Second World War

Chapter 2

What was happening surrounding the second world war?

Political and economic climate in Europe

During the 1930s in Europe, the future seemed uncertain

- European countries were dissatisfied with peace treaties that had been signed at the end of WWI

Germany had been responsible for WWI and was now collapsing because of the amount of war reparations they needed to pay to the Allies or Triple Entente powers

Many countries were c**ontesting new boundaries** that were drawn in 1918 with the dissolution of the Austro Hungarian Empire




Russian Empire
German Empire
Austro-Hungarian Empire
France
Spain
Italy
Romania
Bulgaria
Greece

Political and economic climate in Europe

The instability and tension due to the Great Depression led to **extreme ideologies emerging in Europe.**

- **In Italy, a fascist government was in power**
- **In Germany Hitler's Nazi party came to power**

Slowly, major European powers began to re-arm themselves and new powers emerged including Japan



Political and economic climate in Europe

German Chancellor Adolf Hitler began a policy of revenge when he came to power in 1933 responding to the ‘insults” of the “diktat of Versailles”(used by the German to refer to the Treaty of Versailles due to constraints it places on the country)

Against the terms of Versailles, **Hitler established an army and air force and built up the economy and production industry**



Political and economic climate in Europe

Tensions were on the rise as Germany slowly annexed/took over countries including Austria and Czechoslovakia.

The rest of Europe was concerned but did not get involved until **September 1, 1939 when Germany invaded Poland**

On September 3, France and the United Kingdom declared war on Germany; seven days later, Canada followed

Why did Canada not join right away?


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FRANCE DECLARES "STATE OF SIEGE"

"BRITAIN WILL FULFIL HER OBLIGATIONS"



Political and economic climate in Europe

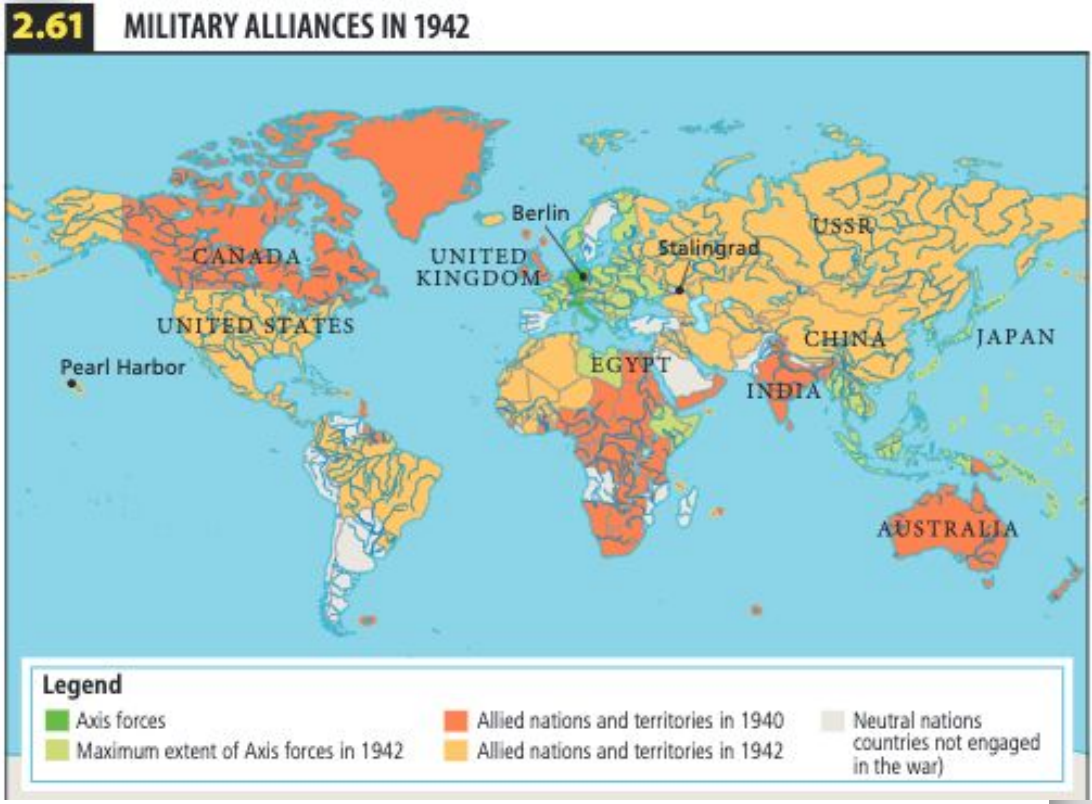
In the years that followed, countries would join one of two alliances

- **The Axis Powers**: in 1940 Italy, Japan and Germany signed the Tripartite Pact to begin this alliance
- **The Allies:** The United States, United Kingdom, Soviet Union and China formed this alliance in 1941 after Japan launched attacks in southeast Asia and Hawaii. This had become a two-ocean conflict



Japan’s involvement made it a two ocean war

The country had a powerful army and air force which would prove to be helpful to the Axis powers as the Allies would have to defend from two sides



Wartime government

In 1939, Mackenzie King's Liberal government invoked the **War Measures Act** to sustain the war effort

- The main objective of this was to allow the country's resources to be brought together to win the war
- It **suspended civil liberties** and allowed the federal government to infringe on the power of provinces



War Measures Act

With this act, the federal government was allowed to **bypass parliament and govern by decree** which it used to:

- Control products and services required by the military
- Limit the movement of the civilian population
- Rations were imposed on the usual wartime supplies(rubber, gas, meat, butter and sugar)
- Centralize and accelerate decision-making



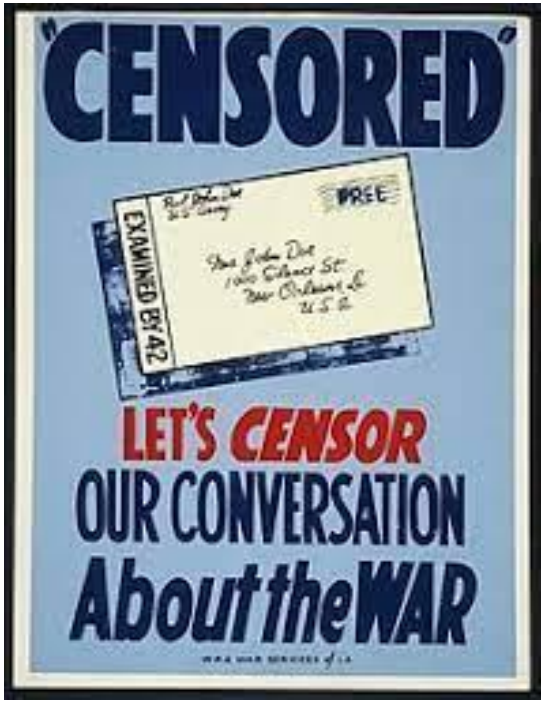
Ottawa drastically brought together financial resources by selling **Victory Bonds and increasing income tax**

- The federal debt still rose from 5 billion to 18 billion in 1945

Wartime government

Propaganda and censorship became important elements of the federal strategy

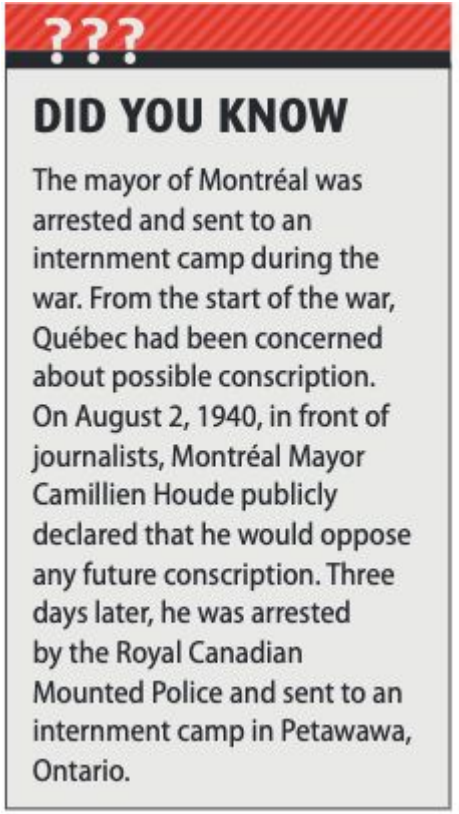
- The **National Film Board and state-run radio** were two institutions that Ottawa used to promote its agenda for the war effort including:
  - Military recruitment
  - Volunteering
  - Resource conservation
  - Participation of women
  - Purchase of Victory Bonds
- The government also **censored content to suppress certain views and information leaks**



Plebiscite on conscription

Soldiers were needed overseas for the war. At the beginning of the war, **enlistment was voluntary, but the threat of conscription was present. Prime Minister King had promised enlistment for overseas service would be voluntary.**

The **National Resources Mobilization Act was passed in 1940** and required men and women from 16-60 to register on a list which the government would use to enrol people in the war effort for **home defence.**



English vs French enlistment

There were f**ewer French Canadian volunteers than English**. In 1942 40% of English Canada served in the war effort while only 9.9% of the Quebec population had served. There were a few reasons for this

- Strong nationalism in opposition to British imperialism
- Government of Canada's initial promise to no use conscription
- Difficulty for francophones to reintegrate into Canadian military life, which was anglophone





Plebiscite on conscription

In 1942, Prime minister King held a plebiscite to ask the population to release his from his promise to not use conscription

- In response, French Canadian nationalists formed and anti-conscription movement called the *Ligue pour la defense du Canada* (Defense league of Canada).
- An anti conscription demonstration Montreal ended in fistfights between demonstrators and English speaking soldiers.



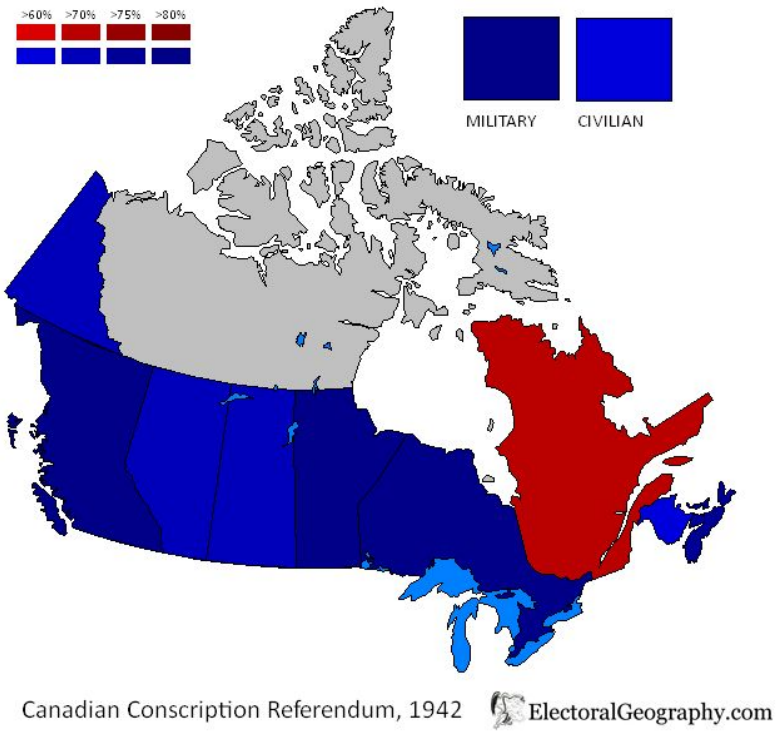
Anti-conscription demonstration in Quebec

Plebiscite on conscription

The results of the plebiscite showed the different opinions of Quebec and the rest of Canada

- **71.2% of the Quebec population voted not to release the government of its promise**
- **80% of the rest of Canada voted yes**

King imposed overseas conscription in 1944




THE REST OF CANADA
YES
QUEBEC
NO
DO THE PEOPLE WANT TOTAL WAR?
KING