

ANDRA VÄRLDSKRIGET - ORSAKER

Två huvudtolkningar av orsakerna till Andra VK:

1. Huvudorsaken till andra världskriget var Hitlers krav på en utökning av det tyska riket
2. Huvudorsaken till det andra världskriget var eftergiftspolitiken (appeasement)

Några andra viktiga tolkningar är:

1. Konsekvenserna av fredsfördragen i Paris efter Första VK
2. Mussolini och Italien 1933-1939
3. Sovjetunionen och Molotov-Ribbentroppakten 1939
4. Den svaga franska utrikespolitiken
5. USAs isolationism
6. Nationernas Förbunds misslyckande
7. Depression (efter börskraschen i New York 1929)
8. Nationalism
9. Totalitära ideologier; kommunism, fascism och nazism

En viktig historiker då det gäller andra världskrigets orsaker är A.J.P.Taylor:

I hans bok "*Förspelet till andra världskriget*" (1968) skriver A J P Taylor bl.a. att:

- Andra världskrigets orsaker bestod dels av en del missförstånd
- Versaillesfredens villkor var så pass stränga att de födde revanschism hos tyskarna samtidigt var de inte tillräckligt hårda för att omöjliggöra Tysklands återkomst som europeisk stormakt
- Taylor beskriver Adolf Hitler som en opportunist som inte alls planerat ett världskrig. Han var inte ett "monster" utan en politiker som improviserade då tillfället gavs. Hans utrikespolitik följde en tidigare tysk tradition (Bismarck, Wilhelm II)
- Eftergiftspolitiken var en logisk och realistisk politik, men misstag begicks då Neville Chamberlain övergav denna politik

Så... andra världskriget bröt inte ut beroende på Hitlers beteende utan på grund av de misstag Neville Chamberlain begick enligt A.J.P. Taylor. Hitlers utrikespolitik lyckades (under en viss tid) eftersom han var skicklig på att utnyttja sina motståndares misstag.

Vad säger Morris?

Freden i Versailles 1919

- Det var en svag kompromiss
- Europas nya gränser orsakade tillfredsställde inte alla nationer
- Nya gränser skapades för att undvika problem med kulturella och etniska minoriteter
- Skadeståndskraven "*innehöll frön för framtida problem*"

Både USA och Sovjetunionen isolerade sig

- USA vägrade godkänna Versaillesfördraget och gå med i Nationernas Förbund
- Sovjetunionen blev behandlade som en besegrad centralmakt (Tyskland, Österrike-Ungern)
- Ingen av stormakterna hade intresse av att bevara fredsuppgörelserna 1919-20

Nationalism

- Flera av de nya staterna som hade bildats enligt principen "*folkets självbestämmanderätt*" visade sig vara aggressiva och expansiva (ex: Polen...)

Omorganisationen av Europa innebar inte fler demokratiska stater:

- Diktaturer i Italien, Tyskland, Ungern, Rumänien, Polen, Spanien, Portugal...
- Endast Tjeckoslovakien etablerade en stabil demokrati

Världsdepressionen

- Ledde till att extremister kom till makten (ex: NSDAP i Tyskland)
- Ledde till att regeringar fokuserade på kortsiktiga nationalistiska lösningar av problem istället internationellt samarbete

Försvagning av Storbritannien och Frankrike

- Frankrike och Storbritannien misslyckades med att stödja Nationernas Förbund
- Eftergiftspolitiken (appeasement)
- Innebar att andra länder började tro att diktatur var ett effektivare sätt att styra en stat

Ur boken "**The origins of the First and Second World Wars**" av **Frank McDonough**

Två huvudtolkningar av orsakerna till Andra VK:

1. Huvudorsaken till andra världskriget var Hitlers krav på en utökning av det tyska riket (denna tolkning användes av domarna i Nürnberggrättegångarna 1945-1946)
2. Huvudorsaken till det andra världskriget var eftergiftspolitiken (appeasement)

Orsak – Fredsuppgörelserna i Paris 1919-1920

Traditionell syn: Många historiker ser fredsuppgörelserna i Paris 1919 som en **misslyckad kompromiss mellan Wilsons idealism** (President i USA) och de Europeiska stormakternas **realism och egoism:**

James Joll: Fredskonferensen delade Europa i de som ville revidera fredsuppgörelserna [Tyskland, Italien, Japan och Ungern], de som ville uppehålla dess resultat [Frankrike, Polen, Tjeckoslovakien och Jugoslavien] och de som inte var intresserade [USA och Storbritannien]

E.H. Carr: "Den grundläggande svagheten i fredsfördraget var att det misslyckades lösa det "*tyska problemet*".

Anthony Lentin: De som låg bakom fredsuppgörelsen verkade inte ha insett att kollapsen av de Ryska, Habsburgska och Osmanska Rikena skapade ett potentiellt starkare Tyskland jämfört med situationen innan första världskriget

Revisionistisk syn: En del historiker ser fredsuppgörelserna i Paris 1919-1920 som en **framgång men dess skapare misslyckades med att följa upp** de principer som man beslutade om och detta misslyckande innebar att Tyskland kunde återhämta sig

Paul Birdsall: USAs vägran att bli inblandade i upprätthållandet av fredsuppgörelserna var en avgörande anledning till att uppgörelserna misslyckades

Paul Kennedy: Det var stora skillnader mellan 1920-talet då uppgörelserna fungerade och 1930-talet då de krossades av militarismen i Tyskland, Japan och Italien. För Kennedy var den avgörande anledningen till kollapsen Depressionen 1929/1930 (börskraschen i New York). Den förstörde det internationella samarbetet och uppmuntrade extrem egoism när det gällde internationella relationer. Depressionen hjälpte också till att förstöra den tyska demokratin och den bidrog till Hitlers maktövertagande och det var hans diktatur som kom att medföra krig

Orsak – Hitler

- Traditionell syn: Hitler hade en fanatisk vilja och ett konsekvent program baserat på aggression (Hugh Trevor-Roper, Alan Bullock, Andreas Hilgruber, Klaus Hildebrand). Hitler var en principlös opportunist som endast begränsades av inrikespolitiska realiteter. Han reagerade på ett flexibelt sätt till de händelser som omgav honom
- Revisionistisk syn: De flesta revisionister avvisar idén att Hitler var en allsmäktig ledare som hade full kontroll av händelserna runt omkring honom. De skildrar honom mer som en domare som försöker kontrollera olika tvister mellan konkurrerande fraktioner,

individer och organisationer inom Nazi-Tyskland. Hitlers Tyskland var "ett minfält av institutionella meningsskiljaktigheter och byråkratiskt kaos". Revisionisterna stryker under de problem som den inre rivaliteten mellan konkurrerande maktkoncentrationer inom det Tredje Riket. De porträtterar Hitler som en mer obeslutsam och svag ledare jämfört med tidigare historiker (Karl-Dietrich Bracher, Martin Broszat, Hans Mommsen)

Kontinuitet i den tyska utrikespolitiken

Hitlers utrikespolitik spelade en viktig roll då det gällde andra världskrigets utbrott. Den historiska debatten har koncentrerats kring följande fråga: var Hitlers utrikespolitik unik eller innebar den bara en fortsättning av den tidigare tyska utrikespolitiken?

- Hitlers utrikespolitik var unik (Friedrich Meinecke, Gerhard Ritter, Ralf Dahrendorf)
- Hitlers utrikespolitik var inte unik (några håller med A.J.P. Taylors syn om att den följde tidigare tyska traditioner) (Detlev Peukert, **A.J.P. Taylor**, Lewis Namier, Fritz Fischer, Geoffrey Eley, Gordon Craig). Några av deras argument är:

HÄR FÖLJER RESTEN AV TEXTEN PÅ ENGELSKA...

1. Lebensraum can be traced back to propaganda pamphlets produced by the Pan German League before 1914
2. German dominance in eastern Europe and the subordination of the Slavs were key aims of the German government during W.W.I
3. The restoration of the German Army power was a desire for the Army throughout the Weimar period
4. Hate for socialism was a major feature of the old Junker class who welcomed the destruction of socialistic parties and trade unions
5. Several of Hitler's foreign policy aims was chaired by Weimar governments, especially the ones between 1930 and 1933
6. "Hitler just represented a right-wing consensus in Germany over the basic goals and aims of German foreign policy"
7. Geoffrey Eley also sees a continuation of Austrian policies... Anti-Semitism was common in Austria. So was the desire to control Eastern Europe and to weaken Slav nationalism...

The Role of Neville Chamberlain and Appeasement

Orthodox view: Chamberlain's conduct of British foreign policy was "diplomacy of illusion". Chamberlain's inability to deal with Hitler and Germany made the aggressive German foreign policy possible. It also ensured that, when the war broke out, Britain and France had no major allies, and that they were also in a very weak military position (Cato - pseudonym for a number of British left-wing writers, John Wheeler-Bennet, Keith Middlemass, R.A.C. Parker)

Revisionist view: When the archives were opened on the subject of appeasement we can see a trend of treating Chamberlain and the policy of appeasement far more sympathetically. Most revisionists avoid moral judgments on Chamberlain and instead focus on social, economic and strategic factors:

1. The complex set of domestic, international, military and economic factors made a policy of standing up to the dictators impractical, and a policy of finding peace preferable - that's why the focus on Chamberlain and the leading figures of the "National Government" is misleading
2. British foreign policy during the 1930's should be viewed within an international context, which gives due emphasis to rival ideologies, economic systems and social groupings in Europe

3. The leaders who took the decisions were prisoners of circumstances beyond their control
4. It's wrong to blame Chamberlain exclusively - he was an able and realistic politician who realized that Britain and France could not keep order in Europe, and who wanted Britain to retain its world power status, which he believed would be lost in a second major world war
5. The British economy did not contain enough skilled workers to effect a large scale rearmament program without endangering the fragile British recovery from the great economic slump of the 1930's
6. The military and naval chiefs constantly warned that Britain was not prepared for a simultaneous war against Germany, Italy and Japan, and advised the government to follow a policy of appeasement
7. Public opinion consistently opposed rapid rearmament and a strong stand being taken against the dictators (David Dilks).

Today the supporters of the revisionist interpretation are in majority. Some "ultra-revisionists" claims that Chamberlain could have saved the empire and prevented a post-war decline if he hadn't loss nerve and allowed appeasement to continue.

French foreign policy

A great many studies link British and French policy during the late 1930's. France was deeply divided and politically unstable, which stumbled from crisis to crisis, from government to government (16 different coalition governments between 1932 and 1940), and from peace to war.

Orthodox view: French foreign policy during the 1930's was obsessed with security and defense. France had no intention of stopping Hitler by force, and therefore willingly allowed Chamberlain to march France along the road to Munich. France did this because they feared losing British support if they didn't (Anthony Adamthwaite, J-B Duroselle, René Girault). Just like in Britain many of the French leaders during the 1930's has been branded "guilty men" due to the policy of appeasement. Contrary to Britain the French version of appeasement was negative - it was a grim realization of their past failures

Many historians highlight the lack of boldness in French planning and tactics. Robert Young shows that the French military planning was based on the defense of the Maginot Line, with no offensive plan

Mussolini's role in the origins of WWII

Mussolini was the first European fascist dictator: he undermined the Paris Peace Settlement, aided Franco during the Spanish Civil war, played a crucial role at the Munich Conference, signed the Pact of Steel, remained neutral in September 1939, and finally joined the war on Hitler's side in 1940...

Orthodox view: Mussolini's foreign policy was ineffective, immoral, designed to grab headlines and to please Italian public opinion, and it lacked any clear objectives (Gaetano Salvemini, Elizabeth Wiskemann, Denis Mack Smith, A.J.P. Taylor)

Revisionist view: Mussolini might have been an opportunist but he did have a coherent set of aims in his foreign policy. Most important were to achieve "spazio vitale" (living space) for Italians in north Africa and the Middle East. Some historians also mention that Mussolini used the aggressive foreign policy to divert public attention from domestic problems (MacGregor Knox, George Baer, Renzo de Felice's, Cassel). The weak position among the European powers is also an issue the revisionists bring up...

Mussolini and Germany: Two major opinions exist in this matter;

1. The Rome-Berlin Axis was a typical example of Mussolini's idea of always keeping his options open (D.C. Watt, Denis Mack Smith)
2. The Pact of Steel represented the expression of parallel desires in mind of the two dictators to achieve their aims by alliance in war (Philip Morgan)

Soviet Union and the origins of WWII

Collective-security approach: Stalin's foreign policy attempted to uphold the principles of collective security against Hitler, and reluctantly moved towards signing the Nazi-Soviet Pact because Britain and France deliberately appeased Hitler, undermined the League of Nations, and delayed signing a triple alliance in 1939 to deter Nazi Germany (Soviet historians, A.J.P. Taylor, Jonathan Haslam, Geoffrey Roberts). After the Munich Agreement in 1938, Stalin viewed the League of Nations as a spent force, and became deeply mistrustful of the aims of the appeasers, whom, he felt, were happy as long as Hitler moved east

US historians: The Nazi-Soviet Pact was "Stalin's blank cheque" to Hitler, which virtually guaranteed that war would start in 1939. Stalin's support for collective security was a cynical ploy to mask an underlying desire for a Nazi-Soviet pact (William Langer, S. Everett Gleason, Robert Tucker...this view was deeply colored by the Cold War)

German school: This is a more recent school of historians, which uses primarily German archives. They think Stalin had significant responsibility for the outbreak of the war. Soviet foreign policy during the 1930's desired a reconstruction of the close Soviet-German relationship, established by the co-operative Soviet-German Treaty of Rapallo in 1922, and broken off by Hitler in 1933. This interpretation regard the Soviet Union as giving Hitler the "green light" for aggression in 1939 Ernst Topitsch:

- The view of Hitler as being the leading character in the events which led to the Second World War has been exaggerated and requires modification
- Stalin was the key figure in the outbreak of war and the key victor of the war
- Stalin was the only leader in Europe with clear aims
- Stalin set out to start a European war in 1939 between what he saw as aggressive and non-aggressive capitalist states, which left the Soviet Union in a neutral position and well placed to reap a rich reward

P.H.M. Bell does not agree... The Soviet Union's incredible lack of preparation for the German attack in June 1941 must raise doubts about whether such a plan ever existed (the plan of a Soviet attack on the Western capitalist democracies, with Hitler acting as Stalin's unwitting agent). The recent opening of Soviet archives supports Bell's view (the Soviet entry into the League of Nations; its offer to save Czechoslovakia in 1938; the speeches by Litvinov, the Soviet foreign minister, at the League of nations in support of collective security; the denouncements of fascism and appeasement by Stalin; and the preference, in 1939, for an agreement with Britain and France, do all appear to have been genuine)

Soviet internal politics: There was a key division within Stalin's regime over the direction of foreign policy: on the one hand, a significant group favored a return to a close Soviet-German friendship: on the other, a larger group supported collective security. The course of events allowed the pro-German group to shift opinion... This view might be exaggerated since the major Soviet desire was to search for a foreign policy which would prevent it being involved in war. The roles of the external events were more important. The Munich Agreement 1938 left a very deep impression on Stalin; that's where the foundations of the Nazi-Soviet Pact was laid (Hildebrand)