

Notes for David Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor*, Ch 2-3

**CHAPTER 2**

Origins of WWII due to:

**EMPIRE**

Territorial rivalry – haves (Britain) vs have much less/want more (Japan, Germany, Italy)

Brits want to preserve the peace; Japanese see British peace as “imperialism”

What we have, we hold vs. What you hold, we take

Why “waning imperialism”? – China, Russia, Austria- Hungary; German Empires fall

**IDEOLOGY**

Anti-liberal – fascist/communist

What characterized fascism? Militarism, expansionism, nationalism, pageantry

Stalin plays on ideology – plays up external threat from the imperialists to justify collectivization; once he needs the imperialists, he switches to popular front strategy

Stalin’s emphasis on anti-fascism distracts from the “national socialism” of the Nazis, which sounds a lot like “socialism in one nation” (Stalin’s plan)

Spanish Civil War – ideological war fascism vs communism; liberal democracy is discredited (as it is in Eastern Europe)

**ECONOMICS**

Anti-liberal – autarky

Liberal economic order is discredited

Nations resort to trading blocs or to self-sufficient autarky

Autarky and communism/central planning appear more successful than liberal capitalism

**US AS “EMPIRE OF LIBERTY”**

How different than Europe? Limited holdings; democratic institutions precede industrialization; federal system of government limits centralized power; lack of ideological diversity (no left);

less class tensions; relative security (US is protected by oceans and weak neighbors) impedes power grab by the state

By the 1930s, the US had turned in on itself; Still powerful, the US was “a country that had lost its nerve”

Ironically, Neutrality Acts try to keep US from getting into the *First* World War

FDR – A Fusion of TR and Wilson

FDR supports a strong navy (like TR)

But...FDR parts ways with Wilson

Instead, he emphasizes:

1-- make sure you have public opinion behind you

2-- recognize the role of power in foreign affairs

3-- recognize that the Great Powers would rule the world [as opposed to utopian League of Nations]

Yet FDR shares Wilson’s suspicions of the Old Order – colonialism, etc.

### **CHAPTER 3**

Significance of Nazi-Soviet Pact? In Asia and Europe?

After Munich, what worries FDR?

A NAZI AIR ATTACK in WESTERN HEMISPHERE

He proposes un-neutral rearmament, but there is no political will

Cash and carry trade with belligerents is all that’s possible, politically

Congress is wary of public opinion; public is wary of war.

### IDEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Krisallnacht – American values cannot flourish in such an environment.

Nazi-Soviet Pact – image of totalitarianism; red fascism

## AMERICAN REACTION TO WAR IN ASIA

Pro-Chinese due to Japanese brutality;

Pro- tough policy; dismissive of the Japanese

Balance of Power in Europe affects US policy in Asia

American fleet must replace British fleet in projecting power and containing the Japanese

Nazi-Soviet pact makes the Japanese rethink their policies; they had already lost a battle with the Soviets and could no longer be pro-German if the Soviets were a German ally

1939 Neutrality Act – end arms embargo, un-neutral support for allies; avoid war

“FDR wanted to have his cake and eat it”