

War Returns

(Chapter 12)

Introduction

As tension mounted in Europe in the 1930s, Canada—like Britain and the United States—hoped to avoid being drawn into another major conflict. Despite Canada's reluctance at becoming entangled in another European war, Adolf Hitler's march across Europe soon drew Canada into the fray. By the war's end, Canada had again given a great deal in the struggle against oppression and had, in the process, faced some radical changes.

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<p><i>World War II was in some ways a rematch of World War I, but some of the players had changed. Italy switched sides and joined Germany. Japan also joined the war on the side of the Germans completing the so-called "Axis Alliance" of Italy, Germany, and Japan. The roots of World War II were definitely found in the unresolved conflicts surrounding World War I.</i></p>	<p>Page 231: Post WW 1 Germany: Inflation, Depression and Political Unrest</p> <p>1). The Treaty of Versailles imposed harsh conditions on Germany which left the country's economy in tatters. Overwhelmed by war debt the German government began printing money to pay reparations. In the process, their currency, e.g. Deutschmark, became virtually worthless. The inclusion of "war guilt clause" in the treaty made matters worse because it was an insult to Germany's honor.</p> <p>2). By 1932 almost half of Germany's workers were without jobs.</p> <p>3). Economic instability created political instability as communists and fascists fought for control of Germany's cities and streets.</p>	<p>Treat of Versailles: ended World War I by imposing harsh conditions on Germany. The two harshest were arguably the reparations payments and the so-called "war guilt clause."</p> <p>Reparations: money Germany gave to her enemies France and Britain to pay off their own war debts.</p> <p>War Guilt Clause: Germany acknowledged officially—but protested vehemently—that it was responsible for starting World War I.</p>
<p><i>Germans were desperate for a solution to their economic and political problems. Economically the country was in ruins and politically speaking different political parties tried to run the country democratically. Germany had no experience with democracy so people had a hard time practicing compromise and consensus building.</i></p>	<p>Page 232-235 Adolf Hitler and the Rise of Nazi Germany</p> <p>1). Adolf Hitler, leader of the National Socialist (NAZI) Party, promised to tear up the <i>Treaty of Versailles</i> and restore Germany's honor, e.g. get land back, end war reparations, re-arm Germany, take care of Germany's enemies (inside and outside of the country).</p> <p>2). In 1933, the NAZIs became Germany's second-largest political party. The president of Germany, Hindenburg, gave Hitler the position of Chancellor in exchange for promises from Hitler that the NAZIs would behave more respectably, e.g. they were fighting communists in the streets of Germany's cities.</p> <p>3). The persecution of Jews began almost immediately after the NAZIs gained power in the Reichstag. Jews were removed from jobs in government, teaching, and the media. They were forced in to separate schools, had a nightly curfew, could not marry Aryans.</p> <p>4). Hitler patterned Nazism on Fascism.</p>	<p>NAZIs: the National Socialist Workers Party of Germany led by Hitler.</p> <p>Reichstag: Germany's parliament.</p> <p>Aryan: the NAZIs fictional master race of "super humans" which was one of the most important foundations of the NAZI party.</p> <p>Fascism: a political movement originating in Italy which stressed the primacy or supremacy of the state over the individual. For example, Benito Mussolini, Italy's dictator, observed that "nothing existed outside of the state."</p>

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<p><i>In the 1930s fascism started to grow in popularity in Canada, Britain and the United States. Fascism was popular because it was based on strong centralized leadership. The inability of democratic countries to deal effectively with the Great Depression made people think a new type of political system—an authoritarian one—would be able to solve the crisis.</i></p>	<p>Page 234: Fascism, Nazism and Anti-Semitism in Canada</p> <p>1). Nazism found its greatest following in Saskatchewan and Manitoba because of the presence of a large number of German speaking immigrants.</p> <p>2). Canadians were attracted to fascism because it seemed to offer a way out of the Great Depression. Hitler appeared to be turning the German economy around and putting people back to work. Canadian Nazis hoped for the same economic transformation; however, anti-Semitism was the bedrock of most of the fascist groups in Canada. Adrien Arcand was the leader of the Christian National Socialist Party.</p> <p>3). Many Canadians who were not fascist shared prejudice against Jews and Native peoples. In many places, Jews were not allowed to enter or own property.</p> <p>4). The Canadian Government refused to allow Jews fleeing persecution in Europe to enter the country.</p>	<p>Anti-Semitism: an irrational hatred of Jewish people.</p> <p>Adrien Arcand: leader of the Christian National Socialist Party which preached master race and destruction of the Jews</p>
<p><i>In March 1935, Hitler began to show his contempt for the Treaty of Versailles. He revealed the existence of a German air force and announced plans to begin military conscription. Hitler claimed he was re-arming Germany so it would be "equal" with its neighbors; however, he was actually planning on waging war against his neighbors when the time was right.</i></p>	<p>Page 235-241: German Re-Armament & the Nazi-Soviet Pact</p> <p>1). In 1936 Hitler gave the order to the Wehrmacht to enter the "demilitarized Rhineland." Britain and France did not oppose him. Hitler's popularity grew. Germany declared he had no more territorial demands to make in Europe.</p> <p>2). In 1938, Hitler ordered the military to invade and add Austria to Germany in a so-called Anschluss. The invasion was successful.</p> <p>3). Later in 1938 Neville Chamberlain met with Adolf Hitler to discuss peace in Europe. Hitler demanded Czechoslovakia give up an area adjacent to Germany called the Sudetenland. Britain and France told Czechoslovakia that they should do what Hitler said. Hitler promised that's all he wanted. Hitler signed the Munich Agreement to this effect.</p> <p>4). Germany took the Sudetenland...and then marched to the capital city of Prague thereby taking the rest of the country.</p> <p>5). France and Britain refused to deal with Germany any longer (not trusting Hitler). Russia tried setting up an alliance with France/Britain. France/Britain refused. So the Russians allied themselves to Germany in a so-called Nazi-Soviet Pact.</p>	<p>Rhineland: an area adjacent to France which according to the <i>Treaty of Versailles</i> was not supposed to have any military personnel or bases.</p> <p>Anschluss: the unification of Germany and Austria; forbidden by the <i>Treaty of Versailles</i>.</p> <p>Neville Chamberlain: prime minister of Great Britain during the late 1930s responsible for following a policy of "appeasement" to Germany.</p> <p>Munich Agreement: an agreement permitting Germany's "legal" absorption of the Sudetenland. The agreement was believed important because it was supposed to help the major powers of Europe avoid a general war.</p> <p>Nazi-Soviet Pact: a non-aggression treaty between Germany and the USSR (Soviet Russia). This agreement led to the partition of Poland by Germany and Russia in 1939.</p>

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The Nazi-Soviet Pact left France and Britain as the only power capable of preventing German aggression; however, France/Britain had no desire to go to war because of their continued economic problems and the lack of support for a war. This left the door open to Germany's invasion of Poland in September of 1939.

Note: Canada declared war on Germany a couple days after Britain.

Page 241-243: Blitzkrieg and the Attack on Poland

- 1). Germany demanded Poland give back the city of Danzig (which was given to Poland as part of the *Treaty of Versailles*). Poland refused. Germany and Russia invaded in 1939.
- 2). Germany used a technique of warfare called **Blitzkrieg** to conquer Poland in under three weeks.
- 3). France and Britain declared war on Germany following the invasion of Poland. However, these two countries did not actually do anything; rather, they sat behind their borders waging a so-called "**Phoney War.**"
- 4). In April of 1940, Germany invaded and captured Denmark and Norway to prevent these countries from falling in to the hands of France/Britain.
- 5). France was invaded shortly thereafter. The British Expeditionary Force was cut off from the French Army at **Dunkirk** by the Germans.
- 6). With Britain in retreat Canadians started to feel vulnerable to German attack. This pushed Canada towards a closer/stronger relationship with the United States.

Blitzkrieg: literally meaning "lightning war" was a technique perfected by the Germans involving the coordination of tanks, troops and airplanes; it relied upon mobility, surprise and overwhelming enemies; it was the complete opposite of trench fighting.

Phoney War: for seven months following Germany's invasion of Poland France/Britain and Germany did not fire a shot. This is also sometimes called the *Sitzkrieg*.

Dunkirk: everything and anything that could sail went across the English Channel to rescue English, French, Canadian, and Polish soldiers from certain capture. This was called the Miracle of Dunkirk in which over 300,000 Allied troops were rescued.