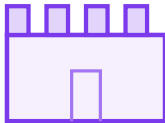


20th-Century Global Conflicts

AP European History ■ Unit 8

AP European History



What we will cover

- 1 Contextualizing 20th-Century Global Conflicts
- 2 World War I
- 3 The Russian Revolution and Its Effects
- 4 Versailles Conference and Peace Settlement
- 5 Global Economic Crisis
- 6 Fascism and Totalitarianism



Contextualizing 20th-Century Global Conflicts

Unit 8 covers c. 1914 to the present as a story of conflict, and four key concepts frame it:

- Total war and political instability in the first half of the century gave way to a polarised state order during the Cold War.
- The stresses of economic collapse and total war produced internal conflicts within European states and **conflicting conceptions of the relationship between the individual and the state** .
- Diverse intellectual and cultural movements questioned the existence of objective knowledge and the authority that had rested on it.
- Demographic change, economic growth, total war, and competing definitions of freedom and justice altered the experience of everyday life.

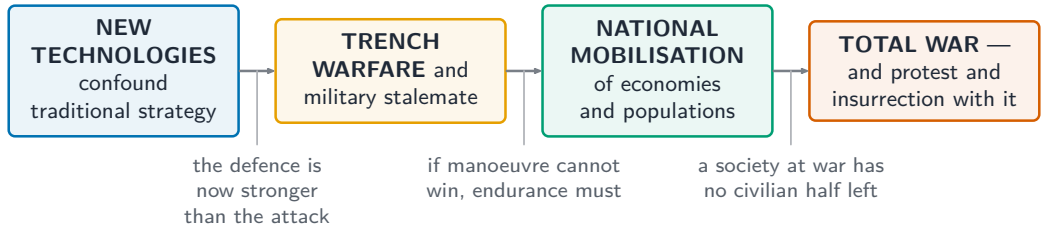


World War I

The war was caused by a complex interaction of long- and short-term factors and produced immense losses and disruption. The CED's specific claims:

- New technologies confounded traditional military strategies, leading to **trench warfare** and massive troop losses.
- The effects of military stalemate, national mobilisation, and total war led to **protest and insurrection** in the belligerent nations – the war turned inward on the societies fighting it.
- The war spread quickly to non-European theatres, becoming a global conflict.
- The relationship of Europe to the world shifted significantly with that globalisation, and with the emergence of new powers.

Technology, stalemate, then whole societies



The war spreads to **non-European theatres** for the same reason: once whole societies are committed, everything either side holds is a target

A trench on the Somme, 1916



A trench on the Somme, 1916
- the stalemate that national
mobilisation was the answer to



The Russian Revolution and Its Effects

The **Russian Revolution** created a regime based on **Marxist-Leninist theory** – the first state to be founded explicitly on that programme, which is what makes it a turning point rather than a national event.

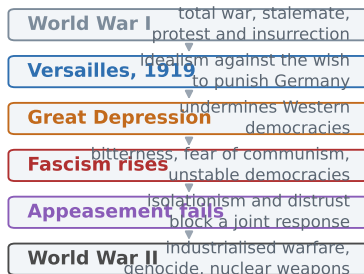


Each link is a separate examinable step

Each step is examinable on its own: Versailles' conflicting aims, the **mandate system** , then the Depression that followed.

Each link is a separate examinable step, in detail

One chain, six links - and questions name a link



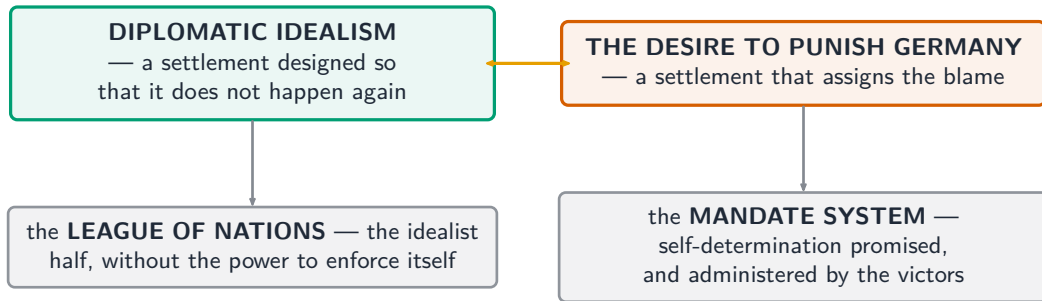
The Depression is the pivot: these movements existed before 1929 but could not win power until it came.

Questions ask about one link; the strongest answers show where it sits in the chain

Versailles Conference and Peace Settlement

The **conflicting goals of the peace negotiators in Paris** pitted **diplomatic idealism against the desire to punish Germany** , and the resulting settlement satisfied neither aim fully.

Two incompatible aims



Neither aim wins outright, which is why the outcome satisfies nobody – and why “the settlement was unsustainable” needs **this** to explain it

Versailles, the mandates, and the two totalitarianisms

the League of Nations

distributed former German and Ottoman possessions to France and Great Britain **through mandates**

what a mandate was

colonial rule with a stated obligation to prepare the territory for self-government – and little enforcement

the lost generation

the wartime dead, and the cultural sense of a break with everything before 1914

the comparison to make

fascism against Soviet communism under **Stalin** is **structural rather than ideological**

the shared claim

both regimes asserted **total authority over the relationship** between the individual and the state

where they differ

in whom they mobilised, what they promised, and what they claimed to be restoring

The demographic consequence is stated directly: the Second World War **decimated a generation of Russian and German men**, with lasting effects on both societies.



Global Economic Crisis

The **Great Depression**, caused by weaknesses in international trade and in monetary theory and practice, **undermined Western European democracies** and fostered **radical political responses** across Europe.

The Depression is what turned interwar bitterness into a political opportunity for movements that had existed since before 1914 but had not previously been able to win power.

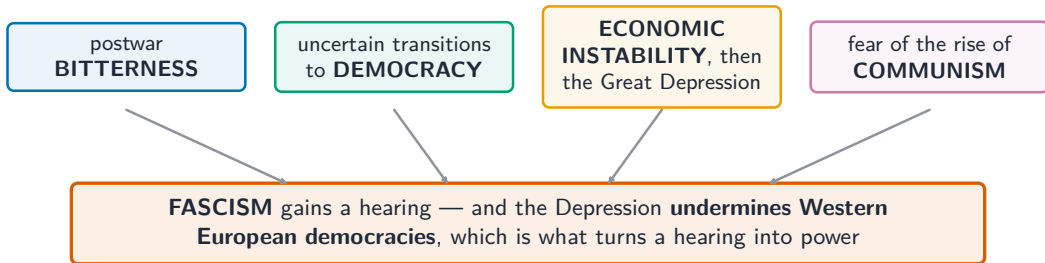


Fascism and Totalitarianism

The ideology of **fascism**, with roots in the pre-war era, **gained popularity in an environment of postwar bitterness, the rise of communism, uncertain transitions to democracy, and economic instability.** That four-part environment is the CED's own answer to "why then", and it is better than any single cause.

The CED states the cost explicitly: modernisation came at a **high price**, including the **liquidation of the kulaks** and a **catastrophic famine**.

The conditions fascism found



Conditions are not a cause on their own. The claim is that the existing order had already failed **twice** – in the war, and then in the economy



Europe During the Interwar Period

The failure to prevent a second war has named causes:

- French and British fears of another war, **American isolationism**, and deep distrust between Western democratic, capitalist nations and the Soviet communist regime prevented an effective response.
- **Fascism, extreme nationalism, racist ideologies, and the failure of appeasement** resulted in the Second World War.



World War II

- Germany's **Blitzkrieg** warfare in Europe, combined with Japan's attacks in Asia and the Pacific, brought the Axis powers early victories.
- American and British industrial, scientific, and technological power, cooperative military efforts under strong leadership, and the Soviet Union's vast manpower and resources eventually defeated the Axis.
- Military technologies made possible industrialised warfare, genocide, nuclear proliferation , and the risk of global nuclear war.



The Holocaust

Fuelled by **racism and anti-Semitism** , Nazi Germany – with the cooperation of some other Axis powers and collaborators – **used industrial technology and bureaucratic structures to carry out the systematic murder of European Jewish people** and other targeted groups.

That is why this topic belongs with the technology and total-war themes rather than standing apart from them.

What the CED says distinguishes the Holocaust

reproduce the framing

the CED's wording here is precise and **should be used**

the distinguishing feature

the use of **the state's full bureaucratic and technological apparatus** to carry out systematic mass murder

not the scale alone

earlier episodes of mass violence were large; this was **administered**

the machinery

census records, railways, industrial production and a professional civil service, all turned to the purpose

the implication

it required the participation of ordinary institutions, not only of a party

An answer that reaches only for scale or for hatred misses what the CED is asking about. **The instrument was the modern state itself.**



20th-Century Cultural and Intellectual Developments

- The belief in progress characteristic of much nineteenth-century thought began to break down before World War I and collapsed after it.
- When the war began, Europeans were generally confident in the ability of science and technology to address human needs; the war and then the Depression undermined that confidence.
- The challenge to the certainties of the Newtonian universe in physics opened the door to uncertainty in other fields.
- The war created a **"lost generation"** and fostered **disillusionment and cynicism**.
- During both wars, women became increasingly involved in military and political mobilisation and in economic production.



Continuity and Change in an Age of Global Conflict

The unit's reasoning skill is continuity and change.

Worked example – a settlement that destabilises

“Explain one way in which the peace settlement of 1919 contributed to political instability in the 1920s and 1930s.”

- **Full marks:** *“The settlement combined punitive terms against Germany with an appeal to national self-determination it could not deliver consistently. That left a German republic burdened with reparations and blamed for accepting them, which gave nationalist and fascist movements a grievance ready-made.”*
- A settlement destabilises by what it *leaves behind*.

Note the second half: self-determination promised and unevenly applied created grievances in the successor states as well.

Exam tips

- Learn the **chain**: war, settlement, economic collapse, radical movements, failed appeasement, war again. Most questions ask about one link.
- The CED gives fascism a **four-part environment** – postwar bitterness, fear of communism, unstable democracies, economic instability. Use all four.
- The **Depression is the pivot**. Movements that existed before 1929 could not win power until it happened.
- On the Holocaust, the examinable point is the use of the **modern state's own instruments**. State it precisely.
- The **mandate system** is imperial control renamed. Saying so links the settlement to decolonisation.
- The collapse of confidence in **progress and objectivity** connects the political and cultural halves of the unit. Examiners reward that connection.



Period 8 – key takeaways

1

Chain

war, settlement, collapse, radicals,
failed appeasement, war

2

Fascism

four-part environment – use all
four

3

Depression

the pivot: movements could not
win until 1929

4

Mandate

imperial control renamed

Check yourself

- 1 Give the interwar chain.
- 2 Name fascism's four-part environment.
- 3 What is the Depression's role?
- 4 What is the mandate system?

Answers: war to war again ▪ bitterness, fear of communism, unstable democracies, economic instability ▪ the pivot to power ▪ imperial control renamed