

The Road to War – Causes of World War II

1. *The Treaty of Versailles – 1919*

- Germany unhappy with terms of the treaty and the reparations they had to pay for war damages (\$33 billion)
- had to sign the “war guilt” clause
- Germany began to break the treaty by building up its military, etc.
- many Germans bitter towards French/British because of treaty

2. *Inflation/Global Depression – 1930s*

- Germany printed large amounts of money to pay for reparations
- money became worthless
- Britain, France, and USA decided to reduce the reparation payments, but Global Depression in 1930 ruined German economy
- 60% German unemployment, and all felt effects of poverty

3. *Failure of the League of Nations*

- based on “collective security”...it didn't work
- WEAKNESSES = the US never a member; Germany and Japan left the League; League had no authority nor military
- did nothing when Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931 or when Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1935

4. *German, Italian, and Japanese Aggression and the Breaking of Treaties*

- between 1934 and 1939, these countries built up their military, signed treaties of friendships, invaded other countries

5. *Non-Aggression Pact*

- Germany made a secret agreement with Joseph Stalin, leader of the Soviet Union
- would not attack each other if war broke out and agreed to divide Poland between them
- this made war possible for Germany because they did not have to worry about fighting the powerful Soviets

6. *The Allied Response*

- the Allies (mainly Britain and France) did nothing (*appeasement*)
- WHY? - they had disarmed after fighting “the war to end all wars”; they were preoccupied with the Depression

