

Long Road to Apocalypse Events Leading to World War II

Timeline

Year	Event
1863	King Frederick VII of Denmark dies without direct heir. Succession crises resolved with accession of Frederick's uncle, Christian IX. Christian allows adoption of November Constitution giving Denmark control over duchies of Schleswig and Holstein.
1864	Prussia reacts to Denmark's actions by declaring war. Prussia defeats Denmark in Second Schleswig War.
1866	Prussia assumes leadership position over German Confederation. Austria reacts by declaring war on Prussia. Prussia defeats Austria in the Austro-Prussian War. Austria forms Alliance with Hungary and turns its attention to the Balkans.
1870	Prussian meddling in the Spanish succession in 1868 prompts France to declare war on Prussia and the German Confederation. Prussia soundly defeats France in the Franco-Prussian War. Otto von Bismarck declares the birth of the German Empire with Wilhelm I as Kaiser.
1879	Germany strengthens its position in Central Europe by forming Dual Alliance with Austria-Hungary.
1882	Italy joins Prussia and Austria-Hungary making the Triple Alliance.
1894	To counter growing German/Austrian influence in Europe France and Russia finalize Franco-Russian Alliance.
1906	England and France form the Entente Cordiale, agreeing on colonization limitations and military assurances.
1907	England and Russia sign Anglo-Russian Convention completing the Triple Entente.
1908	Austria-Hungary annexes Bosnia, angering Serbia.
1914	Bosnian nationalists with ties to Serbia assassinate Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria. Austria declares war on Serbia, triggering World War I.
1918	Central Powers capitulate one by one leaving Germany to fight on alone. Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicates. Amid chaos and revolution, civilian government sues for peace. Prussian-led military is incensed saying they were still fighting. The Stab-in-the-Back myth is born.
1919	Treaty of Versailles formally ends World War I, punishing Germany with loss of territory and crippling reparations.

1920s	Germany starts to recover with help from the Dawes Plan.
1929	World-wide economic depression hits Germany. Germans lose faith in their government. Nationalist groups vie for power.
1930s	Adolf Hitler uses fear mongering, the Stab-in-the-Back, and brutal intimidation to rise in power.
1933	Enabling Act establishes virtual dictatorship for Adolf Hitler.
1936	Germany tests British/French resolve by occupying the Rhineland.
1938	Germany annexes Austria and occupies the Sudetenland. England, France, Italy and Germany sign the Munich Agreement.
1939	Germany occupies the rest of Czechoslovakia. Germany and Russia sign non-aggression pact. Germany orchestrates false flag Polish attack on Gleiwitz radio tower. Germany attacks Poland. England and France declare war on Germany.

Suggested Reading

The Schleswig-Holstein War Between Denmark and the German States, Edward Dicey and Charles Lowe, LEONAU, 2016.

Bismarck's War: The Franco-Prussian War and the Making of Modern Europe, Rachel Chrastil, Basic Books, 2023.

Europe's Last Summer: Who Started the Great War in 1914?, David Fromkin, Knopf, 2004.

The Greatest Day in History: How, on the Eleventh Hour of the Eleventh Day of the Eleventh Month, the First World War Finally Came to an End, Nicholas Best, Perseus Book Group, 2008.

Paris 1919: Six Months That Changed the World, Margaret MacMillan et al, Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2003.

The Unfathomable Ascent: How Hitler Came to Power, Peter Ross Range, Little, Brown and Company, 2020.

A Time for War: Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the Path to Pearl Harbor, Robert Smith Thompson, Prentice Hall Press, 1991.

The Butterfly Effect: How Your Life Matters, Andy Andrews, Thomas Nelson, 2010.

Righteous Might: One Man's Journey Through War in the Pacific, Craig Siegel, Rochelle Publications, 2012.