

Unit 7 Brief Summary – Period 7 Part 2 - Great Depression, and WWII

Remember this is a continuation of Unit 6 (Period 7) which began with 1890!

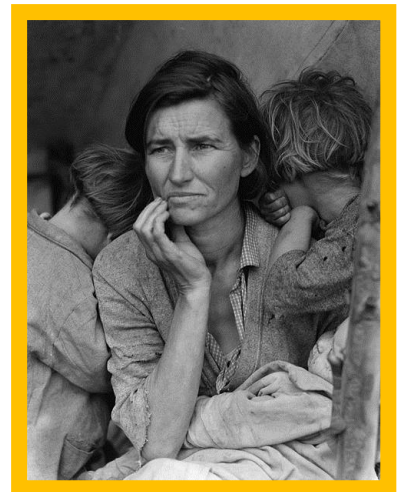
Big Business ruled in the 1920's. The official policy of the government was to assist business, not to regulate it. **President Coolidge** even said that a man who works in a factory worships in a temple. The business owners got rich, but the workers didn't fair as well. The **gap between rich and poor widened**. The **stock market** was **unregulated** which led everyday people to **speculate** in the red hot market. People could **buy on the margin**, which is to place a small amount of money as a down payment. People also invested in Florida real estate (largely unseen swamp land). Florida had experienced a land boom in the 1920's until two hurricanes put the breaks on. Small farmers were also hit hard in the 1920's; they owed a tremendous amount of money that they borrowed and began losing their farms to foreclosure. The **Stock Market Crash of 1929** signaled the end of the roaring 20's and the beginning of the Great Depression. The causes of the **Great Depression** were: **Stock Speculation**, **Buying on the Margin**, **Overproduction**, **debt (due to buying on credit)**, and the yawning, monetary **gap between rich and poor**.

The **Great Depression** was a worldwide economic depression. In the United States and many other countries one out of every four people were unemployed. The government assumed that the economy would fix itself as it did after the economic panics of 1819, 1873, and 1892. So, the government did very little to help. The belief was that you helped yourself and didn't expect a handout or **direct relief** from the government. The President, **Herbert Hoover**, called this attitude **rugged individualism**. Some people even believed that it would hurt a person psychologically if they received a handout.

Things were so bad that World War I veterans went to Washington D.C. to ask for their bonus ten years early. They were called the **bonus army** and they lived in shacks for weeks around Washington. Hoover had **General Douglas MacArthur** remove them. MacArthur went overboard and viciously attacked the veterans. Some veterans ended up in the Florida Keys to build the overseas highway. Unfortunately, many of them were killed by the hurricane of 1935. People roamed from town to town looking for work. Men who traveled illegally by train were called **hobos**. The **dust bowl**, a dry region that blew away farms in the plains states, further added to the nation's misery as many of the so called **Arkies** or **Okies** moved to California. People who were evicted from their homes lived in shacks made from scrap materials called "**Hoovervilles**". Not surprisingly, Hoover was beaten in a landslide by **Franklin Delano Roosevelt**, or **FDR**, in the election of 1932.

Roosevelt came from a wealthy family, but unbeknownst to the public was paralyzed from the waist down due to polio. As a result of his struggles to walk he had affection for the common man, whom he referred to as the forgotten man. He utilized the radio to get his message across to the American public. He gave popular **fireside chats** on the radio to assure the public that "there is nothing to fear, but fear itself". **FDR's** first order of business was to fix the banks that were collapsing. Thousands of people were losing their life savings to banks going out of business. He had legislation passed called **Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, FDIC**, which would insure bank deposits.

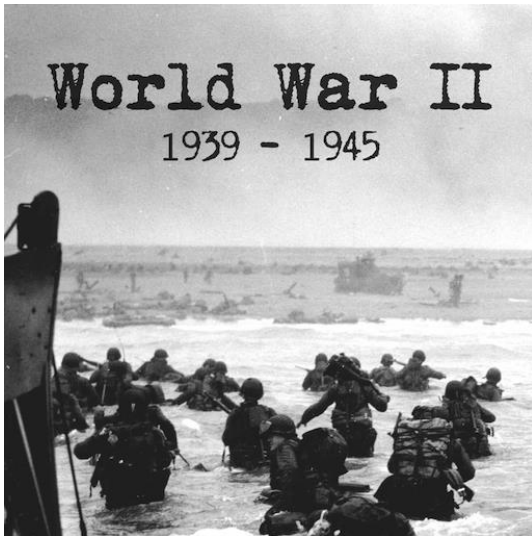
FDR pushed a plethora of major legislation through congress in the first 100 days of his term in office. Critics called his plans **alphabet soup** because each law and agency that was created went by initials. The **New Deal** included **relief** or immediate assistance, **recovery** to get businesses and people back to work, and **reform** to fix the system so a depression would never occur again. Some of the most popular **New Deal programs** were: **Agriculture Adjustment Act (AAA)** to help struggling farmers, the **Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)** to put young men to work on public works projects, the **Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)**, to provide flood control and energy for seven states, the **Works Progress Administration (WPA)** to put people to work on public projects, the **Social Security Act** to help the elderly, disabled and unemployed and the **Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)** to regulate the stock market. The **New Deal** didn't get America out of the **Great Depression**; it would take World War II to accomplish that. However, the **New Deal** gave people hope. Some of the societal and economic changes are still impacting America today. It is little wonder that **FDR** was elected as president a record four times.



From the depths of the **Great Depression**, some countries turned toward **dictators** for hope and salvation. These sinister leaders skillfully exploited their people to pursue dreams of world domination. The rise of **dictators** in Japan, Italy, and Germany would change the world. **Japan**, who had begun **industrializing** in the mid 1800's, wanted to enlarge its empire. They lived on a small island that was devoid of natural resources. The **military took control** of Japan and began to conquer its neighbors beginning with **Manchuria** in 1931. In **Italy**, a dictator named **Benito Mussolini** took power. He wanted to acquire colonies in Africa and conquered **Ethiopia** in 1935. He also made a pact with fellow dictator **Hitler**. **Adolph Hitler** came to power in **Germany** in 1933. Once in power he made his **Nazi party** the only political party. He wanted living space for his people and began taking land (Rhineland and Austria). He wanted the **Sudetenland**, a part of **Czechoslovakia**, and the weak leaders of England and France made a deal with Hitler to "give" it to him in return for the promise that it was the last piece of land that he would take. This policy, known as **appeasement**, was an absolute failure. Hitler grabbed all of all of Czechoslovakia and set his sights on **Poland**.

The **United States** was deeply **isolationist** in the 1930's. This was due to the Great Depression, but also to the lingering feelings of resentment over its involvement in World War I. An official senate report, called the **Nye Report**, blamed our entry into World War I on the greedy weapons manufactures so they could earn a profit. The congress passed a series of strict **Neutrality Laws**, which hampered our effort to assist other countries. The **Spanish Civil War** was a dress rehearsal for World War II. Hitler and Mussolini supported fellow dictator Francisco Franco. Russia was on the opposite side. The major powers of England, France, and the United States sat out. This would embolden Hitler into making other aggressive moves in Europe.

Josef Stalin became the leader of the **Soviet Union** in the 1920's. He began a series of **purges**, in which he killed millions of his own people who opposed him (his total maybe as high as 20 million). He began to industrialize his giant, backward nation. He didn't trust Hitler and the feeling was mutual. Nevertheless, they signed a secret **non-aggression pact**, to not attack each other and divide Poland among them. **Hitler** invaded **Poland** on September 1, 1939. Britain and France declared war on Germany, **World War II** had begun. The war went badly for England and France. Hitler invaded France with a new tactic called **blitzkrieg**, or lightning war. He captured France in a month. All that was left in Europe was Britain. The **Battle of Britain** began in 1940. It was an aerial war. Hitler wanted to bomb Britain with air planes to soften them up prior to landing his troops in Operation Sea Lion. The invention of **radar** helped keep Hitler's plans for conquest on the shelf. Eventually Hitler was distracted with his second front... attacked his old "ally," **Stalin** in Operation Barbarossa.



than Hitler did.

In the **Pacific**, the United States fought Japan virtually alone. The turning point of the war came early in the **Battle of Midway**, where the U.S. sank four Japanese aircraft carriers. The United States had broken the Japanese code which assisted them in defeating the Japanese. The U.S. used a strategy called **island hopping** to defeat the Japanese. Eventually, they fought for control of the islands near the Japanese homeland. The **Battle of Iwo Jima** included the iconic flag raising, but the war wasn't over. The military estimated that one million Americans would be casualties in the invasion of Japan. The United States had secretly been working on the **Manhattan Project**, which was the development of the **atomic bombs**. After FDR's death in April of 1945, **Harry Truman** became president. He was not afraid to make difficult decisions such as dropping the atomic bomb. The first bomb made from Uranium was dropped on **Hiroshima** on August 6th 1945. It was called **Little Boy** and was dropped from the plane the Enola Gay. The Japanese refused to surrender, so after three days the second bomb was dropped on **Nagasaki**. It was nicknamed **Fat Man** and was a plutonium bomb dropped from a plane called Boxcar. This was known as **V - J Day**, for victory over Japan, the war was over.

Efforts on the Home front during war were impressive. **Rationing, Victory Gardens, patriotic propaganda (Voice of America; OWI), War Bonds** rallied the effort. **Navajo Code Talkers, WACS**, and the **Tuskegee Airmen** made priceless contributions. The United States was able to outpace the enemy. We simply were able to make more weapons than any other country. The **economy recovered** from the **Great Depression** as the nation went back to work to win the war. Women went to work in the factories while the men went to war. **Rosie the Riveter** embodied this move. The United States emerged as an economic and military super power.

Before the end of the war, the big three, **FDR, Winston Churchill** (England), and **Josef Stalin** (Soviet Union), met at **Yalta** to discuss what the post war world would look like. The three weighty issues to be decided were: the occupation of Germany, the creation of the United Nations, and the status of Eastern Europe. The Soviets wanted a sphere of influence in Eastern Europe to prevent a third major German attack. The U.S. and England wanted democratic elections to take place. A number of compromises were reached. The **United Nations** would be created, free and fair elections would be held in Poland, and Germany would be divided among the allies. The rest of Eastern Europe would be under the total control of the Soviets... after Stalin refused to follow through earlier plans to allow elections and insisted on having his buffer zone. Some historians postulate that had American not appeased Stalin with Eastern Europe, the Cold War may not have been so cold. Others propose the nation would have gone right back to war.



FDR desperately wanted to help Britain. But the American public and Congress clung to neutrality. He eventually got the **Lend-lease Act** passed which allowed the British to have American weapons. When Hitler turned on Stalin, the **Lend-Lease Act** was extended to the Soviets. The United States became the great **Arsenal of Democracy**, making weapons for countries that fought Hitler. In 1937, the **Japanese** invaded **China**. The United States opposed the action and cut off vital supplies of oil and steel. The Japanese decided to knock the US out, so they could conquer Asia. On **December 7, 1941** they attacked the naval base **Pearl Harbor** in Hawaii. They killed 2,960 Americans and sank 18 navy warships one which was battleship **Arizona**. The next day the United States entered the war.

Stalin wanted the United States and England to invade France and take pressure off of the Soviets. However the first campaign the United States took part in was the invasion of North Africa. Next, the US invaded Italy. The turning point in Europe was at **Stalingrad**, where the Soviets defeated the Germans and began an offensive toward Germany. The second front was finally opened on **June 6, 1944**. It was called **D-day**, which was an invasion of Normandy with the ultimate goal of retaking Europe from Hitler. France was recaptured and Germany was pushed back. Hitler had one final gasp and attacked with all of his remaining reserves in the unsuccessful **Battle of the Bulge**. Hitler killed himself and Germany Surrendered in May 1945, this was called **V-E day** for victory in Europe. The horror of the **Holocaust** was revealed to the world. It was **Hitler's final solution** to getting rid of the Jews. This **genocide** took the lives of 11 million people, six million of which were **Jews**. Of the atrocities of WWII, this Holocaust has been judged as the worst. However, Stalin actually murdered many more people