¶ 4.1

LECTURE 4: WORLD WARS AND REVOLUTIONS

1914 to 1945

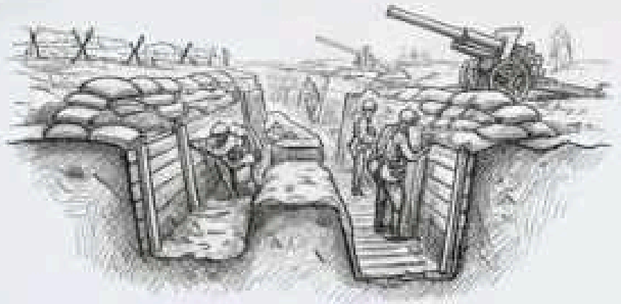


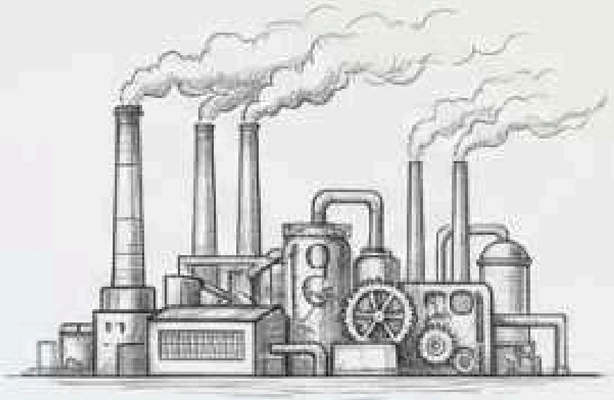
Welcome to Lecture 4.

$$\int_{1945}^{1914} (\text{Violence} + \text{Revolution})\, dt = \text{Modern Era}$$

THE MOST VIOLENT THIRTY YEARS IN HISTORY

$$V_{30} = \{ \text{WWI} \rightarrow \text{Rev} \rightarrow \text{Depression} \rightarrow \text{Fascism} \rightarrow \text{WWII} \rightarrow \text{Holocaust} \}$$









1914 — 1945

The Core Narrative: The era spans the First World War, the Russian Revolution, the Great Depression, the rise of fascism, the Second World War, and the Holocaust.

The Conclusion: Ends with the postwar attempt to build a safer world.

We begin with the spark in Sarajevo. →

The Spark in Sarajevo

¶ 4.3



$$N_s + A_{commit} \rightarrow \Delta(\text{Total Industrial War})$$

(N_s = Serbian Nationalism, A_{commit} = Alliance Commitments)

June 28, 1914: Archduke Franz Ferdinand assassinated.



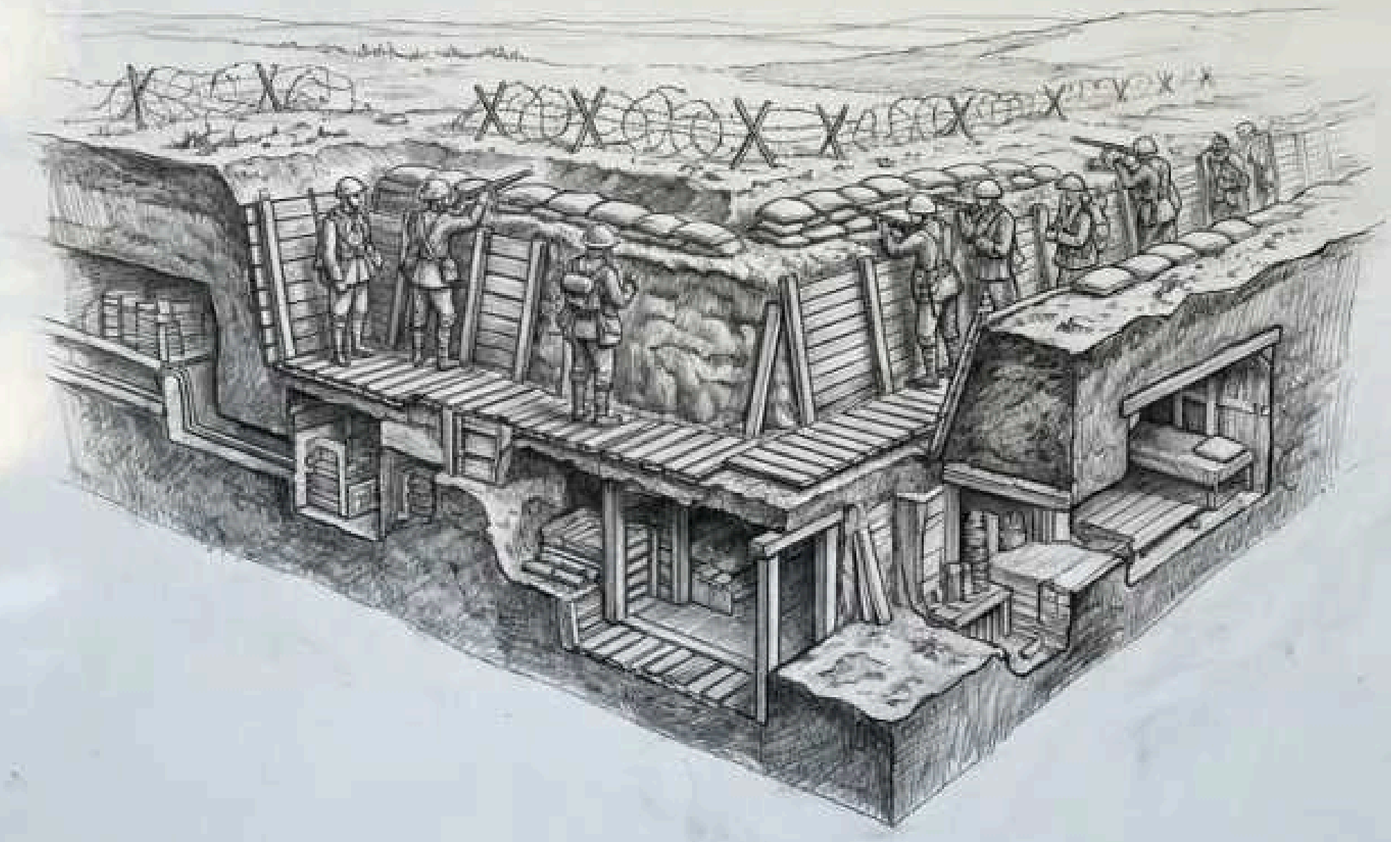
The Miscalculation:

- Leaders expected a short war.
- Instead, it became a 4-year total industrial grind.

The Western Front & Total War

¶4.4

$$\text{Gain} \propto \frac{1}{\text{Lives Lost} \times (\text{Machine Guns} + \text{Artillery} + \text{Poison Gas})}$$



Deadly Defense:

- Machine guns, artillery, and poison gas made attacks relentlessly deadly.

Battles of Attrition:

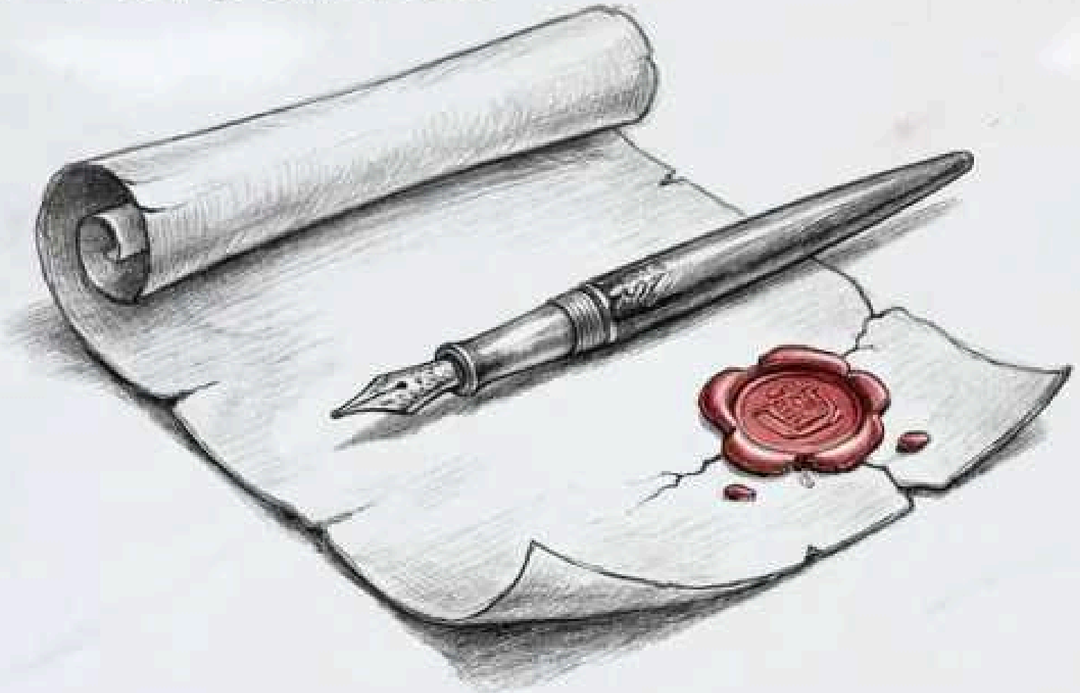
- Somme & Verdun: Hundreds of thousands of lives lost for minimal territorial gains.

Global Scope:

- Fighting spread to the Middle East, Africa, and Asia.
- Heavy reliance on vast numbers of colonial soldiers.

Armistice and Versailles

¶ 4.5



German Resentment = f (Lost Land + Army Limits + Reparations)

The End:

- US enters the war in 1917.
- Nov 11, 1918: Exhausted Germany agrees to armistice.

The Toll:

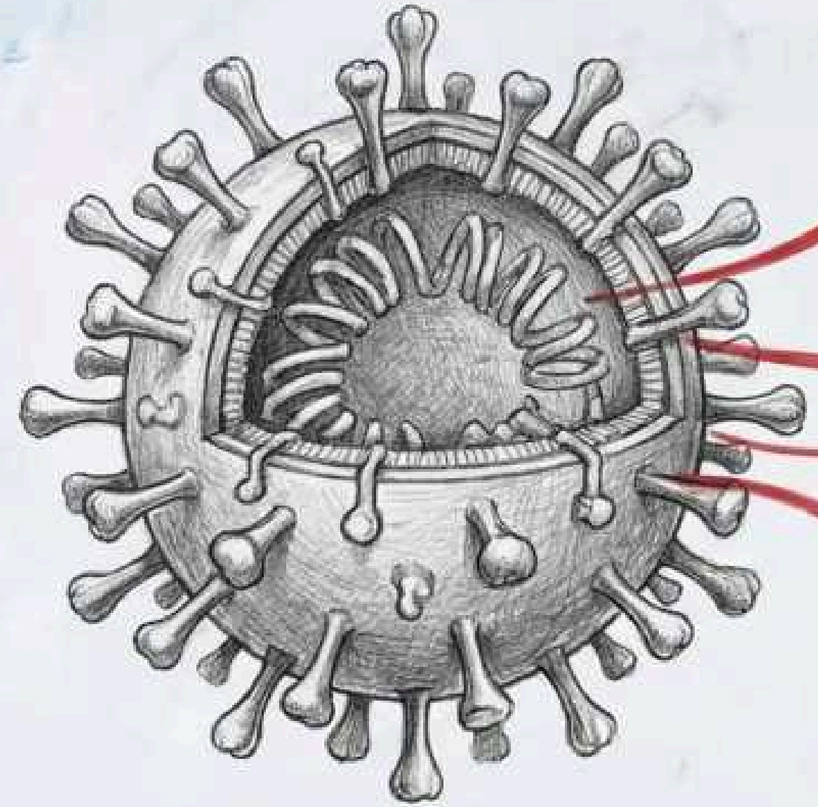
- ~10 million soldiers dead, plus millions of civilians.

The 1919 Treaty of Versailles:

- Punishes Germany harshly, creating bitter resentment that fundamentally destabilizes the postwar peace.

The 1918 Influenza Pandemic

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- Global Sweep (1918–1919): Killed 50 million or more, heavily targeting young adults.

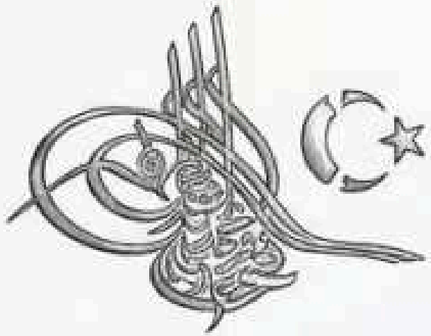


- The 'Spanish Flu' Myth: Named so only because neutral Spain reported on it openly.
- Insight: War and disease function as mutually amplifying systems.

R_0 (Pandemic) × (Troop Movement + Crowded Conditions) = 50,000,000+ Deaths

COLLAPSE OF THE FOUR EMPIRES

¶ 4.7

GERMAN	AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN
	
RUSSIAN	**OTTOMAN**
	

Geopolitical Shift:

The map of Europe is entirely rewritten.

Tsar_toppled + Bolsheviks_seize = USSR_1922

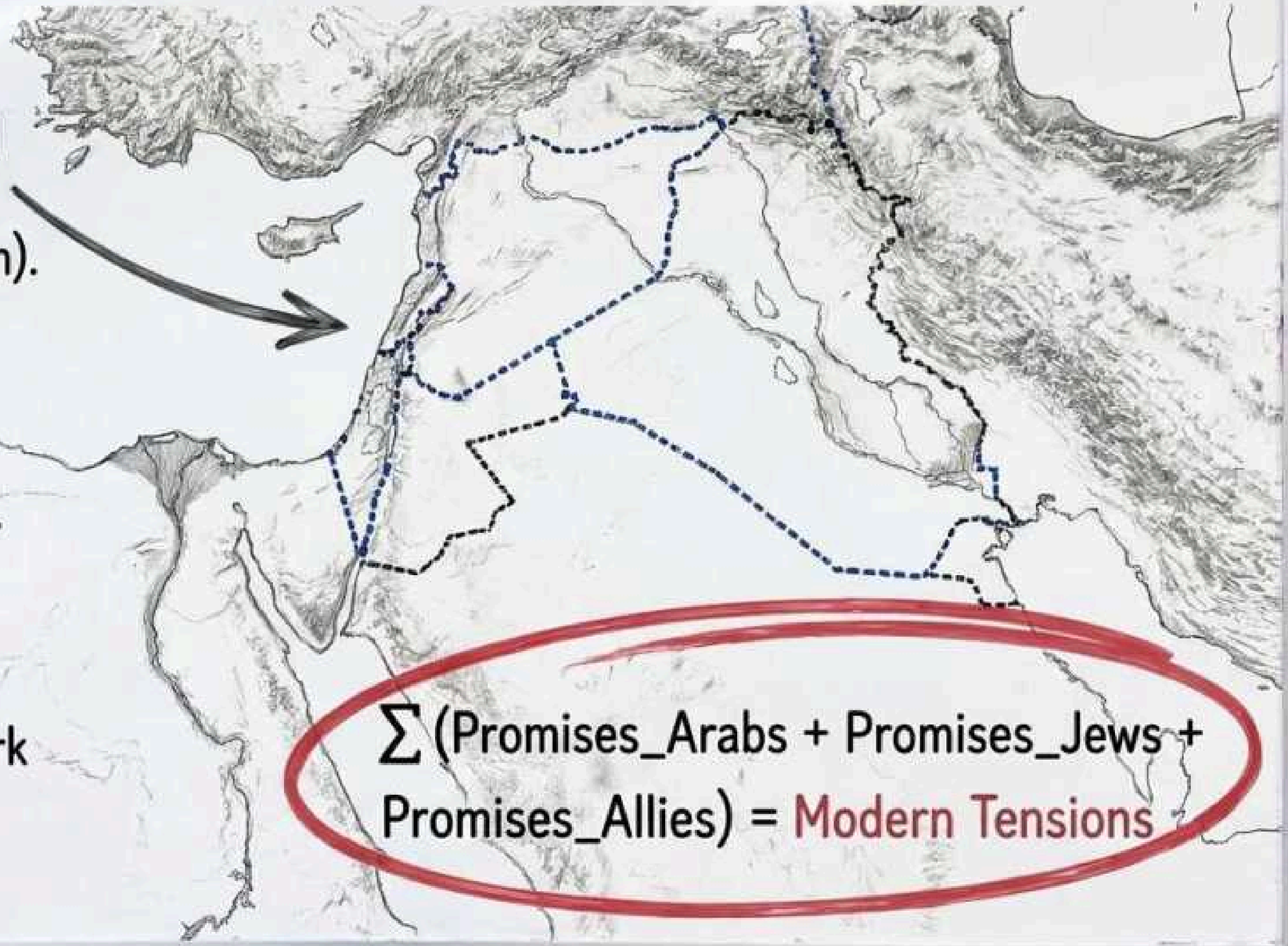
(Mar 1917) (Nov 1917)

The Russian Revolution:

- Vladimir Lenin & Bolsheviks seize power.
- 1922: Following a brutal civil war, the Soviet Union (the first Communist state) is founded.

Redrawing the Middle East

¶ 4.8



League of Nations Mandates:

- Britain and France divide and rule former Ottoman lands (Iraq, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon).

Turkey:

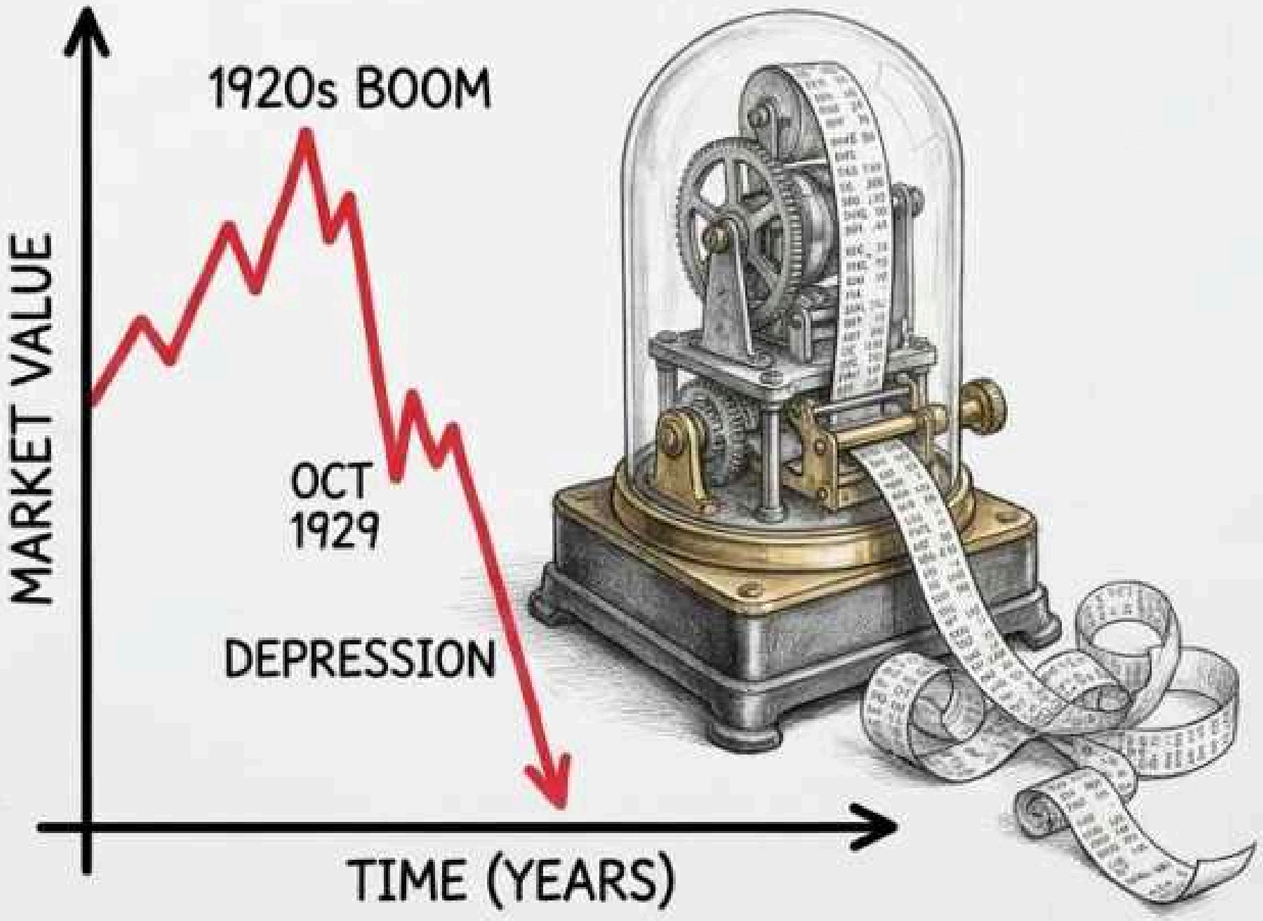
- Emerges as a modern state under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

The Legacy:

- Conflicting wartime promises laid the inescapable groundwork for tensions still felt today.

$$\sum(\text{Promises_Arabs} + \text{Promises_Jews} + \text{Promises_Allies}) = \text{Modern Tensions}$$

Boom and Bust: The Great Depression



$$\lim_{(x \to \text{Oct 1929})} (\text{Speculation}) = -\infty \ (\text{Market Crash})$$

- The 1920s: An era of jazz, radio, and a massive speculative boom.
- October 1929: The US stock market crashes, triggering the Great Depression.
- The Impact: Banks fail, global trade shrinks, and 25% of American workers lose their jobs.
- The Fallout: A widespread, global loss of faith in democracy and free markets.

The Rise of Fascism and Militarism

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Dictatorship = Economic Misery × (Resentment$_{\text{Versailles}}$ + Violent Hatred)

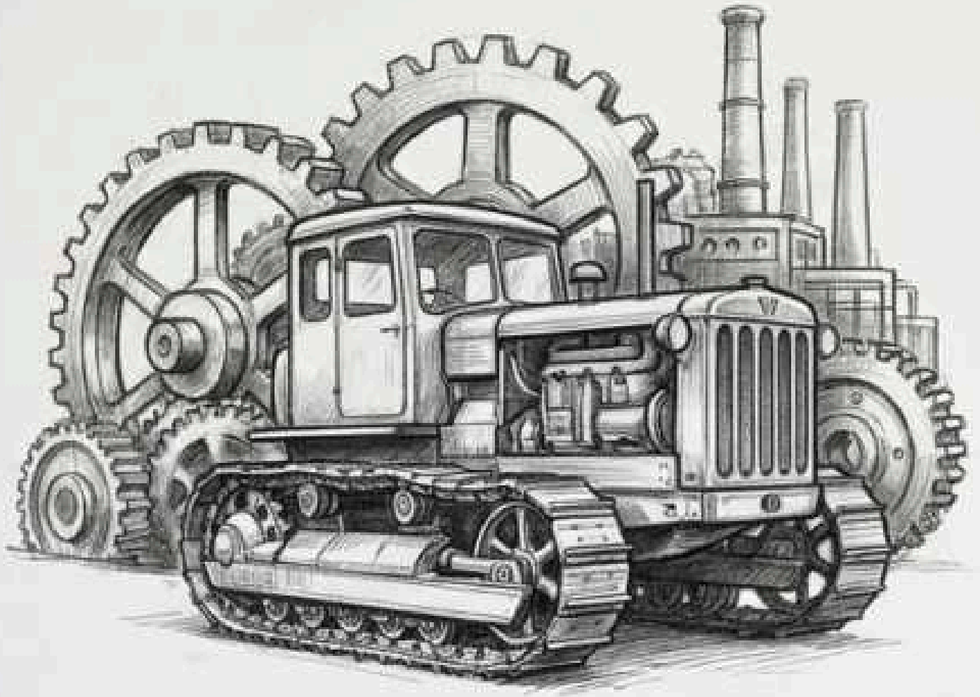
Italy (1920s): Benito Mussolini builds a fascist dictatorship.

Germany (1933): Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party take power. They weaponize economic despair, Versailles resentment, and antisemitism to build a police state.

Japan: Militarists gain dominant governmental influence.

STALIN, CHINA, AND JAPANESE EXPANSION

¶ 4.11





f(Stalin) = (Collective Farms + 5-Year Plans) − (Famine + Great Terror)

Stalin forces collectivization and heavy industry. Millions die in famine and the late-1930s "Great Terror".

China: Bitter internal struggle between Nationalists (Chiang Kai-shek) and Communists (Mao Zedong).

Japan: Aggressively invades Manchuria/China in 1931 and again in 1937.

THE SECOND WORLD WAR BEGINS

Sep 1939: Germany invades Poland; Britain and France declare war.

1940: The fall of France to German forces.

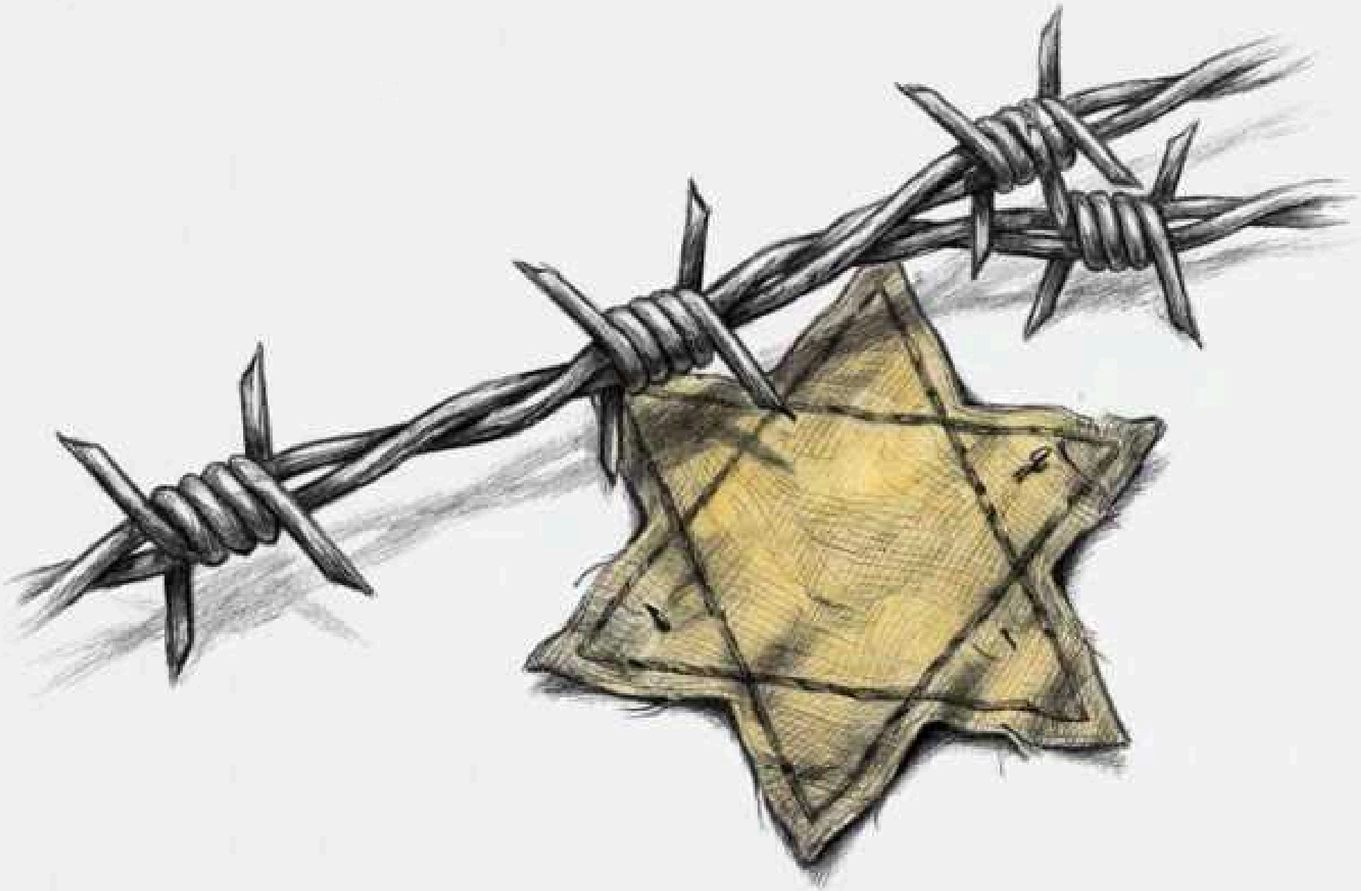


Jun 1941: Germany betrays its pact and invades the Soviet Union.

Dec 7, 1941: Japan attacks Pearl Harbor, bringing the United States into the war.

$$\mathcal{V}_{\text{war}} = \{\text{Europe, Africa, Asia, Oceans}\}$$

THE HOLOCAUST



Genocide: The systematic, state-planned murder of roughly six million Jews and millions of others by the Nazi regime.

Methods: Victims were executed in mass shootings and gassed in extermination camps such as Auschwitz.

Historical Reality: Orchestrated by a modern state, this remains among the most thoroughly documented crimes in human history.

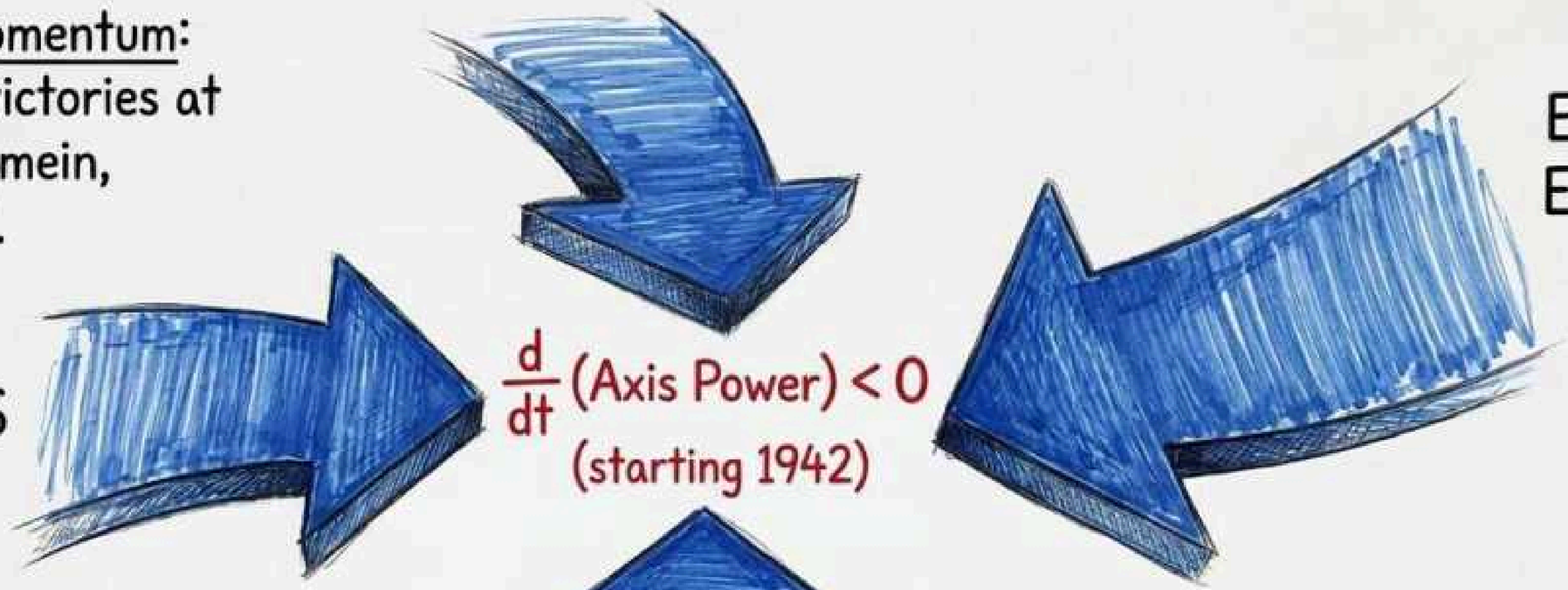
$$n_{\text{murdered}} \approx 6{,}000{,}000 \text{ Jews}$$

+ Roma, disabled people, and Soviet prisoners.

THE TIDE TURNS (1942–1945)

¶ 4.14

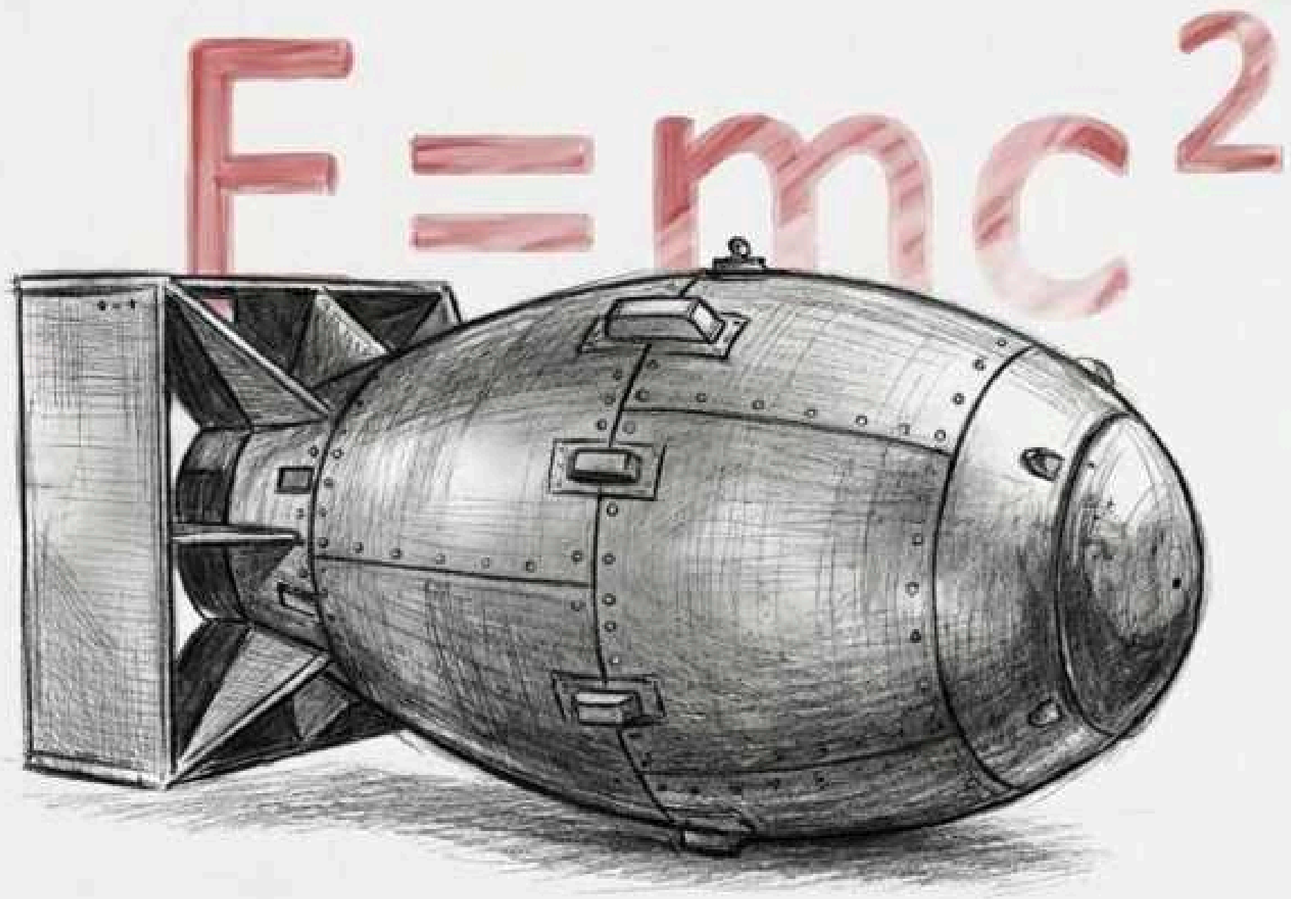
1942–1943 Momentum: Crucial Allied victories at Midway, El Alamein, and Stalingrad.



1944–1945 Victory in Europe: D-Day landings in Normandy (June 1944) lead to Germany's surrender in May 1945.

Asian Theater: Japanese occupation of China and Southeast Asia brings immense suffering, highlighted by the brutal 1937 Nanjing Massacre.

The Atomic Bombs



August 1945:

- The US drops atomic bombs on Hiroshima (Aug 6) and Nagasaki (Aug 9); Japan surrenders.

The Toll:

- Tens of thousands die instantly in the blasts, with many more dying later from radiation.

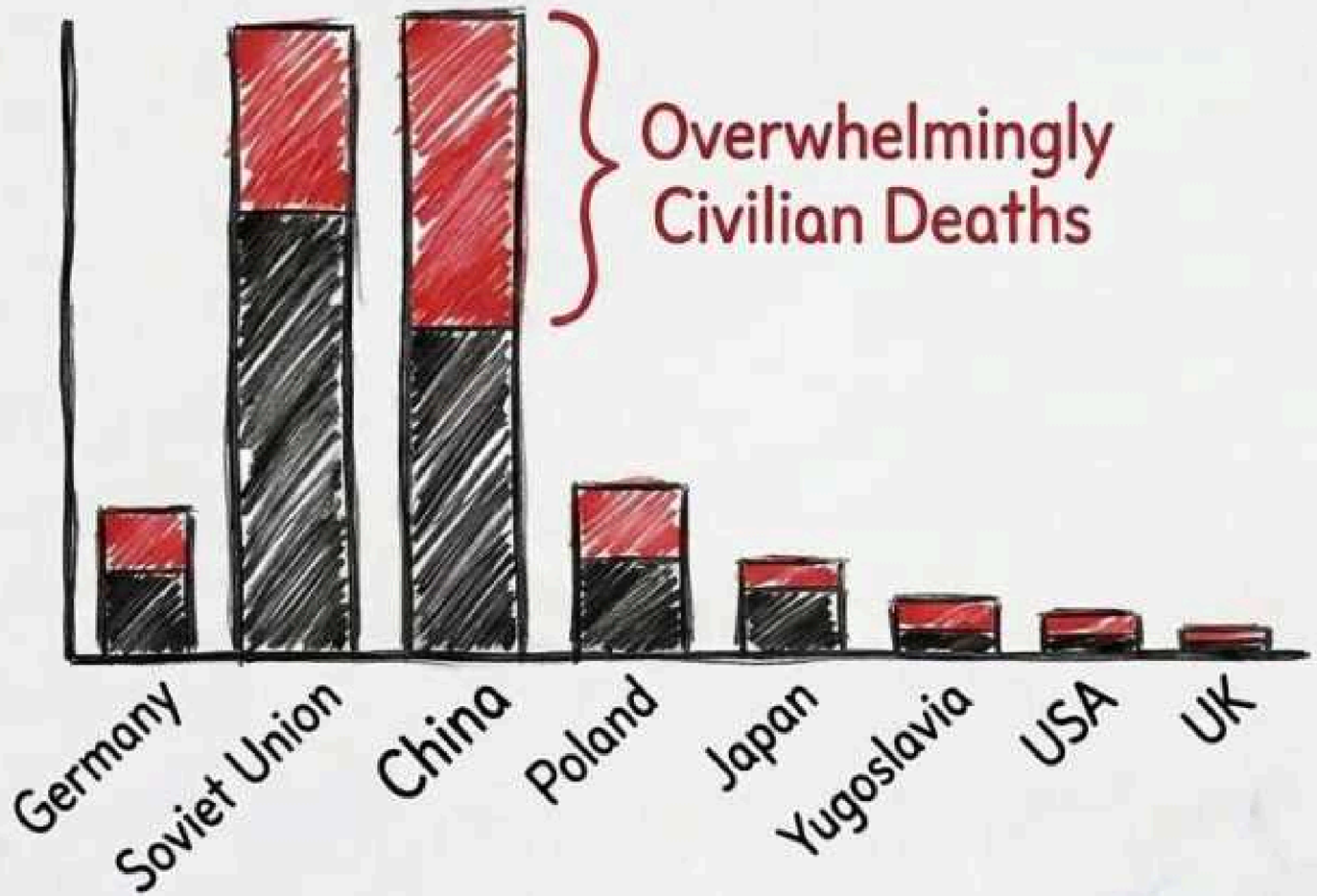
Historical Debate:

- Were the bombs strictly necessary to end the war?
- What exact role did the Soviet entry into the Pacific war play?

¶ 4.16

The Deadliest Conflict in History

$\sum$ Casualties = 70×10^6 to 85×10^6



- 70–85 Million Dead: The vast majority of these casualties were civilians.
- Heaviest Losses: The Soviet Union and China suffered the most extreme death tolls.
- The Aftermath: Cities ac:ross Cities across the globe lay in and tens of millions of people were displaced.

Inevitability vs. Choices

Systemic Pressures: Versailles, the Great Depression, and Fascist ideology pushed inevitably toward war.



Individual Choices: Specific choices mattered—the Munich appeasement (1938) and Hitler's decision to attack the USSR.

$$\mathcal{P}(\text{War}) = w_1(\text{Systemic Causes}) + w_2(\text{Individual Choices})$$

Insight: A sound historical explanation requires weighing long-term structural causes against the specific decisions of leaders.

¶ 4.18

Postwar Justice and the United Nations





$UN_{1945} + Human\ Rights_{1948} = Framework\ for\ Peace$

- 1945: The victors found the United Nations to keep the peace and prevent future catastrophes.
- 1948: The UN adopts the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Nuremberg Trials: Nazi leaders are judged for "crimes against humanity," establishing modern international law.
- The Shadow: Even as peace is built, a new rivalry (the Cold War) is already dividing the victors.

¶ 4.19

Recap of the 30 Years

Crisis + Alliances + Nationalism = WWI & End of 4 Empires

Phase 1: Nationalism and rival alliances turn a single spark in Sarajevo into a world war.

Revolution + Depression + Fascism = Destroyed Peace

Phase 2: A fragile peace completely collapses under the weight of radical ideologies and economic ruin.

WWII + Holocaust = Unmatched Death & the UN

Phase 3: Unprecedented global destruction ultimately births a new institutional global framework.

¶4.20

A Question to Take Away: The Trap of Hindsight



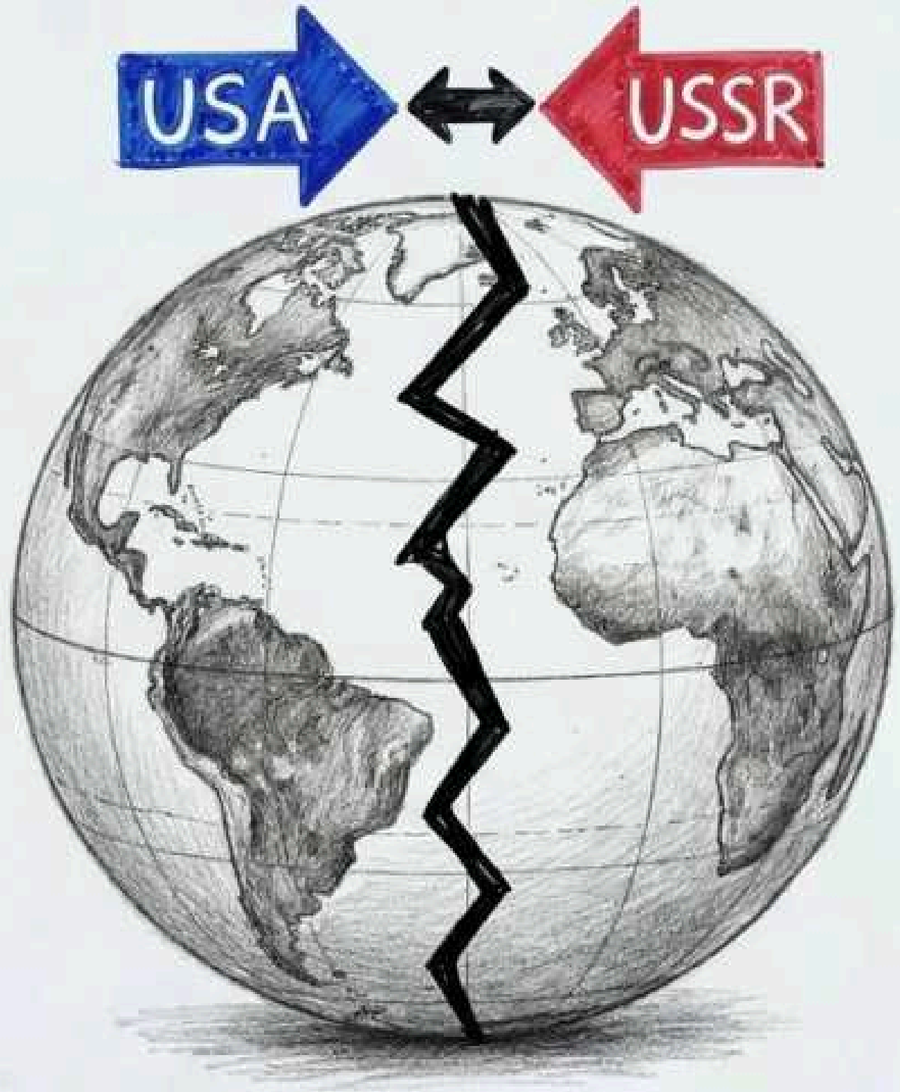
EV	Probb. 0.05 \ Probability (EV)	Knowledge	Hindsight
	Knowledge	−1 (0, 3)	−0 (2, 0)
	Hindsight	−1 (1, 5)	−1 (1, 4)

$EV_{1938\ knowledge} \neq EV_{1945\ hindsight}$

- The Dilemma: Many in the 1930s hoped to avoid war by giving way to Hitler's demands.
- The Question: Was appeasement a foolish mistake? Or was it a reasonable choice at the time that only looks wrong because we know the tragic outcome?
- Takeaway: Notice how hindsight fundamentally shapes the way we judge history and leaders' decisions.

¶4.21

LOOKING AHEAD: THE COLD WAR



- Next Lecture: We turn to the Cold War and the end of colonial empires.
- Key Themes:
  - Follow the superpower rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union.
  - The independence movements of India and Africa.
  - The eventual, surprising collapse of Soviet communism.