

# **HISTORY 208—Europe in the Age of Total War**

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## **EXAM #2— Key Questions, Terms, Names, Dates, Sources**

rev 9/27/24

*Note:* The format for Exam #2 will be exactly the same as Exam #1. It will cover class and readings from Monday, September 16, to Monday, September 30 (from film as primary source for history to the meanings of World War II).

*Big Questions for the Mini-Essay. I will adopt two of these questions for the exam. (I may ask some version of these questions for Part 2 as well).*

What was the Depression of the 1930s? And what was its impact on European politics?

What is totalitarianism? How might or how should historians use the concept?

Compare and contrast Nazism, Italian Fascism, and Stalinism. What did they have in common? How did they differ?

What was the appeal of Nazism in Germany in the early 1930s?

How did the democracies of Britain and France confront the international challenges of the 1930s?

How did Europe go to war in 1939? And how does it compare to the First World War?

What was the impact of the Second World War on European history?

### *How to Think Like a Historian*

What are some central concepts of historical analysis?

- Primary source analysis, evidence, secondary source analysis, historiography
- Context, Change and Continuity, Causality, Contingency – and Complexity

What are some “ways of thinking” that historians use?

- Make judgements based upon evidence
- Understand multiple points of view
- Understand complexity – make distinctions – see the world in shades of gray

### *Reflect on Ian Kershaw and his History of Twentieth-Century Europe*

English political historian, best known for his multi-volume biography of Hitler

What is his approach? What is its value? What does he foreground? What is missing from this story?

It is a beautifully written, accessible, evocative account of the political crisis of Europe. Based on deep research. Focuses on politics, international relations, governments, and leaders. Frequently treats states as actors (but note, they have competing forces within them).

Kershaw puts Germany at the center of this story...

We don't hear much about European empires, the view of colonial subjects, the experience of women, cultural history (esp. popular culture). Social history plays a role here, but it is typically subordinated to political history.

*What kinds of regimes and governments and societies were there in aftermath of WWI?*

### *Britain*

Still a constitutional monarchy

Still a Parliamentary system - House of Commons – House of Lords

Still a two-party system – but Conservatives and Labour – diminished role for Liberals

Still an enormous empire – 25% of the people of the world – with the addition of mandates in the middle east – Palestine, Transjordan – mounting anti-colonial and independence movements

Votes for women – from February 1918

Ireland independent – Irish Free State from 1921

Gold Standard – slow economic recovery – strikes and protests – 1926 general strike

Some politicians: Ramsay Macdonald (Labour PM), Neville Chamberlain (Conserv PM), Winston Churchill (Conserv PM)

### *France*

Still the French Third Republic, until 1940

Still an immense empire in Africa, Asia, Caribbean – with the addition of mandates in the middle east – Lebanon, Syria – mounting anti-colonial and independence movements

Economic recovery in aftermath of war

But persistent political instability – right wing “leagues” marching in the streets – rioting as in 1934

A Popular Front government in 1936, but instability

Some key figures: Léon Blum (socialist PM under Popular Front govt, first socialist and first Jewish PM in France), Edouard Daladier (centrist PM, involved in Munich negotiations)

### *Germany*

The German Republic – established November 1918 with abdication of Kaiser and declaration of republic

Early republic built on agreement between socialists and the army – a deal with the devil (recall the Ebert-Groener Pact)

We know it as the Weimar Republic – after the city where the National Assembly met and the Constitution of 1919 was negotiated

Parliamentary republic, multiparty system with power to Chancellor – and strong President

In times of crisis, President could rule by decree. Article 48

End of Weimar Republic is typically dated to 1933, with the passage of Enabling Act that revised the constitution and the outlawing of all parties except the Nazi Party

Some key figures: Gustav Stresemann (foreign minister), Paul von Hindenburg (president from 1924), Heinrich Brüning (Chancellor in 30-32), Franz Von Papen (Chancellor in 32, argued to bring Hitler into govt)

### *Soviet Union*

Russia from October Revolution (of November 1917). “Union of Soviet Socialist Republics” or “Soviet Union” from 1922

Death of Lenin, 1924. Stalin into power. Controlled bureaucracy of the Communist Party and pushed others out of power

New Constitution in 1936 spoke the language of democracy and rights

But the secret police - the NKVD in the 1930s – had the right to arrest and pass judgement without restraint

Great Famine – the Genocide-Famine of Ukraine, the Holodomor – 1932 to 1933, killed millions

Great Purge of 1936 to 1938 – against kulaks, ethnic minorities, Communist officials, and Red Army leaders. Show trials.

### *Italy*

Postwar crisis – political and economic – “unredeemed Italy” – territorial ambitions including new areas won (such as Trentino) and other areas that were not won for Italy (Fiume) – conflict in the streets – workers and peasants striking – the red years (*biennio rosso*)

Fascist political movement – comes to be led by Mussolini – *fascisti* or *squadristi*

Mussolini appointed Prime Minister in 1922 by King in face of March on Rome – gathered total power over course of three years – in 1925 he was recognized as “Il Duce,” the Leader

Fascist doctrine – valued the state over the individual

War in Abyssinia (Ethiopia) – dream of building a greater Italy

*Note the new states formed out of the ruins of the Habsburg Empire:*

Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia...

*Other New and Reformed States:*

Poland

Baltic States – Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania

Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, Slovenes (renamed Yugoslavia in 1929)

*Some East European political figures to know about:*

Józef Piłsudski, or Marshal Piłsudski, Polish patriot, military leader, and war hero. Led Polish forces in Soviet-Polish War (1919-1921). Would become de facto leader of a “mild” authoritarian government in the late 1920s (coup of 1926) to his death in 1935. He *opposed* xenophobia and anti-Semitism. But laid the groundwork for authoritarian rule in Poland up to the Second World War.

Thomas Masaryk, founder and first president of independent Czechoslovakia. Helped establish democratic norms in the rubble of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He worked to integrate Czechoslovakia into the international system. Died in 1937, before the crisis that saw the annexation of Czechoslovakia by Nazi Germany.

*How to Think about the 1930s*

The Depression marks a terrible shift from the optimism of the late 1920s. Fear. A return to the chaos of the immediate postwar era, 1918-1923

An era marked by the ideological confrontation of liberal democracy, fascism, and communism

Remarkable intellectual ferment, esp. on the left – called by many the “Pink Decade” – evident in pacifist movements

A time of a move to the right in politics – in particular, authoritarianism in eastern Europe and southern Europe – and to conservatism in western Europe

Marked by fears about population decline – backlash against contraception and abortion

## *The Great Depression*

Not just the Wall Street Crash of 1929 – that was only one sign of something much larger that had been building for some time. Three key crises: 1) depression in agriculture, 2) a financial crisis – following from stock market crash and banking failures, resulting in the end of American loans, and 3) a crisis of industrial production.

Impact would include: economic downturn, mass unemployment, steep drop in industrial production, radical fall-off of world trade, crisis in the countryside.

1932 – the slump was at its worst. By 1934, much of Europe was emerging from the worst. (How does that correlate with Hitler's rise to power?)

Some measures:

- Average Income in Germany, down 33%, 1929-1932
- World Production, down 38%, 1929-1932
- International Lending, down 90%, 1927-1933
- Whole or Partial Unemployment in Germany, almost 50% in 1932

First responses of governments in 1930-31: efforts to balance budget, cut expenditures, raise tariffs. This was economic orthodoxy of the day. Had the effect of making the economic downturn worse and longer.

John Maynard Keynes – after several years of Depression, in *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (1936) – developed theory that in times of economic downturn governments needed to *increase spending* to stimulate economy, provide economic stimulus to make up for reduced consumer spending with government spending, to “prime the pump” of the economy. It was a radical idea at the time but has since become an essential lesson of the Depression. This is what we mean today by “Keynesian economics.”

Efforts to retain a high exchange rate for national currencies – that is, to refuse to devalue the currency – made the economic downturn worse. In France, the Depression came late but was deep and persistent.

Note the variety of experience:

- in Germany, the Brüning government cut government expenditures in 1930-31. Hitler's government, in 1933 and after, pursued government spending on public works, highways (the Autobahn), and rearmament, inflationary policies that helped restore the economy. In the Soviet Union, the 1930s were a time of crash industrialization.

All states – even western democracies – moved toward autarky – that is, economic self-sufficiency. Esp. with failure of World Economic Forum.

Impact of the Depression: radicalized politics. “In practically every country outside the Soviet Union, the Depression brought a surge in support for fascist movements that aimed to destroy the Left and reorder societies through manufactured and enforced national unity.” (Kershaw, 207)

The economy that suffered the most? Germany

## *How Did the Nazis Take Power in Germany?*

Hitler appointed Chancellor January 30, 1933. How?

Some essentials: by legal means, under the shadow of economic disaster, in the face of divided opposition, with the support of conservative elites, with a powerful propaganda message of German unity and a rejection of Weimar democracy

NSDAP. The National Socialist German Workers Party. Or Nazis. Hitler, the Leader, the Fuehrer

Remarkable electoral success in context of the Depression. 1928 – less than 3% of vote. 1930 – huge wave of Nazi support, 18%. Nov. 1932 – Nazis received 33% of the vote. This was a decline from their

result in July, a sign that their appeal was waning. It was here that elites surrounding Von Hindenburg convinced him to support Hitler as Chancellor, with the idea that they could control him. Jan 1933 Hitler appointed Chancellor. In course of the next year, he and his Nazi Party gathered total power.

But note – the SPD and the KPD received more than 35% of vote in the elections of Nov. 1932

Hitler took quick steps to root out other sources of authority. Within six months established total domination. Fire in Reichstag, outlawing Communist Party, dissolution of Center Party and the Fatherland Party. By July 1933, the Nazi Party was the only party.

Enabling Act – in March 1933 – amended Constitution to give government power to issue decrees with force of law

With Hindenburg's death, in 1934, Hitler assumed functions of head of state.

*Gleichschaltung* – “Coordination” – all institutions and organizations of civil society coordinated into the Nazi party.

Speaking more broadly – how did Nazis take power?

A perfect storm created the conditions that allowed them to succeed:

- the humiliation of the Versailles Treaty and all it represented
- political attitudes from imperial Germany that fostered respect for army and authority
- the failure of the institutions of the Republic (viewed as weak and ineffective)
- the economic crisis of the 1930s
- assistance of conservatives (who were fearful of the left)
- divisions in German society (esp. on the left, bw socialists and communists)
- and, of course, Nazi political strategies – effective propaganda

#### *Movement to the Right in Politics in the 1930s*

Meant different things in different contexts....

The appeal of fascism – with hyper-nationalism, xenophobia, destruction of political enemies, military organization of organizations, belief in charismatic leadership. Promised to create a “new man.”

Appealed to a lot of different people, but especially high appeal for the middle-classes, veterans, businessmen, farmers, and students.

Didn't have much success in Britain or Scandinavia. Played some role in France with fascist organizations (esp. of war veterans). Found fertile ground in central and eastern Europe, but were kept in check by authoritarian govts. Italy and Germany – and the triumph of fascism and Nazism stand out as exceptions.

In Britain and France, democracy proved resilient...

In Britain, Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists was something of a joke, but a sign of dangerous currents.

In France, right-wing leagues – the Croix de Feu and the Action Française, for example – threatened the peace, as in the riots of February 1934 that left 15 dead. Eventual outcome was to bring Communists, Socialists, and Radicals together in Popular Front government.

Central and Eastern Europe proved to be fertile ground for authoritarian and outright fascist movements...

Takeaway: on the eve of WWII, three-fifths of Europeans lived under repressive, authoritarian rule. Kershaw: “Of the democracies created after the First World War to succeed the Austro-Hungarian Empire, only Czechoslovakia had survived” (245).

What made Hitler's Germany so dangerous: Hitler's dreams of territorial expansion in eastern Europe. *Lebensraum*, “living space” for the people of Germany. A racial ideal of community: the *Volksgemeinschaft* or national (or racial) community.

### *What Was the International Crisis of the 1930s?*

In broad perspective, it entailed...

A three-way conflict bw liberal democracy, fascism/Nazism, Stalinism – and in this era, liberal democracy seemed to be on the losing side

The failure of democracy in Germany and Eastern Europe (it had already failed in Italy)

The failure of liberal democracies of Britain and France to respond to authoritarian threats – in the remilitarization of the Rhineland, the Spanish Civil War, the crisis over Czechoslovakia

The failure of the League of Nations – in wake of American isolation, the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, the Italian invasion of Abyssinia (Ethiopia)

Rearmament led by Nazi Germany. The Maginot Line in France. New tactics of military strategy – armored divisions

A realignment of international affairs that saw Mussolini turn away from Britain and France and align Italy with Nazi Germany

Examples include:

1931 – Japanese invasion of Manchuria

1934 – German withdrawal from LoN – Soviet Union joins

1935 – German creation of a new and large army, the Wehrmacht

1935 – Italian invasion of Abyssinia, int'l outcry, Italian withdrawal from LoN

1936 – remilitarization of the Rhineland – failure of France and Britain to respond – changes all military calculations in France

1936 – Rome-Berlin Axis – and a month later the Anti-Comintern Pact of Germany and Japan

### *What is dictatorship, authoritarianism, totalitarianism?*

Dictatorship entails: strong head of state, restriction of civil liberties, restrictions on parties, no independent judiciary, control of media, sham (or limited) elections, typically ties to military

Authoritarianism is just the same, without putting the emphasis on a strong head of state (or dictator)

Totalitarianism is distinct. It makes a *total* claim on allegiance of individuals, no civil society outside the watchful eye of the state, no space for dissent, a single party

See Kershaw's comparison of Stalinism, Mussolini's Fascism, and Nazi Germany... What was the level of popular support for these regimes? How did it compare? How did the regimes enforce consent? How "totalitarian" were they?

### *How Did Stalin Rule Over Soviet Union in the 1930s?*

Stalin took power in vacuum after death of Lenin, 1924, in time pushing out other members of Politburo "Revolution from Above" to reform peasantry and heavy industry.

General Secretary of the party, a man of bureaucratic genius. In time, a personality cult. Popular acclaim for Stalin

Great Purges (or Great Terror) 1936-38 – targeting threats to Stalin, party members, government, army officials, kulaks, and anyone suspected of "counter-revolutionary" thinking – summary justice and show trials. The Gulag.

Nikolai Yezhov, head of NKVD, secret police – led many purges, eventually would be arrested and executed as a counter-revolutionary

Perhaps a million dead in 37-38 – many more sent to Gulag (perhaps 3 million in 1939)

Kershaw: "Terror was the defining characteristic of Stalin's regime" (274)

#### *How Did Mussolini Rule Italy in the 1930s?*

Mussolini's Fascist party was the sole party. But in course of 1930s it became "an establishment party" (275)

Surrounded by ideologues promoting the "Doctrine of Fascism." Mussolini spoke the language of totalitarianism. In fact, it was a much looser authoritarianism than Nazi Germany

Italian Fascism remarkable for its "aesthetics of power", art, literature, and architecture – and for its organization of sport and leisure

Promised rebuilding Rome – a dream of a new empire

Note that anti-Semitism played no role in early Fascism. It only became a factor after the alliance of Italy and Nazi Germany and particularly after 1938

#### *And Hitler and Nazi Germany?*

An aggressive economic strategy – to turn the economy to arms production

An aggressive military strategy – to rearm and reassert Germany's military role

A total control of civil society – through the "coordination" of independent organization

A role for Nazi organizations – esp. the SS (Stormtroopers, military wing of Nazi Party), the Hitler Youth Movement (compulsory from 1936), etc.

At the center was a particular ideology – the racial community (the *Volksgemeinschaft*) and the promise of "racial cleansing"

Other keys: anti-Semitism, which would be enshrined in Nuremberg Laws of 1935

*Lebensraum* – "living space," the need for new territory for German people, particularly in eastern Europe

The danger of Nazi Germany – plans for territorial expansion

#### *How do you compare and contrast these regimes?*

Historians like to make distinctions! Each of these were quite different – even if they had some features in common. Each made "total claim" on citizens. Each spoke of "enemies within."

Italy, more authoritarian than totalitarianism

Penetration of regimes' values: highest in Nazi Germany, lowest in Fascist Italy

Soviet Union – focused on internal threats. Nazi Germany – on external ambitions

#### *The Popular Front in France*

Popular Front – general name for a coalition that brings together the communists, socialists, and republicans against fascism

Léon Blum – socialist Prime Minister of France in the Popular Front government; Jewish intellectual

Popular Front promised: public works, pensions, unemployment insurance

Came out of crises in French politics – such as anti-govt riots (some said attempted coup) of 1934

May 1936 – before govt took office – huge wave of strikes in France. Negotiations led to legislative reforms and reworked relationships between workers and employers. Support for unions, wage increases, forty-hour work week, and paid vacations.

Economic crisis led Blum to step down. The Popular Front would wither away (though Pop Front would be remembered with nostalgia by those on the left)

Kershaw frames The Popular Front as another example of the failures of the left.

France was “a completely divided country.” Nationalist right hated Blum and the Popular Front. Some said: “Better Hitler than Blum.” Ideological polarization (A sign of divisions to come).

What survived from the Popular Front in France? A national mythology about progressive reform

### *The Spanish Civil War*

Why did the Civil War break out in Spain? What were its impacts? What does the Spanish Civil War tell us about the larger international crisis? What ideological conflicts were at play?

The Spanish Civil War was a great tragedy for the Left in Spain – and in Europe.

Grew out of deep polarization in Spanish politics and in Spanish society, divisions between urban Spain and rural Spain, between conservatives and socialists, between regions with strong identities such as Catalonia and the Basque Country and the rest of Spain, and more...

Second Republic from 1931, in aftermath of dictatorship

Years of conflict – brutal right-wing governing coalition and leftist alternative.

Popular Front government (yes, another one) took power in 1936. An electoral pact of Republicans, Socialists, Communists, Catalan separatists, and trade unions. On the right, it was viewed as the triumph of godless Communism....

On the right, a growing movement, the Falange, promised a more aggressive move against the Republic. Support in the Army, such as General Franco, and in the Churches.

Attempted coup – launched from Spanish Morocco – in July 1936 – soon spread to mainland. Army leaders expected it would be quick, but unanticipated resistance on the left from trade unions, militias, some in Army, prolonged the conflict into a three-year civil war

The Spanish Civil War, 1936 to 1939. Many hundreds of thousands dead in fighting. Tens of thousands more dead in reprisals after the war.

Right, the Nationalists, Rebels, Fascist – supported by much of the rural population, traditionalists, the Church, most of the Army

Left, Republicans, supporters of democracy – supported by much of urban populations, workers, and some members of the military

Francisco Franco, military commander, head of rebel movement from September 1936 and leader of the Falange (or FET) – and then head of state. Little charisma, but ruthless in his control of Spain. Would lead Spain as military dictator until his death in 1975.

International response:

- Germany and Italy supported the nationalists with arms and troops and planes.
- Great Britain and France – sympathetic to the Popular Front government but unwilling to intervene – organized an arms embargo
- The Soviet Union send support to the Popular Front govt – esp. to Communist militias
- Thousands of international volunteers went to Spain to fight against fascism and in defense of democracy

Most infamously, Condor Legion of the German Air Force practiced civilian bombings in the Basque town of Guernica in 1937. One of countless terror raids. Inspiration for Picasso’s painting of “Guernica”

The Spanish Civil War is remembered as a confrontation between democracy and fascism. Many observers at the time and since saw it as a sign of the weakness of democracy and the weakness of the Left.

### *How Did Europe Go to War in 1939?*



Sleepwalking? Slithering? No! Nazi Germany prepared the way from 1934

The miscalculations of democratic powers Britain and France in the 1930s made their efforts to prevent war ineffective.

German aggression was met by Western appeasement – German territorial aggression and weak resistance from the West

Appeasement – the diplomatic policy of making concessions in order to avoid conflict

Hitler becomes the supreme commander of the German army (*Wehrmacht*) taking total control of the military as well as the state – February 1938

The Anschluss – German annexation of Austria – March 1938 – Hitler greeted with acclaim

Conflict over the Sudetenland – territory in Czechoslovakia inhabited by ethnic Germans that Hitler wanted to annex

After weeks of threats and negotiations, Mussolini brokered the Munich Agreement – September 1938 – Czechs cut out of negotiations. Permitted the annexation of the Sudetenland by Nazi Germany. Public response in Britain and France was ecstatic. “Peace in our time.” The high tide of appeasement.

French and British miscalculations. The failure was political, not military (see 1936 and remilitarization of the Rhineland)

British disagreements over legitimate German expansion:

Neville Chamberlain – recognized German claims as legitimate; “Czechoslovakia a faraway country” he said; Britain needed time to rebuild armed forces

Winston Churchill – German expansion was evidence that Britain had given up every interest in central and eastern Europe; Germany as untrustworthy; diplomacy insufficient for the peace and protection of Europe; need grand alliance with Soviet Union against Hitler

### *Preparation for War*

Kristallnacht – Nov. 9, 1938 – violence against Jews across Germany – and new threats against Jews of Germany and of Europe

January 1939 – Hitler speech warning Jews of Europe what will come

March 1939 – German invasion of Czechoslovakia – the end of appeasement

France and Britain offered Poland guarantee of military support

Hitler made claims on Danzig and Polish Corridor

Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact – or Hitler-Stalin Pact – non-aggression pact between Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, August 1939

September 1, 1939 – German invasion of Poland – Blitzkrieg – September 3, Britain and France declare war on Germany

### *World War II*

Some essentials:

In Europe, we date it from September 1939 to May 1945

The culmination of the “Thirty Years War of the 20<sup>th</sup> c.”

40 m. dead in Europe – total warfare – the worst violence will take place in eastern Europe, between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union – a war in which civilian deaths greatly outnumbered military deaths

By Kershaw’s account: WWI was the “seminal catastrophe”; WWII was “the culmination of this catastrophe – the complete collapse of European civilization.” (348) Europe would never be the same again.

### *How did the war unfold?*

In three phases

1. Sept 1939 to June 1941. From Poland to Scandinavia, western Europe and north Africa. Germany (and Italy) on the offensive. Much of the East—the Baltic states, for ex.—occupied by Soviet Union

Capitulation of France in the summer of 1940. But the resistance of Britain. Winston Churchill, PM after the invasion of France

2. June 1941 to June 1944. Marked by the invasion of the Soviet Union. The deadliest arm struggle in history. “Operation Barbarossa.” Enormous distances. Soviet counteroffensive outside of Moscow in December. A long and bitter conflict would continue. With Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the US entered the war.

Turning point? 1942

Allied landings in North Africa in November of 1942. The Siege of Stalingrad in 42-43. Plans for allied invasion of German-occupied western Europe.

3. June 1944 to May 1945. The D-Day invasion in the west—and Soviet offensive in the east. Germany on the defensive. A matter of time. Germany would be occupied from west and east. Hitler suicide in Berlin. Capitulation on May 8, 1945. Come to be known as Victory in Europe Day.

### *How shall we understand the Holocaust?*

In K’s telling, this is the center of the hell that is Europe’s self-destruction.

The Holocaust – the genocide of Europe’s Jews.

The manifestation of Nazi racial ideology – other targets included Slavs, Poles, Gypsies...

Poland was ground zero for these efforts. “The General Government.” First a dumping ground for Jews from around Europe. Deportations. Then an extermination center. Plan was to wipe out “racial undesirables” and open up eastern Europe for German settlement.

Note Soviet plans for eastern Europe. Eastern part of Poland and Baltic Countries were invaded by Soviet Union, under secret protocols of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Stalin had his own plans, to wipe out Polish leaders. A brutal occupation.

“Operation Barbarossa” would unleash what Hitler promised to be a “war of annihilation.” Plans for the “final solution to the Jewish question.” In wake of German invasion, special forces, *Einsatzgruppen*, were sent to kill Jews. Willing collaborators in eastern Europe.

In 1942, the *Einsatzgruppen* and mobile killing gave way to specialized death camps: Chelmno, Belzec, Sobibor. Auschwitz (which included death camp and labor camp). Auschwitz – about 1.1m dead. One inmate: “This is hell”

### *What are the lasting implications of the Second World War?*

What was impact of the war?

- The total collapse of European civilization. And the Second World War would prepare the way for a reordering of the world – and of European history
- 1945 the hinge of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. All of European history should be recounted as: before 1945 and after 1945
- In eastern Europe – meant utter destruction. Occupied by Soviet Union in May 1945. Would see construction of new communist states
- In western Europe – a new start – wouldn’t be clear until the 50s, but new space for consumer capitalism
- The Division of Europe. A recognition of the facts on the ground in May 1945. But also of agreement, at the Yalta Conference (Feb 1945) – USSR a dominant role in Eastern Europe, Germany occupied by

great powers. A Europe divided down the middle – two blocs – one western, tied closely to the US, and one eastern, dominated by the USSR

- End of European dominance in the world. Britain bankrupt, France humiliated, Germany utterly destroyed
- The end of fascism as a major political force. Indeed, the war would also cast a shadow over nationalism
- An effort to rebuild Europe on very different foundations