffe Hermann Göring believed that the RAF could be eliminated in 4 days
- Revolutionary attempt to use air power to break the enemy's will without any other support
- The Germans had 2,500 aircraft while the British RAF had 610
- The UK could produce more fighters but the RAF lacked trained pilots as compared to Germany
- The RAF benefitted from operating over its own bases – it could quickly engage the enemy while bailing out over friendly soil if required
- The Fighter Command's Chain Home radar system played an important role
- In September 1941, the Germans switched to attacking British cities – the Blitz killed 40,000

### The African Campaigns

- Not really important unless talking about Italy's failure and Germany's weak allies
- The desert campaign was difficult as geography confined both sides to a narrow coastal strip
- The area was ideal for armoured warfare
- In July 1940, Italy attacked Kenya, Somali and Egypt – they were defeated by the UK
- The Germans sent the Afrika Korps under General Erwin Rommel to rescue the Italians
- Rommel defeated the British at the Battle of Gazala
- General Montgomery then took over the British forces and defeated Rommel at the Battle of El Alamein in October 1941

- The Axis forces were eventually surrounded at Tunisia and surrendered in May 1943
- 275,000 Axis forces were captured

### The Italian Campaign

- The Italian economy could not support the war effort
- Italy's manpower was declining – many divisions were lost in Africa and Russia
- The Italian people's support for the Axis was mixed
- Italian dictator Benito Mussolini was dismissed in July 1943 but was rescued by Hitler
- Mussolini was later captured by partisans and executed in April 1945
- The Allies invaded in September 1943 – Hitler was forced to defend Italy with German troops
- Italy had to be defended as it offered flank protection to the Balkan states
- The defence of Italy tied down 26 German divisions
- Allied forces were then able to advance into central and eastern Europe easily
- The Germans benefited from the Italian terrain which was advantageous to the defenders

### The Eastern Front

- On 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1941, Operation Barbarossa was launched
- Germany deployed 3,000,000 men, 7,100 guns and 3,300 tanks (about 80% of their total forces)
- Germany did not issue a declaration of war
- Hitler believed that the Soviet forces could be destroyed using blitzkrieg tactics
- Hitler ignored history – Napoleon was defeated while attempting to conquer Russia in 1812
- Germany was defeated due to geography – Russia was simply too big
- Hitler was convinced that the mobility of the Panzer tanks could overcome the problem of the size of the Russian theatre of war
- The deeper the Germans advanced into Russia, the weaker they got
- The German generals favoured a direct push to Moscow – concentration of force
- Hitler instead split the attack into three prongs
  - Army Group North was to attack Leningrad
  - Army Group Central was to attack Moscow
  - Army Group South was to attack Kiev

### Reasons for the German invasion of Russia

- Overconfidence
  - The German success in western Europe made Hitler overconfident
  - Hitler believed that Stalin's purges of the Red Army had crippled it and the Soviet arms industries could not support its war effort
  - Hitler expected Operation Barbarossa to take 2 months
- Ideological reasons
  - Hitler's ideology saw the Russians as inferior
  - Hitler believed that communism was directed by the Jews

- Lebensraum
  - Hitler wanted the Soviet Union as living space for the German population
  - Soviet Russia also possessed significant industrial and agricultural resources
- Ending the war in Europe
  - Hitler believed that the UK would surrender after the Soviet Union had been defeated

The pre-invasion Soviet weaknesses

- The Soviet troops then lacked radios and were poorly trained
- Stalin disregarded all warnings of an impending German invasions even from the British and the Americans

Army Group Central – the Battle of Moscow

- Operation Typhoon began in October 1941 where it began raining
- Moscow came under direct threat but was defended by General Georgy Zhukov
- This led to a stalemate

Army Group North – the Siege of Leningrad

- Leningrad was besieged as Hitler sought to avoid urban fighting
- The Siege of Leningrad lasted 30 months
- 1 out of every 4 Soviets starved to death
- Leningrad was freed in January 1944
- 1,200,000 civilians and 300,000 Soviet troops were killed

Army Group South – the Battle of Stalingrad

- Hitler was obsessed with conquering southern Russia – it had oil and other resources
- Stalingrad lay along a strategic route into the centre of the Soviet Union
- Stalingrad was also politically important, bearing **Stalin's** name
- Hitler split Army Group South into two forces – sought to capture Stalingrad and the oil fields in the Caucasus
- There was no need for a German siege – both Stalin and Hitler were still lured in by the symbolical importance of the city
- The Battle of Stalingrad saw bitter urban house-to-house combat – the Germans hence lost their advantage in mobile armoured warfare
- The German Sixth Army was finally surrounded and captured in January 1943
- This was vital to proving that the Soviets could defeat the Germans
- The Battle of Stalingrad was a major turning point in the war – it was the first time that the Germans had been decisively defeated
- Germany lost 500,000 troops in the Battle of Stalingrad alone – German morale began to sink and open criticism of Hitler appeared

### Army Group South – the Battle of Kursk

- The Germans sought to destroy the Soviets in Kursk than attempting to destroy the entire Red Army in July 1943
- The Battle of Kursk was the largest tank battle of the war – the Germans were forced into a battle of attrition and eventually lost
- Germany lost 200,000 troops and 500 tanks
- The Soviet Union lost 860,000 troops and 1,500 tanks
- The Germans were never able to go on the offensive after that
- The Soviets instead began their inexorable advance westward

### Reasons for the Red **Army's** revival after Operation Barbarossa

- A better military leadership and command system
  - Stalin created a more efficient command system
  - Stalin removed useless military leaders and replaced them with capable leaders
  - e.g. General Zhukov, General Aleksandr Vasilevsky and General Konstantin Rokossovsky
  - Stalin reduced the influence of political commissars
  - Military decisions were to rest in the hands of the field commanders
- Use of ranks and rewards
  - The distinction of ranks and rewards for heroes were reinstated
- Exploiting Russian patriotism and ideology
  - Deep resistance by the intensely patriotic Russians
  - Inspired by the ill-treatment suffered at the hands of the Germans
  - The Germans treated the Soviet prisoners-of-war (POWs) with neglect
  - Only 2,400,000 out of 5,700,000 Soviet POWs survived
- Use of training and coercion
  - Soviet troops were brave and hardy, tenacious in defence and aggressive in attack
  - Improved training of officers
  - Training was harsh and realistic
  - Introduced special units to shoot deserters – Order 227: not one step backwards
- Reorganisation of military structure and tactics
- Support from Soviet industries
  - The Five Year Plan had come to fruition
  - The industries played a major role in supporting the war effort
  - Stalin ordered the move of industries eastwards where they would be protected from the Germans by the Ural Mountains
  - The Soviet arms industries produced superior weapons such as the T-34 tank
  - American Lend-Lease equipment was also vital

### The role of Soviet partisans on the Eastern Front

- The partisans were not a significant cause of the Soviet victory
- To what extent did guerrilla war contribute to the Allied victory?
- Comparison of guerrilla warfare – use the Eastern Front and the Chinese Civil War

### Composition of the Soviet partisan forces

- The Soviet pre-war strategy did not take into account guerrilla warfare – it would have been tantamount to recognising the weakness of the Red Army
- The almost total collapse of the Red Army spontaneously forced the adoption of guerrilla warfare in German-occupied territories
- Many partisans were initially stragglers from the Red Army who were cut off during retreat
- The Soviet partisans did not originally have strong support – there was instead strong welcome for the Germans due to Stalin's cruelty to the rural peasants during collectivisation
- The rural peasants had strong anti-communist resentment
- Women and children played major roles as fighters and scouts
- Importance of nationalism to the Soviet partisans
- There were only 500,000 partisans out of the 55,000,000 people under German rule by 1943
- The partisans did not have mass appeal
- There was forced conscription – this accounted for at least 40 % of the partisans by 1943

### Organisation of the Soviet partisan forces

- The Soviet partisans were initially organised on an ad hoc basis by Red Army officers
- The Red Army was always determined to integrate the Soviet partisans – reflects the centralised nature of the communist system
- Narodnyy Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del (NKVD<sup>15</sup>) political commissars were imposed on the Soviet partisans to ensure their discipline and loyalty
- There was a deliberate policy not to allow Soviet partisan units to meet with the Red Army
- The Soviet government was fearful that the partisans' self independence would infect the Red Army – partisans were risk-takers and rebellious by nature

### The area of operations for Soviet partisan forces

- The Soviet partisans in southern Russia were easily wiped out – the flat and treeless steppes did not provide sufficient cover
- The terrain was more favourable towards the Soviet partisans in central and northern Russia
- Belorussia (now Belarus) also had many dense forests and swamps for the Soviet partisans to take refuge in
- Belarus was in a strategic location because it held the lines of communications between Moscow and the other Allied nations

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<sup>15</sup> The People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs

### Partizan operations

- From 1941 to mid-1942, the Soviet partisans operated deep in German-held territory
- The Soviet partisans suffered from severe shortages and their actions lacked coordination
- German reprisals against the Soviet partisans were very severe
- The Germans lacked sufficient forces to destroy partisan republics
- The Germans were confined to populated areas due to lack of manpower
- The Soviet partisans focused on the disruption of German logistics, destroying over 230,000 rails and bridges
- The actions of the Soviet partisans were clearly subordinate actions
- There was a concerted Soviet partisan attack on German rail communications when the Red Army counter-attacked Belorussia in 1944

### The German response

- The Germans had no real strategy in dealing with the Soviet partisans
- The Germans considered the Soviets as sub-human and executed all captured partisans
- The Germans did not treat the Soviet partisans as POWs until 1943
- German Army General Rudolf Schmidt came up with a plan to deal with the partisans – he dismantled the aged Soviet collectives and managed to persuade the Soviet peasants to form their own militias
- However his plan was not implemented for use

### Evaluation of partisan operations

- It is possible that the Soviet partisan effects and losses were not worth the effort
- Counter-productive use of terror
  - The use of terror against German collaborators stimulated anti-partisan movements
  - e.g. the Ukrainian Insurgent Army which supported Ukrainian independence
  - The Red Army wiped out the anti-partisan movements from 1944 onwards
- German reprisals against Russian civilians
  - Partisan activities further heightened the brutality of the Germans
  - Civilians were targeted too
  - In Belorussia, nearly 345,000 civilians were executed in response to Soviet partisan activities
- Role of intelligence
  - There is no evidence that Soviet partisan intelligence gathering was vital to the Red Army
- Diversion of German resources
  - The Germans deployed poorly trained men or non-German men to fight the Soviet partisans
  - There was no evidence that German morale was undermined by Soviet partisan operations
  - The partisan effectiveness only grew after the German retreat – by this time, the partisans were operating closely with the Red Army
- Attacks on lines of communications



- The Germans adopted a passive protection of communication lines
- The Soviet partisans played a role in disrupting German lines of communications
- The Soviet partisans derailed over 3,000 trains and destroyed 3,200 bridges
- However the Soviet partisans were not fully able to cut off the supply to the German frontline
- Economic warfare
  - The Germans were heavily dependent on the economic output of conquered areas
  - The Germans focused especially on the Ukrainian food area
  - However the steppe region was out of the Soviet partisans' area of operations
  - The Soviet partisans saw little success here due to the sheer distance
- Limits on partisan independence
  - Stalin was fearful of giving the Soviet partisans too much independence
  - This went against the Stalinist system of controlling the people
  - After liberation of territory, Soviet partisans involved were interrogated by the NKVD to ensure their loyalty to the Soviet Union
- Maintaining Soviet authority
  - This was arguably the most significant role of the Soviet partisans
  - They served to maintain Soviet political authority through assassinating German collaborators, collecting taxes and publishing propaganda

#### The Soviet march towards Germany

- The Soviets focused on the southern front as it was easier to attack
- Stalin also wanted to capture eastern Europe
- By May 1944, most of Soviet territory was recovered
- The Soviets captured Poland, Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary by early 1945
- By April 1945, the Soviets had encircled Berlin
- 125,000 Germans died in the Siege of Berlin – many by suicide
- On 7<sup>th</sup> May 1945, Germany signed a general surrender at Reims in France

#### The Allies and the Second Front – the march to Germany

- The Americans and Soviets pressed for a Second Front – Germany feared a two-front war
- Germany would not be able to cope fighting on two fronts simultaneously
- However this required an invasion in western Europe
- Amphibious invasion of France would be difficult
- However this eventually took place on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1944 – the D-Day Normandy landings
- By this time, Germany was already retreating from Soviet Russia
- Hence the Red Army was the decisive factor that won the Allies the war

#### The Normandy landings in France

- The Germans tried to build naval defences called the Atlantic Wall along the French coastline

- However, many sectors remained weak
- The Allies carried out a complicated but successful deception programme on the exact landing area along the French coastline – this was called Operation Bodyguard
- The actual amphibious landings were called Operation Overlord
- The Germans were deceived to think that the landings would be at Pas de Calais
- The casualty rate were expected to be extremely high as the operation was extremely risky
- However Operation Overlord was successful
- Allied air power destroyed German communications to prevent reinforcements from being called
- 160,000 Allied troops were landed using 5,000 ships
- By July 1944, some German generals favoured Hitler making peace
- On 20<sup>th</sup> July 1944, a failed bomb plot was directed at Hitler<sup>16</sup>

#### The European resistance movements

- Involved both civilians and soldiers due to the nature of total war
- Compare to the absence of resistance movements in World War I
- Strongly motivated by ideology, nationalism and the brutality of the opposing power
- The resistance movements carried out sabotage operations to hinder the Germans
- The British Special Operations Executive<sup>17</sup> (SOE) and American Office of Strategic Services<sup>18</sup> (OSS) aided in coordinating and supporting the resistance groups
- However there is no specific instance where a resistance movement seriously defeated German intentions
- Examples of resistance movements include the Warsaw Uprising and the Yugoslav Uprising (led by Josip Tito, a communist)
- The resistance movements were easily suppressed by the Germans – if they were caught, they were executed by the Germans immediately (summary executions)
- The resistance movements instead wasted much time combating informers and spies

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<sup>16</sup> see the movie 'Valkyrie'

<sup>17</sup> now known as Military Intelligence 6 or MI6

<sup>18</sup> now known as the Central Intelligence Agency or CIA

## 15.5 THE ASIAN-PACIFIC THEATRE (1939 – 1945)

### THE ALLIED AND AXIS STRATEGIES AND THE COURSE OF THE WAR

#### The Japanese strategy

- The Japanese sought to capture Southeast Asia to obtain vital supplies and raw materials – this showed the effectiveness of the American embargo in hindering the Japanese war effort
  - e.g. Malaya had tin and rubber
  - e.g. Indonesia had tin, rubber and oil
- The Japanese wanted to use attrition to wear down its enemies – similar to World War I strategies
- The Japanese perimeter however was vulnerable – the islands were not mutually supporting
- The Americans easily bypassed the Japanese perimeter islands
- The Japanese tended to husband their main fleet for a decisive battle and failed to destroy the American Navy right at the start of the war
- This battle occurred as the Battle of Leyte Gulf in 1944 but ended as an American victory
- The Japanese Navy failed to commit to an attack at decisive moments

#### The attack on Pearl Harbour

- The US Pacific Fleet was the most powerful fleet in the Pacific region and was the only fleet that could possibly stop the Japanese invasion – it was located at Pearl Harbour in Hawaii
- The attack took place on 7 December 1941 (a Sunday) – it was a holiday and the Americans were poorly prepared
- The Japanese aircraft destroyed the ships there but not the base itself
  - 18 out of 94 ships were sunk or damaged beyond repair, 8 of which were battleships
  - 188 US planes were lost compared to 29 Japanese planes lost
- The Japanese aircraft failed to eliminate the aircraft carriers – crucial
- The Japanese aircraft failed to target the support facilities such as oil storage tanks and dry docks – this would prove crucial in the American war effort later
- Germany and Italy then declared war on the USA – this was Hitler's greatest single mistake
- Total war – preemptive strike

#### The Southeast Asian campaign

- The Japanese targeted Malaya for its resources e.g. rubber, tin, oil etc.
- The British had numerical superiority in Malaya
- However, the British had weaknesses:
  - Inexperience
  - Lack of jungle training
  - Low morale
  - Poor tactics
- The Japanese used their own form of blitzkrieg, using bicycles instead of tanks
- The British retreated to their base in India
- The British then began an invasion of Burma in late 1944 and recaptured it in May 1945

- However this did not play a major role in the Japanese defeat

#### The Battle of Midway

- The Japanese Navy wanted to capture Midway and destroy the American fleet
- The Americans were able to break the Japanese codes – major technological breakthrough (role of technology in the victory of the Allies)
- The Japanese lost 4 aircraft carriers, 258 aircraft and many experienced pilots – these pilots could not be replaced easily
- The Americans were extremely weak at this time and had only 2 aircraft carriers
- The Japanese could have defeated the Americans
- However the Japanese decided to split their fleet up instead and this failed
- The Battle of Midway marks the start of the Japanese defeat

#### The American strategy

- The US Navy and Marines advanced through the Central Pacific
- The US Army advanced through the Southwest Pacific
- Bypassed strong islands and cut off supplies to these islands from behind
- Strategy of 'withering on the vine'
- Use of amphibious operations – role of naval power in the victory of the Allies
- Amphibious operations involved specialised armour units as well as naval and air power
- Example of amphibious landings – Normandy beach landings
- Island hopping strategy – building of forward bases

#### The Island campaigns

- Islands captured were used for strategic bombing
- Air bases were built on captured islands
- Marianas Turkey Shoot in June 1944 – severe loss of Japanese aircraft carriers and pilots
- Battle of Leyte Gulf in October 1944 – climatic battle
- The Imperial Japanese Navy was completely destroyed
- The use of kamikaze tactics in April 1945 – total war tactic of using suicide bombers
- 28 American ships sunk and 131 damaged
- Stiff Japanese resistance – the Japanese soldiers fought to the death

## 15.7 REASONS FOR THE AXIS DEFEAT

Factors	The Allies	The Axis Powers
Leadership and strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Allies had effective joint planning mechanisms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hindered by Hitler's misguided belief in his military abilities</li> <li>• No attempt made to coordinate their strategies</li> <li>• Germany was the most important country – Italy and Japan would not have risked war without it</li> <li>• Invasion of the Soviet Union was a mistake – Germany was forced to fight a war on two fronts when UK was not yet defeated</li> <li>• Mistake to declare war on the USA</li> </ul>
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defeated the Axis in a war of attrition</li> <li>• Greater economic resources did not guarantee victory – need to turn that economic strength into effective fighting power</li> <li>• The US was good at mass production</li> <li>• The Allies had much more efficient bureaucracies to mobilise their economies</li> <li>• Supported by strong logistical support</li> <li>• Managed to produce large quantities of a small number of weapons – efficiency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Germans failed to fully mobilise their economy and did not make use of mass production</li> <li>• The Japanese industries were not able to support their war effort due to shortages of raw materials</li> <li>• The Axis Powers often neglected the logistical side of war – German officers looked down on logistical units</li> <li>• The Axis powers were also running out of manpower</li> </ul>

Fighting power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reorganisation of the Red Army after the Wehrmacht's initial advance into the Soviet Union</li> <li>• Most of the German military (80%) was deployed on the Eastern Front against the Red Army</li> </ul>	—
Weapons and technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focused on a small number of weapon systems which could be easily produced</li> <li>• Effectively harnessed research scientists – played a significant role in the war</li> <li>• The US and UK had more centralised organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focused on building many highly sophisticated and complicated weapons in small numbers</li> <li>• Introduced the V1 flying bombs and V2 rockets</li> </ul>
Signal intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• British ULTRA organisation played a major role</li> <li>• The Germans used the Enigma code – it was thought to be unbreakable</li> <li>• The British managed to decrypt the Enigma code in May 1941</li> <li>• The Americans managed to break the Japanese naval and diplomatic codes</li> <li>• The Allied exploitation of cryptology gave them a distinct edge over the Axis</li> </ul>	—
Ideology and behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Believed they were fighting a just war</li> <li>• The Allies were welcomed as liberators</li> <li>• Issued the Atlantic Charter in 1941 – similar to Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Axis Powers had racist ideologies – especially the Nazis and Japanese</li> <li>• Behaved brutally in captured territories – only served to alienate the locals</li> <li>• Its moral behaviour convinced its enemies that there was no compromise</li> </ul>

Domestic support	–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terror played a major role – summary executions were common</li> <li>• By 1945, the German people had lost confidence in Hitler and the Nazi regime</li> </ul>
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## 15.8 THE IMPACT OF AIR POWER ON WORLD WAR II

### Reconnaissance

- Aerial reconnaissance played a major role in providing intelligence regarding the enemy
- Example would be the sinking of the German battleship Bismarck in 1941 – aerial reconnaissance discovered its presence
- Another example would be the role of Japanese reconnaissance airplanes which led to the sinking of the British Prince of Wales and Repulse off Malaya in 1941

### Aerial superiority

- The Allies achieved aerial superiority by June 1944
- Fighters were needed to ensure aerial dominance so that other aircraft could operate freely
- The Allies also introduced the long ranged P51 Mustang fighters – allowed the Allies to strike at Germany itself and destroy the German fighters
- Example would be the Battle of Britain in 1940 – British Spitfires and Hurricanes, together with the use of radar, were able to stop German fighters and bombers

### Close air support

- Also known as tactical air support
- Development of specialised aircraft e.g. fighter bombers with specialised anti-tank weapons
- The Blitzkrieg were greatly aided by the German dive bombers (the Junkers Ju-87 Stuka)
- The Allies also developed specialised aircraft like the Typhoon, P-38 Lightning and the P-47 Thunderbolt – this played a vital role in the Allied invasion of Europe in 1944

### Strategic bombing

- The concept of strategic bombing
  - British and Americans were deeply influenced by bomber theories
- The early limitations of strategic bombing
  - The British Bomber Command originally suffered heavy losses – due to poor bombing accuracy, poor quality aircraft which lacked range and strong German anti-aircraft defences
- Weaknesses faced by Allied bombers
  - The Allies neglected engineering and logistics when it came to aircraft
  - The aircraft were of poor quality, lacking range and the capability to carry large bomb loads
  - The German anti-aircraft defences were very strong
- Improvements by Allied bombers
  - The British Royal Air Force (RAF) replaced its older bombers with the new, more capable Lancaster and Halifax bombers
  - The Americans had the B-17 bomber which was long ranged and had a heavy defensive armament (they were convinced that their bombers were self-protecting but were wrong)

### The British and American strategic bombing campaign in Europe

- There was little cooperation between the British RAF and the US Army Air Force (USAF)



- The RAF adopted the area bombing strategy – they focused on hitting civilians instead of hitting the industries and factories
- The RAF bombed at night to reduce crew casualties
  - The RAF bombed Hamburg in July 1943, killing 40,000 and wounding another 40,000 but only disrupting 10 % of Germany's industrial capacity
  - The RAF then bombed Dresden in February 1945, killing 40,000 despite Dresden not having any economic or military significance
- By 1943, the UK were questioning the effectiveness of the area bombing strategy
- The raids were important psychologically for the British public and government despite failing
- The USAF adopted the panacea bombing strategy – they studied a country's industrial system and sought to target specific chokepoints
- The USAF believed that they could paralyse the entire enemy war effort by targeting a certain segment of the economy– however the USAF failed to pursue their effort to fruition
- The USAF believed that they could bomb with precision during the daytime – in reality, they were unable to hit their targets accurately
- The USAF tried to target German industrial factories but the Germans still had alternative sources to call upon
- By October 1943, the USAF realised that bombers could not fly by day without fighter escorts
- The USAF later targeted oil plants and refineries which were large and could not be moved – this was because codebreakers had discovered that the Luftwaffe was short of fuel
- This proved very successful as the Germans were left with many tanks and aircraft but no fuel

#### The American strategic bombing campaign in Japan

- Japan lacked anti-aircraft guns and did not have night fighters
- Bombing raids were carried out by the B-29 Superfortress bombers
- The USAF used low level area bombing with incendiary bombs (fire bombing), killing 330,000 people and causing 8,500,000 refugees
- This shattered Japanese civilian morale

#### Assessment of strategic bombing

- Human casualties
  - 600,000 people were killed
  - 8,000,000 people had to be evacuated
- Diversion of war resources
  - The bombing raids diverted 2,000,000 Germans to anti-aircraft defences
  - The bombing raids also diverted German air defences from the Eastern Front
- Undermining of production
  - Steel output was reduced by 30 %
  - Motor engineering output was reduced by 25 %
  - Electrical output was reduced by 15 %

- Chemical production output was reduced by 15 %
- Oil production output was reduced by 100 %
- The Allies had overestimated the damage they had inflicted through strategic bombing and underestimated the adaptability of the German economy
- German war production was reduced by only 1 % overall
- No part of Germany suffered starvation
- Impact on morale
  - By 1944, German absenteeism rates in factories increased
  - However German civilian morale was not broken
- Impact on bomber crews
  - The Bomber Command never commanded support of all the British people
  - The bomber crews often suffered from extreme anxiety and hopelessness
  - The bomber crews began disillusioned by the growing awareness of their lack of success

#### Transportation

- Certain aircraft were designed to provide logistical support and to drop troops behind enemy lines to seize strategic areas until reinforcements arrived
- The Germans deployed 3,000 paratroopers in Crete who spearheaded major beach landings – this was the most successful airborne attack of the war and forced the Allies to evacuate to Egypt
- Paratroopers were also used by the Allies during the Normandy campaign
- Paratrooper units suffered heavy losses as they were scattered around enemy territory and were lightly armed

#### Maritime roles

- Aircraft played major roles in providing reconnaissance and attacking enemy warships
- The Luftwaffe played a major role in attacking British shipping
- The Allies countered using long-ranged Allied fighters such as the Bristol Beaufighter
- The Allies also used long-ranged aircraft armed with radar and searchlights to detect U-boats – this helped the Allies to gain control of the Atlantic

## 15.9 THE IMPACT OF NAVAL POWER IN WORLD WAR II

### Command of the sea

- Battleships became very vulnerable – the more serious threats were aircraft and submarines
- The Kriegsmarine<sup>19</sup> had the warships Bismarck and Tirpitz – however the Bismarck was sunk in May 1941 and the Tirpitz was sunk in 1944
- The UK sent out the battleships HMS Prince of Wales and the battlecruiser Repulse to stop the Japanese landings in Malaya – these were both sunk in February 1942 which dealt a serious blow to British morale
- The aircraft carrier became the new centrepiece of naval operations – it played a vital role in naval clashes and supported amphibious operations
- The aircraft on the aircraft carrier were multi-functional and could provide fighter cover or perform reconnaissance or transport resources etc. – this often led to combat beyond visual range (the enemies could not see one another)
- The US ships were equipped with radar which was extremely advantageous
- The Americans had large numbers of Independence-class and Essex-class aircraft carriers – these aircraft carriers were reliable and sturdy
- The US Navy's aircraft carriers played a vital role in destroying the Japanese Navy

### Commerce raiding

- The Kriegsmarine was massively outnumbered in 1939 and thus adopted the cruiser warfare strategy – this involved combining the use of submarines, ships, mines and aircraft
- Germany worked on a 'system collapse' approach – they believed that the British trade network was brittle and could be destroyed by a small, well-aimed attack
- The UK was highly dependent on imports – its island position made it vulnerable
- The Soviet Union was also highly dependent on supplies from the US – the Murmansk Run
- Germany used 'wolf pack' tactics – a U-boat would use radio to call in other U-boats to inflict mass sinking and overwhelm the escorts
- U-boat attacks would typically take place at night on the surface

### Allied countermeasures to **Germany's** U-boat campaign

- The Allies immediately introduced convoys from the start of the war
- The key weapon was the destroyer but there was a shortage of such ships
- In 1943, the US introduced the **destroyer escorts** which were cheaper and smaller
- The Allies relied on special escort vessels with sonar to detect U-boats
- It was difficult for the Germans to track the convoys given the sheer size of the ocean
- However, up to May 1943, the Allies faced a shortage of long-ranged aircraft
- Anti-submarine warfare schools were formed to introduce training and disseminate new tactics
- By November 1943, the U-boats were withdrawn from the Atlantic

### Evaluation of **Germany's** U-boat campaign

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<sup>19</sup> German Navy

- Food stocks in the UK were lowest at the beginning of 1941 – however the UK managed to survive with careful rationing
- The sinking reached a peak in November 1942 – however, by this time, the shipping replacement rate had increased to meet losses while U-boat losses were equalling launches
- The German U-boats were never able to severely undermine the flow of imports
- Germany lacked sufficient submarines to fully cripple the UK
- Hitler instead wasted resources building battleships for prestige reasons
- The German U-boats suffered a ratio inferiority to Allied escort strength – however this tactic could have had succeeded if the Luftwaffe and Kriegsmarine had cooperated
- The U-boats made a substantial strategic contribution to the German war effort – they nearly choked off the lifelines of the UK and Soviet Union, undermining early war efforts
- The U-boats also delayed the build-up of American armed forces into Europe

#### Submarine warfare in the Pacific theatre

- The US conducted a highly successful submarine campaign against Japan
- Japan was highly dependent on imports, being an island nation
- Japan also lacked convoy doctrine and specialised anti-submarine warfare ability

#### Amphibious warfare

- Played a vital role in the **Allies'** victory
- Germany could not invade the UK in 1940 – it lacked the necessary landing craft and vehicles
- Operation Overlord: Normandy landings (D-Day) – it involved 7,000 ships and 12,000 aircraft
- Construction of artificial harbours (Mulberries) and underwater oil pipelines
- Use of special landing ships e.g. Landing Ship Tank and Landing Craft Tank
- The UK tried to use amphibious warfare in WWI at Gallipoli but it failed
- The USA used it against Japan – tactic of 'withering on the vine'

#### Transportation and logistics

- The Allies had an advantage due to their superior technology – it allowed them to have a superior ship-building capability
- Example would be the Liberty cargo ships – built in the US in 42 days through the use of assembly lines and prefabricated parts

## 15.10 THE IMPACT OF ECONOMIC MOBILISATION

### The domestic war effort

- Refers to the Home Front (what is happening back home) – contrast to the War Front
- The Allies won not because they had more resources (economic size was bigger) – but they could use these resources much more efficiently
- The Allies created an efficient bureaucracy to mobilise their economies

### The UK

- The UK government intervened extensively – it took over industries, railroads, communications, health and welfare etc.
- The UK was highly dependent on imports – led to rationing being reintroduced during wartime
- There was a sharp increase in the mobilisation of women
- There was a sharp increase in production – however their production was still not sufficient and had to still depend on the US for imports

### The Soviet Union

- Benefitted from Stalin's Five-Year Plans
- The Industries were moved East of the Ural Mountains which protected them from enemy attacks
- Use of slave labour in the form of Gulag prisoners – however slave labour was not efficient
- However their production was not sufficient – depended on the US Lend-Lease Programme

### The US

- Formation of the War Production Board in 1942 to take over production priorities
- Relied on American businesses which focused on mass production and technical innovation
- Made no effort to change the free market system – American companies were trying to produce more items at cheaper rates
- By 1944, it produced 40% of the world's arms – it outproduced everyone else in the world

### Germany

- Authoritarian anarchy – lack of coordination and competition between leaders (Albert Speer, Hermann Göring, Joseph Goebbels, Heinrich Himmler etc.)
- Did not impose total mobilisation (including that of the economy) until 1943 as Hitler wanted the public to think they were winning
- Reliant on forced labour – however this was not efficient as the slave labour was resentful
- Production only increased in 1944 after total mobilisation was introduced

### Japan

- Vulnerable to economic strangulation due to its island position
- Needed resources from overseas – however the capture of Southeast Asia yielded lower returns than expected

## 15.11 THE IMPACT OF SOCIETY

### Military impact of the war on civilians

- Genocidal impact of Hitler's new order:
  - Promoted the Aryan race (with blue eyes, blond hair etc.) as superior to the other races
  - Calculated and methodical system of coercion and persecution
  - Construction of concentration camps and extermination camps
  - Jews were rounded up and sent to concentration camps in Eastern Europe – however this put a lot of pressure on Germany's railway system
  - Formation of the Schutzstaffel (SS) headed by Himmler
  - Implementation of the Final Solution in late 1941
  - Mass gassing of European Jews led to the deaths of at least 6,000,000 dead
- Japan's New Order
  - Arbitrary and sporadic in contrast to the systematic Nazi
  - Rape of Nanking in 1937 (estimated up to 300,000 killed)
  - Sook Ching massacre in Singapore in early 1942 (up to 50,000 killed)
- The issue of refugees
  - WWII created a massive refugee situation
  - Evacuation of 3,000,000 children from cities to rural areas in UK
  - 16,000,000 Germans expelled as the war ended

### The impact of the war on women

- Rosie the Riveter – American propaganda campaign
- However women earned less than their male counterparts
- British SOE sent women secret agents
- Women formed 8% of the armed forces by 1943 in the Soviet Union
- Soviet women formed an air force squadron named Black Widow
- In Nazi Germany, the women were kept at home due to their ideological beliefs

### The impact of the war on reporting and propaganda

- Propaganda is not used to introduce new beliefs – it tends to reinforce confidence in existing beliefs and constructs
- Difficult to judge how successful the use of propaganda was
- The enemy was often portrayed as being bestial and destructive – dehumanisation
- The German propaganda ministry tried to stimulate German enthusiasm for the war and demonised the Allies
- The British propaganda ministry instead aimed to undermine enemy morale
- Much of the black (fabricated) propaganda failed

## 15.12 THE POST-WAR IMPACT

### The political impact of World War II

- Treaties imposed on the Axis powers
  - Reparations imposed were not crippling (unlike the Treaty of Versailles)
- Revision of borders
  - Limited territorial readjustments
  - Russia had more territory to serve as a buffer from attack
- Rise of the bipolar world
  - After World War I, the existing Great Powers still survived and a multipolar world still survived
  - After World War II, arose the bipolar world: split between the US and Soviet Union
  - Formerly great European powers like France and the UK were reduced to second-rate powers
  - Conflict between ideological differences – capitalism v. communism
  - Disputes over spheres of influence
  - Military threat – American atomic weapons v. the Soviet Red Army
  - Division of Europe – the US and Western Europe v. Soviet Union and the Eastern Europe
  - Creation of NATO by the US and the Warsaw Pact by the Soviet Union
- A move towards globalisation
  - Effectiveness of collective security was dependent on the stability of the global environment
  - Collective security – where everybody is involved in keeping the peace
  - Formation of the United Nations – however its effectiveness is patchy
  - Creation of global financial bodies<sup>20</sup> for financial integration – contrast to World War I where nothing was done after the war to foster financial integration
  - Hindered by economic nationalism – poorer countries tried to protect their own economies
- Acceleration of the process of decolonisation
  - Compare the Mandate system after World War I and decolonisation after World War II
  - Many European countries suffered serious economic damage during World War II and could no longer afford sustaining an overseas empire
  - World War II was fought on the basis of self-determination (e.g. the Polish Corridor, Sudeten Germans etc.) and put pressure on European countries to decolonise
  - Most colonies had become independent by the 1960s
  - Often Third World countries would get sucked into Cold War conflicts (proxy war) which would further devastate their countries
- The discrediting of Fascism and Nazism
  - These ideologies were damaged by the unconditional surrender of the Axis Powers
  - This was reinforced by the trials of high-ranking German and Japanese officers in the Nuremberg Trials and the Tokyo War Crimes Trials respectively
  - Many were executed as war criminals

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<sup>20</sup> Examples include the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs

## The economic impact of World War II

- Economic destruction
  - Aerial bombing proved to be very destructive
  - Food production had fallen sharply
  - Industries and farmlands were destroyed
  - Up to 150,000,000 were reliant on aid up to 1946
- Revival of the European and Japanese economies
  - The Americans were determined to aid economic recovery of these countries to stop them from turning to communism
  - These countries in turn would act as a bulwark against the spread of communism
  - The US provided a massive injection of economic aid known as the Marshall Plan in 1947
  - The US helped in European reconstruction – they recognised that crippling Germany's economy was counter-productive
  - Germany's economic recovery was vital to the economic recovery of Europe as a whole
  - The US also rehabilitated the Japanese economy – Japan became the world's second largest economy after the war, after the US itself
  - The Soviet Union also created its economic bloc called COMECON – it was meant to challenge the US-dominated Western European economies
  - The Third World countries' economies were neglected or exploited by the two blocs instead and remained amongst the poorest in the world
  - Sharp contrast to World War I where most countries were unable to recover after the war

## The social impact of World War II

- Death and casualties
  - The Soviet Union suffered around 16,900,000 civilian deaths and 8,700,000 military deaths (total around 25,600,000 deaths)
  - Germany lost 3,250,000 soldiers and lost 6,850,000 people in total (around 9.5% of its population before the war)
  - The UK lost 388,000 people, of which 326,000 were soldiers (around 0.8% of its population before the war)
  - The US lost 400,000 people, all of which were soldiers
  - In total, around 52,000,000 people were killed in World War II – a characteristic of total war is a high death toll from both sides
- The issue of refugees
  - People were turned into refugees when their homes were destroyed or they were forced to leave their homes
  - Led to the creation of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration
  - Many refugees were accepted into countries like the UK – the UK actively encouraged the immigration of skilled labour



- The impact on women
  - Women were vulnerable to the post-war effects of World War II
  - The Soviet Army raped over 2,000,000 German women during their invasion of Germany
  - Women who consorted with Germans in occupied countries were subjected to humiliation and discrimination e.g. having their hair shaven or being branded
  - Women were able to find work as Western economies had expanded rapidly enough to create sufficient jobs for both genders
- The rise of the welfare state
  - States would assume primary responsibility for its citizens
  - After World War II, governments were concerned that an economic depression would return and hence introduced a welfare state
  - The UK became a welfare state after 1948

#### The military impact of World War II

- The rise of the nuclear age
  - The US quickly lost its monopoly on nuclear weapons
  - The Soviet Union developed their own nuclear bomb in 1949
  - The US, France and China also developed their own nuclear weapons
  - There was a rapid expansion of nuclear arsenals which served as a deterrence
  - This led to a number of scares of nuclear war – e.g. the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962
- The Cold War arms race
  - Scientists and military-industrial complexes played a major role in World War II
  - This added the development of increasingly sophisticated weaponry (see Gulf War)
  - This also raised defence expenditure sharply for many countries