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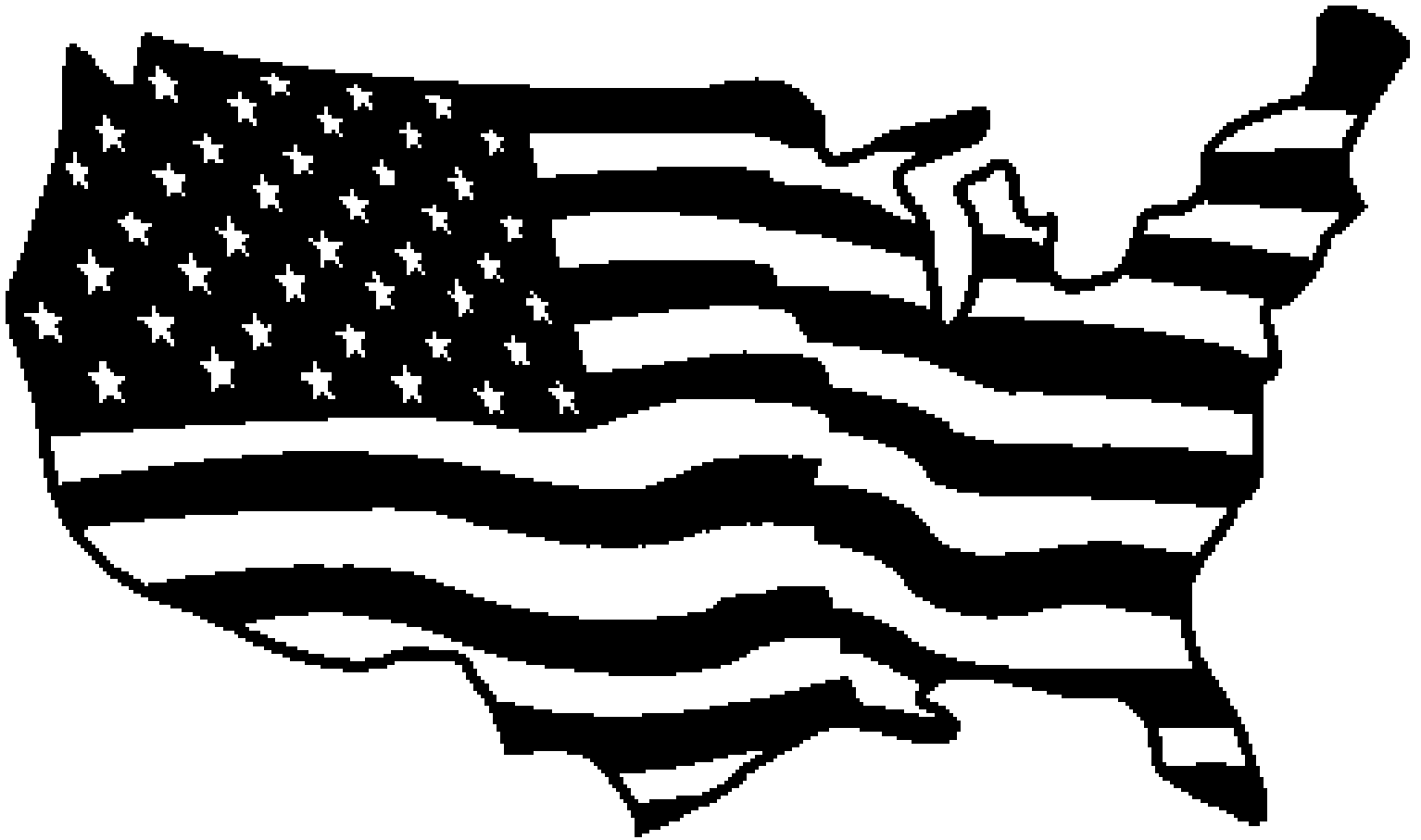
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i Think : U.S. History

The U.S. & W.W. II



by Kendra Corr

** It is the goal of InspirEd Educators, Inc. to create instructional materials that are interesting, engaging, and challenging. Our student-centered approach incorporates both content and skills, placing particular emphasis on reading, writing, vocabulary development, and critical and creative thinking in the content areas.

Edited by Sharon Coletti

Cover graphics by Sharon Coletti and Amy Hellen

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ISBN # 978-1-933558-17-2

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Printed in the United States of America

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A Brewing Storm

Springboard:

Students should read “_____” and answer the questions.

Objective: The student will be able to explain conditions that contributed to World War II.

Materials:

“_____” (Springboard handout)
United States Congress Post-War Status Report (handout)
Predict the Problems (handout)

Terms to know:

colonies - lands ruled by a stronger nation
economy - financial affairs of a country
revolution - overthrow of a government
reparations - money paid for war damages
empire - a nation that rules itself and others

Procedure:

- After reviewing the Springboard, explain that *in this lesson the student(s) will learn how conditions after World War I led to a second world war twenty years later.*
- Distribute the “United States Congress Post-War Status Report” and the “Predict Problems” handouts. Have the student(s) work individually, in pairs or small groups to read the report, identify issues, and make their predictions to complete the analysis form.
- Have the student(s) share / compare their ideas. *(Answers may vary and include: tremendous loss of life and financial damages; harsh peace treaty which is unlikely to keep the peace; new nations drawn on the map that include peoples who do not want foreign rule; a weak League of Nations; the Great Depression which made it harder to recover and caused hardships; misery and anger in Germany, Italy, and Japan; political instability in colonies and former empires; shock, anger, bitterness, devastation of the people. Predictions will vary but should reflect the very tense and unstable situation in Europe.)*
- Then, discuss the following questions:
 - ? Which of these issues do you think MOST contributed to problems and eventually another war? Why? *(Answers may vary. The next lesson specifically examines the suffering and problems in Germany and Italy that led to the rise of Hitler and Mussolini, the key aggressor in World War II.)*
 - ? What could have been done differently to avoid future conflicts? *(Answers will vary and include suggestions that the Great Depression may have been avoidable, Germany could have been dealt with less harshly, or the League of Nations could have been strengthened, enabling it to address global problems.)*



From the 1500's until the early 20th century, European nations were extremely powerful. Countries like Great Britain, France, and Germany had taken over many lands and established colonies around the world. These powers grew very rich from the resources and markets of their prized possessions. To protect their holdings, the Europeans built large armies and navies

and didn't hesitate to use them to maintain their control. Then the years from 1914 to 1919 changed everything.

World War I was the most costly war up to its time. About 13 million people died including many civilians, and millions more were wounded. The billions of dollars worth of destroyed property and land left European economies in ruins as well. Most of the war was fought in Europe, making recovery difficult. France in particular suffered huge losses; thousands of homes, businesses, factories and farms were destroyed. Germany, the leader of the Central Powers, also experienced great difficulty in the aftermath. Russia's tremendous losses led in part to a bloody revolution in 1917 that caused it to withdraw from the war early. Great Britain, which relied heavily on shipping, lost most of its **fleet**.

The situation was different across the Atlantic for the United States. Because America joined the war late, involved for just a year, it absorbed only a fraction of the costs. In fact the United States emerged from the war as the strongest nation in the world. The war's end signaled a shift in global leadership. For the first time Europeans found themselves in a position of following, rather than leading in world affairs.

Which choice would be the **BEST** title for the passage?

- A. "The End of European Power"
- B. "World War I and Europeans"
- C. "The Aftermath of World War I"
- D. "America: The New World Power"

Based on its use, the word "fleet" in the second paragraph refers to

- A. a group of boats.
- B. guns and tanks.
- C. a large army.
- D. faraway colonies.

Based on the passage, which occurrence would **NOT** be considered an outcome of World War I?

- A. America emerged as a stronger nation after the war.
- B. Countries involved in the war suffered greatly as a result.
- C. European countries lost their colonies all over the world.
- D. Russia had a different form of government after World War I.



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- C. "The Aftermath of World War I" *
- D. "America: The New World Power"

(Although all the choices relate to the passage information, at least in part, Choice C summarizes the most information.)

Based on its use, the word "fleet" in the second paragraph refers to

- A. a group of boats *
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- C. a large army
- D. faraway colonies

(Students should use words that appear before the term to figure out the meaning of the term. In this case, "relied heavily on shipping" provides the key clue.)

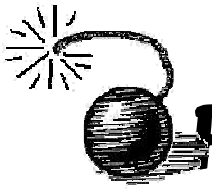
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- C. European countries lost their colonies all over the world. *
- D. Russia had a different form of government after World War I.

(The reading discusses Europe's problems but Choice C, though implied, was never stated, while others were. Though only partially true, C is the best choice.)

UNITED STATES CONGRESS POST-WAR STATUS REPORT

- Death tolls are placed at around 13 million, with almost 20 million wounded.
- Total costs to fight the war are estimated at more than \$180 billion dollars. Resulting damages total almost \$152 billion.
- Versailles Peace treaty to end the war resulted in severe punishment of Germany. Germany forced to give up territory; reduce its army and navy; turn over its major coal-producing Saar region to France; give up all colonies; pay millions of dollars in reparations; and take full responsibility for war.
- New states of Poland, Lithuania, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Latvia, and Yugoslavia formed from land taken from the defeated Central powers.
- The Russian, Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian, and German empires fell apart as a result of the war.
- Global organization called The League of Nations is formed at war's end. The stated purpose of the League of Nations is for world nations to cooperate to prevent future wars. Congress did not pass the treaty, so U.S. is not a member nation. Other European countries joined, but not all. Now, some are leaving as others opt to participate; situation remains in flux.
- Due to Great Depression, the severe economic downturn that began in 1929, millions have lost jobs and homes. Trade between nations is at a standstill. Stronger countries, such as the U.S., cannot afford to loan money to aid other nations.
- Italy also dissatisfied with peace settlement. Having joined the Allies during the war, the nation seems to have held hopes of gaining territory in exchange, which did not happen.
- Japan, which began to industrialize before World War I, continues to do so. As a small island nation with resources of their own, concerns exist that it will seek to expand.
- Congress passes law to forbid Japanese immigration to the U.S. in 1924; immigration remains restricted.
- Native people in European colonies, who realize their rulers were weakened by the war, now are using the situation to push for independence.
- People remain greatly disturbed over the horrors of war. The devastation and loss of life has led many citizens and members of Congress to question whether the technology and advances of the modern world were worth it.
- While glad to have won the war, Americans were shocked by the losses. Pressure is still being applied to the president and Congress to stay out of world affairs.

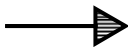
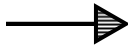
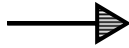


PREDICT THE PROBLEMS

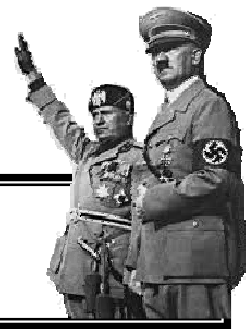
DIRECTIONS: In the left column list what you see as major issues and problems threatening world peace in the years after World War I. Then predict one way each issue could cause more tension and even a future war.

ISSUES

PREDICTIONS



Evil Rising



Springboard:

Students should study “The Rise of Fascism” and write their paragraphs as instructed.

Objective: The student will be able to explain fascism and why the ideology took hold in Germany and Italy prior to World War II.

Materials:

The Rise of Fascism (Springboard handout)
I Was a Blackshirt (handout)
I Was a Brownshirt (handout)
But Why?! (handout)

Terms to know:

ideology - set of beliefs

fascism - ideology characterized by a one-party dictatorship, massive military, extreme national pride, government control over the economy, and strict limits on the rights of citizens

inflation - rise in the costs of goods and services

communism - political system under which all property and business are owned “in common” under strict government control

paramilitary - army that is not part of a nation’s forces

Procedure:

- After reviewing the Springboard, explain that in the years leading up to World War II, fascism took root in both Germany and Italy. Go on to explain that this lesson examines how the fascists gained control in each country.
- Distribute the remaining handouts. The student(s) should read the narratives individually, in pairs, or small groups and complete the “But Why?” analysis. (**NOTE:** The narratives are InspirEd creations based on author’s the research.)
- Have the student(s) compare their answers and discuss. (*Answers will vary on most questions, but the following points should be noted:*
 - *Both nations had economic problems that the government couldn’t solve.*
 - *They hated the Versailles Treaty; Italy was bitter over broken promises, Germany crippled by punitive reparations and loss of resources.*
 - *A strong dictator came to power in both countries by promising solutions; Hitler in Germany, Mussolini in Italy.*
 - *Both Hitler and Mussolini used fear of communism to further their goals.*
 - *Both used paramilitary, ex-soldiers to silence opposition and dissent.*
 - *While both used the Communists as scapegoats, Hitler also blamed the Jews for problems.*
 - *Citizens’ rights and freedoms were suppressed in both countries.*
 - *Both accounts are completely biased, expressing widely-accepted views among Mussolini’s and Hitler’s armies and other supporters, including widespread anti-Jewish sentiment.)*

THE RISE OF FASCISM

BACKGROUND: In the years following World War I, a new ideology took root and grew in European. This ideology called fascism brought new governments to power with new leaders who would later threaten world peace. While fascism can be hard to clearly define, several characteristics are common to all fascist governments:

- Under fascism, the nation is celebrated. In fact love of country is taken to the extreme.
- Fascist governments are usually controlled by one political party. They are led by a single, all-powerful dictator, who uses the military to maintain control.
- Citizens' rights such as freedom of speech, religion, and the press, and many others are strictly limited.
- The economy is controlled by the government, in other words the dictator. Private businesses are only allowed if they benefit the state in some way.
- Often, fascist dictators call for action against their enemies. Such enemies can be real or imagined threats.
- Youth, the military, and male strength and power are glorified in fascist countries.

DIRECTIONS: Based on what you know about conditions in Europe after World War I, why do you think this ideology was embraced? What country or countries would be most likely to become fascist, and why? Write a paragraph to explain the rise of fascism in Europe.

I Was a Blackshirt

“As a soldier from the Italian army after the Great War, I, Giuseppi Rosini, suffered much. At the time there were so many problems in my country. I and thousands of other soldiers returned from the war and could not find work. We crowded into the cities, along with the many farmers who did not own their own land and had lost jobs. We were all seeking hope that did not exist.

Our nation and its economy were so weak. So much was destroyed in the war; it was very hard to get what was needed. Then inflation made goods too costly to buy. Those who could buy things, rich and middle class business owners, were afraid of the Communist Party growing in our country. After seeing what had happened in Russia, they did not want to see all they had worked for taken from them by an angry mob. Many people were upset by the treaties our government signed after the war. A million Italians gave their lives to help the Allies, yet our nation received little for that help -- only a fraction of the land we had been promised. So many people were angry, and our leaders did nothing to help. Things were truly in an uproar; Italy needed a strong leader!



Benito Mussolini had joined the army during the war. Like so many of us, he hated to see what was happening to his beloved land. So he organized the Fascist Movement and a political party around its ideas. He made speeches, promising jobs and a return to normal. He pledged to us that Italy would hold a strong place in the world. Many, like myself, agreed with his words. We joined with him to help take back our nation. Our forces came to be called the Blackshirts for our clothes. This is a picture of me (at left) with Il Duce, as we called Mussolini.

You see, large numbers of Italian workers thought communism was the answer to their problems. They had begun to organize into unions to fight for their “right” to their share of the nation’s wealth. Of course we did not agree with this and feared the growing popularity. Il Duce led us in breaking up their meetings, burning down union halls, and even killing Communist Party members and those working with them. Our king and government could not stop this threat. But they did not stop us either, as they too feared the Communists.

In October of 1922, about 50,000 fascist supporters marched to Rome from all corners of Italy to stop the coming communist revolution. The king could see from the large number of armed men that Il Duce was right, and so he made Mussolini the new government leader. As he promised, Il Duce restored order almost immediately. He began public building projects to put people to work. He took over factories and seized control of any property owned by Communists. The people loved him so much! As his power grew, he outlawed other political parties and took over all communication to keep us safe. The people did not mind to give up a bit of freedom for jobs and for our many economic problems to be over!

I know some people think Mussolini had too much power, but I do not agree. His goal was to return Italy to glory. He strengthened and protected our great nation. His beliefs were our beliefs. He worked for us, and we gave him our support. He would say, ‘Nothing above the state, nothing outside the state, nothing against the state!’ That was his pledge...”

I Was a Brownshirt



"I am Hans Schroeder, and I was a member of the stormtroopers, the German paramilitary after W.W. I. We were called the Brownshirts for our uniforms (pictured). Most of us had once served in the German army, but many younger men joined because they believed in the ideas of the Führer, our leader Adolf Hitler. In the years after World War I our country had terrible problems. So many people were without jobs! There was no money, and all over the country even mothers and children did without many things they needed.

The Allies tried to make Germany pay reparations, but with what? Our stupid government just printed more money. This did not help at all; instead it caused inflation to skyrocket! German marks were not worth the paper and ink it cost to print them! By the end of 1923 a trillion marks were equal to one U.S. dollar! People lost businesses, their savings, their homes... Germany truly suffered.

And everyone hated the government! We blamed our leaders for signing the vile Versailles Treaty which hurt our country. They allowed the Allies to take our colonies and the Saar region, where we mined coal for our factories. Without coal there could be no industry. The Allies also took our trade ships. How was Germany ever supposed to recover from the first war? With no way to make money, there were no jobs. Germany could not pay the Allies for their damages as required. Things were awful and only getting worse! I can tell you that everyone I knew was very happy when Adolf Hitler finally came to power and solved our problems.

Hitler was a magnetic man. Whenever he gave a speech, people listened. When he spoke, he said what was in our hearts. He was such a powerful man; we all believed he could do as he promised. And he did! He promised jobs, and he promised Germany would rise to be a great power once more. He promised to protect us from the Communists, who would make us all slaves of the state as in Russia. He also wanted to control the Jews, whom we all knew had always caused problems. This is why they had been shunned and even killed at times throughout European history. His ideas about them made sense. We did not like the Jews. We learned that they were not like us; that they were not really human beings.

The Führer formed the Nazi Party around his fascist beliefs and we Brownshirts and the SS as we were later called helped him in every way. In a short time our nation was rid of the communist threat. Jews soon 'knew their place' in the new Germany. By 1932 Nazis controlled the legislature and Hitler was named chancellor. As his popularity grew, he outlawed other parties and took full control of the government. He could then quickly accomplish so much more. Hitler was very good for business! He began many public works projects to create jobs. He re-built our military, which boosted factories to expand and hire more workers. It was very good!

Hitler would say, 'There have been two great German Empires in the past, the Holy Roman Empire of the Middle Ages and Germany under the rule of the Kaisers in the late 1800's.' He told us the Nazis' rise to power was the beginning of the Third Reich, an empire that would last for 1,000 years! We believed in this vision and wanted to fight for it. We used every means, including violence when necessary, to stop dissent. Any who opposed us were jailed or executed. Radio and newspapers were controlled, public meetings were banned, and any who caused us problems, especially the Jews, were punished. We did anything we could to help der Führer restore our country to its rightful place of glory and respect..."