

I. The Failure of Internationalism

1. The German people were convinced by Adolf Hitler that they could achieve their national aim of a “*grossDeutschland*” (a greater Germany) only at the expense of their national enemies, and they accepted his ideology of *Nazionalsozialismus* (“National Socialism,” or *Nazism*).
2. The rest of Europe was paralyzed by the rise of Hitler. In theory, every nation was supposed to be able to decide things for itself. Who were the people of France or England to complain, if a nation like Germany chose Hitler as their leader, and if Hitler seemed to be merely asking for the same national status as other nations?
3. When an Austrian vote was held to join Austria to Germany, it was again not possible for anyone who believed in nationalism to resist. All that was happening was that a true nation of German people was forming.
4. However, the next step in the rise of Nazi Germany was that Hitler demanded that the German-speaking people of Czechoslovakia be allowed to join Germany. Hoping to appease Hitler, the leader of England Neville Chamberlain met with him and agreed to permit the dismantling of Czechoslovakia so that the Germans could all live in one homeland together. In mid-1938, Chamberlain returned from this meeting—a true example of internationalist diplomacy—claiming that it would produce “peace for our time.”
5. Making final preparations for a supernationalist war, Germany signed a “non-aggression” treaty with Russia in August 1939. (Secretly, the treaty included an agreement to divide Poland between them.) It was the last crucial step that made the Germans believe they could succeed, since their enemy to the east was neutralized, and they could focus on a war to the west.
6. On the 1st of September 1939, Germany invaded Poland, and the hopes of the internationalists were dashed. The greatest war in history had begun.

J. World War II (1939-45)

1. When Germany invaded Poland, Britain and its European allies realized that war with Germany was inevitable and they declared war on it.
2. Germany’s long, systematic preparations for this war were a great advantage. Germany easily conquered France, to everyone’s great surprise.
3. The *Battle of Britain* ensued, with the German Air Force bombarding London and the rest of England continually, producing a level of destruction never before seen.
4. Americans, of course, were relieved to not be directly involved, but they could not pretend that neutrality was a proper response. It was clear that they needed to help Britain and its allies in some way. They responded by sending supplies to those countries in a program called “Lend-Lease.”

5. Since this included sending supplies to Asia, where the war begun even earlier, to stop Japan (and ally of Nazi Germany), that country correctly feared that when America eventually joined the war as a direct participant, it would not be able to win.
6. The Japanese launched the infamous sneak attack on Pearl Harbor in December of 1941, destroying a large portion of the American fleet there, but not as much as they had hoped, resulting in the immediate entry of the United States into the war.
7. The American navy and marines gradually forced the Japanese out of their empire in the South Pacific, and on “D-Day” in 1944, invaded continental Europe from Britain.
8. With Russia, empowered by Lend-Lease aid, fighting back the Germans in the east, America and its allies were able to push them back in the west. Unlike in World War I, the goal was the total conquest and subordination of Germany.
9. American and Russian forces converged on Germany, and Germany unconditionally surrendered in May of 1945.

K. The Holocaust and the End of European Supernationalism

1. Americans and Russians converging on Germany discovered that one of the monstrous features of Germany National Socialism was a program to exterminate all non-Germans within Germany.
2. The main target of this extermination program were the Jews, whom Hitler had blamed for Germany’s defeat in World War I.
3. Jewish people, and anyone not considered to be a proper member of the German race, were rounded up and sent to concentration camps, where they were forced to perform slave labor, and eventually simply murdered. Six million Jews were killed that way.
4. When American soldiers discovered the horrors of this program, which became known in history as the *Holocaust*, they were so shocked that they sometimes said, “we will take no prisoners here.”
5. After Germany was conquered, all the highest ranking Nazi leaders were put on trial, and many were executed. The Germans were forced to face what their belief in supernationalism had produced, instilling their nation with a deep sense of shame.