World War II - Wikipedia

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Retrieved 19 December By producing nearly two thirds of the munitions used by Allied forces - including huge numbers of aircraft, ships, tanks, trucks, rifles, artillery shells, and bombs - American industry became what President Franklin D. Roosevelt once called the 'arsenal of democracy'.

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Feb 28, Mr. Twinkie rated it really liked it. Quite a good introduction. Aug 29, Jenny rated it really liked it. The essays are succinct and easy to follow. Most importantly, McDonough's work isn't as biased as many other sources on the market. I would recommend this introduction to the World Wars in the blink of an eye and would frankly be delighted to get my hands on a copy of my own. Shelves: non-fiction, read. It was a very informative non-fiction novel. And rated it it Sep 12, Greatbert rated it really liked it Dec 07, Sina Sezer rated it it Aug 11, Darren Kachere rated it it Jan 03, Ali Tabba rated it it May 10, Harry Butcher rated it it Mar 08, Steve rated it it Nov 05, Curren rated it it May 29. The copy was full of pencilled marginal notes attacking the book's thesis. When Gilbert looked at the flyleaf, it was inscribed "A. He presented the copy to Taylor, who was much amused.

Hugh Trevor-Roper reviewed the book in the July issue of Encounter. Trevor-Roper argued against Taylor's thesis, claiming that Hitler in Mein Kampf and elsewhere had outlined his programme. He also accused Taylor of perverting the evidence. He has said enough to show why I think Mr. Taylor's book utterly erroneous. In spite of his statements about 'historical discipline,' he selects, suppresses, and arranges evidence on no principle other than the needs of his thesis; and that thesis, that Hitler was a traditional statesman of limited aims, merely responding to a given situation, rests on no evidence at all. Ignores essential evidence, and is, in my opinion, demonstrably false.

This casuistical defence of Hitler's foreign policy will not only do harm by supporting neo-Nazi mythology: it will also do harm, perhaps irreparable harm, to Mr. Taylor's reputation as a serious historian. On 9 July, Taylor and Trevor-Roper appeared in a televised debate, chaired by Robert Kee, in which the two historians quarrelled. Taylor's article was set out in two columns, one showing the quotations from Taylor's book that Trevor-Roper had included in his review, the other column providing the entire sentence from the book from which Trevor-Roper had acquired his quotations.

Taylor intended to demonstrate that Trevor-Roper had selected, suppressed and arranged his evidence in exactly the way he had accused Taylor of doing. The last quotation of Trevor-Roper was his claim that the book would harm Taylor's reputation. Taylor responded: "The Regius Professor's methods of quotation might also do harm to his reputation as a serious historian, if he had one". Mason pointed to Nazi Germany's "demonic urge" and criticised Taylor for dismissing German economic patterns, such as the importance of rearmament and the objective of achieving autarky.

In Mason's view, all these things required Hitler to launch a war: "A war for the plunder of manpower and materials lay square in the dreadful logic of German economic development under National Socialist rule." Taylor had ignored the interdependence of internal and external factors in the aims of German foreign policy. Taylor responded in the April issue of Past and Present: "The evidence for economic or political crises within Germany between and is very slight, if non-existent. Hitler cut German armaments plans by 30 per cent after Munich. He cut them again drastically after the fall of France and was reducing them even after the invasion of Russia.

Indeed large-scale rearmament began only in the summer of 1939. Taylor replied to Mason's accusation that Taylor ignored deeper forces at work in the background: "I fear I may not have emphasised the profound forces. Of course there was a general climate of feeling in the Europe of the nineteen-thirties which made war likely. Of course historians must explore the profound forces. But I am sometimes tempted to think that they talk so much about these profound forces in order to avoid doing the detailed work.

I prefer detail to generalisations: a grave fault, no doubt, but at least it helps to redress the balance". The press of West Germany had unanimously criticised Taylor's thesis. The German conservative historian Gerhard Ritter was also critical. When Taylor flew to Munich for a televised debate with a Swiss historian, the taxi driver who drove him from the airport asked whether he knew an Englishman called A. Taylor replied that he was A. The driver stopped mid-traffic, told Taylor he had been part of Hitler's SS bodyguard and put out his hand to congratulate Taylor on proving that Hitler had not caused the war.

The book was published in the United States by Athenaeum Press. At the publisher's suggestion, Taylor wrote a preface to the American edition explaining America's role in the s. The reaction to Taylor's thesis was even more extreme than in Britain. Taylor finds excuses for Hitler and reasons to blame nearly everybody else. In Taylor's view it was always somebody else who put poor, passive Hitler in a mood to fight. With scholarly detachment, Taylor states the case for appeasing Hitler and for resisting him, but his sympathies obviously lie with the appeasers Taylor insists that Hitler was no fanatic.

**World War I: Summary, Causes & Facts - HISTORY**

Pierre de Margerie, the French ambassador to Berlin, warned Prime Minister Aristide Briand in — in the era of Franco-German rapprochement — that France would lose the contest for world opinion unless it followed suit. As in Die Grosse Politik the selection of documents reflected political imperatives.

The lead editor was M. He joined the Bolshevik party after the revolution and played an influential role in developing education policy. The documents were translated into German — but not into English or French — under the guidance of Otto Hoetzsch, a leading German expert on Russian politics. Financed by a German loan, four Austrian historians edited eight volumes of Austro-Hungarian diplomatic documents. The volume of documents in these collections overwhelmed other sources produced in the interwar period. Archives and personal collections of papers were generally inaccessible — or else made public through the publication of memoirs. These publications therefore had considerable weight in shaping the debate over the origins of the war. First, the choice of German and French historians and officials to start the series in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian war pushed the search for the origins back from the immediate context of the July crisis and the years immediately preceding the war. This gave rise to a narrative that emphasised the flaws of the international order, rendering war a likely outcome of
decades of great power rivalries. Second, the study of the origins of the war became the study of diplomatic history. Without access to significant materials from other ministries or personal papers, historians generally worked on the assumption that the key decisions were made in the foreign ministries. This downplayed the role of military and economic groups in making foreign policy. Sources for public opinion were available — in Malcolm Carroll published his important study of French public opinion and foreign policy — but these were under-utilised.

Third, the publication of so many volumes ensured that historians often had access to several accounts of the one event or discussion. By the late s, historians were busily digesting the mass of documents. American historians — most prominently Bernadotte Schmitt, Sidney Fay, William Langer, and Harry Elmer Barnes — were at the fore of the debate. For the first time since the outbreak of the war, historians began to achieve some critical distance from the subject, even if they were working with documentary materials shaped by the political struggles over article This confirmed his findings in an earlier volume on the July crisis.

The comprehensive analysis of the origins of the war, written by the former editor of Corriere della Sera, Luigi Albertini, was published during the Second World War. It represented the culmination of the diplomatic history approach of the interwar years. Even if historians distanced themselves from politics, the wider political context inevitably shaped questions and perspectives. Noel-Baker, a conscientious objector during the First World War, was one of many to make the association between the Nazi regime and Prussian militarism. The aggressive, expansionist foreign and military policies of the Third Reich compelled contemporaries to think anew about the relationship between German domestic politics and the origins of major European wars from the s to the s.

The relationship between academic and political debate is illustrated by two contributions to the debate. The first example is A. The chapter was rejected for its allegedly pessimistic reading of German history, so Taylor responded by writing a full survey. The First World War and its origins became a central part of this narrative. In typically irreverent and suggestive style, Taylor argued that the origins of the war were primarily rooted in the crisis-prone politics of the German Empire after Foreign policy setbacks — the formation of the Triple Entente between and and an over-reliance on the Austro-Hungarian ally — and the increasing fragility of Bismarckian constitutional settlement of increased the willingness of German leaders to pursue highly risky policies.

Success in war served domestic agendas, buttressing authoritarian elites against democratic reforms. After German historians faced the task of giving an historical context for the Third Reich, while also renewing German historiographical traditions. The German historian and veteran of the First World War Gerhard Ritter published Machtstaat und Utopie in, a partially disguised attempt to separate the Nazi regime from its self-proclaimed roots in German history.

For Ritter, Hitler represented a perversion of politics, the subordination of politics to war. The roots of the Hitler regime, Ritter suggested, lay in the triumph of military over political considerations, which brought about the destruction of the political order and moral conventions. The Schlieffen Plan, which privileged technical military considerations over what was politically possible, represented the triumph of the military over politics. Ritter criticised Bethmann Hollweg and others for their unquestioning acceptance of the primacy of military necessity over political judgement. As the volumes were published after the war, he also saw them as a contribution to the debate about strategy in an age of nuclear war. While Wilhelm II and Bethmann Hollweg were not fully excused from their follies: they were cast as moderates, overwhelmed by modern militarism before and during the war.

Bismarck and the Prussian conservative state were rescued from the opprobrium heaped upon them by the Allies and critical foreign historians, such as Taylor. Within the West German historical profession in the s, the origins of the war lay in the anarchical international system and modern militarism. It was in this context that the Fischer controversy broke. Certainly the most passionate debate since the early s, the Fischer controversy was perhaps also the most nationally bounded debate on the origins of the war. From the time of the infamous War Council meeting in December, he argued, German leaders planned a war of aggression. The drive to war resulted from increasing anxiety amongst German elites about the deterioration of the domestic and international stability of the Empire.

Crucially, Fischer argued, German leaders had brought this situation upon themselves. At home, they stalled on constitutional changes, while German isolation in international politics was the result of menacing moves over Morocco and the Balkans after the turn of the century. It was a case of self-encirclement. He showed how military and political leaders prepared for war from late , increasing the size of the army and fostering aggressive nationalist public opinion. This interpretation significantly reduced the interpretive weight placed on the international system.

His interpretation derived from a methodological move, from the primacy of foreign policy to the primacy of domestic politics. On this reading, foreign policy was primarily the product of domestic political pressures. This was the fundamental driving force of the history of the German nation-state between and The implications of this argument were already evident in his books on German war aims and pre-war foreign policy.

This account challenged the efforts of Ritter and others to separate the Nazi regime from its self-proclaimed roots in German history. They argued that many of the documents could be interpreted in alternative ways. Indeed, complex disputes over the interpretation of the War Council meeting continue to the present day. Although his own work had dissected the role of the German military in pre-war politics, he worked from the assumption that foreign policy was a response to international, not domestic political, conditions.

The anxieties of German leaders before were the product of isolation and encirclement, cemented by the Anglo-Russian entente of Some German historians — and the American Paul Schroeder — argued that the entente powers, in particular Britain, were the most expansionist states in the decades before In global terms — then an unusual perspective for a scholar of European power politics — the expansion of the British and French Empires made Germany relatively weaker.

The controversy owed much of its febrile atmosphere to the political stakes. Recent research has shown that Fischer had already viewed the
conservative German historical profession with suspicion, even contempt, during the s. At this point, Fischer was certainly open to certain Nazi ideas and he was appointed professor of modern history at the University of Hamburg in In this respect, the two camps shared a similar, if negative, goal, namely avoiding a return to a dictatorship. The weight of evidence and the clarity of his argument undoubtedly contributed to his success. Yet the success of any historical argument also owes much to wider political and social contexts. Within West German universities, a new generation of graduate students adopted a more critical perspective on German history. They tended to emphasise the long-term continuities that culminated in the Third Reich. Studies of the German Empire were a proxy for engagement with the history of the Nazi past.

A new generation of German historians went much further than Fischer in emphasising the domestic roots of the origins of the war. Hans Ulrich Wehler, based at Bielefeld, was the most prominent of these historians. He introduced new approaches from the social sciences, which saw domestic politics as a struggle between different economic and social groups. Social elites — business people, agrarians, the officer corps, and the mandarin class — forged alliances to retain power and wealth at the expense of workers, peasants, and other social groups. They thwarted constitutional reform. Yet these elite alliances were beset by contradictions.

An expansionist imperialist policy offered the elites in the German Empire a means to escape these contradictions and to stifle domestic reform — but at the risk of war. Whereas in the interwar period, historians saw in Franco-German antagonism the original flaw of the international system, Wehler and others now located the source of the problems in the German constitution. Amongst French historians there was a similar change in emphasis, away from the diplomatic history practised by Renouvin in the interwar period towards a greater interest in the economic and social bases of foreign policy. Between the late s and mids, Renouvin himself and Jean-Baptiste Durosselle supervised important works on French imperial expansion, economic relations, and public opinion. In part, the French studies did not deal directly with the political decisions of the July crisis and in part they confirmed existing interpretations that French policy had contributed towards creating the conditions for war, but had not actively sought war.

His arguments confirmed the general thrust of post-Second World War scholarship on the origins of the war. His engagement with American and British academics was important in inspiring his own criticisms of the methodological assumptions within the German historical profession. Invitations to lecture at universities and the translations of his books gave additional validation to his research. And they did, broadening the source-base and asking new questions. By the late s a new orthodoxy about the origins of the war was established, emphasising the primary responsibility of German leaders for ending peace in Europe and the flawed domestic political development of the German nation-state after the American Civil War. The credo of globalisation theories in the s suggested that growing economic interdependence and cultural exchange made wars — certainly between the major powers — irrational in any sense of material gain or security. Similar arguments had been well rehearsed before and yet the great powers had gone to war.

Historians began to ask not why war broke out in , but why and how peace between the great powers had been maintained for over four decades. In the immediate term, the questioning of the Sonderweg by social historians had little impact on research in international history. Rather than a full-fronted assault on the Fischer thesis, the cornerstone of the new orthodoxy, changing historical interpretations, emerged across a range of different issues. This reflected the increasing breadth of research into international history, but it also contributed to a fragmentation of the field. Of course not every changing perspective can be attributed to contemporary political currents. Present debates tend to work in more suggestive ways, opening up new questions rather than providing easy templates. Yet the end of the Cold War arguably had a more profound impact, raising new questions. First, the relatively peaceful ending of the Cold War suggested that long-term great power confrontation did not inevitably issue in a general war.

British social historians were not inclined to idealise British historical developments, against which German history could be measured and found wanting. In the immediate term, the questioning of the Sonderweg by social historians had little impact on research in international history. Rather than a full-fronted assault on the Fischer thesis, the cornerstone of the new orthodoxy, changing historical interpretations, emerged across a range of different issues. This reflected the increasing breadth of research into international history, but it also contributed to a fragmentation of the field. Of course not every changing perspective can be attributed to contemporary political currents. Present debates tend to work in more suggestive ways, opening up new questions rather than providing easy templates. Yet the end of the Cold War arguably had a more profound impact, raising new questions. First, the relatively peaceful ending of the Cold War suggested that long-term great power confrontation did not inevitably issue in a general war.

Historians began to ask not why war broke out in , but why and how peace between the great powers had been maintained for over four decades. Holger Afflerbach questioned the argument of his doctoral supervisor, Wolfgang Mommsen, that political and military leaders viewed war as inevitable. Questions have their own built-in assumptions. By reframing the question around the preservation of peace, historians have directed their attention to stabilising elements in international politics. This has informed revisionist accounts of a wide range of topics, from the alliance system to popular movements. Second, the failure of many realist scholars to predict the outcome of the Cold War led international relations theorists to revisit assumptions about international politics. From the early s, scholars developed constructivist approaches to international politics, challenging realist ideas about anarchy, the distribution of power, and the articulation of the national interest.

Tracing the impact of this new departure in international relations scholarship on historical research is difficult for various reasons. Whereas Joll was primarily interested in how these assumptions shaped individual decisions, notably during the July crisis, the constructivist approach invites historians to consider how understandings of the international system are shared between key actors. It directs attention to the normative environment, adding a further layer to analyses based on power and interest. Although we may see norms as being pro-social — facilitating cooperation and conflict-resolution — certain norms, such as honour, can incentivise violence and war.

Explaining the outbreak of war can also involve charting how the normative environment broke down in the final years of peace. The end of the Cold War accelerated processes of globalisation, which had begun in the s. By the s, historians were busily drafting agendas for global history. The late 19 th and early 20 th centuries offered a rich seam for global historians. Capital flows, trade, migration, and cultural exchange reshaped the world after the American Civil War. The credo of globalisation theories in the s suggested that growing economic interdependence and cultural exchange made wars — certainly between the major powers — irrational in any sense of material gain or security. Similar arguments had been well rehearsed before and yet the great powers had gone to war.

Some recent works have begun to tease out the relationship between globalisation and erosion of peace. Since the s historians of British foreign policy have questioned narratives centred on the European balance of power and the German threat to British security. Keith Wilson argued that British decision-makers viewed Russia as the primary threat, privileged the maintenance of empire over the balance of power in Europe, and had a military posture dedicated to imperial defence, not European wars. Scepticism about British participation in the European project had existed since the end of the Second World War, but during the s this scepticism migrated from the Labour to the Conservative party. Eurosceptics on the right continued to emphasise themes such as the defence of parliamentary sovereignty, but they also sought to present Britain as a global, rather than a European, power.
In the late s, Niall Ferguson and John Charmley published two of the most trenchant criticisms of British foreign policy before Nonetheless, it has had implications for the broader discussion of the origins of the war, emphasising the relationship between the emerging global balance of power and the anorectics of German leaders who feared the Empire was being relegated to a second-rate European power. This neglect was compounded by the assumption that the multi-ethnic empire was inevitably doomed to collapse, its foreign policy largely a study in myopia and wishful thinking. Recent historiography has been generous in assessing the stabilising function of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The ponderous decision-making process and the labyrinthine bureaucracy look less odd as Europeans grapple with the complexities of the European Union. Paradoxically the more positive view of the Austro-Hungarian Empire has gone hand in hand with more sustained criticism of its foreign policy-makers, who overestimated the challenges posed by national minorities.

Samuel Williamson — in the Macmillan series mentioned above — argued that leaders in Vienna were responsible for pushing for war in Narratives centred on Anglo-German antagonism or the hereditary enmity of the French and Germans were rooted in the wartime experience, but the focus on western European tensions marginalised the fault lines, conflicts, and accommodations in eastern Europe and the Balkans. During these negotiations, Japan advanced a number of proposals which were dismissed by the Americans as inadequate. Frustrated at the lack of progress and feeling the pinch of the American—British—Dutch sanctions, Japan prepared for war.

On 20 November, a new government under Hideki Tojo presented an interim proposal as its final offer. It called for the end of American aid to China and for lifting the embargo on the supply of oil and other resources to Japan. In exchange, Japan promised not to launch any attacks in Southeast Asia and to withdraw its forces from southern Indochina. Japan planned to rapidly seize European colonies in Asia to create a large defensive perimeter stretching into the Central Pacific. The Japanese would then be free to exploit the resources of Southeast Asia while exhausting the over-stretched Allies by fighting a defensive war. The Japanese invasion of Thailand led to Thailand's decision to ally itself with Japan and the other Japanese attacks led the United States, United Kingdom, China, Australia, and several other states to formally declare war on Japan, whereas the Soviet Union, being heavily involved in large-scale hostilities with European Axis countries, maintained its neutrality agreement with Japan.

On 1 January, the Allied Big Four[] — the Soviet Union, China, the United Kingdom and the United States — and 22 smaller or exiled governments issued the Declaration by United Nations, thereby affirming the Atlantic Charter,[] and agreeing not to sign a separate peace with the Axis powers. During, Allied officials debated on the appropriate grand strategy to pursue. All agreed that defeating Germany was the primary objective.

The Americans favoured a straightforward, large-scale attack on Germany through France. The Soviets were also demanding a second front. The British, on the other hand, argued that military operations should target peripheral areas to wear down German strength, leading to increasing demoralisation, and bolster resistance forces. Germany itself would be subject to a heavy bombing campaign. An offensive against Germany would then be launched primarily by Allied armour without using large-scale armies. At the Casablanca Conference in early, the Allies reiterated the statements issued in the Declaration and demanded the unconditional surrender of their enemies. The British and Americans agreed to continue to press the initiative in the Mediterranean by invading Sicily to fully secure the Mediterranean supply routes.

By the end of April, Japan and its ally Thailand had almost fully conquered Burma, Malaya, the Dutch East Indies, Singapore, and Rabaul, inflicting severe losses on Allied troops and taking a large number of prisoners. In early May, Japan initiated operations to capture Port Moresby by amphibious assault and thus sever communications and supply lines between the United States and Australia. The planned invasion was thwarted when an Allied task force, centred on two American fleet carriers, fought Japanese naval forces to a draw in the Battle of the Coral Sea. With its capacity for aggressive action greatly diminished as a result of the Midway battle, Japan chose to focus on a belated attempt to capture Port Moresby by an overland campaign in the Territory of Papua.

Both plans started in July, but by mid-September, the Battle for Guadalcanal took priority for the Japanese, and troops in New Guinea were ordered to withdraw from the Port Moresby area to the northern part of the island, where they faced Australian and United States troops in the Battle of Buna—Gona. By the start of, the Japanese were defeated on the island and withdrew their troops. The first, an offensive into the Arakan region in late, went disastrously, forcing a retreat back to India by May Despite considerable losses, in early Germany and its allies stopped a major Soviet offensive in central and southern Russia, keeping most territorial gains they had achieved during the previous year.

The Soviets decided to make their stand at Stalingrad on the Volga. By mid-November, the Germans had nearly taken Stalingrad in bitter street fighting. The Soviets began their second winter counter-offensive, starting with an encirclement of German forces at Stalingrad[,] and an assault on the Rzhev salient near Moscow, though the latter failed disastrously. In mid-February, after the Soviet push had tapered off, the Germans launched another attack on Kharkov, creating a salient in their front line around the Soviet city of Kursk. Exploiting poor American naval command decisions, the German navy ravaged Allied shipping off the American Atlantic coast.

In August, the Allies succeeded in repelling a second attack against El Alamein[] and, at a high cost, managed to deliver desperately needed supplies to the besieged Malta. In June the British and Americans began a strategic bombing campaign against Germany with a goal to disrupt the war economy, reduce morale, and "de-house" the civilian population.

After the Guadalcanal Campaign, the Allies initiated several operations against Japan in the Pacific. In the Soviet Union, both the Germans and the Soviets spent the spring and early summer of preparing for large offensives in central Russia. Within a week, German forces had exhausted themselves against the Soviets' deeply echeloned and well-constructed defences[,] and for the first time in the war Hitler cancelled the operation before it had achieved tactical or operational success. On 12 July, the Soviets launched their own counter-offensives, thereby dispelling any chance of German victory or even stalemate in the east. The Western Allies fought through several lines until reaching the main German defensive line in mid-November. German operations in the Atlantic also suffered. By May, as Allied counter-measures became increasingly effective, the resulting sizeable German submarine losses forced a temporary halt of the German Atlantic naval campaign. From November, during the seven-week Battle of Changde, the Chinese forced Japan to fight a costly war of attrition, while awaiting Allied relief.
On 27 January, Soviet troops launched a major offensive that expelled German forces from the Leningrad region, thereby ending the most lethal siege in history. This delay slowed subsequent Soviet operations in the Baltic Sea region. The Allies had mixed success in mainland Asia. In March, the Japanese launched the first of two invasions, an operation against British positions in Assam, India, and soon besieged Commonwealth positions at Imphal and Kohima. After reassigning several Allied divisions from Italy, they also attacked southern France. Paris was liberated on 25 August by the local resistance assisted by the Free French Forces, both led by General Charles de Gaulle, and the Western Allies continued to push back German forces in western Europe during the latter part of the year. An attempt to advance into northern Germany spearheaded by a major airborne operation in the Netherlands failed.

In Italy, Allied advance also slowed due to the last major German defensive line. In northern Serbia, the Soviet Red Army, with limited support from Bulgarian forces, assisted the Partisans in a joint liberation of the capital city of Belgrade on 20 October. A few days later, the Soviets launched a massive assault against German-occupied Hungary that lasted until the fall of Budapest in February. In the Pacific, US forces continued to press back the Japanese perimeter. In mid-June, they began their offensive against the Mariana and Palau islands and decisively defeated Japanese forces in the Battle of the Philippine Sea. These defeats led to the resignation of the Japanese Prime Minister, Hideki Tojo, and provided the United States with air bases to launch intensive heavy bomber attacks on the Japanese home islands. In late October, American forces invaded the Filipino island of Leyte; soon after, Allied naval forces scored another large victory in the Battle of Leyte Gulf, one of the largest naval battles in history.

On 16 December, Germany made a last attempt on the Western Front by using most of its remaining reserves to launch a massive counteroffensive in the Ardennes and along with the French-German border to split the Western Allies, encircle large portions of Western Allied troops and capture their primary supply port at Antwerp to prompt a political settlement. They agreed on the occupation of post-war Germany, and on when the Soviet Union would join the war against Japan. In two weeks, the offensive had been repulsed, the Soviets advanced to Vienna, and captured the city. American and Soviet forces met at the Elbe river on 25 April, leaving several unoccupied pockets in southern Germany and around Berlin.

Soviet and Polish forces stormed and captured Berlin in late April. In Italy, German forces surrendered on 29 April. On 30 April, the Reichstag was captured, signalling the military defeat of Nazi Germany, Berlin garrison surrendered on 2 May. Several changes in leadership occurred during this period. Benito Mussolini was killed by Italian partisans on 28 April. In the Pacific theatre, American forces accompanied by the forces of the Philippines, clearing Leyte by the end of April. They landed on Luzon and recaptured Manila in March.

Fighting continued on Luzon, Mindanao, and other islands of the Philippines until the end of the war. A devastating bombing raid on Tokyo on 9—10 March was the deadliest conventional bombing raid in history. In May, Australian troops landed in Borneo, overrunning the oilfields there. American naval and amphibious forces also moved towards Japan, taking Iwo Jima by March, and Okinawa by the end of June. On 11 July, Allied leaders met in Potsdam, Germany. They confirmed earlier agreements about Germany, and the American, British and Chinese governments reiterated the demand for unconditional surrender of Japan, specifically stating that "the alternative for Japan is prompt and utter destruction".

The call for unconditional surrender was rejected by the Japanese government, which believed it would be capable of negotiating for more favourable surrender terms. Between the two bombings, the Soviets, pursuant to the Yalta agreement, invaded Japanese-held Manchuria and quickly defeated the Kwantung Army, which was the largest Japanese fighting force. The Allies established occupation administrations in Austria and Germany. The former became a neutral state, non-aligned with any political bloc. The latter was divided into western and eastern occupation zones controlled by the Western Allies and the Soviet Union. A denazification programme in Germany led to the prosecution of Nazi war criminals in the Nuremberg trials and the removal of ex-Nazis from power, although this policy moved towards amnesty and re-integration of ex-Nazis into West German society.

Germany lost a quarter of its pre-war territory. Among the eastern territories, Silesia, Neumark and most of Pomerania were taken over by Poland, and East Prussia was divided between Poland and the Soviet Union, followed by the expulsion to Germany of the nine million Germans from these provinces, as well as three million Germans from the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia. By the s, one-fifth of Western Germany was divided, and two independent states, the Federal Republic of Germany West Germany and the German Democratic Republic East Germany, were created within the borders of Allied occupation zones. The rest of Europe was also divided into Western and Soviet spheres of influence. Communist Yugoslavia conducted a fully independent policy, causing tension with the Soviet Union. Separate republics emerged on both sides of the 38th parallel in, each claiming to be the legitimate government for all of Korea, which led ultimately to the Korean War. In China, nationalist and communist forces resumed the civil war in June. Communist forces were victorious and established the People's Republic of China on the mainland, while nationalist forces retreated to Taiwan in 1949. While European powers attempted to retain some or all of their colonial empires, their losses of prestige and resources during the war rendered this unsuccessful, leading to decolonisation.

The global economy suffered heavily from the war, although participating nations were affected differently. The United States emerged much richer than any other nation, leading to a baby boom, and by its gross domestic product per person was much higher than that of any of the other powers, and it dominated the world economy. Recovery began with the mid currency reform in Western Germany, and was sped up by the liberalisation of European economic policy that the Marshall Plan — both directly and indirectly caused.
The Soviet Union, despite enormous human and material losses, also experienced rapid increase in production in the immediate post-war era. Estimates for the total number of casualties in the war vary, because many deaths went unrecorded. The Soviet Union alone lost around 27 million people during the war, including 8 million civilians. Estimates of 17 million civilians were also given. The other European Axis powers Germany and Italy; if colonies are included, the Allies had more than a 1.5 to 1 advantage in population and a nearly 1 to 1 advantage in GDP.

In Europe, before the outbreak of the war, the Allies had significant advantages in both population and economics. In 1939, the Western Allies United Kingdom, France, Poland and the British Dominions had a 30 percent larger population and a 30 percent higher gross domestic product than the European Axis powers Germany and Italy; if colonies are included, the Allies had more than a 1.5 to 1 advantage in population and a nearly 1 to 1 advantage in GDP.

The United States produced about two-thirds of all the munitions used by the Allies in WWII, including warships, transports, warplanes, artillery, tanks, trucks, and ammunition. Additionally, neither Germany nor Japan planned to fight a protracted war, and had not equipped themselves to do so. Aircraft were used for reconnaissance, as fighters, bombers, and ground-support, and each role was advanced considerably. Innovation included air lift the capability to quickly move limited high-priority supplies, equipment, and personnel; and of strategic bombing the bombing of enemy industrial and population centres to destroy the enemy's ability to wage war. The use of the jet aircraft was pioneered and, though late introduction meant it had little impact, it led to jets becoming standard in air forces worldwide. Advances were made in nearly every aspect of naval warfare, most notably with aircraft carriers and submarines.

Although aeronautical warfare had relatively little success at the start of the war, actions at Taranto, Pearl Harbor, and the Coral Sea established the carrier as the dominant capital ship in place of the battleship. The British focused development on anti-submarine weaponry and tactics, such as sonar and convoys, while Germany focused on improving its offensive capability, with designs such as the Type VII submarine and wolfpack tactics.

Land warfare changed from the static frontlines of trench warfare of World War I, which had relied on improved artillery that outmatched the speed of both infantry and cavalry, to increased mobility and combined arms. The tank, which had been used predominantly for infantry support in the First World War, had evolved into the primary weapon. This, along with Germany's use of combined arms, were among the key elements of their highly successful blitzkrieg tactics across Poland and France. Most major belligerents attempted to solve the problems of complexity and security involved in using large codebooks for cryptography by designing ciphering machines, the most well known being the German Enigma machine. Notable examples were the Allied decryption of Japanese naval codes and British Ultra, a pioneering method for decoding Enigma benefiting from information given to the United Kingdom by the Polish Cipher Bureau, which had been decoding early versions of Enigma before the war.

Other technological and engineering feats achieved during, or as a result of, the war include the world's first programmable computers Z3, Colossus, and ENIAC, guided missiles and modern rockets, the Manhattan Project's development of nuclear weapons, operations research and the development of artificial harbours and oil pipelines under the English Channel. From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Global war between Allies and Axis. — World War II. Allied victory. Joseph Stalin Franklin D. Roosevelt Winston Churchill Chiang Kai-shek.


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At that time no original sources were available: no cabinet minutes or papers, no Chiefs of Staff records, only more or less formal documents from the Foreign Office with very occasional minutes. This extraordinary paucity, as it seems now, makes my book a period piece of limited value. Since, he had read fifteen volumes of British diplomatic documents, eight volumes of German diplomatic documents and one volume of Italian diplomatic documents, all of them covering the s. Taylor supported the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, one of whose arguments was that an unintended war brought about by accident could cause a nuclear war and the end of human civilisation.

He also was opposed to the idea that it was necessary for the Western powers to take a tough stand against the Soviet Union as failure to take a similar stand against Nazi Germany had led to war. Since the war, the general view of the causes of the Second World War the "Nuremberg Thesis" was that Hitler had wanted war, planned in detail for war and had launched the war. He was supported by other Nazis but not by the German people, who were innocent bystanders or victims of the Nazi regime. The book was published in April, with German and American editions appearing the following year. Sebastian Haffner wrote in his review in The Observer: "This is an almost faultless masterpiece, perfectly proportioned, perfectly controlled. Bitterness has mellowed into quiet sadness and even pity. In spite of all this, it will probably become his most controversial book Taylor is in the very first rank.

He is among English historians to-day what Evelyn Waugh is among English novelists, a rescuer of forgotten truths, a knight of paradox, a prince of story-telling, and a great, perhaps the greatest, master of his craft". Martin Gilbert came across a copy of the book in a second hand bookshop some years after it was published. The copy was full of pencilled marginal notes attacking the book's thesis. When Gilbert looked at the flyleaf, it was inscribed "A. He presented the copy to Taylor, who was much amused. Hugh Trevor-Roper reviewed the book in the July issue of Encounter. Trevor-Roper argued against Taylor's thesis, claiming that Hitler in Mein Kampf in and elsewhere had outlined his programme. He also accused Taylor of perverting the evidence.

I have said enough to show why I think Mr. Taylor's book utterly erroneous. In spite of his statements about 'historical discipline,' he selects, suppresses, and arranges evidence on no principle other than the needs of his thesis; and that thesis, that Hitler was a traditional statesman, of limited aims, merely responding to a given situation, rests on no evidence at all, ignores essential evidence, and is, in my opinion, demonstrably false.

This casuistical defence of Hitler's foreign policy will not only do harm by supporting neo-Nazi mythology; it will also do harm, perhaps irreparable harm, to Mr. Taylor's reputation as a serious historian. On 9 July, Taylor and Trevor-Roper appeared in a televised debate, chaired by Robert Kee, in which the two historians quarrelled. Taylor's article was set out in two columns, one showing the quotations from Taylor's book that Trevor-Roper had included in his review, the other column providing the entire sentence from the book from which Trevor-Roper had acquired his quotations.

Taylor intended to demonstrate that Trevor-Roper had selected, suppressed and arranged his evidence in exactly the way he had accused Taylor of doing. The last quotation of Trevor-Roper was his claim that the book would harm Taylor's reputation. Taylor responded: "The Regius Professor's methods of quotation might also do harm to his reputation as a serious historian, if he had one". Mason pointed to Nazi Germany's "demonic urge" and criticised Taylor for dismissing German economic patterns, such as the importance of rearmament and the objective of achieving autarky. In Mason's view, all these things required Hitler to launch a war: "A war for the plunder of manpower and materials lay square in the dreadful logic of German economic development under National Socialist rule".

Taylor had ignored the interdependence of internal and external factors in the aims of German foreign policy. Taylor responded in the April issue of Past and Present: "The evidence for economic or political crises within Germany between and is very slight, if non-existent. Hitler cut German armaments plans by 30 per cent after Munich. He cut them again drastically after the fall of France and was reducing them even after the invasion of Russia.