

Origins of World War II and the Holocaust

I. When Did World War II Begin?

II. Who Was Responsible for Starting World War II in Europe?

A. Traditional View

B. A. J. P. Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War* (1961)

C. George F. Kennan, *Russia and the West under Lenin and Stalin* (1961)

D. Role of the Versailles Peace Treaty

1. Reparations
2. Territorial Losses
3. War Guilt Clause (revision by historians during 1920's)

E. Why Was Hitler Surprised When England Declared War on Germany?

1. France and England said Germany was not allowed to rearm
 - a. 1935 — Hitler announced German rearmament
 - b. result: nothing happened
2. France and England said Germany was not allowed to occupy the Rhineland
 - a. 1936 (March) — Hitler ordered German troops into Rhineland
 - b. result: nothing happened
3. France and England said Germany was not allowed to unite with Austria
 - a. 1938 (March) — Hitler announced *Anschluss* with Austria
 - b. result: nothing happened
4. France and England guaranteed territorial integrity of Czechoslovakia
 - a. Hitler said he would take “Sudentenland” anyway
 - b. 1938 (September) — Chamberlain and Daladier signed Munich Agreement
5. Allies said Germany was not allowed to occupy Czechoslovakia
 - a. 1939 (March) — German troops occupied Bohemia (Prague) and Moravia
 - b. result: nothing happened
6. Allies said Germany was not allowed to attack Poland
 - a. 1939 (September) — Germany army invaded Poland
 - b. result: France and England declared war on Germany

F. German-Soviet Relations

August 1914–November 1918 — War and Treaty of Brest-Litovsk

November 1918–April 1922 — Minimal Contact

April 1922–January 1933 — Alliance
— Treaty of Rapallo, April 16, 1922

January 1933–August 1939 — Antagonism
— Hitler Becomes Chancellor (January 30, 1933)
— Anti-Comintern Pact (November 25, 1936)
— Viacheslav M. Molotov replaces Maxim Litvinov as Soviet Foreign Minister (May 3, 1939)
— Anglo-French Military Mission Arrives in Moscow (August 12, 1939)

August 1939–June 1941 — Alliance
— German–Soviet Non-Aggression Pact (August 23, 1939)
— German and Soviet armies invade Poland (September 1 and 17, respectively)
— England and France Declare War on Germany (September 3, 1939)
— Sitzkrieg (Phony War), September 1939–May 1940
— German occupation of France (June 1940)
— Molotov Visit to Berlin, November 12, 1940
— Soviet-Japanese Non-Aggression Pact (April 13, 1941)
— German army invades the Soviet Union (June 22, 1941)
— What Led Hitler to Attack the Soviet Union?
— What Led Hitler to Declare War on the U.S. on December 11, 1941?

G. *Endlösung* (Final Solution) – Wannsee Conference, January 20, 1942