

FROMM INSTITUTE
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The United States and the Second World War

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The Second World War, World War Two, whichever one calls it, was a dreadful catastrophe for the human race and should never be forgotten and, one hopes, never again repeated. Many of us here at the Fromm were already alive when it occurred, some experienced it first hand, in armed forces or as civilian victims. I was born in October 1932; Herbert Hoover was still president of the United States, Adolf Hitler had not yet been appointed Reich Chancellor in Germany. I was not yet thirteen when the war ended, though I had followed it closely in LIFE magazine and daily newspapers. And of course we had a full diet of newsreels and war movies at Saturday matinees.

During my active duty as a Naval Reserve officer, 1954-58, I served with men who had fought in that war, and have known since many more. While veterans may be reticent to discuss their experiences, among other veterans, including those like me who never knew combat, they tend to be more open. When I was on active duty, those with combat experience believed that those of us without it needed to have a sense of what it was like. I have since read a great deal about the war and for some fifteen years offered courses on it for ROTC cadets at Santa Clara University.

For recommended reading, I find Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, *A War to Be Won: Fighting the Second World War* (2000) and Gerhard Weinberg, *A World At Arms: A Global History of World War II* (1994) the two best studies of the war (but watch for typos; my Weinberg has Midway on June 7, not June 4, 1942). Both have extensive bibliographies. *The Times Atlas of the Second World War* (1989) is handy. West Point Atlases, once better, can be found online.

For the United States in these years, David M. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945* (1999) well deserves its Pulitzer Prize. *Reporting World War II* (Library of America, 1995: *Part One: American Journalism 1938-1944; Part Two: American Journalism 1944-1946*) conveys a splendid sense of immediacy. In it you'll find William L. Shirer, Edward R. Murrow, Martha Gellhorn, Ernie Pyle, Margaret Bourke White, Bill Mauldin, Eric Sevareid and more.

An extraordinary achievement is Samuel Eliot Morison, *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II*, 15 vols. (1947-62). Two exceptional volumes have so far appeared of a promising "Liberation Trilogy" on the U.S. Army in Europe: Rick Atkinson, *An Army at Dawn* (2002), a Pulitzer Prize winner about the North African campaign, and *The Day of Battle* (2007), Sicily and Italy to the fall of Rome (4 June 1944).

Histories published before the mid-1970s, the crucial breaking of German codes was not included as it remained top secret. The studies to read are Stephen Budiansky, *Battle of Wits: The Complete Story of Code Breaking in World War II* (2000) and Hugh Sebag-Montefiore, *Enigma: The Battle for the Code* (2000). The breaking of Japanese codes. For quick reference, *Simon & Schuster Encyclopedia of World War II* (1978) and *The Oxford Companion to World War II* (1995) are both good, the former a bit better for the American side. Illustrated histories abound; LIFE has at least three since 1950.

Television, especially cable channels, endlessly broadcast documentaries about the war so that wags call the History Channel the "Hitler Channel." None for me surpasses "Victory at Sea" (1952-53) with its marvelously arranged Rodgers musical score.

SEQUENCE OF LECTURES

1. Return to Normalcy to Gathering Storm 1918-1938. The 1919 Versailles Treaties. U.S. Foreign Policy in the 1920s; Washington Naval Treaties, 1922; Kellogg-Briand Pact, 1928; The USSR, its early appeal; Stalin and "Five Year Plans;" Mussolini and Fascism in Italy; The worldwide impact of the Great Depression. Hitler, Germany and rearmament; FDR, the New Deal and Isolationism in the U.S.; America's armed forces in 1938.

2. American reaction to events in Europe and Asia 1931-40: 1931: Japan and Manchuria; 1935: Italy & Ethiopia; 1936: Popular Fronts and Civil War in Spain; The Berlin Olympics; 1937: Japan-China war; Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis; 1938: Anschluss (Germany annexes Austria), Munich Agreements; 1939: German occupation of Bohemia; Hitler-Stalin Pact; Nomonhan: Russia and Japan; War in Europe; Blitzkrieg and the Fall of Poland. U.S. Neutrality Act; 1940: "Phoney War," Fall of Norway, the Low Countries and France; Battle of Britain

3. Arsenal of Democracy: 1940-41: U.S. Selective Service Act and "Two Ocean Navy;" the War at Sea; U.S.- U.K. "Destroyers for Bases"; War in North Africa and the Balkans; Roosevelt and Churchill; **1941:** FDR and "Arsenal of Democracy;" "America First" movement and German-American Bund; Lend Lease; German Invasion of Russia (June 1941); Roosevelt and Churchill at Argentia Bay; Japan in French Indo-China; U.S. Atlantic naval moves; USS *Reuben James*; Stalin's spies and the Battle of Moscow

4. Remember Pearl Harbor: The Pacific 1941-42: Pearl Harbor; Churchill in Washington, the Grand Alliance and Combined Joint Chiefs of Staff; Tide of Japanese victories: Malaya, Dutch East Indies and Philippines; The U.S. Home Front War Effort; "Rosie the Riveter;" Stemming the tide: the Battles of the Coral Sea and Midway. Guadalcanal and New Guinea

5. The End of the Beginning: 1942-June 43 Russian Front to Stalingrad (November-January 1943); North Africa and Middle East; the Western Desert and El Alamein (October); Operation Torch (8 November) Morocco and Algeria; 1943 Casablanca Conference (January); Tunisian Campaign (February-May)

6. The Grind: The Nazis and Occupied Europe, 1940-44; the Holocaust; Russian Front 1943-July 1944 (Warsaw); The Aerial Bombardment of Germany 1942-44; U.S. and Britain in Sicily and Italy, July 1943-June 1944. The Pacific 1943-May 1944: Gilbert (Tarawa) and Marshall Islands

7. Victory in Europe: Quebec Conference August 1943; Teheran Conference, November 1943; 6 June 1944: Normandy; Southern France, Paris; Quebec Conference September 1944; Liberation of France; Italy, June-December 1944; the Battle of the Bulge, December 1944-January 1945; Aerial Bombardment of Germany 1944-1945; Eastern Front January 1945; Yalta Conference (February); Western Allies cross Rhine, March 1945; Death of FDR, Harry Truman, President; Fall of Berlin, April; **V-E Day 8 May 1945;** Potsdam Conference (July)

8. Victory in the Pacific: June 1944: Saipan, Battle of Philippine Sea, Guam; October 1944, Return to the Philippines; Battle of Leyte Gulf; 1945: Luzon (January); Iwo Jima (February), Okinawa (April); Death of FDR, Harry Truman, President; Manhattan Project and A-Bombs (August 6, 9), **V-J Day 15 August 1945.** Euphoria, Surprise, Cold War

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SESSION ONE, 15 SEPTEMBER 2009

Return to Normalcy to Gathering Storm 1918-1937.

The United States and the First World War (Population: 1910: 92,228,496; 1920: 106,021,537)

Woodrow Wilson (president 1913-21) and the 1919 Versailles Treaties. Germany

League of Nations. Henry Cabot Lodge

(St. Germain Treaty, Austria, 1919; Trianon Treaty, Hungary 1920; Sèvres treaty, Turkey 1920.

Allied War Dead/Population: France 1,400,000/39.6m; UK 885,000/45.4m; Commonwealth & India, 200,000; Italy 631,000/35.6m; Belgium 59,000/7.4m/Russian Empire 1,811,000/175m. Serbia lost military & civilian 16% of 4.5m. Japan lost few.

U.S.A., 116,000/96m

Central Powers War Dead/Population: Germany 2,000,000/65m; Austria-Hungary, 1,100,000/51.4m/Ottoman Empire 772,000/21m.

Wounded about twice number of dead; civilian deaths varied; Russia, Serbia & Turkey most; Germany & Austria Hungary over 400,000 each; France 300,000; Belgium 74,000

Warren Gamaliel Harding (1921-2 August 1923); "Return to Normalcy;"

H. L. Mencken: "He writes the worst English that I have ever encountered. It reminds me of a string of wet sponges; it reminds me of tattered washing on the line; it reminds me of stale bean soup, of college yells, of dogs barking idiotically through endless nights. It is so bad that a sort of grandeur creeps into it. It drags itself out of the dark abyss of pish, and crawls insanely up the topmost pinnacle of posh. It is rumble and bumble. It is flap and doodle. It is balder and dash."

Prohibition; "Jazz Age," "Roaring '20s"

Scandals: "Teapot Dome"

U.S. Foreign Policy in the 1920s

Lingering Conflicts: 1918-23: Russian Civil War; Baltic States & Finland; Russo Polish War 1919-21; Greek-Turkish War 1919-22

Washington Naval Treaties, 1922: United States, Great Britain, Japan, France, Italy

Battleship Ratio and number: US. 5 (15); Britain 5 (15); Japan 3 (10) France 1:75 (6); Italy 1:75 (6); 35,000 ton limit; Aircraft Carriers also affected;

Calvin Coolidge (1923-28)

Germany, Inflation, French occupation of Ruhr; Dawes Plan (Charles G. Dawes)

Gunboat Diplomacy: Nicaragua 1927-33

Geneva Naval Disarmament, 1927: Treaty Cruisers 10,000 ton limit; Heavy cruiser: 8" guns; Light cruisers: 6.1" guns or less.

Kellogg-Briand Pact, 1928; War Outlawed.

London Naval Conference 1930

Developments Abroad

USSR: "Red Scares;" USSR's early appeal; 1928 Stalin and "Five Year Plans"

Benito Mussolini and Fascism in the Kingdom of Italy; "Duce"

The Great Depression (1930 population: 123,202,624)

Coolidge Prosperity

Herbert Hoover (president 1929-33: the Great Engineer)

Stock Market Crash, "Black Tuesday" 29 October 1929

Protectionism and Tariff Wars: Smoot-Hawley Act 1930

Gold Standard (Britain returned to, 1925; abandoned, Sept. 1931)

Bank Failures. Austrian Credit Anhalt

Repercussions

Germany; Weimar Republic; Paul von Hindenburg, president 1925-34

Locarno Treaty 1925: France, Germany, Italy, U.K.

Adolf Hitler. Nazi Party (NSDAP: Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei); Führer; Beer Hall Putsch 1923; *Mein Kampf* (1925) "Versailles Diktat" Article 231 War Guilt "Kriegsschuld;" Jewish Question, "Judenfrage"

World Depression; Fear of Bolshevism, growing Soviet Power
 Unemployment: 1930: 3,000,000; 1931: 4,380,000; 1932: 5,615,000, 1933: 6,100,000 - 33% of workforce: more partially employed; total population 65,000,000
 Nazi Storm Troops (SA Sturm Abteilung, 600,000 by 1932); SS (Schutz Staffel); Hermann Göring; Joseph Goebbels; Rudolf Hess; Heinrich Himmler, Ernst Röhm
 1930 Reichstag Elections: Left: Social Democrats **SDP** 145; Communists **KPD** 77; Liberal: German Democratic Party **DDP** 20; German Peoples' Party **DVP** 30; centrist Center Party (Catholic) **ZP** 68; Bavarian Peoples' Party **BVP** 19; conservative: German National Peoples Party **DNVP** 41; fascist: National Socialists (Nazi) **NSDAP** 107 (6.5 million votes) (Nazis 1924(1) 32; 1924(2) 14; 1928, 12)
 1932 Presidential Election: Hindenburg, 18,650,000; Hitler, 11,300,000; Thälmann (KPD) 5m
 Heinrich Brüning Chancellor 1930-30 May 1932)
 Franz von Papen & General Curt von Schleicher
 1932 July Election: NSDAP 230; SDP 133; KPD 89; ZP+BVP 97; DNVP 37; others 22
 1932 November Election: NSDAP 196; SDP 121; KPD 100; ZP+BVP 90; DNVP 52, others 25
 1933, 30 January. Hitler appointed chancellor (Reichskanzler);
 27 February: Reichstag fire; KDP soon outlawed
 March 5 Elections: NSDAP 288; DNVP 52; SDP 120; KDP 81; ZP 74
 March 24 Enabling Act: April Civil Service Law: Nazis; May end of all parties;
 Gestapo (GeheimStaatsPolizei); Nazi courts: Sondergericht; Volksgerichtshof; Dachau "Arbeit macht Frei"
 1934 SA problem; June 30 Blood Purge ("Night of Long knives")
 Death of Hindenburg (Aug.); election of Hitler as President 38,000,000 to 4,500,000.
 1935 Nuremberg Racial Laws
 Naval Treaty with Britain (1935), Rearmament, Militarization of Rhineland (March 1936)
 Berlin Olympics, August 1936
United States and Great Depression. 1930 census: 123,202,624: Unemployment 25%
 1932 Election, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 22.8m 472 Electoral/Herbert Hoover 15.7m/59 El.
 New Deal: "Brain Trust" Rexford Tugwell, Raymond Moley Harold Ickes, Adolf Berle
 Economic Theory: John Maynard Keynes
 Programs: RFC, NRA, WPA, CCC and continuing political debate
 Low point, summer 1932; GDP increased except 1938; Business and manufacturing more efficient, less labor intensive.
 Foreign Affairs. "Good Neighbor" Policy; Protectionism and Isolationism
 1931 Japan into Manchuria; 1935 Italy into Ethiopia: Neutrality Acts
 America's armed forces in 1936. **Army**: Secretary of War Henry Hines Woodring 1936-1940; Douglas MacArthur, Chief of Staff 1930-35; Mailan Craig, COS, 1935-39; 1922 Act: 12,000 officers, 150,000 enlisted; 16,800 Army Air Corps; 7000 Philippine Scouts. **Navy** Secretary of the Navy, Charles A. Swanson, 1933-39; Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) William D. Leahy (1937-39); 10,000 officers, 95,000 enlisted; Commander-in-Chief U.S. Fleet; 15 Battleships, 4 aircraft carriers, 25 cruisers, 104 destroyers, 57 submarines, 1200 aircraft. **Marine Corps**, 16,000 officers and men, Thomas Holcomb commandant 1936-43 (John A. Lejeune, Commandant 1920-29)
 Second London Naval Treaty. 1936. Japan withdraws.
 Berlin Olympics

Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months That Changed the World* (2001)
 Frederick Lewis Allen, *Only Yesterday* (1931)
 David M. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear: the American people in Depression and War 1929-45* (1999)
 Gordon A. Craig, *Germany 1866-1945* (1978)
 Joachim Fest, *Hitler* (1978)
 Ian Kershaw, *Hitler 1889-1936 Hubris* (1998); *Hitler 1936-1945 Nemesis* (2000)
 William L. Shirer, *Berlin Diary* (1941); *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (1960)
 Dennis Mack Smith, *Mussolini's Roman Empire* (1976)
 Herbert Feis, *Road to Pearl Harbor* (1950)