World War II

Outcome: Causes of World War II
Causes of World War II

1. Underlying Causes of World War II
   a. Totalitarian Dictators gained power around the world
      i. Fascist leaders arose in Europe after WWI in:
         1. Italy: Benito Mussolini (followers wore black shirts)
         2. Spain: Franco’s fascists won the Spanish Civil War
         3. Soviet Union: Joseph Stalin took control of the communist nation
         4. Japan:
            a. Hideki Tojo: Military Leader & Prime Minister
            b. Emperor Hirohito: Political & Spiritual figurehead
      5. Germany: Adolf Hitler (Nazism = German Fascism)
Fascism

a political philosophy, movement, or regime that exalts nation and often race above the individual and that stands for a centralized autocratic government headed by a dictatorial leader, severe economic and social regimentation, and forcible suppression of opposition
Benito Mussolini of Italy
Francisco Franco of Spain
Joseph Stalin in The Soviet Union
Adolf Hitler in Germany
Causes of World War II

b. Each dictator took advantage of economic problems by:
   i. Promising simple solutions to their nation’s problems
   ii. Rebuilding national pride (often using propaganda)
   iii. Providing scapegoats (targets for anger & blame)
   iv. Absorbing power, taking away individual rights, and crushing opposition (1 party; 1 ruler)
Adolf Hitler in Germany
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c. Nationalism + Imperialism
   i. In Germany, Adolf Hitler preached:
      1. Vengeance against (4 hates)
         a. **Democracies** (a weak & undisciplined form of gov’t)
         b. **Communism** (a threat to Nazi growth)
         c. **November** Criminals who signed the WWI Armistice
         d. **Jews** (the source of all evil & problems in Germany)
      2. Anti-**Semitism** & racial supremacy (The Master Race)
      3. A desire to unit all people of **German** ancestry (Blood & language)
      4. “**Lebensraum**” (a desire for more living space) needed to build his empire he called The Third **Reich**
Benito Mussolini of Italy
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ii. In Italy, Mussolini (Il Duce = “The Leader”)
   1. Felt betrayed by the Allies at the Treaty of Versailles Conference due to a promise of land for joining the Allies that was not kept
   2. Wished to rebuild the ancient Holy Roman Empire and wanted to control lands around the Mediterranean Sea; “Mare Nostrum = Our Sea
Hideki Tojo & Emperor Hirohito
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iii. Japan wanted to be self-sufficient and #1 in Asia but needed oil and raw materials

1. Wanted China’s land for this purpose
2. Goal: Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere: name for power in Asia
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d. Militarism

i. Germany:
1. Defied the Treaty of Versailles & rebuilt the army
2. Created the “Nazi War Machine”

ii. Japan
1. Built up the strongest military regime in Asia
2. Soldier’s motto: “Death before Dishonor”

iii. Italy
1. Formed the Rome-Berlin Axis (alliance) with Germany in 1936
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e. Poor Decisions were made by the powerful **democracies**
   i. France & Great Britain adopted a policy of **appeasement**
   ii. The **League** of Nations would prove ineffective; lacked a **military**
   iii. U.S.: **Isolationism** & **Depression** kept our focus on U.S. concerns; once **aggression** began we claimed to be **neutral**
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Equation:

Nationalism + Imperialism + Militarism = Aggression

Extreme Aggression = War!