History

Year 11

Major World Events of the 20th Century

World War 2 Part A



World War II

The second world war (WW2) began on the 1st of September 1939 with Germany's invasion of Poland. WW2 was a global war that lasted from 1939 to 1945, though related conflicts began earlier. It involved the vast majority of the world's nations—including all of the great powers—eventually forming two opposing military alliances: the Allies, (Great Britain, USA, France, Holland, Sweden and others) and the Axis (the enemies: Germany and Italy). It was the most widespread war in history, and directly involved more than 100 million people from over 30 countries.

In a state of "total war", the major participants threw their entire economic, industrial and scientific capabilities behind the war effort, erasing the distinction between civilian and military resources. There were mass deaths of civilians, including the Holocaust (during which approximately 11 million people were killed). The Holocaust refers to the mass slaughter of European civilians and especially Jews by the Nazis during World War II. The Jewish people were targeted by Hitler for extermination. About 6 million Jews were murdered, (about 33% of the Jewish population at the time.)

There was also strategic bombing of industrial and population centres (during which approximately one million people were killed).

Japan joined the war two years after the commencement of the war in Europe, on the 7th of December 1941.

Japan's involvement in WW2 began with their bombing of Pearl Harbour in the United States, but what led them to this decision?

At the time of the second world war, Japan's economy was seriously struggling. This was partly due to the fact that the country was already engaged in a war with China, which was proving to be very expensive. To add to this, the United States had also placed an oil embargo on Japan, meaning that they would no longer export oil to Japan. This was particularly harmful as oil was Japan's most crucial import, with more than 80% of Japan's oil coming from the United States.

There was additional pressure between Japan and the United States at the time concerning the war in China. The United States was demanding that Japan withdraw from the war with China and sign non-aggression pacts with other Pacific countries. Japan deemed these requests unacceptable.

All of this led Japan to the attack on Pearl Harbour. A bomb was dropped on Pearl Harbour, which was a United States naval base in Hawaii. Australia and New Zealand joined the USA in fighting against Japan. The Fiji Infantry Regiment was formed, made up of thousands of both iTaukei and Indian Fijians. The regiment was attached to New Zealand and Australian army units. They fought in the Solomon Islands against Japanese troops. The islands themselves hosted barracks, training fields, and an airfield for the Allies.

One of the main goals for the Japanese was to establish a Southeast Asian Empire. On the 25th of December 1941, Hong Kong surrendered to Japanese forces during the Battle of

Hong Kong. The Japanese then advanced down the Malayan Peninsula (Malaysia), forcing the Allied forces to retreat towards Singapore.

The Japanese took hundreds of thousands of prisoners of war. This included the 80,000 Indian, Australian, and British troops that were taken in the seizing of Singapore, as well as the 50,000 who were taken during the Japanese invasion of Malaya.

The Americans developed the atomic bomb and used it to end the war with Japan. The United States detonated two atomic bombs over the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6 and 9 August 1945, respectively. The two bombings killed between 129,000 and 226,000 people, most of whom were civilians, and remain the only use of nuclear weapons in armed conflict so far.

During WW11 there were an estimated 50 million to 85 million fatalities. This made World War II the deadliest conflict in human history.

Questions

1. When was the World War II?

2. Why was there a World War II?

3. Which countries were the Axis?

4. Which countries were the Allies?

5. What was the Holocaust?

6. How many Jews were killed during the Holocaust?

7. Who was the leader of the Nazi party?

8. Who else died in WW11?

9. When did Japan join the war?

10. What was their reason?

11. What major event triggered the involvement of the USA against Japan?

12. Who were allies with America in fighting against Japan?

13. What ended the war with Japan?

14. Which 2 Japanese cities were bombed?

15. What was the death rate?

16. What was the overall death rate of WW11 in total?

17. Why do you think nuclear weapons have not been used since?

The War in Europe

World War II in Europe began when Hitler's Nazi Germany attacked Poland. Germany had allies such as Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania. These European countries were part of the Axis Powers.

The countries that fought against Germany and the Axis Powers in Europe were called the Allied Powers. The main Allied Powers in Europe were Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and France. Later the United States would help in defeating Hitler.

Leading up to War

When Germany lost World War I they were forced to sign the Treaty of Versailles. This treaty not only took land from Germany, but required that they pay huge amounts of money in reparations to countries they had fought. As a result, the German economy did very poorly. The citizens of Germany were not only humiliated that they had lost World War I, but they were also poor and struggling. It was during this time that Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party came into power. Hitler promised he would bring Germany back to power.

Hitler was elected Chancellor of Germany in 1933. Soon he had made himself dictator. Hitler said the country needed more land or "living space". First Hitler took over the country of Austria. Next, he took part of Czechoslovakia. The other European countries didn't want war, so they didn't do anything. Finally, when Germany invaded Poland in 1939, the other countries knew he would not stop. France and Great Britain declared war on Germany and World War II had begun.

The War

Prior to invading Poland, Germany had made a deal with the Soviet Union. After Poland was defeated, the country was divided up between Germany and the Soviet Union. Even though France and Great Britain declared war on Germany in 1939, there wasn't a lot of fighting at first.

It was in April of 1940 when Germany went on the attack again. On April 9, 1940 Germany invaded Norway and Denmark. Soon after that, they invaded the Netherlands, Belgium, and France. On June 22, 1940 Germany signed an agreement that gave them control of the Northern half of France.

Up until this point in the war, the Soviet Union had been allied with Germany. However, on June 22, 1941 Germany invaded the Soviet Union. Now the Soviet Union was on the side of the Allies.

The United States Enters the War

The United States had stayed neutral during the war. They tried to help out the Allies, but did not want to enter the fighting. However, on December 7, 1941 Japan attacked the US at Pearl Harbor. The US became a major power within the Allies Alliance.

Three Fronts

By 1941 Germany had control over much of mainland Europe. They had tried to take over Great Britain in 1940 with the Battle of Britain, but failed. Germany's army was stretched thin and was fighting on three fronts:

- Eastern or Russian Front
- Mediterranean Front and Africa
- Western Front (France and Great Britain)

The Allies Start to Fight Back

In 1942 and 1943 the Allies began to fight back. The British Air Force began to bomb Germany, taking the war to German soil. The Allies also took control of northern Africa and then launched an attack on Italy forcing southern Italy to surrender. At the same time, the Russians defeated the German army on the Eastern Front and started to push them back towards Germany.

End of World War II in Europe

On June 6, 1944 the Allies attacked the Germans on the Western Front. This day is often called D-Day or the Invasion of Normandy. The Allies defeated the Germans and pushed them out of France. Germany then counterattacked and a great battle, called the Battle of the Bulge, was fought. Hundreds of thousands of US troops held the Germans back and the German army was finally defeated.

On May 7, 1945 Germany surrendered to the Western Allies. The next day the Allies celebrated victory. May 8th is called V-E day or "Victory in Europe" day.

Interesting Facts

- After World War II, Germany was split in half; the western half was controlled by the Western Allies and the eastern half by the Soviet Union.
- Adolf Hitler committed suicide in a bunker on April 30, 1945 when he realized that Germany would lose the war.
- Around 200,000 US soldiers lost their lives in battle in World War II in Europe.
- United States General Dwight D. Eisenhower was Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe. At one point he was in charge of over 5 million soldiers.
- The war in the Eastern Front was called the Great Patriotic War by the people in the Soviet Union.

Questions

1) What country did Hitler take over first in his effort to gain more living space?

2) What two countries declared war on Germany when the German army invaded Poland?

3) What country made a deal with Germany to divide up Poland?

4) Why did the United States enter World War II to help Great Britain and the Soviet Union?

5) Who were the Germans fighting on the Eastern Front?

6) What was the name of the battle where the Allies attacked the western front on the coast of France on June 6, 1944?

7) Why did the Soviet Union change sides and end up fighting for the Allies?

8) What happened to Germany after World War II?

9) What was the last great battle on the western front in Europe?

10) What United States general was Supreme Commander over the Allied forces in Europe?

Check your answers:

1. Austria

2. France and Great Britain

3. The Soviet Union

4. Because Japan, an ally of Germany, attacked the US at Pearl Harbor

5. The Soviet Union

6. Invasion of Normandy

7. Because Germany invaded the Soviet Union

8. It was split between the western Allies and the Soviet Union

9. Battle of the Bulge

10. Dwight D. Eisenhower



The Allied Powers

World War II was fought between two major groups of nations. They became known as the Axis and Allied Powers. The major Allied Powers were Britain, France, Russia, and the United States.

The Allies formed mostly as a defence against the attacks of the Axis Powers. The original members of the Allies included Great Britain, France and Poland. When Germany invaded Poland, Great Britain and France declared war on Germany.

Russia becomes an Ally

At the start of World War II, Russia and Germany were friends. However, on 22 June 1941 Hitler, the leader of Germany, ordered a surprise attack on Russia. Russia then became an enemy of the Axis Powers and joined the Allies.

The US Joins the Allied Powers

The United States had hoped to remain neutral during World War II. However, the US was attacked by surprise at Pearl Harbor by the Japanese. This attack united the country against the Axis Powers and turned the tide of World War II in the favour of the Allies.

Leaders of the Allied Powers:

Great Britain: Winston Churchill - Prime Minister of Great Britain during most of World War II, Winston Churchill was a great leader. His country was the last country fighting against the Germans in Europe. He is known for his famous speeches to his people when the Germans were bombing them during the Battle of Britain.

United States: Franklin D. Roosevelt - One of the greatest presidents in the history of the United States, President Roosevelt led the country out of the Great Depression and through World War II.

Russia: Joseph Stalin - Stalin's title was General Secretary of the Communist Party. He led Russia through terrible and devastating battles with Germany. Millions and millions of people died. After winning the war, he set up the Eastern Bloc of Soviet led communist states.

France: Charles de Gaulle - Leader of the Free French, de Gaulle led the French resistance movement against Germany.

Other Allied leaders and generals in the war:

Britain:

Bernard Montgomery - General of the British Army, "Monty" also led the ground troops during the invasion of Normandy.

Neville Chamberlain - Was the Prime Minister prior to Winston Churchill. He wanted peace with Germany.

United States:

Harry S. Truman - Truman became president after Roosevelt died. He had to make the call to use the atomic bomb against Japan.

George Marshall - General of the US Army during World War II, Marshall earned the Nobel Peace Prize for the Marshall Plan after the war.

Dwight D Eisenhower - Nicknamed "Ike", Eisenhower led the US Army in Europe. He planned and led the Invasion of the Normandy.

Douglas MacArthur - MacArthur was General of the Army in the Pacific fighting the Japanese.

George S. Patton, Jr. - Patton was an important general in North Africa and Europe.

Russia:

Georgy Zhukov - Zhukov was leader of the Russian Red Army. He led the army that pushed the Germans back to Berlin.

Vasily Chuikov - Chuikov was the general who led the Russian Army in defending Stalingrad against the fierce German attack.

China:

Chiang Kai-shek - Leader of the Republic of China, he allied with the Chinese Communist Party to fight the Japanese. After the war he fled from the communists to Taiwan.

Mao Zedong - Leader of the Communist Party of China, he allied with Kai-shek in order to fight the Japanese. He gained control of mainland China after the war.

Other countries that were part of the Allies:

Poland - It was the invasion of Poland by Germany in 1939 that started World War II.

China - China was invaded by Japan in 1937. They became a member of the Allies after the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941.

Other countries that were part of the Allied Nations included **Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Netherlands, Yugoslavia, Belgium, and Greece.**

Note: There were even more countries that were on the same side as the Allies mostly because they had been taken over or attacked by Axis countries.

Interesting Facts

- Great Britain, Russia, and the United States were sometimes called the Big Three. When China was included, they were called the Four Policemen. It was the Four Policemen who founded the United Nations.
- General Patton's nickname was "Old blood and guts". General MacArthur had the nickname "Dugout Doug".
- There were 26 countries who signed the original Declaration by United Nations on January 1, 1942. After the war, on 24 October 1945, 51 countries signed the Charter of the United Nations.
- Winston Churchill once said "a joke is a very serious thing". He also said "A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on".

Questions

1) Which nation below was NOT a member of the Allied Powers?

2) What was the group of nations called that were fighting against the Allies?

3) Who was the leader of Great Britain through much of World War II?

4) What member of the Big Three Allies began the war on the side of Germany?

5) Who was the leader of Russia during World War II?

6) In what country did Charles de Gaulle lead a freedom fighting force after it was taken over by the Germans?

7) What Allied leader made the decision to drop the atomic bomb?

8) True or False: The Republic of China and the Communist Party of China joined together to fight against the Japanese during the war.

9) What United States general led the army in the Pacific and the fighting against Japan?

10) What Allied Power was invaded by Germany to start World War II?

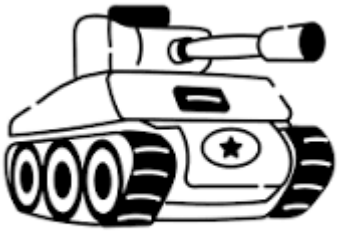


Check your answers:

1. Germany
2. The Axis Powers
3. Winston Churchill
4. Russia
5. Joseph Stalin
6. France
7. Harry S. Truman
8. TRUE
9. Douglas MacArthur
10. Poland



Winston Churchill



Military Tank

The Axis Powers

World War II was fought between two major groups of nations. They became known as the Axis Powers and the Allied Powers. The major Axis Powers were Germany, Italy, and Japan.

The Forming of the Axis Powers

The alliance began to form in 1936. First, on October 15, 1936 Germany and Italy signed a friendship treaty that formed the Rome-German Axis. It was after this treaty that Italian dictator Benito Mussolini used the term Axis to refer to their alliance. Shortly after this, on November 25, 1936, Japan and Germany both signed the Anti-Comintern Pact, which was a treaty against communism.

An even stronger alliance was signed between Germany and Italy on May 22, 1939 called the Pact of Steel. This treaty would later be called the Tripartite Pact when Japan signed it on September 27, 1940. Now the three main Axis Powers were allies in the war.

Leaders of the Axis Powers

The three main member countries of the Axis Powers were ruled by dictators. They were:

Germany: Adolf Hitler - Hitler became Chancellor of Germany in 1933 and Fuhrer in 1934. He was a ruthless dictator who hated Jewish people. He wanted to purge Germany of all weak people. He also wanted to take control of all of Europe.

Italy: Benito Mussolini - Mussolini was supreme dictator of Italy. He founded the concept of a fascist government where there is one leader and one party that has total power. He was an inspiration to Adolf Hitler.

Japan: Emperor Hirohito - Hirohito reigned as Emperor of Japan from 1926 until 1989. He remained Emperor after the war. The first time his subjects heard his voice was when he announced Japan's surrender on the radio.

Other leaders and generals in the war:

Germany:

Heinrich Himmler - Himmler was second in command to Hitler. He commanded the Gestapo police and was in charge of the concentration camps.

Hermann Goering - Goering held the title Prime Minister of Prussia. He was commander of the German air force called the Luftwaffe.

Erwin Rommel - Rommel was one of Germany's smartest Generals. He commanded their army in Africa and then the German army during the Invasion of Normandy.

Italy:

Victor Emmanuel III - He was King of Italy and the head of the Italian Army. In reality he did whatever Mussolini told him to do until Mussolini was removed from power.

Ugo Cavallero - Commander of the Italian Royal Army during World War II.

Japan:

Hideki Tojo - As Prime Minister of Japan, Hideki Tojo was a major supporter of the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy.

Isoroku Yamamoto - Yamamoto was thought to be the best war strategist and commander of the Japanese armed forces. He was commander of the Japanese Navy and a leader in the attack on Pearl Harbor. He died in 1943.

Osami Nagano - A Fleet Admiral in the Japanese Navy, Nagano was a leader in the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Other countries in the Axis Alliance:

Hungary - Hungary became the fourth member of the Tripartite Pact. Hungary played a large role in the invasion of Russia.

Bulgaria - Bulgaria started out on the Axis side of the war, but after being invaded by Russia ended up on the side of the Allies.

Romania - Similar to Bulgaria, Romania was on the side of the Axis Powers and helped to invade Russia. However, by the end of the war they changed sides and fought for the Allies.

Finland - Finland never signed the Tripartite Pact, but fought with the Axis countries against Russia.

Interesting Facts

- The Pact of Steel was first called the Pact of Blood, but they changed the name thinking the public would not like it.
- Mussolini was often called "Duce", or leader. Hitler picked a similar name in German called "Fuhrer".
- At their peak during World War II, the Axis Powers ruled much of Europe, Southeast Asia, and Africa.
- Some people in Italy called the Italian Empire the New Roman Empire. The Italians conquered Ethiopia and Albania prior the break out of World War II. They were the first major power to surrender to the Allies.

Questions

1) Which of the following countries was NOT a member of the Axis Powers?

2) Who was the dictator of Italy that installed a fascist regime?

3) Of the major Axis Powers, which leader remained in power for many years after the war?

4) What title did Adolf Hitler take in 1934 that meant leader?

5) What was the job of German leader Heinrich Himmler in the government?

6) Which of the major Axis Powers was the first to surrender to the Allies?

7) What was the document that all three Axis powers signed in 1940? It was later signed by Hungary.

8) True or False: The Axis Powers at one point ruled much of Europe, Southeast Asia, and North Africa.

9) What Scandinavian country did not sign the Tripartite Pact, but did fight with the Axis powers against Russia?

10) What brilliant German general commanded the German army during the Invasion of Normandy?

Check your answers:

1. France

2. Benito Mussolini

3. Emperor Hirohito

4. Fuhrer

5. He was in charge of the concentration camps, the Gestapo police and he was second in command after Adolf Hitler.

6. Italy

7. The Tripartite Pact

8. TRUE

9. Finland

10. Erwin Rommel

Causes of World War 2

There were many events throughout the world that led to the beginning of World War 2. In many ways, World War 2 was a direct result of the turmoil left behind by World War 1. Below are some of the main causes of World War 2.

Treaty of Versailles

The Treaty of Versailles ended World War I between Germany and the Allied Powers. Because Germany had lost the war, the treaty was very harsh against Germany. Germany was forced to "accept the responsibility" of the war damages suffered by the Allies. The treaty required that Germany pay a huge sum of money called reparations.

The problem with the treaty is that it left the German economy in ruins. People were starving and the government was in chaos.

Japanese Expansion

In the period before World War II, Japan was growing rapidly. However, as an island nation they did not have the land or the natural resources to sustain their growth. Japan began to look to grow their empire in order to gain new resources. They invaded Manchuria in 1931 and China in 1937.

Fascism

With the economic turmoil left behind by World War 1, some countries were taken over by dictators who formed powerful fascist governments. These dictators wanted to expand their empires and were looking for new lands to conquer. The first fascist government was Italy which was ruled by the dictator Mussolini. Italy invaded and took over Ethiopia in 1935. Adolf Hitler would later emulate Mussolini in his takeover of Germany. Another Fascist government was Spain ruled by the dictator Franco.

Hitler and the Nazi Party

In Germany, Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party rose to power. The Germans were desperate for someone to turn around their economy and restore their national pride. Hitler offered them hope. In 1934, Hitler was proclaimed the "Fuhrer" (leader) and became dictator of Germany.

Hitler resented the restrictions put on Germany by the Treaty of Versailles. While talking about peace, Hitler began to rearm Germany. He allied Germany with Mussolini and Italy. Then Hitler looked to restore Germany to power by expanding his empire. He first took over Austria in 1938. When the League of Nations did nothing to stop him, Hitler became bolder and took over Czechoslovakia in 1939.

Appeasement

After World War 1, the nations of Europe were weary and did not want another war. When countries such as Italy and Germany became aggressive and began to take over their neighbours and build up their armies, countries such as Britain and France hoped to keep peace through "appeasement." This meant that they tried to make Germany and Hitler happy rather than try to stop him. They hoped that by meeting his demands he would be satisfied and there wouldn't be any war.

Unfortunately, the policy of appeasement backfired. It only made Hitler bolder. It also gave him time to build up his army.

Great Depression

The period before World War II was a time of great economic suffering throughout the world called the Great Depression. Many people were out of work and struggling to survive. This created unstable governments and worldwide turmoil that helped lead to World War II.

Interesting Facts about the Causes of World War 2

- Because of the Great Depression, many countries were experiencing strong fascist and communist movements including France and Great Britain prior to the war.
- Prior to World War 2, the United States attempted to stay out of world issues with a policy of isolationism. They were not members of the League of Nations.

- As part of their appeasement policy, Britain and France agreed to let Hitler have part of Czechoslovakia in the Munich Agreement. Czechoslovakia had no say in the deal. The Czechoslovakians called the agreement the "Munich Betrayal."
- Japan had taken over Korea, Manchuria, and a significant part of China before World War 2 began.

Questions

1) What was the name of the treaty signed between Germany and the Allied Powers to end World War 1?

2) What country invaded China in 1937 in an effort to expand their empire?

3) What type of government ruled by a dictator took control in Spain?

4) What political party took control of the German government?

5) Who became dictator of Germany in 1934?

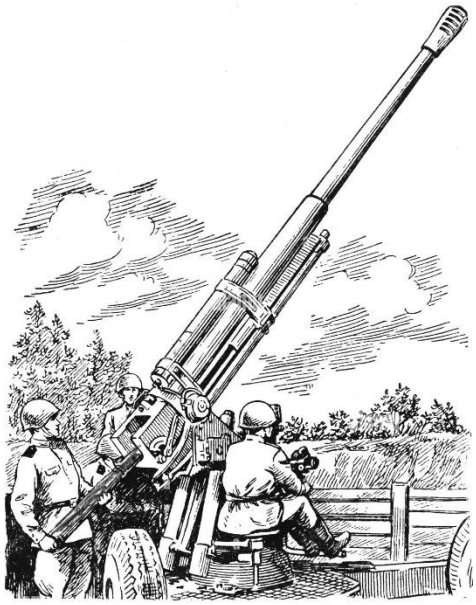
6) True or False: Prior to World War II, the United States attempted to stay out of world issues.

7) What foreign policy tried to keep Hitler happy rather than punish him for taking over countries?

8) What worldwide economic crisis took place prior to World War 2?

9) True or False: By giving Hitler the country of Czechoslovakia, Britain and France almost prevented World War 2.

10) Give 3 or more causes that led to World War 2.



Check your answers

1. Treaty of Versailles

2. Japan

3. Fascism

4. Nazi

5. Hitler

6. TRUE

7. Appeasement

8. Great Depression

9. FALSE

10.

- The rise of fascism
- Harsh treatment of Germany by the Treaty of Versailles
- Appeasement of aggressive countries
- Great Depression

Adolf Hitler



Occupation: Dictator of Germany

Born: April 20, 1889 in Braunau am Inn, Austria-Hungary

Died: April 30 1945 in Berlin, Germany

Best known for: Starting World War II and the Holocaust

Biography:

Adolf Hitler was the leader of Germany from 1933 to 1945. He was leader of the Nazi party and became a powerful dictator. Hitler started World War II by invading Poland and then invading many other European countries. He is also known for wanting to exterminate the Jewish people in the Holocaust.

Where did Hitler grow up?

Adolf was born on April 20, 1889 in a city named Braunau am Inn in the country of Austria. His family moved around some, living a short while in Germany and then back to Austria.

Hitler did not have a happy childhood. Both his parents died fairly young and many of his brothers and sisters died as well.

Adolf did not do well in school. He was expelled from a couple of schools before he moved to Vienna, Austria to pursue his dream of becoming an artist. While living in Vienna, Hitler found that he did not have much artistic talent and he soon became very poor. He would later move to Munich, Germany in hopes of becoming an architect.

Soldier in World War I

When World War I began, Hitler joined the German army. Adolf was awarded twice with the Iron Cross for bravery. It was during World War I that Hitler became a strong German patriot and also came to love war.

Rise in Power

After the war, Hitler entered politics. Many Germans were upset that they had lost the war. They were also not happy with the Treaty of Versailles, which not only blamed the war on Germany, but took land from Germany. At the same time, Germany was in an economic depression. Many people were poor. Between the depression and the Treaty of Versailles, the time was ripe for Hitler to rise to power.

Once entering politics, Hitler discovered that he was gifted in giving speeches. His speeches were powerful and people believed what he said. Hitler joined the Nazi party and soon became its leader. He promised Germany that if he became leader he would restore Germany to greatness in Europe. In 1933 he was elected Chancellor of Germany.

After becoming Chancellor, there was no stopping Hitler. He had studied his idol, Benito Mussolini of Italy, about how to install a fascist government and become a dictator. Soon Hitler was dictator of Germany.

World War II

In order for Germany to grow, Hitler thought the country needed more land or "living space". He first annexed Austria as part of Germany and then took over part of Czechoslovakia. This wasn't enough, however. On September 1, 1939 Germany invaded Poland and World War II began. Hitler formed an alliance with the Axis Powers of Japan and Italy. They were fighting the Allied Powers of Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States.

Hitler's army began to take over much of Europe. They attacked quickly in what was called Blitzkrieg or "lightning war". Soon Germany had captured much of Europe including France, Denmark, and Belgium.

However, the Allies fought back. On June 6, 1944 they invaded the beaches of Normandy and soon liberated France. By March of 1945 the Allies had defeated much of the German army. On April 30, 1945 Hitler committed suicide.

The Holocaust and Ethnic Cleansing

Hitler was responsible for some of the most horrible crimes committed in human history. He hated Jewish people and wanted to exterminate them from Germany. He forced Jewish people to go to concentration camps where 6 million Jews were killed during World War II. He also had other people and races he didn't like killed including handicapped people.

Questions

1) In what country was Adolf Hitler born?

2) As a young man, Hitler moved to Vienna to pursue his dream in what career?

3) Which of the following best describes Adolf Hitler's childhood?

4) Hitler joined the German army and fought during what war?

5) Give three factors that helped Adolf Hitler to rise to power in Germany?

6) Hitler rose to power as the leader of what political party?

7) Who was Benito Mussolini to Hitler?

8) What two countries were Germany's main two allies during World War II?

9) What is the name given to Hitler's killing of 6 million Jewish people during World War II?

10) How did Adolf Hitler die?

Check your answers

1. Austria

2. Art

3. Both his parents and several siblings died while he was still young.

4. World War I

5. Poor economic conditions following World War I; The Treaty of Versailles; Loss of land and prestige from losing World War I

6. Nazi

7. The dictator of Italy who Hitler idolized

8. Italy and Japan

9. The Holocaust

10. He committed suicide

The Holocaust

What was it?

The Holocaust is one of the most terrible events in human history. It occurred during World War II when Hitler was leader of Germany. Six million Jewish people were murdered by the Nazis. This included as many as 1 million Jewish children. Millions of other people that Hitler didn't like were killed as well. This included Polish people, Catholics, Serbs, and disabled people. It is thought that the Nazis murdered as many as 17 million innocent people.

Why did Hitler and the Nazis do it?

Hitler hated Jewish people and blamed them for Germany losing World War I. He considered Jewish people to be less than human. Hitler also believed in the superiority of the Aryan race. He wanted to use Darwinism and breeding to create a race of perfect people.

Hitler wrote in his book Mein Kampf that when he became ruler he would rid Germany of all the Jews. Not many people believed he would really do this, but as soon as he became Chancellor he started his work against the Jews. He made laws that said Jews had no rights. Then he organized attacks on Jewish businesses and homes. On November 9, 1938 many Jewish homes and businesses were burnt down or vandalized. This night was called the Kristallnacht or "Night of Broken Glass".

Ghettos

During World War II when the Nazis would take over a city in Europe they would force all of the Jewish people into one area of town. This area was called a ghetto and was fenced in with barbed wire and guarded. There was little food, water, or medicine available. It was also very crowded with multiple families sometimes sharing a single room to live in.

Concentration Camps

All Jewish people were eventually to be brought to concentration camps. They were told they were relocating to a new and better place, but this was not the case. Concentration camps were like prison camps. People were forced to do hard labour. The weak were quickly killed or died of starvation. Some camps even had gas chambers. People would be led into the chambers in large groups only to be killed with poison gas. The concentration camps were horrible places.

Hiding

Many Jewish people hid from the Nazis during World War II. They would hide with non-Jewish families. Sometimes they would pretend to be a part of the family and sometimes they would hide in hidden rooms or in a basement or attic. Some were able to eventually

escape across the border into a free country, but many hid for years sometimes in the same room.

Stories and Heroes of the Holocaust

There are many stories of Jewish people striving to survive during the Holocaust and the heroes who helped them. Here are a few:

Anne Frank's Diary - This diary tells the real-life story of a young girl named Anne Frank. She and her family hid from the Nazis for two years before they were betrayed and captured. Anne died in a concentration camp, but her diary survived to tell her story.

Schindler's List - This movie tells the story of Oskar Schindler, a German businessman who managed to save the lives of over one thousand Jewish people who worked in his factories. Note: this movie is R-rated and not for children.

The Hiding Place - This tells the true story of Corrie ten Boom, a Dutch lady who helped to hide Jewish people from the Nazis. Corrie gets caught by a spy, however, and is sent to a concentration camp. Corrie survives the camp and is let free at the end of the war.







Questions

1) What was the Holocaust?

2) What book did Hitler write where he said he wanted to rid Germany of the Jews?

3) Besides wanting to kill all of the Jewish people, who else did Hitler want to get rid of?

4) When the Germans took over a city in Europe, what was the place in town called where they put the Jewish people?

5) What was the name of the places where they would take the Jews and make them work or kill them?

6) What were gas chambers?

7) What young girl wrote a journal of her life hiding for two years from the Nazis?

8) How many innocent people have historians estimated that Hitler and the Nazis killed?

9) Who was Corrie ten Boom?

10) What nationality was Oskar Schindler, the man who helped save many Jewish people during World War II?

Check your answers

1. When six million Jewish people were killed by the German Nazis

2. Mein Kampf

3. Polish, Catholics, Handicapped/disabled people

4. The Ghetto

5. Concentration camps

6. Places where Jewish people were killed by poisonous gas

7. Anne Frank

8. 17 million

9. A Dutch lady who helped Jewish people to hide from the Nazis

10. German

Sophie Scholl and the White Rose

Margie Burns

At the age of 21, Sophie Scholl was executed by the People's Court in Germany on Feb. 22, 1943, during the Holocaust, for her involvement in The White Rose, an organization that was secretly writing pamphlets calling for the end of the war and strongly denouncing the inhuman acts of the Nazis.

In May, 1942 German troops were on the battlefields of Russia and North Africa, while students at the University of Munich attended salons sharing their love of medicine, Theology, and philosophy and their aversion to the Nazi regime. Hans Scholl, Alexander Schmorell, and Sophie Scholl were at the center of this group of friends.

Attending the same university were two medical students, Willi Graf and Jurgen Wittgenstein, who had served in a military hospital in 1939, with Hans, Sophie's older brother. Along with Christoph Probst, a married soldier and father of three, they eventually joined The White Rose.

Sophie Scholl was born on May 9, 1921, in Forchtenberg am Kocher, where her father Robert Scholl, was mayor. At 12 Sophie joined the Hitler Youth, but became disillusioned. The arrest of her father for referring to Hitler as "God's Scourge," to an employee, left a strong impression on her.

To the Scholl family loyalty meant obeying the dictates of the heart. "What I want for you is to live in uprightness and freedom of spirit, no matter how difficult that proves to be," her father told the family.

When the mass deportation of Jews began in 1942, Sophie, Hans, Alexander and Jurgen realized it was time for action. They bought a typewriter and a duplicating machine and Hans and Alex wrote the first leaflet with the heading: Leaflets of The White Rose, which said:

"Nothing is so unworthy of a nation as allowing itself to be governed without opposition by a clique that has yielded to base instinct…Western civilization must defend itself against fascism and offer passive resistance, before the nation's last young man has given his blood on some battlefield."

Members of The White Rose worked day and night in secrecy, producing thousands of leaflets, mailed from undetectable locations in Germany, to scholars and medics. Sophie bought stamps and paper at different places, to divert attention from their activities.

In 1933 Hitler was elected chancellor of Germany. Many Germans who were uncomfortable with the anti-Semitic ranting of the Nazi party, appreciated Hitler's ability to bolster pride in a shamed nation.

The second White Rose leaflet stated: "Since the conquest of Poland 300,000 Jews have been murdered, a crime against human dignity…Germans encourage fascist criminals if no chord within them cries out at the sight of such deeds. An end in terror is preferable to terror without end."

Sophie's brother Hans spent two years in the military, studied medicine at the University of Munich, and was a medic at the Eastern front with Alex, Willi and Jurgen in 1942.

Jurgen transported stacks of pamphlets to Berlin. The journey was dangerous," Trains were crawling with military police. If you were a civilian and couldn't prove you'd been deferred, you were taken away immediately," he recalled.

No one in the United States can comprehend what it is to live under absolute dictatorship. The party controlled the news media, police, armed forces, judiciary system, communications, education, cultural and religious institutions.

The third leaflet demanded:" Sabotage in armament plants, newspapers, public ceremonies, and of the National Socialist Party…Convince the lower classes of the senselessness of continuing the war; where we face spiritual enslavement at the hands of National Socialists."

The Nuremberg Laws of 1935 had demanded expulsion of anyone who was not Aryan, declaring Jews as non-citizens. The international press had begun to report beatings in the streets, so Hitler moved the arena of cruelty away from cities to concentration camps.

On November 9, 1938, 30,000 Jews were beaten and arrested, and Storm Troops burned 191 synagogues on Kristallnacht," the night for the broken windows," causing 200,000 Jews to flee to the countryside.

When Alexander Schmorell was asked to swear an oath to Hitler, he asked to be discharged from the army. Willi Graf turned to passive resistance like the rest, after serving as a medical orderly in Yugoslavia. He was assigned to the Second Student's Company in Munich, where he met Sophie, Hans, Alexander, Christoph, and Jurgen.

Christoph Probst was the only member of the White Rose who was married with children, so the others tried to protect him. In the fourth leaflet they wrote: "I ask you as a Christian whether you hesitate in hope that someone else will raise his arm

in your defense?…For Hitler and his followers no punishment is commensurate with their crimes."

After the German defeat at Stalingrad, in 1943, and Roosevelt's demand for unconditional surrender for the Axis powers, an Allied invasion was weeks away. That night, Hans, Willi, and Alex painted" Freedom" and" Down with Hitler," and drew crossed-out swastikas on buildings in Munich.

Their philosophy professor, Kurt Huber, was shocked when he learned of the state-organized atrocities committed in Germany, and he worked on the final White Rose leaflets. He was also motivated to lecture on forbidden subjects, such as the writings of the Jewish philosopher Spinoza.

Each leaflet was more critical of Hitler and the German people than the last. The fifth mentioned: "Hitler is leading the German people into the abyss. Blindly they follow their seducers into ruin…Are we to be forever a nation which is hated and rejected by all mankind?"

The Gestapo had been looking for the pamphlets' authors as soon as the first ones appeared. As the language in the leaflets became more inflammatory they stepped up their efforts. They arrested people at the slightest hint of suspicion.

Sophie and Hans brought a suitcase of the final leaflets, written by Professor Huber, to the University, and left them in corridors for the students to discover and read.

Jakob Schmidt, University handyman and Nazi party member, saw Hans and Sophie with the leaflets and reported them. They were taken into Gestapo custody. Sophie's 'interrogation' was so cruel, she appeared in court with a broken leg.

On Feb 22, 1943, Sophie, Hans and Christoph were condemned to death by the 'People's' Court, which had been created by the National Socialist Party to eliminate Hitler's enemies.

Hans Scholl's last words shouted from the guillotine were," Long live freedom!" In an unprecedented action by the guards, Christoph Probst was allowed a few moments alone with Hans and Sophie before they went to their deaths. After months of Gestapo interrogations to obtain the names of his co-conspirators, Willi was executed. His final thoughts were:" They shall continue what we have begun."

Alexander Schmorell was arrested in an air raid shelter and executed at Munich Stadelheim. Kurt Huber became one of the defendants at the trial of the People's Court against the White Rose. Survivors remember Huber's last words, an affirmation of humaneness.

Jurgen Wittenstein was interrogated by the Gestapo, but they couldn't prove his involvement so they let him go. He got himself transferred to the front, beyond Nazi control and was the only one to survive. After the war, he relocated to the United States, became a doctor and received an award from the Government of West Germany for his bravery.

" How can we expect righteousness to prevail when there is hardly anyone willing to give himself up individually to a righteous cause," Sophie said." Such a fine, sunny day, and I have to go," she continued," but what does my death matter, if through us thousands of people are awakened and stirred to action?"

The White Rose is a radiant page in the annals of the 20th Century. The courage to swim against the stream of public opinion, even when doing so was equated with treason, and the conviction that death is not too great a price to pay for following the whisperings of the conscience," writes Chris Zimmerman in The White Rose: Its Legacy and Challenge.

Two hundred German schools are named for the Scholls, and politicians such as former New York Mayor David Dinkins invoke their names, and visit their graves. With the rise of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and violence against foreigners in Germany, the anniversary of the executions is a powerful reminder.

Sophie Scholls sister Inge Aicher-Scoll wrote: "Perhaps genuine heroism lies in deciding to stubbornly defend the everyday things, the mundane and the immediate."

The final leaflet, though undelivered by the White Rose, found its way to the resistance, and was carried to Sweden. From there it was placed into the hands of the British, who made thousands and thousands of copies. As their bombers flew over Germany, the letters were dropped all over the country. The truth could not be hidden.

For you to do

1. Reflect on the life of Sophie Scholl. What stands out to you as being most admirable?

2. What issues might Christians have to stand up for today, standing for truth in today's society, even if it means sacrifice?

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was born in 1906, in Germany. He was one of six children, and a twin. As a child he was full of questions, about Heaven and about God.

At the age of fourteen he decided that he wanted to become a theologian. That is, someone who studies all about God and the Bible and then teaches others. He found the old family Bible and started reading it, even though his family didn't go to church.

He worked hard and eventually graduated as a teacher and pastor. Then he was given the chance to study in America for a year. He didn't realize how much more he had to learn!

Dietrich watched in confusion in New York City where a waiter would not take an order of a black person. Dietrich went up and spoke to the black person named Frank.

"Frank, if they won't serve you because of the color of your skin, then none of us will ever eat here again!" With that, Dietrich and his friends left the restaurant in protest.

Walking home that evening, Dietrich was deep in thought. America was great, but why were people so prejudiced against blacks? Blacks were even attacked on the street for no reason. It was so unfair! God looked at a person's heart, not the color of his skin!

Experiences like this taught Dietrich things he hadn't learned in all his years of study. Living out his faith meant more than just attending church, reading books and teaching about God. Dietrich wanted to truly live out Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount, "God blesses those who work for peace." He returned to Germany determined to treat all people as equals and teach them that peace was always better than violence.

"What is different about you? What happened in America?" asked Dietrich's friends when he returned to Germany.

His answer was simple. He told them, "I became a Christian in America."
Little did he know that his decision to promote peace and equality would soon be put to the test.

World War 2 began, and Hitler was scheming his evil plot to kill all Jews.

Dietrich's brother-in-law, Hans, approached him.
"Dietrich, we need your help. We're going to do it-- we're going to assassinate Hitler!"

Dietrich was shocked speechless. He looked at Hans, as his mind raced. As a pacifist, Dietrich believed in peace, not violence. How could he consider killing someone, even a monster like Hitler?

Adolph Hitler was Germany's leader. Hitler hated Jewish people so much that he wanted to get rid of them all. At first Jews lost their jobs, then their homes and businesses were destroyed. Eventually, many were crowded into filthy concentration camps and forced to

work without enough food or warm clothes. Many Jews were sent to extermination camps, where they were killed just because they were Jews.

But Hitler and his Nazi party didn't stop there. Anyone who opposed their evil plans would be treated like a Jew. Dietrich did all he could to show other Christians that they needed to stand up for the Jews, but many refused to listen. Now he was being asked to help kill Adolph Hitler.

"Hans, you know my beliefs! I hate what Hitler is doing, but I could never plot to kill somebody. I would be just like him! We've helped Jews escape and called the church to stand firm-- surely that is the most we can do."

"No, Dietrich. It's not enough. Thousands of Jews are dying each week and Germany is being destroyed. Hitler must be stopped!"

Dietrich remembered the verse that had challenged him back in America: "God blesses those who work for peace." He finally decided that removing the leader who was killing so many defenseless people would be the best way to work for peace. But the assassination attempt did not succeed. Dietrich, Hans and several other members of their family were arrested. He spent the last two years of his life in prison and concentration camps. Even under those awful conditions, Dietrich continued to challenge other Christians to stand against Hitler through his powerful writing. Those who were imprisoned with him looked to him as a pastor as they faced those dark days.

After five long days in the back of the transport truck, the weary prisoners were locked in a small schoolhouse for the night. The next morning was Sunday, so Dietrich led them in a church service. Following worship and prayer, Dietrich comforted the other prisoners with words from the book of Isaiah, "With his wounds we are healed." As Dietrich finished his last prayer, the door to the schoolhouse burst open. Two evil-looking men entered and pointed at Dietrich.

"Prisoner Bonhoeffer. Get ready to come with us." Just a few words, but everyone in the room knew what they meant. A hush fell over the little group as the room filled with a sudden tension.

As the prisoners said goodbye to Dietrich, he had time to whisper a last message. "Please don't worry about me. This may be the end of my life, but it's really just the beginning for me."

He died in 1945, at the end of World War 2.

Reference: http://m.christianity.com/church/church-history/church-history-for-kids/dietrich-bonhoeffer-the-cost-of-discipleship-11635062.html

For you to do:

Write a summary of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's life and include one thing that challenged you.

The Evacuation of Dunkirk, 1940

In May 1940, some of the darkest days in the history of Europe were experienced, and in particular, in the history of Britain. German forces under Hitler were surging west, having overthrown Holland and Belgium and broken through the defences on the north-eastern borders of France.

The British Expeditionary Force were fighting in France, as the German forces advanced in a pincer movement, threatening to encircle the entire British force of 355,000. The decision was made to evacuate the British Expeditionary Force from France. The B.E.F. were only 8 to 12 miles (approximately 13 to 20 kilometres) from Dunkirk, but the German forces were only 10 miles (16 km) behind them. Winston Churchill later wrote in a history of the war that at best they expected to save only up to 30,000 of the total. “The whole root and core and brain of the British Army seemed about to perish on the field or be led into ignominious and starving captivity,” he wrote.

But Britain had a Godly sovereign. Seeing this situation developing, His Majesty King George VI requested that Sunday May 26 should be observed as a National Day of Prayer. In a stirring broadcast, he called the people of Britain and the Commonwealth to commit their cause to God. Together with members of the cabinet, the King attended Westminster Abbey, whilst millions of his subjects in all parts of the Commonwealth flocked to the churches in prayer. Hundreds who had neglected church attendance for years were moved to join the crowds in prayer. Britain was given inspiring leadership in those days, and her people responded immediately when this kind of initiative was taken. The whole nation and Commonwealth were at prayer that Sunday. The scene outside Westminster Abbey was remarkable – photographs show long queues of people who could not even get in, the Abbey was so crowded. So much so that a daily newspaper the following morning exclaimed, “Nothing like this has ever happened before!” In its hour of deep distress, a heart-cry from both monarch and people was going up to God in prayer. And that cry did not go unanswered. For very soon at least three miracles were seen to happen.

The first was that for some reason, which has never yet been fully explained, Hitler over-ruled his generals and halted the advance of his armoured troops, at the very point when they could have proceeded to the British Army’s annihilation being only 10 miles away. Later Mr. Churchill asserted in his memoirs that this was because Hitler believed that his air superiority would be sufficient to prevent a large-scale evacuation by sea. That is very significant in terms of the second miracle.

A storm of unprecedented fury broke over Flanders, a region just east of Dunkirk, on Tuesday May 28, grounding the German squadrons of planes and enabling the British army formations to move up the 8 to 12 miles to the coast on foot. The darkness of the storm and the violence of the rain, with scarcely any interruption from enemy aircraft were wonderful protection as the planes were unable to operate in such turbulent conditions. Hitler had obviously not taken the weather into his reckoning, nor the One who controls the weather.

And the third miracle? Despite the storm in Flanders, a great calm such as has rarely been experienced, settled over the English Channel during the days which followed and its waters became as still as a mill pond. It was this quite extraordinary calm which enabled a vast armada of little ships, big ships, war ships, privately owned motor cruisers from British rivers and estuaries. In fact, almost anything that would float, to travel back and forth between Dunkirk and the English port of Dover, in a desperate bid to rescue as many men as possible. There were so many ships involved in the evacuation that Douglas Bader, a famous Spitfire pilot, described the scene like this in his book *"Flight for The Sky":*

"The sea from Dunkirk to Dover during these days of the evacuation looked like any coastal road in England on a bank holiday. It was solid with shipping. One felt one could walk across without getting one's feet wet, or that's what it looked like from the air. There were naval escort vessels, sailing dinghies, rowing boats, paddle steamers, indeed every floating device known in this country. They were all taking British soldiers from Dunkirk back home. You could identify Dunkirk from the Thames estuary by the huge covering of black smoke rising straight up into a windless sky from the oil tanks which were ablaze just inside the harbour."

Yet still, to a large extent, the German air squadrons were unable to intervene - certainly not in force, nor in the way Hitler had anticipated, for so many of these squadrons remained grounded. General Halder, Chief of the German General Staff, three days after the High Command, proudly boasted that the British Army was about to be annihilated. But now he was obliged to record in his diary on 30th May that "Bad weather has grounded our air squadrons, and now we must stand by and watch countless thousands of the enemy getting away to England right under our noses."

Even though some squadrons did get through, it seems that yet another miracle happened. Many of the troops on the beaches were favoured with a strange immunity. When about 400 men were being machine-gunned and bombed, systematically by about sixty enemy aircraft, one man who flung himself down with the rest reported that, after the attack was over, he was amazed to find that there was not a single casualty.

Another man, a chaplain, was likewise machine-gunned and bombed as he lay on the beach. After what seemed like an eternity, he realised he had not been hit, and rose to his feet to find that the sand where he had been lying was pitted with bullet holes, and his figure was outlined on the ground. Truly, amazing things were happening. There were signs on every hand that God had intervened and delivered officers and men from the hands of a mighty foe who, humanly speaking had them at its mercy.

After the last rescue boats left Dunkirk harbor on June 4, 1940, the Germans captured some 40,000 French troops who'd been left behind as well as at least 40,000 British soldiers in the Dunkirk vicinity. Theirs is a story that is often overlooked, but for the next five years, until the war's end, large numbers of these POWs were mistreated and abused in violation of Geneva Convention guidelines governing the sick, wounded, prisoners of war and civilians. As described in *Dunkirk: The Men They Left Behind, by Sean Longden*, some were summarily executed. The POWs were denied food and medical treatment. The wounded were jeered at. To lower officer morale, the Nazis told British officers that they would lose their rank and be sent to the salt mines to work. They were forced to drink ditch water and eat putrid food.

As noted by Longden: “These dreadful days were never forgotten by those who endured them. They had fought the battles to ensure the successful evacuation of over 300,000 fellow soldiers. Their sacrifice had brought the salvation of the British nation.

Sunday June 9th was appointed as a Day of National Thanksgiving and once again the people of Britain and the Commonwealth joined in prayer, this time giving thanks to God who had miraculously saved over 300,000 British soldiers from the jaws of death and returned them safely home.

Psalm 124 was read in the churches where thanksgiving was made. The closing verse read, “Praised be the Lord who has not given us over for a prey unto their teeth. Our soul is escaped even as a bird out of the snare of the fowler: the snare is broken and we are delivered. Our help stands in the name of the Lord who has made heaven and earth.”

1. Use an atlas to locate Dunkirk, Dover, Flanders, the English Channel, Holland, Belgium, Germany, France.
2. What is meant by an evacuation?
3. Find words that mean: humiliating, to come between, of special importance.
4. What do you think was the ‘pincer movement’ whereby the German armies advanced?
5. What lesson can we learn from this event? a) for ourselves b) for our nation.

Psalm 46:1- God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in the time of trouble.
Psalm 50:15 - Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you and you will honour me.

Adapted from *The Trumpet Sounds for Britain,* Vol 2, by David Gardner, Christian Foundation Publication, Great Britain



