

## **Origins of World War II**

### **A. Japan's war in China**

1. Global conflict began with Japanese invasion of Manchuria, 1931
  - a. League of Nations condemned action; Japan simply withdrew from league
  - b. 1937, Japan launched full-scale invasion of China
2. The Rape of Nanjing characterized war waged against civilians
  - a. Aerial bombing of Shanghai
  - b. In Nanjing, widespread rape and slaughter
3. Chinese resistance movement
  - a. Nationalists and communists formed "united front" against Japanese
  - b. Unable to effectively work together, they conducted guerilla attacks
  - c. Communists gained popular support throughout war
4. Japan's Triple Pact with Germany and Italy, 1940; neutrality pact with Soviet Union, 1941

### **B. European aggression**

1. Italy after the Great War
  - a. Italians felt slighted at the Paris Peace Conference
  - b. Italian losses high in World War I; economy never recovered
  - c. Mussolini promised national glory, empire
  - d. Annexed Libya; invaded Ethiopia (1935-1936), killed 250,000 Ethiopians
2. Germany: deep resentment at Treaty of Versailles
  - a. Harsh terms: reparations, economic restrictions
  - b. Former Allies inclined not to object when Hitler violated terms of the treaty
  - c. Hitler blamed Jews, communists, liberals for losing the war and accepting the treaty
3. After 1933, Hitler moved to ignore terms of peace settlement
  - a. Withdrew from League of Nations, 1933
  - b. Rebuilt military, air force; reinstated draft
  - c. Took back the Rhineland, 1936, then annexed Austria, 1938
  - d. Reclaimed Sudetenland from western Czechoslovakia, 1938
  - e. At each step, France and Britain did nothing to stop him
4. The Munich Conference: Peace for our time?
  - a. In 1938, Germany "appeased" by taking Sudetenland, promised to stop there
  - b. Britain and France desperate to avoid war
  - c. 1939, violating Munich agreement, Hitler seized most of Czechoslovakia
5. Russian-German Treaty of Non-Aggression, 1939, shocked the world

## **Total war: the world under fire**

- A. Blitzkrieg: Germany conquers Europe
  - 1. Strategy of a "lightning war": unannounced, surprise attacks
  - 2. September 1939, Nazi invasion of Poland
  - 3. Battle of the Atlantic: German U-boats (submarines) against British ship convoys
  - 4. Spring 1940, the fall of France
    - a. Nazis swiftly conquered Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Netherlands
    - b. French signed an armistice in June 1940
    - c. Italy entered the war on Nazis' side
  - 5. The battle of Britain
    - a. Germans' strategy to defeat Britain solely through air attacks
    - b. Aerial bombing killed forty thousand British civilians; Royal Air Force prevented defeat
    - c. Summer 1941, Germany also controlled Balkans and North Africa
- B. The German invasion of the Soviet Union
  - 1. Operation Barbarossa: German surprise invasion of Soviet Union, June 1941
    - a. Captured Russian heartland; Leningrad under siege; troops outside Moscow
  - 2. Blitzkrieg strategies less effective in Russia
    - a. Soviets drew on tremendous reserves: 360 Soviet divisions against 150 German
    - b. Hitler underestimated Soviet industrial capacity
    - c. Stalin quickly moved Soviet industry east to the Ural Mountains
  - 3. Russian winter caught German troops ill-prepared
- C. Battles in Asia and the Pacific
  - 1. U.S. support of the Allies before Pearl Harbor
    - a. Roosevelt sold and then "loaned" arms and war material to the British
    - b. Later supplied the Soviets and the Chinese
  - 2. Japanese expansion continued into southeast Asia: Indochina, 1940-1941
    - a. United States responded by freezing Japanese assets, implementing oil embargo
    - b. Demanded withdrawal from China and southeast Asia
    - c. Prime minister Tojo Hikedi developed plan of attack
  - 3. 7 December 1941: U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor attacked by Japanese pilots
    - a. U.S. naval power in Pacific devastated
    - b. United States declared war on Japan; Germany and Italy declared war on U.S.
  - 4. Japanese victories after Pearl Harbor
    - 1. Japan advanced swiftly in the Pacific and southeast Asia
    - 2. Conquered Philippines, Dutch East Indies, Indochina, Burma, Singapore
    - 3. Slogan "Asia for Asia" masked Japanese imperialism against fellow Asians

## **Defeat of the Axis Powers**

- A. Impact of Soviet Union and U.S. entry in 1941
  - 1. Brought vital personnel and industry to Allies
  - 2. German subs sank 2,452 merchant ships, but U.S. shipyards built more
- B. Allied victories came after 1943
  - 1. Russians defeated the Germans at Stalingrad, pushed them back
  - 2. 1944, British-U.S. troops invaded North Africa and then Italy
  - 3. June 1944, British-U.S. forces invaded northern France at Normandy
  - 4. Overwhelmed Germans on coast of Normandy, 6 June 1944
  - 5. Round-the-clock strategic bombing by United States and Britain leveled German cities
  - 6. Germans surrendered unconditionally 8 May 1945; Hitler committed suicide
- C. Turning the tide in the Pacific
  - 1. Turning point: the Battle of Midway, June 1942; United States broke Japanese code
  - 2. Island-hopping strategy: moving to islands close to Japan for air attacks
- D. Savage fighting on islands of Iwo Jima and Okinawa
  - 1. Japanese used suicide kamikaze pilots

2. U.S. military was convinced that Japan would not surrender
- E. Japanese surrender after devastating assault
  1. U.S. firebombing raids devastated Japanese cities: in Tokyo, one hundred thousand killed
  2. August 1945: atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki killed two hundred thousand
  3. The Soviet Union declared war on Japan, 8 August
  4. Japanese emperor surrendered unconditionally 15 August, ending WWII

### **Life during wartime**

- A. Occupation, collaboration, and resistance [*EUROPE AND PACIFIC*]
  1. Patterns of occupation varied
    - a. Japanese conquests: puppet governments, independent allies, or military control
    - b. German conquests: racially "superior" people given greater autonomy
      - 1) In northern Europe, civilian governments under German supervision
      - 2) In eastern Europe, conquered territories taken over by military
  2. Both Japan and Germany exploited conquered states, resources, and peoples
    - a. Slave labor conscripted from conquered populations to work in factories
    - b. Labor conscripted from Poles, Soviets, Balkans, also Chinese and Koreans
  3. Many local people accepted, even collaborated with occupying forces (aided conquerors to gain power in new administration)
  4. Resistance to occupation took many forms
    - a. Active resistance: sabotage, assaults, assassination
    - b. Passive resistance as well: intelligence gathering, refusing to submit
    - c. Resistance in Japan and Germany was dangerous and rare
  5. Occupation forces responded to resistance with atrocities
    - a. Brutal reprisals to acts of resistance by both Germans and Japanese
    - b. Despite retaliation, resistance movements grew throughout the war
- B. The Holocaust
  1. Long history of anti-Semitism created tolerance of Nazi's anti-Jewish measures
    - a. At first Nazis encouraged Jewish emigration
    - b. Many Jews were unable to leave after Nazis took their wealth
    - c. Nazi conquest of Europe brought more Jews under their control
  2. The "final solution"
    - a. Began with slaughter of Jews, Roma, and other undesirables in Soviet Union
    - b. By end of 1941, German special killing units had killed 1.4 million Jews
    - c. By 1942 Nazis decided to evacuate all European Jews to camps in east Poland
    - d. In Auschwitz alone at least one million Jews perished
  3. Jewish resistance
    - a. Will to resist sapped by prolonged starvation, disease
    - b. Uprising of Warsaw ghetto, 1943: sixty thousand Jews rose up against Germans
  4. Altogether, about 5.7 million Jews perished in the Holocaust
- C. Women and the war
  1. "It's a Woman's War, Too!"
    - a. Over half a million British, 350,000 American women joined auxiliary services
    - b. Soviet and Chinese women took up arms and joined resistance groups
    - c. Jewish women and girls suffered as much as men and boys
  2. Women's social roles changed dramatically
    - a. By taking jobs or heading families, women gained independence and confidence
    - b. Changes expected to be temporary, would return to traditional role after war
  3. "Comfort women"
    - a. Japanese armies forcibly recruited 300,000 women to serve in military brothels
    - b. 80 percent of comfort women came from Korea
    - c. A comfort woman had to service between twenty and thirty men each day
    - d. Many were massacred by Japanese soldiers; survivors experienced deep shame

## **Neither peace nor war**

- A. Postwar settlements and cold war
  - 1. Two strongest postwar powers, Soviet Union and United States, vied for nonaligned nations
  - 2. War left millions of casualties and refugees
    - a. At least sixty million people died in WWII, highest in Soviet Union and China
    - b. Eight million Germans fled west to British, U.S. territories to escape Soviet army
    - c. Twelve million Germans and Soviet prisoners of war made their way home
    - d. Survivors of camps and three million refugees from the Balkans returned home
  - 3. The origins of the cold war (1947-1990)
    - a. Unlikely alliance between Britain, Soviet Union, and United States held up for duration of war
    - b. Not without tensions: Soviet resented U.S.-British delays in European invasion
  - 4. Postwar settlement established at Yalta (February 1945) and Potsdam (July--August)
    - a. Each Allied power to occupy and control territories liberated by its armed forces
    - b. Stalin agreed to support United States against Japan
    - c. Stalin's plans prevailed; Poland and east Europe became communist allies
    - d. President Truman took hard line at Potsdam, widened differences
  - 5. Postwar territorial divisions reflected growing schism between United States and Soviet Union
    - a. Soviets took East Germany, while United States, Britain, and France took West Germany
    - b. Berlin also divided four ways; by 1950 division seemed permanent
    - c. Churchill spoke of an "iron curtain" across Europe, separating east and west
    - d. Similar division in Korea: Soviets occupied north and United States the south
  - 6. Truman doctrine, 1947: United States would support "free peoples resisting subjugation"
    - a. Perception of world divided between so-called free and enslaved peoples
    - b. Interventionist policy, dedicated to "containment" of communism
- B. Global reconstruction and the United Nations
  - 1. The Marshall Plan, 1948: U.S. aid for the recovery of Europe
    - a. Idea to rebuild European economies and strengthen capitalism
    - b. Soviet response: Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) for its satellite nations
  - 2. NATO and the Warsaw Pact: militarization of the cold war
    - a. 1949, United States created NATO, a regional military alliance against Soviet aggression
    - b. 1955, Soviets formed the Warsaw Pact in response
    - c. Two global superpowers protecting hegemony with alliances
    - d. United Nations, established 1945 to maintain international peace and security