

J. Germany Between the Wars

1. Even though the new version of Europe was supposed to be organized into nations, Germany was not allowed to become a “nation” by joining with Austria (where the people all spoke German).
2. Still, Germany joined the League of Nations in 1926 and seemed to accept internationalism.
3. Inside Germany, however, the people believed that not only were they not guilty of doing anything wrong by starting World War I, but they believed that they had not really lost. Instead, it was common for Germans believe a conspiracy theory that the German army had been betrayed, thus bringing about defeat. (This is known as the “back stab legend.”)
4. This was the view of Adolph Hitler, a member of the Nazi party, wrote a book entitled *Mein Kampf* in which he claimed that it was a people known as the Jews, who were living inside Germany, who were responsible for Germany's defeat and its continuing weakness. (The Jews are people from ancient Israel, but who, because of repeated invasions of their homeland, were scattered throughout Europe. *To be clear: Hitler's blame upon the Jews is one of the greatest falsehoods and injustices ever perpetrated in history, if not the single greatest.*)
5. Still, Hitler was a charismatic leaders, who promised the people that he could make the changes necessary to make Germany a great country again.
6. He became the Chancellor of Germany (the leader of the government) in 1933. He soon withdrew from the League of Nations and began a program of rapid militarization as the rest of Europe watched on with dismay.

K. 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 *Nazionalismus* (“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.

L. World War II, the Holocaust and the End of European Supernationalism

1. As terrible as all aspects of World War II were, when allied forces converged on Germany, they discovered that the most monstrous feature of German 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, which made them feel a deep sense of shame.

M. Preventing Future Wars

1. The main idea of supranationalism is to prevent future European wars.
2. In the wake of World War II, French statesman Robert Schumann proposed that the industries most connected to the production of armaments — the coal & steel industries — should be placed under *supranational* control.
3. Schumann believed that supranationalism, as a way of thinking, would allow Europeans to abandon the narrower, national, conceptions of their personal identity, and thus make war “*unthinkable*.”
4. In practical terms, the way to prevent war, he held, was to make war “*materially impossible*,” by placing the armaments industries under a supranational “high authority.”
5. In 1951, the European Coal & Steel Community (ECSC) was formed as the first supranational government authority in Europe. It became the prototype for further efforts to unite the nations.