

## Lecture 2.12: World War II

### Conflict and Appeasement in the 1930s:

- Most people argue that start was in 1939
- Stuff going on through entire 1930s that contribute to start of it
- Most countries practicing appeasement bc they don't want another WWI
- Examples:
  - 1931: Japan invaded Manchuria
    - Starting conflict
    - League of nations protests, but they don't do anything about it
  - 1935 Italy conquers Ethiopia
    - Britain and France do nothing even though they theoretically could have bc they don't want to get involved in another war
  - 1936 Hitler send German troops into Spain to aid fascist troops in the Spanish CV
    - Rest of Europe doesn't want to get involved, stays neutral
    - Everybody paranoid bout staying out of war
  - 1937 Japan invades China
    - League of nations protests but does nothing
  - 1938 Hitler's army annexes Austria
    - Starts threatening to take Czechoslovakia
  - 1938 Munich Conference
    - Bunch of leaders meeting with Hitler to prevent war
    - They decide that he can have Czechoslovakia, but he can't have anymore
    - That's fine but no more, but it doesn't end
    - Theme of appeasement
  - 1939 Hitler makes secret deal with Stalin, they both invade Poland, France and UK declare war
    - Stalin doesn't like fascists, Hitler doesn't like communists, but they both want Poland
  - Pretty much immediately, Germany just keeps going → keep branching out and taking chunks of everywhere
  - Appeasement couldn't stop Nazi Germany
- What is the US doing? Nothing

### US "Neutrality"

- Isolation still main mentality bc of depression, WWI, etc
- Europe deals with own problems
- 1935 US passes Neutrality Act
  - Bars them from selling weapons to countries during war
- 1936 Congress you also can't provide loans to any country that is in war
- 1937 we have recession, FDR and congress changes policies to what is called Cash and carry
  - You can transport non military goods (later weapons) if the country pays in cash and transports it themselves
  - Need income
- Not all US citizens agree with this, big debate

- Small vocal group (Popular Front)
  - Not all US citizens agree, the popular front wants US to oppose fascism and defend liberal govt, so join the war
  - The America First committee wants to prioritize the US
  - Massive debates!!
- On the other hand, America First Committee says no, we shouldn't care what happens to anybody else
- 1939 FDR convinces Congress to add weapons to Cash and Carry
  - We need money!! Still in depression, anything that could give money is useful
- 1940 pushed by FDR, gov agrees to increase US defense spending and introduce first Peacetime draft in history
  - Starting to build up military force and weapons
  - FDR and people know that they can't stay out of this long term
- Arsenal of Democracy
  - Phrase that FDR uses to justify ^
  - FDR says look we're gonna be supply house for democratic govs around the world as justification
- 1940 election: FDR wins 3<sup>rd</sup> term
  - All these things help boost US economy
  - FDR says world look like its about to go to crap, there's no law that says I can't run for a third term
  - He runs for an unprecedented third term in 1940 and not as landslide win but he does win comfortably
  - No rule he couldn't be president for 3<sup>rd</sup> term
- 1941 Lend-Lease Act
  - Replaces Cash and Carry
    - US sets up system that they will lend or lease supplies to nation that is "vital for the defense of the US"
    - Translates to Britain and France (and maybe China)

#### Pacific Theater:

- Japan wants to strike first, doesn't want to wait for US to strike first
- Dec 7, 1941 → bomb Pearl Harbor in Hawaii
- Immediately, FDR entered war bc of pearl harbor
- Focus is on Japan, not Europe
- Focused on the Pacific Theater
- Bc they were completely unprepared, they lost control of the Philippines to Japan
- Takes a while for US to gain momentum
- Strategy → island hopping
  - Can't jump from Hawaii to Japan, so the idea of island hopping is they are going from island to island to try and gain foothold for navy ships to refuel, aircraft to land and takeoff
  - Battle by battle, island by island
  - Very slow process, especially bc Japanese troops were ok with facing heavy losses rather than surrender

- Closer they get to Japan, more that US can send aircraft and start massive bombing campaign on Japan (not atomic bombs yet)
- Cause massive fires, quarter of Tokyo destroyed by fire

#### Japanese Internment/Incarceration:

- Anti-Japanese hysteria bc of pearl harbor
- Italian and German immigrants, even if they were pro-Nazi, did not face these things
- US population is 133.5 mil, Japanese in US is just 112k
- Executive Order 9066 1942 → FDR allowed war department to move Japanese people from their homes and hold them in camps throughout the war
  - 2/3 of these people were US citizens
  - There were 0 signs of disloyalty to the US
  - When they got this order, they were given a couple days to pack, sell their belongings → leads to massive amount of property loss in this period
  - Internment camps did not have good conditions
- Internment camps weren't even finished when people got there
  - Food and supplies, but not sensitive to Japanese culture and habits
  - Pretty desolate, public toilets, etc
- Korematsu vs. United States:
  - K sued saying it was violation of his rights
  - Court upheld internment of Japanese Americans as a necessity for military
  - However, did not address whether imprisonment was constitutional or not
- US allowed Japanese to join the military in Japanese only regiment to fight in Europe → 442<sup>nd</sup> Regiment (most decorated regiment of the entire war in the US)
- At the end of the war, Japanese are allowed to return home, but have lots of problems
  - A lot of places resistant to Japanese coming back
  - Can't get their belongings back
  - Hard time resettling in community
- Not until 1988 that US gov apologizes and provides \$20k in reparations any surviving internees

#### Expanding GOV power;

- War got major changes in politics economics, and society
- Influence of gov power
- 1941 War Powers Act gives president right to reorder executive branch and gov agencies
  - Huge expansion of presidential power
  - Doesn't have to rely on congress and other people
- 1942 Revenue Act → increases percent of people paying income tax
  - 16<sup>th</sup> amendment established tax
  - Expands who has to pay it
  - Instead of paying once a year, it just gets taken out of your paycheck
  - Don't have to wait until tax days comes around
  - Getting it little by little over the course of year

- Useful bc they have to fund the war
- Congress and FDR set up War Production Board (a gov agency, under FDR's control) → goal is reorder economy to aid the war effort
  - Handing out defense contracts
  - Pay this company to pay tanks, ships, etc
  - Rationing materials that are scarce for military purposes
  - Rationing means gov is saying you can't buy this thing that you could normally get
  - Ford goes from making cars to making tanks → gov paid them to build tanks
  - This shift is going to create expansion of jobs (need people to build tanks) and gov is buying stuff for the military, so huge uptick in the economy
- Ending the GD → new deal didn't end the gd, WWII did bc caused economy boost

#### Supporting the War Effort:

- Peacetime draft caused 15 mil young men to join the military
- Mexican Americans, Chinese Americans were not in segregated units, but Black and Japanese Americans were in segregated units
  - Most black soldiers were relegated to cleaning, driving, etc, barred from combat positions
  - Japanese americans weren't, but black americans were
- Also have women enlisting in the military → WAC, WAVES, WASPS
  - Army, navy, air force
  - In non-combat roles
  - 350k women
  - Being called in to support the war through flying airplanes, delivering mail, etc
  - Black women's unit sorting and distributing mail to make sure mail got to soldiers to keep up morale
- Just put 15 mil men in the army → have more jobs, need people
- 36% of women started working in non-traditional jobs → jobs reserved for men
  - Making airplanes, tanks, etc
  - With machinery and tools
  - Generally face what is called the Double Burden
    - Paid less, sexual harassment, have to manage work + home and child responsibilities
  - When the war ended, they were pushed out of jobs and forced to go back to roles in the home

#### WWII also experiences a lot of Racial Conflict:

- Cognitive dissonance
  - Fighting for democracy in europe, and then looking at how Japanese Americans were treated at home
- Black Americans became more militant in fighting for racial equality → marching on the gov, protesting, refusing the draft, more active in fighting for their rights
- Create the Double V campaign:
  - Victory at home by ending racism and segregation, plus victory in ending fascism, Nazi Germany, etc

- Greater contact between different racial groups bc people are moving around a lot
  - Wave in 1943 of racial fighting in major cities that is really bad → “Race riots”
  - This freaks out a lot of Black leaders → maybe we need to slow down
  - 1943 is turning point → militant to gradual, not rock the boat so much bc of the violence
- Black and Japanese Americans not the only ones, Mexican Americans also facing challenges in the southwest
  - Bracero program → bringing in workers from Mexico to work in agricultural jobs, they are taking the work
  - Working for low wages and bad conditions
- In LA → Zoot Suit Riots
  - Rumor that white American soldier was attacked by Mexican American
  - White military folks in LA going around beating up Mexican Americans
  - LAPD only arrests Mexican people involved

#### US and the Holocaust:

- Between 1933-45 Nazi Germany systematically murdered 11 million people
  - 6 mil people were Jewish
  - 5 mil were homosexual people, Slavic people, disabled people
  - Extent was only uncovered
- US gov knew about German atrocities much earlier
- Journalism was uncovering this as well → atrocities were in headlines
- US intelligence received reports of concentration and extermination
- FDR didn't take a lot of action to address it
- Jews were trying to flee Europe, but US refused to change the quotas from 1924 national origins act
- Only certain amount of people could enter the country
- In 1939 there was a ship from Germany St. Louis and were not let into the US, sailed back to Europe and died in the Holocaust
- Military priority → FDR worried about how to deal with this
  - Can't just send airplanes in military territory, how do I not kill the prisoners, etc
  - Main priority is ending the war faster, as he sees that this is how it will end the Holocaust rather than trying to intervene more directly

#### European Theater:

- Europe and north Africa
- US doesn't get involved until 1943, first in NA where Germany has taken over
- Fighting to push Germany out
- 1943 is turning point in Europe → year that US gains control of NA and also the year when Hitler went back on agreement with Stalin and goes into the Soviet Union
- Stalingrad → pushing Germany back out of Soviet Union
- Also year US decides to go invade Italy
- FDR remains popular in the war, he runs for fourth term in 1944
  - He still wins
  - People afraid to vote for somebody else bc there's a war

- Attack nazi Germany directly on June 6 → D Day
- Helps distract the Germans, they are busy fighting off Soviet attack

#### European Theater, 1945:

- somebody, Stalin, and somebody else
- Meet at Yalta Conference, decide that Germany will be cut up into 4 zones
- And tentatively allow free elections in Europe
- FDR who's had Polio, dies in April of 1945, which makes VP Harry Truman president
- Truman has to make decisions for rest of the war in 1945
- Hitler finally commits suicide, Soviets capture Berlin
  - V-E Day, May 8
  - Victory in Europe Day
  - Germans have surrendered unconditionally
  - Pacific theater not done yet
- Still have to deal with that (Truman)

#### Ending WWII:

- Rather than attack mainland Japan directly, Truman orders the dropping of two atomic bombs
- His advisor argued that it prevented casualties on US and Japanese side as they believed Japanese would fight to the death on Japanese soil, but new evidence has shown that Japanese were planning to surrender anyway
  - So maybe if US had been more flexible they wouldn't have had to bomb Japan?
- Two cities chosen are civilian
  - First in Aug 6 Hiroshima
  - Second is Aug 9 Nagasaki
  - Killed 200k Japanese immediately, many more die of cancer later on
- USSR declared war on Japan in Aug 8
- V-J Day, Japanese surrender on Sept 2, 1945