

Causes of World War II

HOW WERE THE EFFECTS OF WORLD WAR I RELATED TO THE CAUSES OF WORLD WAR II?

The economic collapse, and the political instability caused by World War I led the rise of fascism in Europe to World War II. The Nazi version of fascism was dedicated to the reversal of the Versailles Treaty and the establishment of a German Empire by means of war and conquest.

HOW DID THE GREAT DEPRESSION CONTRIBUTE TO THE COMING OF WORLD WAR II?

The Great Depression decimated the economies of Europe and the United States. This was fertile ground for the emergence of the Nazis to power in Germany, and a military clique to take power in Japan. In the United States and in Western Europe, the pre-occupation with the domestic economic crisis contributed to the political failure to meet the rising threat of fascism.

HOW DID FASCISM CONTRIBUTE TO THE COMING OF WORLD WAR II?

Fascism was an ideology which glorified the military, denounced international organizations and cooperation, and considered war an acceptable means for achieving national goals. Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy adopted aggressive foreign policies involving war as an intended, even desirable method.

WHAT WERE THE ROLES OF ENGLAND, FRANCE AND THE SOVIET UNION IN CONTRIBUTING TO THE COMING OF WORLD WAR II?

England pursued a determined effort to avoid war, which played into Hitler's plans because he used every concession to prepare the stage for his next demand. France consistently followed England's lead. The English and the French did not trust Stalinist Russia, and Stalin distrusted the capitalist West. When the Russians tried to form a common front against fascism in the 1930's, many English and French leaders considered Nazi Germany to be useful as a check against Russian expansion.

WHAT WAS THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES IN CONTRIBUTING TO THE COMING OF WORLD WAR II?

The United States, as the leading power in the world after World War I, might have exercised great influence in restoring a stable peace through economic assistance to war-torn Europe, and through an active role in the League of Nations, discouraged aggression. Failure to do that led to the rise of fascism and the path to renewed war.