

# FOREIGN POLICY 1920s-1930s

## ■ Essential Questions:

- ◆ What factors led the United States to shift from isolation in the 1920s & 1930s to an active war participant by 1941?
- ◆ Why did the USA enter WW II?
- ◆ How do these factors compare to US reasons for entering the first World War?

# RESULTS OF WW I

- Wilson had wanted to “make the world safe for democracy”
- From post-war chaos in Europe to communism in Soviet Union, this had not been realized
- America does not want to be brought into another European conflict

# ISOLATIONISM

- Defined as a withdrawal from world affairs
- America practiced *partial* isolationism
  - ◆ America will still deal with other nations, but try to avoid entangling alliances
  - ◆ Main effort is to stay out of a European war

# UNILATERALISM

- Independent action in foreign affairs
- United States did not join the League of Nations or the World Court
- U.S. will use diplomacy to promote peace
- Disarmament - limiting of weapons

# WASHINGTON CONFERENCE

- Nov. 1921
- Organized by Sec. of State Charles Evans Hughes
- Called for 10-year naval “holiday” → No battleships or battle cruisers would be built

# FIVE-POWER AGREEMENT

- Involved United States, Great Britain, Japan, France, and Italy
- Warships would be scrapped until a ratio of 5:5:3 existed among U.S., Great Britain, and Japan

# OTHER AGREEMENTS

- **Four-Power Treaty** - Japan, Great Britain, United States, and France agree to respect one another's territory in the Pacific
- **Nine-Power Treaty** - United States, Great Britain, Japan, France, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Belgium, and China agree to China's territorial integrity and to uphold the Open Door Policy → blocks Japanese dominance of China



# KELLOGG-BRIAND PACT

- French Foreign Minister Aristide Briand proposed that the U.S. and France agree to outlaw war as a way of resolving differences
- Sec. of State Frank Kellogg proposes that all nations be included
- 62 eventually sign

# WAR DEBTS

- During 1800s, the U.S. had become a debtor nation with respect to Europe
- After 1914, U.S. becomes a creditor nation
  - ◆ European countries could not pay debts
  - ◆ 1931- Pres. Hoover declares a one-year moratorium on payments

- In Europe, post-war recovery was difficult in the 1920s & 1930s:
  - ◆ The Hawley-Smoot Tariff in 1930 limited European attempts to sell their goods in the US
  - ◆ The Great Depression limited American loans to Europe which left Germany unable to repay reparations & Europe unable to repay its debts to the US

# RELATIONS WITH LATIN AMERICA

- FDR – “Good Neighbor” Policy
  - ◆ renounces past imperialism / continues political, economic domination of Latin America
  - ◆ 1934 - cancels the Platt Amendment (Cuba)
    - ◆ Right to intervene in Cuba’s internal affairs
  - ◆ 1936 - gives up claim to intervene unilaterally in Panama
  - ◆ Withdraws marines from Haiti

# ECONOMIC INVOLVEMENT

- After WW I, U.S. companies increase their investment in banana, coffee, and sugar plantations
- Largest was United Fruit Company
  - ◆ In Guatemala, it was largest landowner, exporter, and employer
- Known as “banana republics” → unstable, dependent, corrupt
- Stock market crash of 1929 effects Latin America

# CAUDILLOS

- Military leaders who came to power in the 1930s
- El Salvador, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and Honduras all come under dictatorships
- U.S. would sometimes support the caudillos if they were favorable to American interests

# NICARAGUA

- 1925 - General Emiliano Chamorro overthrows the government
- 1926 - Coolidge sends in marines to protect American interests
- Henry Stimson sent to negotiate end to civil war
- 1927 - Peace treaty negotiated and U.S. calls for training of a Nicaraguan National Guard

- Augusto Cesar Sandino refuses to accept agreement
- Organizes revolt against Chamorro and his successor, Adolfo Diaz
- U.S. troops cannot defeat Sandino and Hoover withdraws them in 1933
- Head of National Guard, Anastasio Somoza, orders the assassination of Sandino
- Somoza takes over in 1937



# MEXICO

- March 1938- Mexican President Lazaro Cardenas nationalizes the country's oil industry
- U.S. and British firms owned and operated oil companies in Mexico
- Calls for action by companies
- Because of situation in Europe and Asia, compromise is reached in 1939

# CAUSES OF WORLD WAR II

# 7 CAUSES

- PEACE OF PARIS
- WEAKNESS OF LEAGUE OF NATIONS
- FAILURE OF DISARMAMENT
- ECONOMIC PROBLEMS
- NATIONALISM
- RISE OF DICTATORSHIPS
- AGGRESSIVE EXPANSION

# 1. PEACE OF PARIS

- Problems left by World War I
- Treaty of Versailles
  - ◆ Caused Germany to be occupied, to disarm, to give up land, to pay reparations, and to admit guilt
  - ◆ Germany faced with unemployment, runaway inflation, and shortages

# WEIMAR REPUBLIC

- 1919 - blamed for accepting Treaty of Versailles
- People want change
- Communists and Socialists call for overthrow

## 2. Weakness of League of Nations

- No international police force
- U.S. did not join, thus making it weaker
- Most countries more concerned with their own problems, not willing to stand against other nations

# 3. Failure of Disarmament

- 1921- Washington Naval Conference
- 1927 and 1930 - less successful conferences
- 1932- League of Nations conference in Geneva
- German Chancellor Heinrich Brüning offers to stay at level set by Versailles Treaty if others will do same

- France refuses without international police force to enforce
- Talks collapse, and Brüning government collapses also
- Within 8 months, Hitler is in charge and Germany withdraws from conference and League of Nations



## 4. Economic Problems

- Germany, Italy, and Japan consider their trade situation unfair
- U.S., Great Britain, France, Belgium, and Netherlands control world trade
- In prosperous times, markets were available
- Combination of war reparations and the Great Depression effect overall economies

## 5. Nationalism

- Hindered cooperation the same as during World War I
- Led to alliances
- Germans in Sudetes Mountains of Czechoslovakia (Sudetenland) want to join with Germany

# 6. RISE OF DICTATORSHIPS

# RUSSIA

- Nov. 1917 - Bolshevik Revolution
- Communists under V. I. Lenin call for “dictatorship of the proletariat”
- Instead, once in power, led to one-party dictatorship
- After Lenin’s Death, Joseph Stalin will emerge as the new leader

- ◆ Began to seize private property
- ◆ Outlawed all parties, except for Communists

# ITALY

- After World War I, communist party urges peasants to take over land and workers to take over factories
- To confront the communists, Benito Mussolini founds the Fascist Party in 1919
- Black Shirts - Mussolini's army of followers
- 1922 - Mussolini named Prime Minister
- Takes all power of government

- Italy not satisfied with land gained in World War I
- Mussolini calls for restoration of Italian greatness, the glory of Rome
- States that the Mediterranean Sea should be an Italian lake
- Known as Il Duce (the Leader)

# GERMANY

- National Socialists (Nazis) come to power under Hitler in 1933
- In 1925, Hitler had written a book called *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle) in which he outlined his plan for a Third Reich
- He called for rearmament and a Greater Germany



- Once named Chancellor by Paul von Hindenburg, he began to crush any opposition and to rebuild power
- His army was called the Brown Shirts
- He established the Hitler Youth to instill military discipline
- He said that Germany needed *Lebensraum* (living space)

- He began to cleanse Germany of those who were not true Germans
- *Kristallnacht* - Night of Broken Glass
  - ◆ Jewish businesses are trashed

# JAPAN

- Militarists begin to control
- Tradition of the Samurai
  - ◆ The highest achievement in war and conquest
- During the 1920s, a liberal government was in charge; by the 1930s, the military dominates

# 7. AGGRESSIVE EXPANSION

# MANCHURIA

- Japan invades in 1931
  - ◆ Japan needs natural resources
  - ◆ Other countries more concerned with the Great Depression than China
- 1937- Japan attacks China near Peking (Beijing)
- By 1938, Japan controls most major ports and rail centers
- League of Nations condemns, does not act

# ETHIOPIA

- 1935 - Mussolini invades
- Ethiopians are crudely equipped, cannot match the power of Italy
- Other nations refuse to get involved

→ *Aggressor nations feel they can act without fear of retaliation*

# SPANISH CIVIL WAR

- 1936 - Fascist rebels under Francisco Franco → wage war against the Loyalists
- Hitler and Mussolini help the Fascists, and the Soviet Union aids the Loyalists
- Franco wins in 1939
- Served as testing ground for WW II
- Hemingway - *For Whom the Bell Tolls*

# RHINELAND

- Hitler begins to build up German military
- 1936- Troops move into demilitarized zone west of Rhine River
- Europe is afraid of war, they do not stop Hitler
- Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis is formed



# AUSTRIA

- Hitler supports Nazi movement in Austria
- Chancellor Engelbert Dolfuss is assassinated
- 1938- Hitler marches in unopposed → *Anschluss*

# CZECHOSLOVAKIA

- Germans surround on three sides
- Hitler wants Germans in Sudetenland to join with Germany
- France, Soviet Union, and Great Britain pledge to help the Czechs
- Hitler states this is his “last territorial claim”

# MUNICH CONFERENCE

- 1938- British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and French Premier Edouard Daladier meet with Hitler and Mussolini to decide fate of Sudetenland
- Decision is made to give Sudetenland to Hitler → *APPEASEMENT*
- Chamberlain states “there will be peace in our time”

# American Isolationism

- In the 1930s, FDR & Congress were preoccupied with the Great Depression to adequately plan for these growing world conflicts
- The rising threat of war in Europe & Asia strengthened Americans' desire to avoid involvement in another world war

# U.S. NEUTRALITY

- 1935-1939 – A series of neutrality laws (Nye Resolutions) were passed → Most Americans resolved against another “meaningless” war
  - ◆ Prohibited shipment of munitions to warring countries
  - ◆ Requires warring nations to transport American goods on their own ships
  - ◆ U.S. loans to nations at war prohibited
  - ◆ Forbids Americans to travel on ships of warring nations

# The Lure of Pacifism & Neutrality

Munitions makers & bankers were labeled “merchants of death” & were blamed for American involvement in WW I

Pacifism swept across college campuses;  
Students staged “walk-outs” to attend anti-war rallies

# POLAND

- 1939 - Hitler wanted strip of land across Polish Corridor to unite Germany with East Prussia, also wanted Danzig
- Poles refuse
- Italians take Albania
- Hitler takes rest of Czechoslovakia

- Germans work to fortify Siegfried Line across from French Maginot Line
- British and French realize that appeasement has been failure
- Chamberlain announces that Great Britain will support Poland
- Hitler states that the Poles are unreasonable



# NON-AGGRESSION PACT

- Hitler makes agreement with Stalin to divide Poland
- Aug 23, 1939 - Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and Soviet Union is made public
- Hitler felt Britain will not fight
- Sept. 1, 1939- Germany invades Poland

# United States Reacts to War - Debate in 1940: Isolationist or Internationalist?

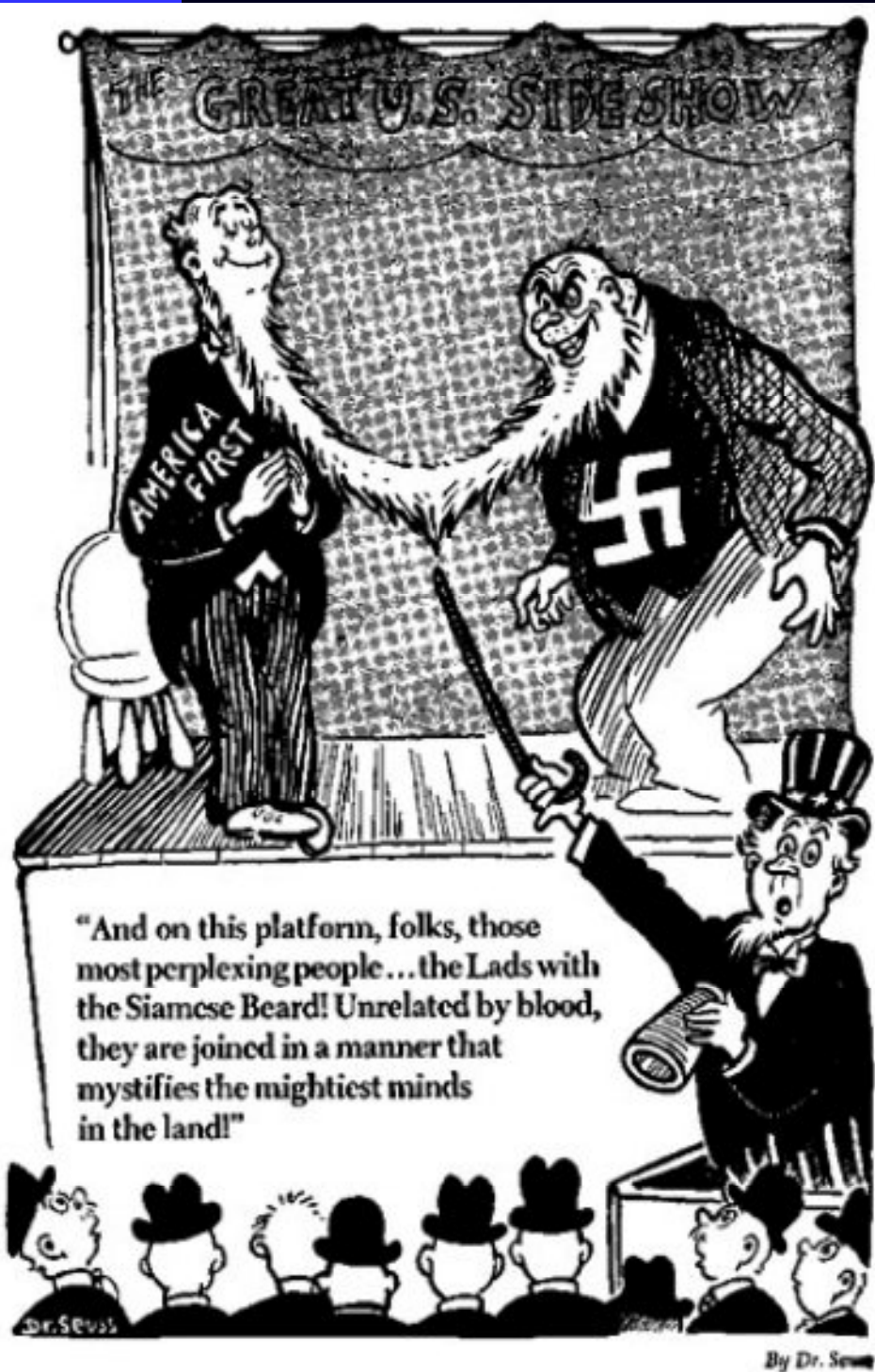
## *Isolationists*

- America First Committee
- Charles A Lindbergh
- “Intervention is detrimental to American interests”



## *Internationalists*

- Committee to Defend America
- Best way to keep US out of war is to help allies fight the Germans
- Roosevelt is sympathetic



**THE FIGHT AGAINST FOREIGN WAR HAS JUST BEGUN!**

THE VOTE ON NEUTRALITY REVISION WAS THE CLOSEST ON ANY WAR LEGISLATION YET.

There is still time to keep out —  
**IF you do your part, by joining**  
**AMERICA FIRST**

AMERICA FIRST COMMITTEE  
 32 DEVONSHIRE STREET • BOSTON • CAPITOL #144

**"Relax, Sam, I assure you  
the express turns  
off right here!"**



Dr. Seuss

By Dr. Seuss

