

# To what extent did nationalism contribute to the origins of the second world war?...

[People](#), [Adolf Hitler](#)



To what extent did nationalism contribute to the origins of the Second World War? (2011, 2) GERMANY: -Hitler exploited the German people's disillusionment with the Treaty of Versailles in order to come to power. He promised that he would fix the economy and pay off reparations, as well as increase employment. -Hitler made the people believe that only his leadership was strong enough to lead Germany back towards greatness. The German people had little faith in their government at that point (they felt it was weak) and were therefore susceptible to Hitler's nationalistic appeals. - After being appointed Chancellor in 1933, Hitler instituted numerous nationalistic policies that led Germany towards WWII Social/Economic Policies -Reduced unemployment -Appointed Hjalmar Schacht as Minister of Economics in 1934; in 1935, Schacht also became head of preparing the economy for war. \*Shows that Hitler was planning another war from the beginning, as this would be the best way to indicate Germany's strength - Began major civil works programs, such as the construction of railroads, autobahns (roadways), and dams -Enemies of the state were arrested, namely Jews (they were used as the scapegoat for many of Germany's economic problems, and the Nazi party itself was inherently racist) Foreign Policy Main goals were: 1. Peace/union with Austria 2. Restoration of Germany's national borders as they stood in 1914 3. Rejection of military restrictions imposed by Treaty of Versailles 4. Return of former German colonies in Africa 5. German zone of influence in Eastern Europe -An axis declared between Italy & Germany -Germany signed anti-Comintern (Anti-Communist) pact with Japan Military Policy -Hitler slowly began to strengthen the military more and more until the beginning of WWII -Withdrew from

League of Nations in 1933 -Expanded navy and air force \*Anglo-German Naval Agreement (AGNA) of 1935 allowed for Germany to increase the size of its navy to 35% the size of the British fleet -Germany also violated the Treaty of Versailles by reoccupying the Rhineland beginning 1936 -Hitler sent troops to aid Franco's Fascist revolution in Spain -From 1938 onwards, the ultimate goal of all of Hitler's policies were to begin a war -Hitler believed that the German economic crisis could only truly be alleviated at that point by a policy of military aggression, namely towards seizing Austria & Czechoslovakia

USSR: -After the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the other nations at Versailles, fearing the spread of communism, did not invite Russia to the peace proceedings, even though Russia had been on the winning side \*Russians felt betrayed -USSR was a single-party, Communist state comprised of numerous smaller countries, led by Joseph Stalin from 1941-1953 (even before he became full leader, he was still in charge of the economy) -USSR's nationalistic policies had the basic goal of re-expanding borders to increase the empire to the size of what Russia once was, as well as proving its power to other nations

Social/ Economic Policies -Stalin's Five-Year Plan to build a socialist economy was introduced in 1928: included internationalist policies, as well as a more domestic plan to zone in on socialism within Russia \*State took control of all existing enterprises in Russia \*Major program of industrialization \*Forced collectivization of farms - Great Purge (1936-1939) was meant to get rid of any of Stalin's opposition, and instill fear in the Russian people in order to "unite" them. "Old Bolsheviks" (who had initially supported Lenin, but not Stalin's new policies) were imprisoned and/or executed. Foreign Policy -USSR established

diplomatic relations with the US in 1933 -USSR joined League of Nations in 1934 -USSR supported Republican side in the Spanish Civil War (as opposed to Italy and Germany, who supported Franco's fascist Nationalists) -Non-Aggression Pact of 1939: Between Germany and USSR " gave Hitler the go ahead to invade Poland with impunity a week after the Soviets had gained the upper hand in the far east, and guaranteed Nazi Germany that they would not have to fight the USSR. In addition, the Pact assured a temporary non-involvement of the Soviet Union's participation in a European War, as well as separating both Germany and Japan from forming a military alliance" -German-Soviet Commercial Pact of 1940: Germany & USSR form an economic agreement that involves exchange of goods between the 2 nations. ENGLAND: Led by Macdonald. Was led by peace rather than moral correctness. The British preferred conciliation as against security. Macdonald and Foreign Office head Arthur Henderson were constantly in disagreement as how to lead the country in a post war society Henderson wished to disarm France to ensure security while Macdonald wished the opposite. He wanted to use disarmament as a lever to increase British commitment to France (French reliance upon the British) to increase world power status. Austen Chamberlin, Macdonald's successor, wanted to have a direct alliance with France. This directly caused an outrage and the public did not like this. The next proposed idea was a peace treaty between France and Germany. This was ideal for the British because it meant peace against an aggressor state. The mindset was that the less America had to do with Europe, the better, which spread across the public and created an anti-Wilson mindset. Macdonald ceased to direct British foreign policy, and continued to shape it

indirectly. Conciliation was key. Treaty of Locarno allowed for peace in Europe after the war Britain wanted to keep control over Europe and remain a major power Seemed to be involved in other countries affairs like Japan, China, the middle east etc. instead of focusing on their own problems. Country became unified after the war to counteract Germany and sought severe reparations. FRANCE: Led by Briand Proposed that Germany should promise to respect all her frontiers. Treaty of Locarno-Ended the war France had the only large army in Europe and was the strongest power, with Germany now out of the way. However, they were only trained defensively, not offensively. France had wanted to take out Germany completely so that its safety as a country was ensured. The US stopped France from taking Germany out politically, economically, and socially more than it already was from the post war reparations. France ITALY: " My objective is simple, I want to make Italy great, respected and feared"-Mussolini Italy's humiliation in and after WWI, and the nationalist wave on which Mussolini climbed to power, were bound to make for a nationalist foreign policy, wherein any available means would be used to demonstrate Italy's return to greatness The sole purpose for entering the World War II was not to aid Germany in becoming the next superpower of the world. Rather, the Italians wanted to expand their Mediterranean empire by driving out the British and regaining their former Roman Empire glory. Hitler's advent to power in Germany altered things considerably. Mussolini was delighted to see him in power, and saw the potential of a German alliance against Britain and France to revise the 1919 settlement Mussolini decided to enter the war after observing how Germany was being able to crush the French as well as the allied forces in all

of Western Europe Hence the Italian dictator Mussolini decided to declare war against the Allies so that the country could gain possession of some easy war spoils As the Italians decided to support the axis forces, Germany lent its full support to its newfound ally The country sent over reinforcement troops that would help Italy make its way through France. JAPAN: Japan entered WWII after they saw what Germany was doing (again, similar to the Italians) Japan also believed they would be able to conquer and do what Germany was doing to the European countries—beginning of Imperialism, formation of Japanese pride and superiority over Asian nations The military began to influence national policy in Japan during the 1930s—persuading the Emperor that Japan can become the leader of Asia, can promote nationalistic pride and superiority over Asian countries (i. e. China-Manchuria) Not only did military leaders begin to hold political office, but they began to have a profound influence on the Emperor of Japan. The Japanese began a policy of expansion in Asia. They wanted to take over areas that would provide needed raw materials for the economy of Japan. HOWEVER.....The United States was concerned with Japanese expansion in the Pacific. It threatened the security of the United States. Japan saw the outbreak of war as an opportunity to continue their expansion and eventually control all of eastern Asia. Only the United States was in a position to prevent the expansion of Japan into East and Southeast Asia. The decision to attack Pearl Harbor was risky. But the Japanese military convinced the Emperor that the Japanese forces could control the Pacific before the US could recover from the attack at Pearl Harbor. Such an attack essentially justifies the Americans to attack the Japanese CONCLUSION: In relation to the way in which countries such as,

Germany, USSR, France, England, Italy and Japan joined the war, one would agree that nationalism strongly contributed to the origins of the Second World War.