

Theme 2: India & the Second World War (1939-1945)



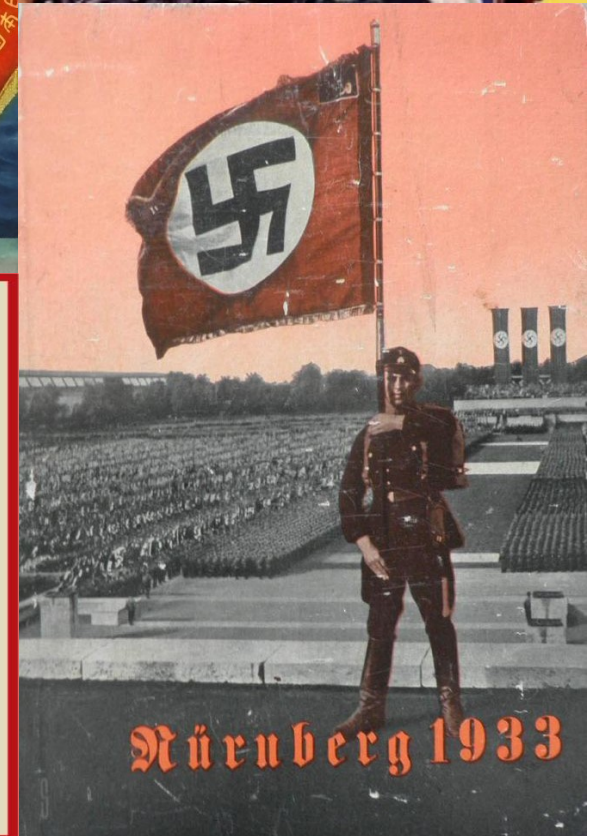
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Key Questions

- Was the First World War responsible for WW-2?
- How was WW-2 different from WW-1?
- What was it's impact on India?
- Why study WW-2?

Consequences of WW-I

- **Rise of aggressive nationalism:** Europe, China, India, Africa
- **German Revanchism:** Desire to avenge Treaty of Versailles, gain lost territories
- **China:** Civil War, KMT Party in nominal control. Fighting Japan.
- **Japan:** Increasingly aggressive, militaristic, autarkic. Wants to colonise China.
- **Russia:** Proclaimed as USSR



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20 Years of Unstable International Diplomacy 1919-1939

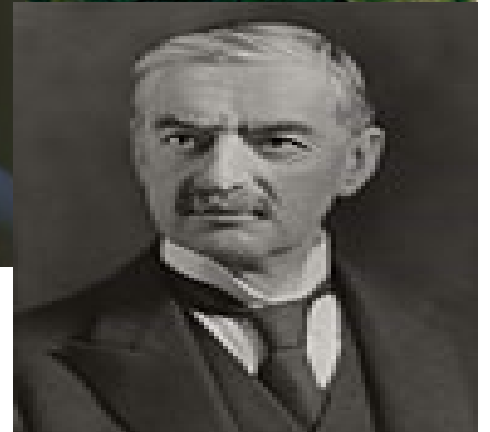
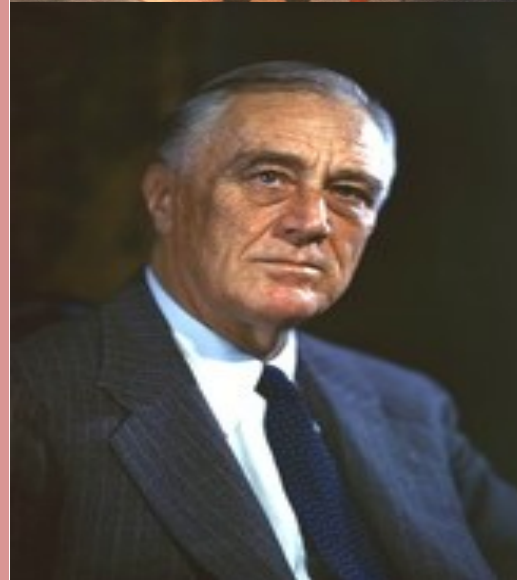
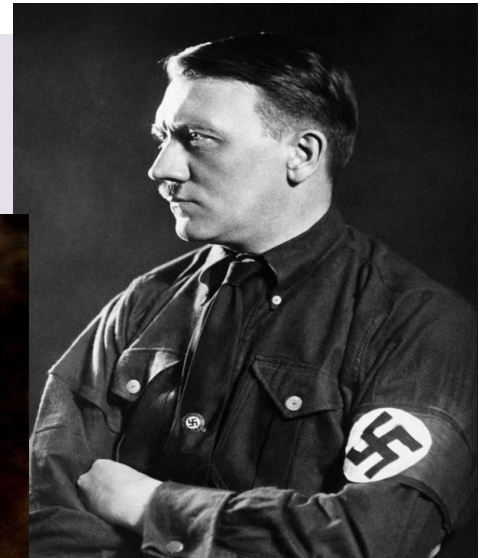
- **Failure** of the League of Nations to prohibit conflicts.
- **Dissolution of German Empire: 1918-1919** ; Weimar Republic
- **Japanese Colonisation of Manchuria, China in 1931**
- **Italy-Ethiopia War 1935-36** (Germany supports Italy in return for German occupation of Austria)
- **China-Japan War, 1937**
- **APPEASEMENT by UK, France:**
- Remilitarisation & Annexation of Rhineland by Germany, 1936
- **Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939** (Germany supported militaristic Nationalists led by General Franco)



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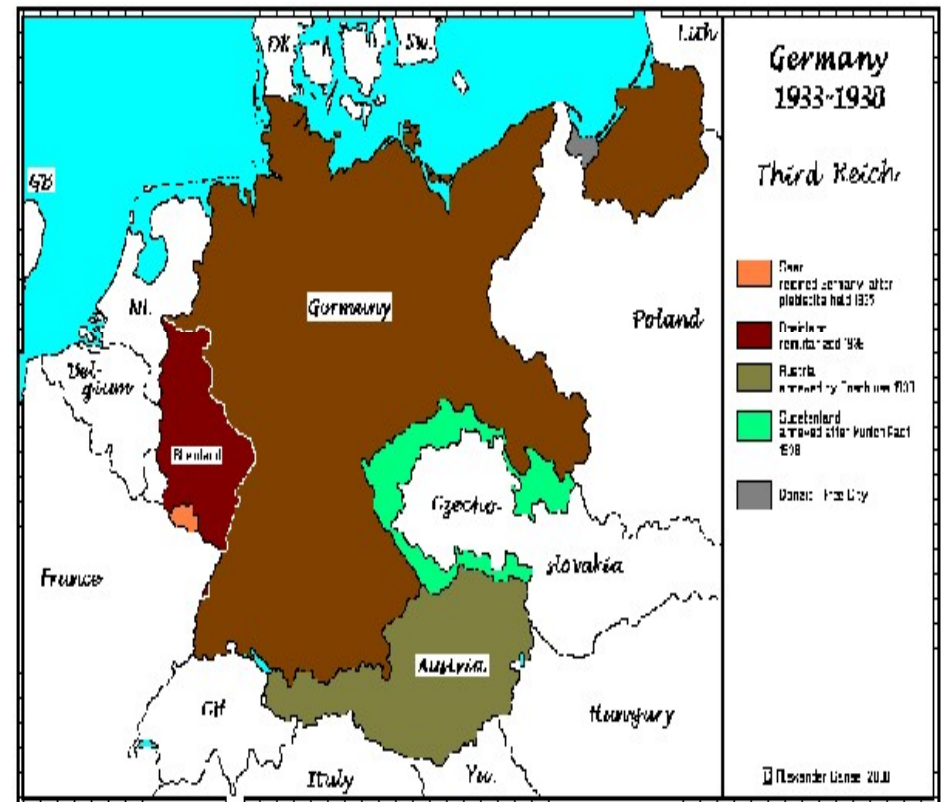
Inter-War Years (1919-1939)

- **Emergence of the US and USSR (Allies briefly during WW2) + UK & France**
- **Secret Treaty: USSR + Germany = Invalid in 1941**
- **Adolf Hitler: Nazism (Chancellor in 1933)**
- **Failure of Diplomacy:** Failure to notice Fascist threats (**Rhineland, Annexation of Austria etc**)
- **Complex International Environment:** Trade Wars merging with Political Wars
- **Rise of Imperialist Japan = Allies with Germany (Axis)**



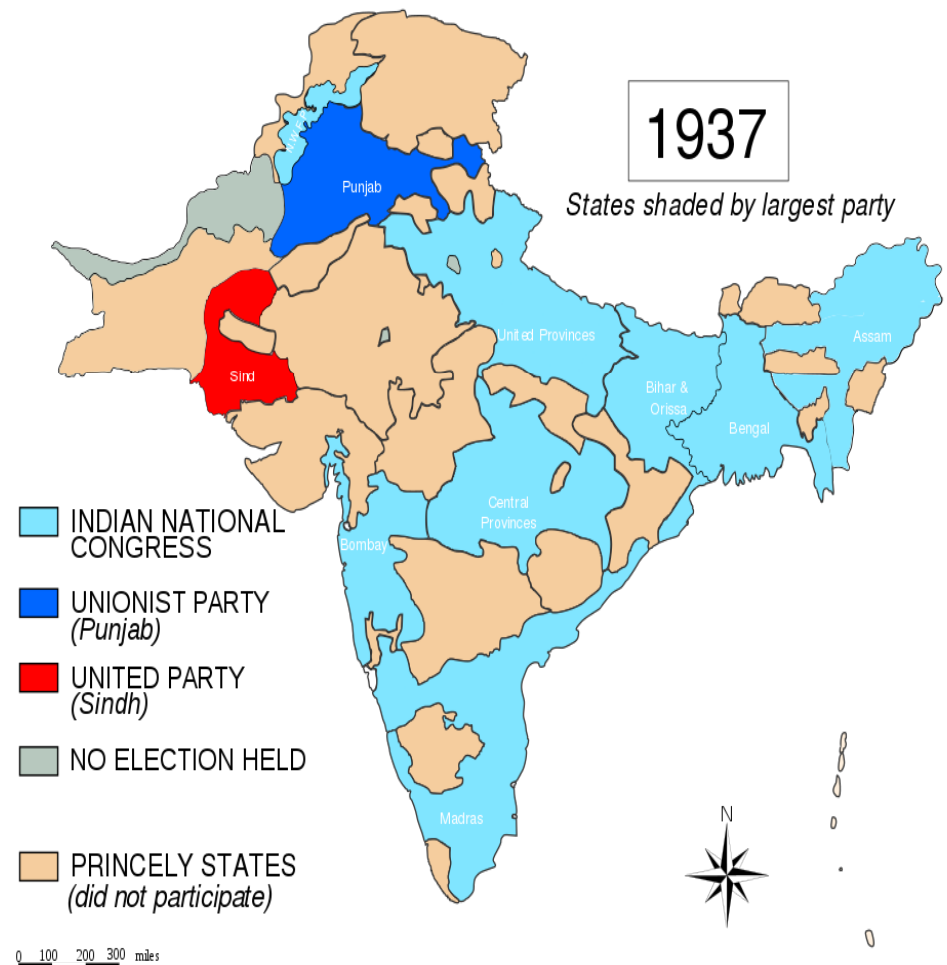
Countdown towards War: Failure of Appeasement

- 1936: Germany takes Rhineland
- 1938: Germany takes Austria
- 1938: UK, France agree to let Germany annex Sudetenland (Czechoslovakia) ; Treaty of Munich
- 1939: Germany takes entire Czechoslovakia
- Aug 1939: USSR + Germany secret treaty of non-aggression. Division & Annexation of Poland.
- **September 1939: Germany Invades Poland = UK + France declare War**



India's Entry in WW-2

- **1937 Elections:** Congress majority ; Muslim League vanquished.
- **1939:** Resignation of Congress Ministries following WW-2 outbreak & India's entry announced by the UK.
- **1939:** Congress declines support, ML supports war effort. ML starts **Pakistan Movement**.
- **1939-1942:** Communal disturbances in the subcontinent.
- **1942:** Quit India Movement



Indian Army During WW-2

- Strength: Almost **2.5 million**
- **Theatres:** East Africa (Ethiopia), Iraq, Iran, Syria, Italy, Burma, Singapore, Malaya, Libya, Egypt
- **New generation of Indian officers** trained for diverse kinds of warfare, became senior officers post-1947
- Kohima, Imphal: Pitched between the **14th Army** Of India versus Japan & INA



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Indian National Army

- Formed in **1942 in Singapore**. Roughly **20,000** men. Mostly former Indian Army officers & soldiers.
- Formed mainly as a liberation army in collaboration with Japan.
- Advanced through Burma (1943-44)
- Fights along India's north-eastern frontier (Imphal, Kohima): 1944
- 1945: INA retreats into Burma repulsed by British Indian Army. Eventually collapses in Bangkok.



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Indian Navy During WW-2

- **1857-58:** Formation of the Royal Indian Marine in Calcutta
- Limited contribution to WW-I in Iraq, later downgraded.
- **1934:** Establishment of the **Royal Indian Navy (RIN)** at Bombay.
- **Strength:** only **8** warships; 1300 personnel in 1939-40.
- WW-2 development of RIN in response to German & Japanese capabilities.
- **Main roles:** coastal defence, trade routes protection in Indian Ocean, support army in troop movements.
- **Served mainly in:** Burma, Andamans, Persian Gulf.



Re-arming the Navy during WW-2

- Japanese control over south-east Asia led to the re-arming of RIN after 1942.
- **May 1945:** Capture of Rangoon ; Joint operations by Navy, Army & AF (**Operation Dracula**)
- **WW-2 Acquisitions for RIN:** Anti-aircraft sloops, Minesweepers, small ships.
- **Naval Equipment Hierarchy:** Sloop < Corvette < Frigate < Aircraft Carriers.
- **Until 1947:** RIN has only limited equipment capability, subservient to the Royal Navy (UK)



Air Power & WW-2

- **Main service areas: Burma, NWFP, Assam** + UK, Africa (limited numbers)
- Crucial for **Land + Air Battles** in Burma against the Japanese, INA
- Both **Offensive & Defensive** unlike the Navy (mainly defensive)
- Defended Kohima & Imphal during 1944 against Japanese aircrafts.
- **1945:** Declared '**Royal**' Indian Air Force (RIAF)
- **RIAF:** Elite, Cosmopolitan, International Composition



Mehar Singh



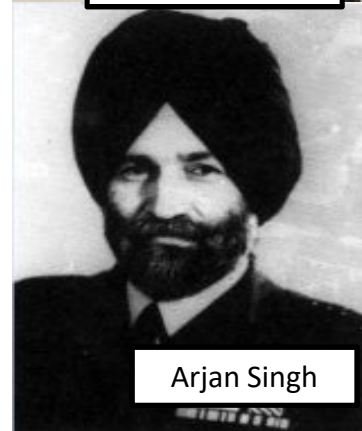
Hurricanes



Aspy Engineer



Spitfire



Arjan Singh



S Mukerji



Lysander