

# New Conflagrations: World War II and the Cold War

## chapter 36

### AP KEY CONCEPTS

**6.1.III:** Disease, scientific innovations, and conflict led to demographic shifts.

**6.2.III:** Political changes were accompanied by major demographic and social consequences.

**6.2.IV:** Military conflicts occurred on an unprecedented global scale.

**6.3.I:** States responded in a variety of ways to the economic challenges of the twentieth century.

**6.3.II:** States, communities, and individuals became increasingly interdependent, a process facilitated by the growth of institutions of global governance.

### AP HISTORICAL THINKING

**Using Evidence to Support an Argument** Using photographs, maps, and documents in the chapter, construct an argument that either justifies or opposes the dropping of the atomic bomb on Japanese cities.

**Causation** Explain the short-, medium-, and long-term causes of the cold war.

**Comparison and Contextualization** Compare the treatment of civilians in the two world wars by both their home countries and by invaders/enemies.

**Creating an Argument and Synthesis** Make an argument that World War I and World War II were the same war.

### AP CHAPTER FOCUS

The horrendous casualties of World War II illustrated the devastating effects of new military technologies, such as airplanes and atomic weapons, and tactics, such as fire-bombing. Other twentieth-century technologies were used to identify, transport, and sometimes destroy entire ethnic groups

or wartime enemies, perceived or real. The leaders of industrialized nations again wreaked total war on their opponents, in which there was no distinction between armed enemy soldiers and unarmed civilians. For the AP exam, you will need to analyze the short-, medium- and long-term causes and results of the war, but will not need to know individual battles.

As in World War I, the cold war and World War II extended far beyond official battlefields. Ethnic, religious, and nationalist prejudices became more pronounced. The fascists in Germany herded “undesirables” into ghettos (neighborhoods), then labor camps, and then many into death camps. The U.S. uprooted Japanese Americans living on the west coast and moved them to internment camps after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The Japanese used the Chinese in Nanjing as target-practice to toughen new recruits. And as men were drafted or pressed into military service, women stepped in. Women were drafted and fought for the U.S.S.R. and for China. Women volunteered to join women’s auxiliary forces, were significant members of resistance movements, and moved into jobs that had been traditionally held by men. And as in World War I, some African Americans and colonial peoples volunteered to fight in order to win acceptance, rights, and independence.

AP students will have to be able to trace the shift in the global balance of power from western Europe to the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. in the postwar era. You will also have to analyze the long-, medium- and short-term causes of the cold war, and the new alliances that it spawned in the postwar era. (Some of this information is in the next chapter.) Even as the leaders of the cold war worked to divide countries into a new set of antagonists, other people worked toward global cooperation and a set of universally-recognized human rights. The movement toward internationalism slowly gained traction, even as proxy wars in Africa, Asia, and Latin America threatened to pull the world’s people into an eddy of a never-ending series of wars.

#### Origins of World War II

Japan’s War in China

Italian and German Aggression

#### Total War: The World under Fire

Blitzkrieg: Germany Conquers Europe

The German Invasion of the Soviet Union

Battles in Asia and the Pacific

Defeat of the Axis Powers

#### Life during Wartime

Occupation, Collaboration, and Resistance

The Holocaust

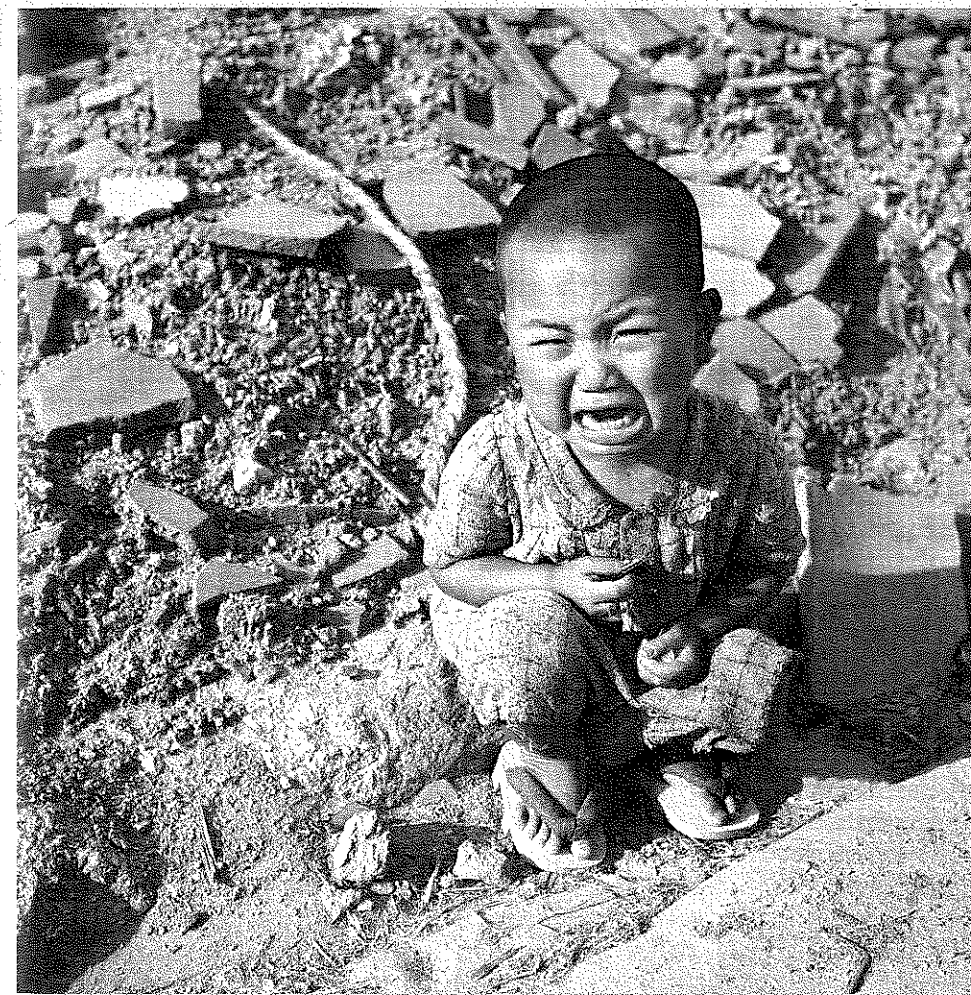
Women and the War

#### The Cold War

Origins of the Cold War

The Globalization of the Cold War

Dissent, Intervention, and Rapprochement



A Japanese child crouches and cries in the rubble of Hiroshima in the aftermath of the atomic bombing, expressing the profound sadness of war and its devastating weapons.

### EYEWITNESS:

#### Victor Tolley Finds Tea and Learns Empathy in Nagasaki

On 6 August 1945, as he listened to the armed services radio on Saipan (a U.S.-controlled island in the north Pacific), U.S. marine Victor Tolley heard the news: the president of the United States announced that a “terrible new weapon” had been deployed against the city of Hiroshima, Japan. Tolley and the other marines rejoiced, realizing that the terrible new weapon—the atomic bomb—might end the war and relieve them of the burden of invading Japan. A few days later Tolley heard that the city of Nagasaki had also been hit with an atomic bomb. He remembered the ominous remarks that accompanied the news of this atomic destruction: radio announcers suggested it might be decades before the cities would be inhabitable.

Imagine Tolley’s astonishment when a few weeks later, after the Japanese surrender, he and his buddies were

assigned to the U.S. occupation forces in Nagasaki. Assured that Nagasaki was “very safe,” Tolley lived there for three months, during which he became very familiar with the devastation wrought by the atomic bomb. On his first day in Nagasaki, Tolley explored the city and noted, “It was just like walking into a tomb. There was total silence. You could smell this death all around ya. There was a terrible odor.”

Tolley also became acquainted with some of the Japanese survivors in Nagasaki, which proved to be an eye-opening experience. Having become separated from his unit and seeing “young children with sores and burns all over,” Tolley encountered another young child. Despite the language barrier, he and the boy were able to communicate. Tolley showed the child pictures of his wife and two daughters. The Japanese boy excitedly took Tolley home to meet his surviving family: his father and his pregnant sister. Tolley recalled,

This little kid ran upstairs and brought his father down. A very nice Japanese gentleman. He could speak English. He bowed and said, “We would be honored if you would come upstairs and have some tea with us.” I went upstairs in this strange Japanese house. I noticed on the mantel a picture of a young Japanese soldier. I asked him, “Is this your son?” He said, “That is my daughter’s husband. We don’t know if he’s alive. We haven’t heard.” The minute he said that, it dawned on me that they suffered the same as we did. They lost sons and daughters and relatives, and they hurt too.

Before his chance meeting with this Japanese family, Tolley had felt nothing except contempt for the Japanese. He pointed out, “We were trained to kill them. They’re our enemy. Look what they did in Pearl Harbor. They asked for it and now we’re gonna give it to ‘em. That’s how I felt until I met this young boy and his family.” But after coming face-to-face with his enemies, Tolley saw only their common humanity, their suffering, and their hurt. The lesson he learned was that “these people didn’t want to fight us.”

In 1931 Japan invaded Manchuria, and the United States concluded hostilities by dropping atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. By 1941 World War II was a truly global war with hostilities spreading from east Asia and the Pacific to Europe, north Africa, and the Atlantic. Beyond its immense geographic scope, the death toll of World War II exceeded that of the Great War. At least sixty million people perished, and civilian deaths outnumbered military casualties, blurring lines between civilians and soldiers. In this total war, contacts with enemies, occupiers, and liberators affected populations around the world. World War II redefined gender roles and relations between colonial peoples and their masters, as women contributed to their nations’ war efforts and as colonial peoples exploited the war’s weakening of imperial nations.

## ORIGINS OF WORLD WAR II

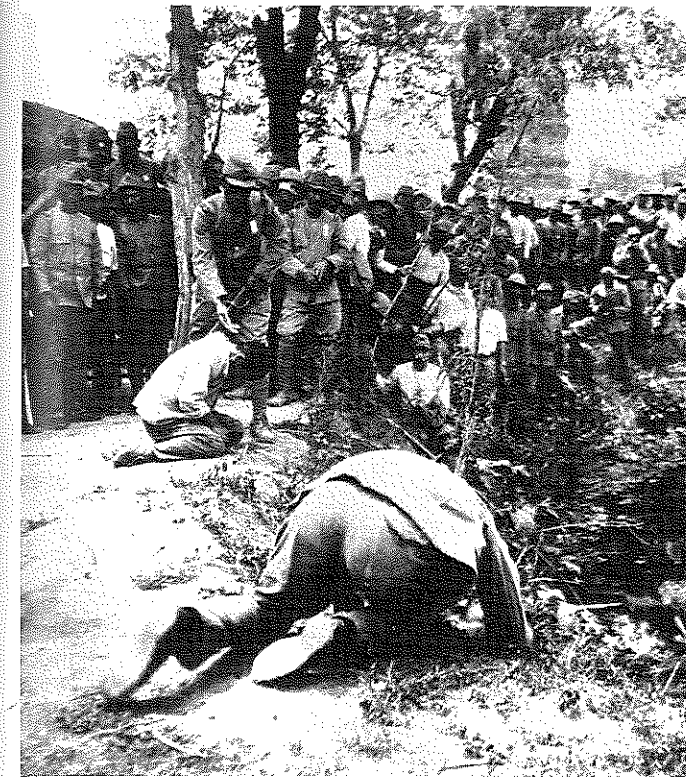
In 1941 two major alliances squared off against each other. Japan, Germany, and Italy, along with their conquered territories, formed the **Axis powers**, the name of the alignment between Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy that had been formed in October 1936. The term was used later to include Germany’s other allies in World War II, especially Japan. The **Allied powers** included France and its empire; Great Britain and its empire and Commonwealth allies (such as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand); the Soviet Union; China; and the United States and its allies in Latin America. The construction of these global alliances took place over the course of the 1930s and early 1940s.

Driven in part by a desire to revise the peace settlements that followed the Great War and affected by the economic distress of the worldwide depression, Japan, Italy, and Germany engaged in a campaign of territorial expansion that ultimately

broke apart the structure of international cooperation that had kept the world from violence in the 1920s. These **revisionist powers**, so called because they revised, or overthrew, the terms of the post–Great War peace, confronted nations that were committed to the international system and to the avoidance of another world war. To expand their global influence, the revisionist nations remilitarized and conquered territories they deemed central to their needs and to the spread of their imperial control. The Allies acquiesced to the revisionist powers’ early aggressive actions, but after they had been attacked, in the late 1930s and early 1940s, the Allies engaged the Axis powers in a total war.

### Japan’s War in China

The global conflict opened with Japan’s attacks on China in the 1930s: the conquest of Manchuria between 1931 and 1932 was the first step in the revisionist process of expansionism



Japanese soldiers execute Chinese prisoners. In the Japanese invasion of China, four hundred thousand Chinese died when the Japanese used them for bayonet practice or executed them.

and aggression. Within Japan a battle continued between supporters and opponents of the aggressive policies adopted in Manchuria, but during the course of the 1930s the militarist position dominated, and for the most part civilians lost control of the government and the military. In 1933, after the League of Nations condemned its actions in Manchuria, Japan withdrew from the league and followed an ultranationalist and promilitary policy.

Seeing territorial control as essential to its survival, Japan launched a full-scale invasion of China in 1937. A battle between Chinese and Japanese troops at the Marco Polo Bridge in Beijing in July 1937 was the opening move in Japan’s undeclared war against China. Japanese troops took Beijing and then moved south toward Shanghai and Nanjing, the capital of China. Japanese naval and air forces bombed Shanghai, killing thousands of civilians, and secured it as a landing area for armies bound for Nanjing. By December 1937 Shanghai and Nanjing had fallen, and during the following six months Japanese forces won repeated victories.

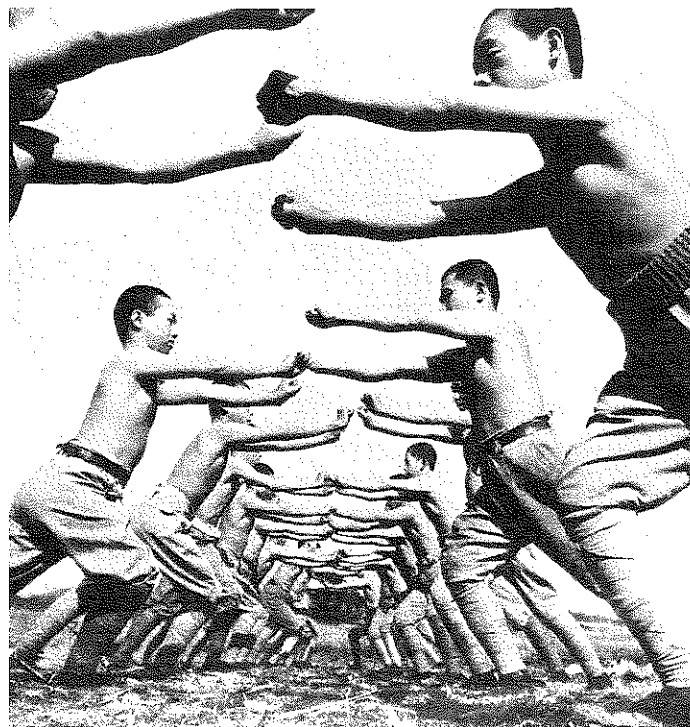
The Rape of Nanjing China became the first nation to experience the horrors of World War II: brutal warfare against civilians and repressive occupation. During the invasion of China, Japanese forces used methods of warfare that led to

mass death and suffering on a new, almost unimaginable, level. Chinese civilians were among the first to feel the effects of aerial bombing of urban centers; the people of Shanghai died by the tens of thousands when Japanese bombers attacked the city to soften Chinese resistance. What became known as the **Rape of Nanjing** demonstrated the horror of the war as the residents of Nanjing became victims of Japanese troops inflamed by war passion and a sense of racial superiority. Over the course of two months, Japanese soldiers raped seven thousand women, murdered hundreds of thousands of unarmed soldiers and civilians, and burned one-third of the homes in Nanjing. Four hundred thousand Chinese lost their lives as Japanese soldiers used them for bayonet practice and machine-gunned them into open pits.

**Chinese Resistance** Despite Japanese military successes and the subsequent Japanese occupation of Chinese lands, Chinese resistance persisted throughout the war. Japanese aggression aroused feelings of nationalism among the Chinese that continued to grow as the war wore on. By September 1937 nationalists and communists had agreed on a “united front” policy against the Japanese, uniting themselves into standing armies of some 1.7 million soldiers. Although Chinese forces failed to defeat the Japanese, who retained naval and air superiority, they tied down half the Japanese army, 750,000 soldiers, by 1941.

Throughout the war, the coalition of nationalists and communists threatened to fall apart. Although neither side was willing to risk open civil war, the two groups engaged in numerous military clashes as their forces competed for both control of enemy territory and political control within China. Those clashes rendered Chinese resistance less effective, and while both sides continued the war against Japan, each fought ultimately for its own advantage. The nationalists suffered major casualties in their battles with Japanese forces, but they kept the Guomindang government alive by moving inland to Chongqing. Meanwhile, the communists carried on guerrilla operations against the Japanese invaders. Lacking air force and artillery, communist guerrillas staged hit-and-run operations from their mountain bases, sabotaged bridges and railroads, and harassed Japanese troops. The guerrillas did not defeat the Japanese, but they captured the loyalty of many Chinese peasants through their resistance to the Japanese and their moderate policies of land reform. At the end of the war, the communists were poised to lead China.

The Japanese invasion of China met with intense international opposition, but by that time Japan had chosen another path—and it was an auspicious time to further its attack on the international system. Other world powers, distracted by depression and military aggression in Europe, could offer little in the way of an effective response to Japanese actions. The government of Japan aligned itself with the other revisionist nations, Germany and Italy, by signing the Tripartite Pact, a ten-year military and economic pact, in September 1940. Japan also cleared the way for further empire building



Japanese soldiers in 1938 engaged in strenuous physical education and kept fit in order to fight the Chinese.

in Asia and the Pacific basin by concluding a neutrality pact with the Soviet Union in April 1941, thereby precluding hostilities on any other front, especially in Manchuria. Japan did not face determined opposition to its expansion until December 1941, when conflict with the United States created a much broader field of action for Japan and its growing empire.

### Italian and German Aggression

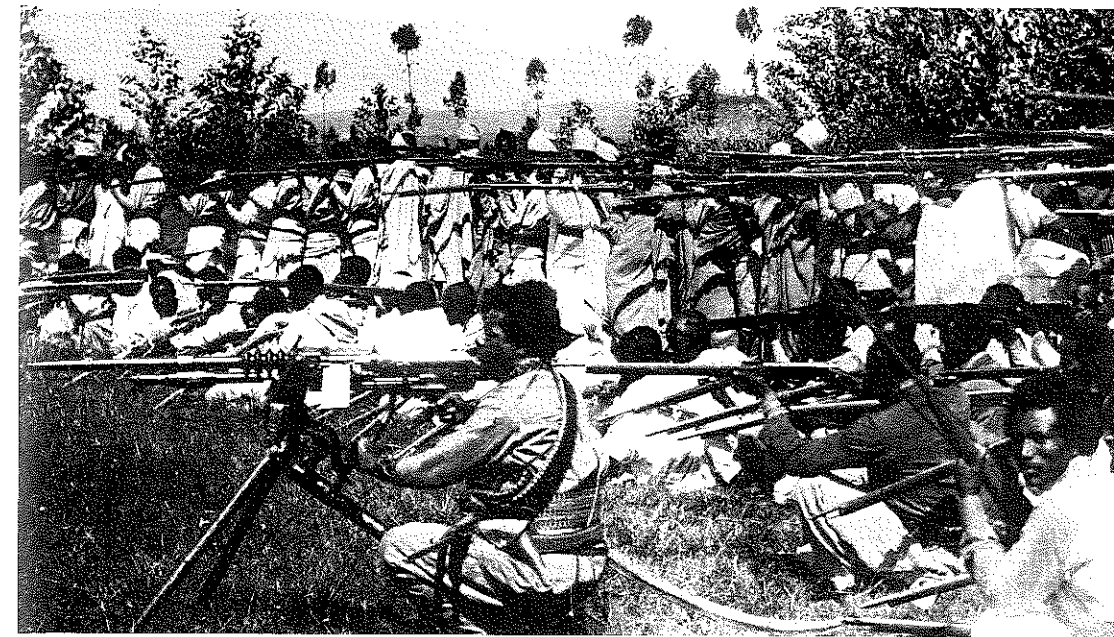
Italy's expansionism helped destabilize the post-Great War peace and spread World War II to the European continent. Italians suffered tremendously in World War I. Six hundred thousand Italian soldiers died, and the national economy never recovered sufficiently for Italy to function as an equal to other European military and economic powers. Many Italians expected far greater recompense and respect than they received at the conclusion of the Great War. Rather than being treated as a real partner in victory by Britain and France, Italy found itself shut out of the divisions of the territorial spoils of war.

Italy **Benito Mussolini** (1883–1945) promised to bring glory to Italy through the acquisition of territories that it had been denied after the Great War. Italy's conquest of Ethiopia in 1935 and 1936, when added to the previously annexed Libya, created an overseas empire. Italy also intervened in the **Spanish Civil War** (1936–1939) on the side of General Francisco Franco (1892–1975), whose militarists overthrew the republican

government, and annexed Albania in 1939. (Mussolini viewed Albania as a bridgehead for expansion into the Balkans.) The invasion and conquest of Ethiopia in particular infuriated other nations; but, as with Japan's invasion of Manchuria, the League of Nations offered little effective opposition.

What angered nonrevisionists about Italy's conquest of Ethiopia was not just the broken peace. The excessive use of force against the Ethiopians also rankled. Mussolini sent an army of 250,000 soldiers armed with tanks, poison gas, artillery, and aircraft to conquer the Ethiopians, who were entirely unprepared for the assault. The mechanized troops mowed them down. Italy lost 2,000 soldiers while 275,000 Ethiopians lost their lives. Despite its victories in Ethiopia, Italy's prospects for world glory never appeared quite as bright as Japan's, especially since few Italians wanted to go to war. Throughout the interwar years, Italy played a diplomatic game that kept European nations guessing as to its future intentions, but by 1938 it was firmly on the side of the Axis.

Germany Japan and Italy were the first nations to challenge the post-World War I settlements through territorial conquest, but it was Germany that systematically undid the Treaty of Versailles and the fragile peace of the interwar years. Most Germans and their political leaders were unwilling to accept defeat and deeply resented the harsh terms imposed on their nation in 1919, but even the governments of other European nations eventually recognized the extreme nature of the Versailles treaty's terms and turned a blind eye to the revisionist actions of **Adolf Hitler** (1889–1945) and his government. Hitler came to power in 1933, riding a wave of public discontent with Germany's postwar position of powerlessness and the suffering caused by the Great Depression. Hitler referred to the signing of the 1918 armistice as the "November crime" and blamed it on those he viewed as Germany's internal enemies: Jews, communists, and liberals of all sorts. Neighboring European states—Poland, France, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Hungary, and Austria—also shared in the blame. Hitler's scheme for ridding Germany of its enemies and reasserting its power was remilitarization—which was legally denied to Germany under the Versailles treaty. Germany's dictator abandoned the peaceful efforts of his predecessors to ease the provisions of the treaty and proceeded unilaterally to destroy it step-by-step. Hitler's aggressive foreign policy helped relieve the German public's feeling of war shame and depression trauma. After withdrawing Germany from the League of Nations in 1933, his government carried out an ambitious plan to strengthen the German armed forces. Hitler reinstated universal military service in 1935, and in the following year his troops entered the previously demilitarized Rhineland that bordered France. Germany joined with Italy in the Spanish Civil War, during which Hitler's troops, especially the air force, honed their skills. In 1938 Hitler began the campaign of expansion that ultimately led to the outbreak of World War II in Europe.



Ethiopian soldiers train with outmoded equipment that proves no match for Italian forces. At the end of the Great War, Italy, under Benito Mussolini, sought to redress perceived wrongs that denied it territorial gain by conquering Ethiopia with an army of a quarter-million soldiers.

Germany's forced **Anschluss** ("union") with Austria took place in March 1938. Hitler justified this annexation as an attempt to reintegrate all Germans into a single homeland. Europe's major powers, France and Britain, did nothing in response, thereby enhancing Hitler's reputation in the German military and deepening his already deep contempt for the democracies. Soon thereafter, using the same rationale, the Nazis attempted to gain control of the **Sudetenland**, the western portion of Czechoslovakia. This region was inhabited largely by ethnic Germans, whom Hitler conveniently regarded as persecuted minorities. Although the Czech government was willing to make concessions to the Sudeten Germans, Hitler in September 1938 demanded the immediate cession of the Sudetenland to the German Reich. Against the desires of the Czechoslovak government, the leaders of France and Britain accommodated Hitler and allowed Germany to annex the Sudetenland. Neither the French nor the British were willing to risk a military confrontation with Germany to defend Czechoslovakian territory.

**Peace for Our Time** At the **Munich Conference** held in September 1938, European politicians consolidated the policy that came to be known throughout the 1930s as **appeasement**. Attended by representatives of Italy, France, Great Britain, and Germany, the meeting revealed how most nations outside the revisionist sphere had decided to deal with territorial expansion by aggressive nations, especially Germany. In conceding demands to Hitler, or "appeasing" him, the British and French governments extracted a promise that Hitler would cease further efforts to expand German territorial claims. Their goal was to keep peace in Europe, even if it meant making major concessions. Because of public opposition to war, the governments of France and Britain approved the

Munich accord. Britain's prime minister, Neville Chamberlain (1869–1940), arrived home from Munich to announce that the meeting had achieved "peace for our time." Unprepared for war and distressed by the depression, nations sympathetic to Britain and France also embraced peace as an admirable goal in the face of aggression by the revisionist nations.

Hitler, however, refused to be bound by the Munich agreement, and in the next year German troops occupied and annexed most of Czechoslovakia. As Hitler next threatened Poland, it became clear that the policy of appeasement was a practical and moral failure, which caused Britain and France to abandon it by guaranteeing the security of Poland. By that time **Joseph Stalin** (1879–1953) was convinced that British and French leaders were conspiring to deflect German aggression toward the Soviet Union. Despite deep ideological differences that divided communists from Nazis, Stalin accordingly sought an accommodation with the Nazi regime. In August 1939 the foreign ministers of the Soviet Union and Germany signed the **German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact**, an agreement that shocked and outraged the world. By the terms of the pact, the two nations agreed not to attack each other, and they promised neutrality in the event that either of them went to war with a third party. Additionally, a secret protocol divided eastern Europe into German and Soviet spheres of influence. The protocol provided for German control over western Poland while granting the Soviet Union a free hand in eastern Poland, eastern Romania, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Hitler was ready to conquer Europe.

**Anschluss** (AHN-shloos)  
**Sudetenland** (soo-DEYT-n-land)

## TOTAL WAR: THE WORLD UNDER FIRE

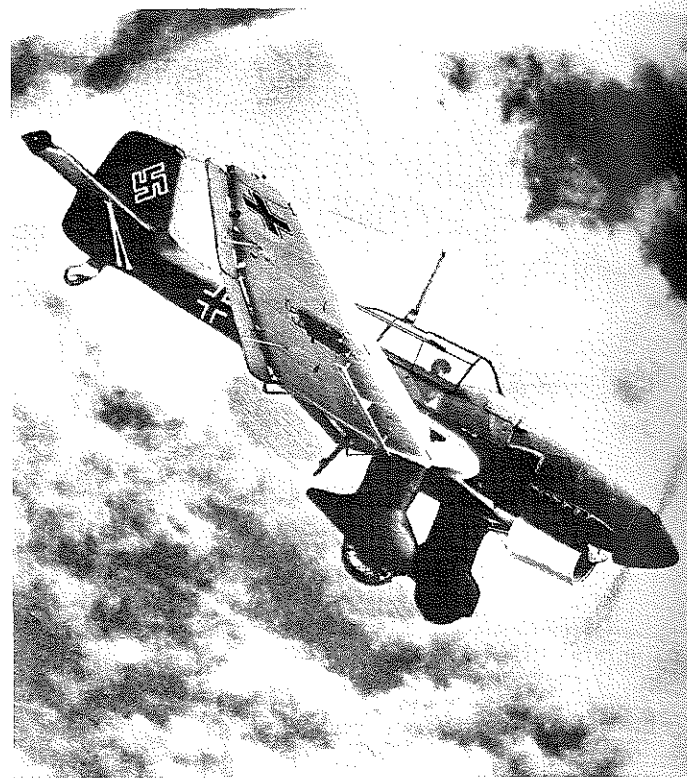
Two months after the United States became embroiled in World War II, President Franklin Roosevelt (1882–1945) delivered one of his famous radio broadcasts, known as fireside chats. In it he explained the nature of the war: “This war is a new kind of war,” he said. “It is warfare in terms of every continent, every island, every sea, every air lane.” There was little exaggeration in FDR’s analysis. Before World War II was over, almost every nation had participated in it. Battles raged across the vast Pacific and Atlantic oceans, across Europe and northern Africa, and throughout much of Asia. Virtually every weapon known to humanity was thrown into the war. More than the Great War, this was a conflict where entire societies engaged in warfare and mobilized every available material and human resource.

The war between Japan and China had already stretched over eight years when European nations stormed into battle. Between 1939 and 1941, nations inside and outside Europe were drawn into the conflict. They included the French and British colonies in Africa, India, and the British Dominion allies: Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Germany’s stunning military successes in 1939 and 1940 focused attention on Europe, but after the Soviet Union and the United States entered the war in 1941, the conflict took on global proportions. Almost every nation in the world had gone to war by 1945.

### Blitzkrieg: Germany Conquers Europe

During World War II it became common for aggressor nations to avoid overt declarations of war. Instead, the new armed forces relied on surprise, stealth, and swiftness for their conquests. Germany demonstrated the advantages of that strategy in Poland. German forces, banking on their air force’s ability to soften resistance and on their *Panzer* (“armored”) columns’ unmatched mobility and speed, moved into Poland unannounced on 1 September 1939. Within a month they subdued its western expanses while the Soviets took the eastern sections in accordance with the Nazi-Soviet pact. The Germans stunned the world, especially Britain and France, with their *Blitzkrieg* (“lightning war”) and sudden victory. The term *Blitzkrieg* was coined by journalists and has gained extensive contemporary use, although it was never an official doctrine or concept of the German armed forces.

While the forces of Britain and France coalesced to defend Europe without facing much direct action with Nazi forces, the battle of the Atlantic already raged. This sea confrontation between German *Unterseeboote* (“U-boats,” or submarines) and British ship convoys carrying food and war matériel proved decisive in the European theater of war. The battle of the Atlantic could easily have gone either way—to the German U-boats attempting to cut off Britain’s vital imports or to the convoys devised by the British navy to protect its ships from submarine attacks. Although British intelligence cracked Germany’s secret code to the great advantage



German dive-bombers like this one dominated the early air war in World War II and played a significant role in Blitzkrieg.

of the Allies, advance knowledge of the location of submarines was still not always available. Moreover, the U-boats began traveling in wolf packs to negate the effectiveness of convoys protected by aircraft and destroyers.

**The Fall of France** As the sea battle continued, Germany prepared to break through European defenses. In April 1940 the Germans occupied Denmark and Norway, then launched a full-scale attack on western Europe. By seizing control of Norway, the Germans gained control of the eastern North Sea and prevented Britain’s navy from implementing a blockade. Their offensive against Belgium, France, and the Netherlands began in May, and again the Allies were jolted by *Blitzkrieg* tactics. Belgium and the Netherlands fell first, and the French signed an armistice in June. The fall of France convinced Italy’s Benito Mussolini that the Germans were winning the war, and it was time to enter the conflict and reap any potential benefits his partnership with the Germans might offer.

Before the battle of France, Hitler had boasted to his staff, “Gentlemen, you are about to witness the most famous victory in history!” Given France’s rapid fall, Hitler was not far wrong. Field Marshal Erwin Rommel put it more colorfully: “The war has become practically a lightning Tour de France!” In a moment of exquisite triumph, Hitler had the French sign their armistice in the very railroad car in which

the Germans had signed the armistice in 1918. Trying to rescue some Allied troops before the fall of France, the British engineered a retreat at Dunkirk, but it could not hide the bleak failure of the Allied troops. Britain now stood alone against the German forces.

**The Battle of Britain** The Germans therefore launched the **Battle of Britain**, led by its air force, the *Luftwaffe*. They hoped to defeat Britain almost solely through air attacks. “The Blitz,” as the British called this air war, rained bombs on heavily populated metropolitan areas, especially London, and killed more than forty thousand British civilians. The Royal Air Force staved off defeat, however, forcing Hitler to abandon plans to invade Britain. By the summer of 1941, Hitler’s conquests included the Balkans, and the battlefront extended to north Africa, where the British fought both the Italians and the Germans. The swastika-bedecked Nazi flag now waved from the streets of Paris to the Acropolis in Athens, and Hitler had succeeded beyond his dreams in his quest to reverse the outcome of World War I.



Adolf Hitler proudly walks through conquered Paris in 1940, with the Eiffel Tower as a backdrop.

### The German Invasion of the Soviet Union

Flush with victory in the spring of 1941, Hitler turned his sights on the Soviet Union. This land was the ultimate German target, from which Jews, Slavs, and Bolsheviks could be expelled or exterminated to create more *Lebensraum* (“living space”) for resettled Germans. Believing firmly in the bankruptcy of the Soviet system, Hitler said of **Operation Barbarossa**, the code name for the June invasion of the Soviet Union, “You only have to kick in the door, and the whole rotten structure will come crashing down.”

**Operation Barbarossa** On 22 June 1941, Adolf Hitler ordered his armed forces to invade the Soviet Union. For the campaign against the Soviet Union, the German military assembled the largest and most powerful invasion force in history, attacking with 3.6 million soldiers, thirty-seven hundred tanks, and twenty-five hundred planes. Military contingents from Italy, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Croatia, and Finland—totaling some thirty divisions—augmented the German invasion force. The invasion, along a front of 3,000 kilometers (1,900 miles), took Stalin by surprise and caught the Red Army off guard. By December 1941 the Germans had captured the Russian heartland, Leningrad had come under siege, and German troops had reached the gates of Moscow. Germany seemed assured of victory.

However, German *Blitzkrieg* tactics that had earlier proved so effective in Poland and western Europe failed the Germans in the vast expanses of Russia. Hitler and his military leaders underestimated Soviet personnel reserves and industrial capacity. Within a matter of weeks, the 150 German divisions faced 360 divisions of the Red Army. Also, in the early stages of the war Stalin ordered Soviet industry to relocate to areas away from the front. About 80 percent of firms manufacturing war matériel moved to the Ural Mountains between August and October 1941. As a result, the capacity of Soviet industry outstripped that of German industry. The Soviets also received crucial equipment from their allies, notably trucks from the United States. By the time the German forces reached the outskirts of Moscow, fierce Soviet resistance had produced eight hundred thousand German casualties.

The arrival of winter—the most severe in decades—helped Soviet military efforts and prevented the Germans from capturing Moscow. So sure of an early victory were the Germans that they did not bother to supply their troops with winter clothing and boots. One hundred thousand soldiers suffered frostbite, and two thousand of them underwent amputation. The Red Army, in contrast, prepared for winter and found further comfort as the United States manufactured thirteen million pairs of felt-lined winter boots. By early

**Luftwaffe** (LOOFT-vaff-uh)  
**Lebensraum** (LAY-behnz-rahwm)

A German photographer captured this image of Soviet prisoners of war in 1941, shortly after German forces invaded the Soviet Union. The German military engaged in murderous policies toward Soviet prisoners of war, killing 3.3 million men (out of a total of 5.7 million) through summary execution, exposure, and starvation.



December, Soviet counterattacks along the entire front stopped German advances.

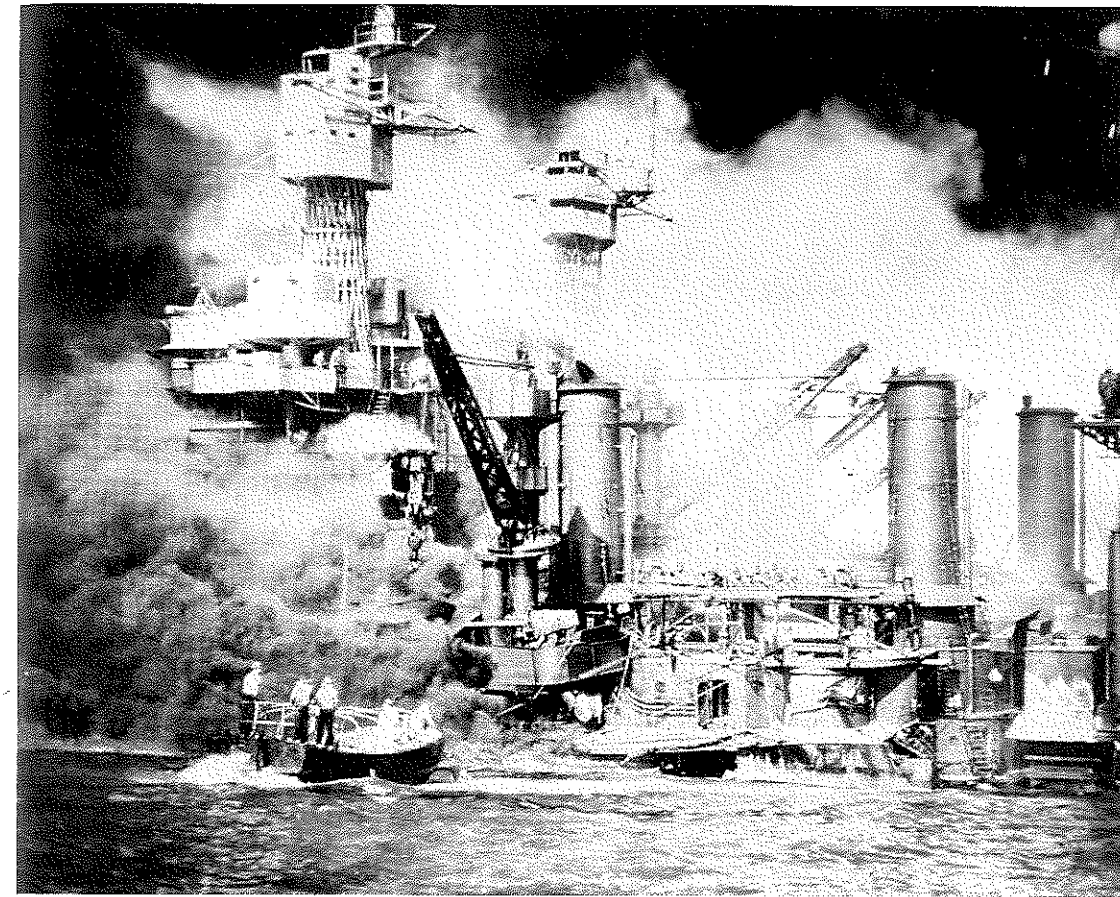
German forces regrouped and inflicted heavy losses on the Red Army during the spring. The Germans briefly regained the military initiative, and by June 1942 German armies raced toward the oil fields of the Caucasus and the city of **Stalingrad**. As the Germans came on Stalingrad in September, Soviet fortunes of war reached their nadir. At this point the Soviets dug in. “Not a step back,” Stalin ordered, and he called on his troops to fight a “patriotic” war for Mother Russia. Behind those exhortations lay a desperate attempt to stall the Germans with a bloody street-by-street defense of Stalingrad until the Red Army could regroup for a counterattack.

### Battles in Asia and the Pacific

Before 1941 the United States was inching toward greater involvement in the war. After Japan invaded China in 1937, Roosevelt called for a quarantine on aggressors, but his plea fell mostly on deaf ears. However, as war broke out in Europe and tensions with Japan increased, the United States took action. In 1939 it instituted a cash-and-carry policy of supplying the British, in which the British paid cash and carried the materials on their ships. More significant was the lend-lease program initiated in 1941, in which the United States “lent” destroyers and other war goods to the British in return for the lease of naval bases. The program later extended such aid to the Soviets, the Chinese, and many others.

**Pearl Harbor** German victories over the Dutch and the French in 1940 and Great Britain’s precarious military position in Europe and in Asia encouraged the Japanese to project their influence into southeast Asia. Particularly attractive were the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) and British-controlled Malaya, regions rich in raw materials such as tin, rubber, and petroleum. In September 1940, moving with the blessings of the German-backed Vichy government of France, Japanese forces began to occupy French Indochina (now Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia). The government of the United States responded to that situation by freezing Japanese assets in the United States and by imposing a complete embargo on oil. Great Britain, the Commonwealth of Nations, and the independent colonial government of the Dutch East Indies supported the U.S. oil embargo. Economic pressure, however, did not persuade the Japanese to accede to U.S. demands, which included the renunciation of the Tripartite Pact and the withdrawal of Japanese forces from China and southeast Asia. To Japanese militarists, given the equally unappealing alternatives of succumbing to U.S. demands or engaging the United States in war, war seemed the lesser of two evils. In October 1941, defense minister general Tojo Hideki (1884–1948) assumed the office of prime minister, and he and his cabinet set in motion plans for war against Great Britain and the United States.

The Japanese hoped to destroy American naval capacity in the Pacific with an attack at **Pearl Harbor** and to clear the way for the conquest of southeast Asia and the creation of a defensive Japanese perimeter that would thwart the Allies’



Flames consumed U.S. battleships in Pearl Harbor after the Japanese attack on 7 December 1941.

ability to strike at Japan’s homeland. On 7 December 1941, “a date which will live in infamy,” as Franklin Roosevelt concluded, Japanese pilots took off from six aircraft carriers to attack Hawai‘i. More than 350 Japanese bombers, fighters, and torpedo planes struck in two waves, sinking or disabling eighteen ships and destroying more than two hundred aircraft. Except for the U.S. aircraft carriers, which were out of the harbor at the time, American naval power in the Pacific was devastated.

On 11 December 1941, though not compelled to do so by treaty, Hitler and Mussolini declared war on the United States. That move provided the United States with the only reason it needed to declare war on Germany and Italy. The United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union came together in a coalition that linked two vast and interconnected theaters of war, the European and Asian-Pacific theaters, and ensured the defeat of Germany and Japan. Adolf Hitler’s gleeful reaction to the outbreak of war between Japan and the United States proved mistaken: “Now it is impossible for us to lose the war: We now have an ally who has never been vanquished in three thousand years.” More accurate was **Winston Churchill** (1874–1965), prime minister of Britain, who expressed a vast sense of relief and a more accurate assessment of the situation when he said, “So we had won after all!”

**Japanese Victories** After Pearl Harbor the Japanese swept on to one victory after another. The Japanese coordinated their strike against Pearl Harbor with simultaneous attacks against the Philippines, Guam, Wake Island, Midway Island, Hong Kong, Thailand, and British Malaya. For the next year the Japanese military maintained the initiative in southeast Asia and the Pacific, capturing Borneo, Burma, the Dutch East Indies, and several Aleutian Islands off Alaska. Australia and New Zealand were now in striking distance. The Japanese navy emerged almost unscathed from these campaigns. The humiliating surrender of British-held Singapore in February 1942 dealt a blow to British prestige and shattered any myths of European military invincibility.

Singapore was a symbol of European power in Asia. The slogan under which Japan pursued expansion in Asia was “Asia for Asians,” implying that the Japanese would lead Asian peoples to independence from the despised European imperialists and the international order they dominated. In this struggle for Asian independence, Japan required the region’s resources and therefore sought to build a **Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere**. The appeal to Asian independence at first struck a responsive chord, but conquest and brutal occupation made it soon obvious to most Asians that the real agenda was “Asia for the Japanese.” Proponents

After the Pearl Harbor attack, Americans expressed great hostility toward the Japanese nationals and Japanese Americans living in the United States, primarily on the west coast. In 1942 President Franklin Roosevelt authorized the forcible removal of approximately 120,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans to relocation or internment camps. This photograph from Seattle in March 1942 shows both the gloom and the patriotism of those on a train bound for a camp; the family is flashing the World War II "V for victory" sign while a boy holds the American flag.



of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere advocated Japan's expansion in Asia and the Pacific while cloaking their territorial and economic designs with the idealism of Asian nationalism.

### Defeat of the Axis Powers

The entry of the Soviet Union and the United States into the war in 1941 was decisive, because personnel reserves and industrial capacity were the keys to the Allied victories in the European and Asia-Pacific theaters. Despite the brutal exploitation of conquered territories, neither German nor Japanese war production matched that of the Allies, who outproduced their enemies at every turn. The U.S. automotive industry alone, for instance, produced more than four million armored, combat, and supply vehicles of all kinds during the war. Not until the United States joined the struggle in 1942 did the tide in the battle in the Atlantic turn in favor of the Allies. Although German submarines sank a total of 2,452 Allied merchant ships and 175 Allied warships in the course of six years, U.S. naval shipyards simply built more "Liberty Ships" than the Germans could sink. By the end of 1943, sonar, aircraft patrols, and escort aircraft from carriers finished the U-boat as a strategic threat.

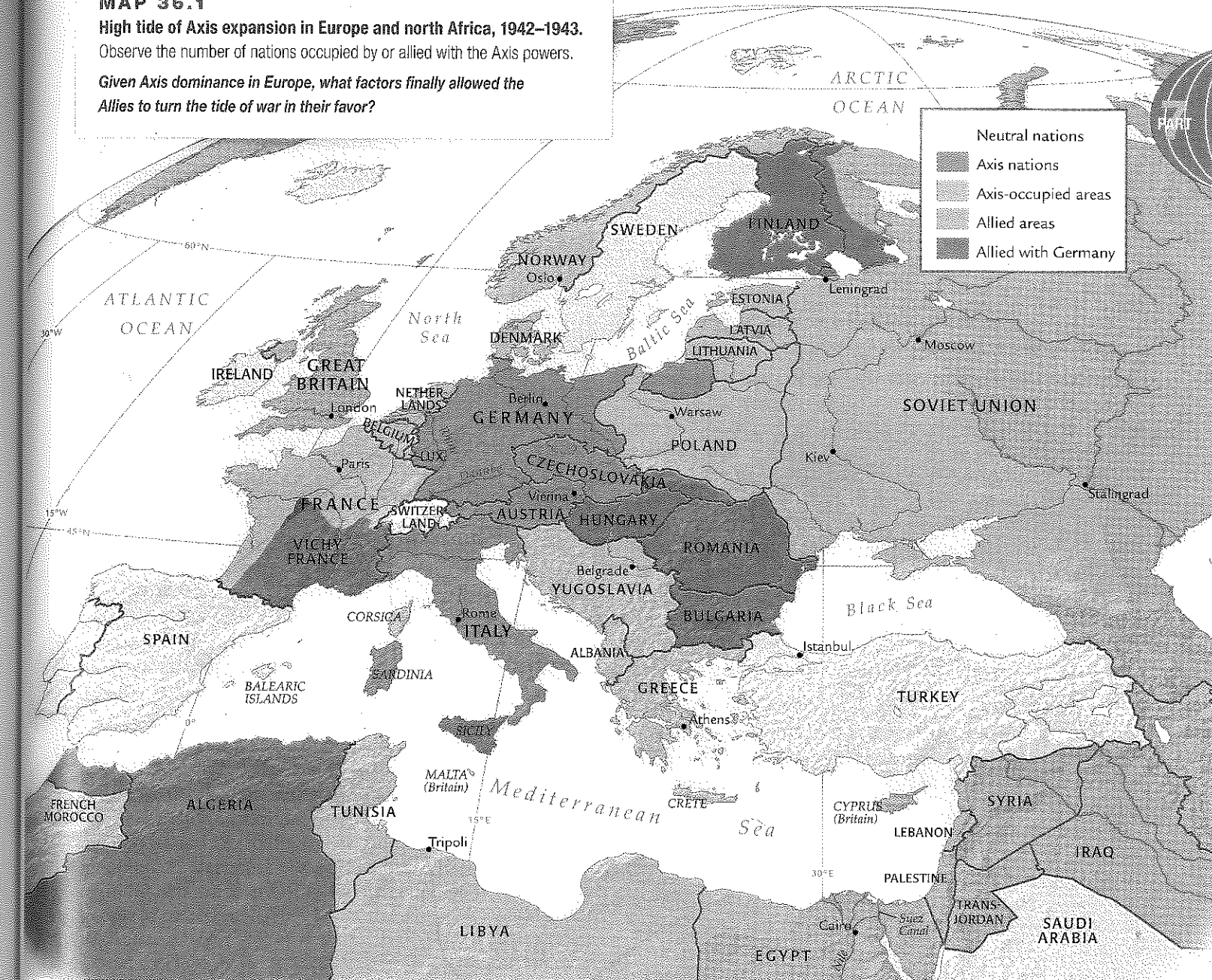
**Allied Victory in Europe** By 1943, German forces in Russia lost the momentum and faced bleak prospects as the Soviets retook territory. Moscow never fell, and the battle for Stalingrad, which ended in February 1943, marked the first large-scale victory for Soviet forces. Desperate German counteroffensives failed repeatedly, and the Red Army, drawing on enormous personnel and material reserves, pushed the German invaders out of Russian territory. By 1944 the Soviets had advanced into Romania, Hungary, and Poland, reaching the suburbs of Berlin in April 1945. At that point, the Soviets had inflicted more than six million casualties on the German enemy—twice the number of the original German invasion force. The Red Army had broken the back of the German war machine.

With the eastern front disintegrating under the Soviet onslaught, British and U.S. forces attacked the Germans from north Africa and then through Italy. In August 1944 the Allies forced Italy to withdraw from the Axis and to join them. In the meantime, the Germans also prepared for an Allied offensive in the west, where the British and U.S. forces opened a front in France. On **D-Day**, 6 June 1944, British and U.S. troops landed on the French coast of Normandy. Although the fighting was deadly for all sides, the Germans were overwhelmed. With the two fronts collapsing around them and round-the-clock strategic

**MAP 36.1**

**High tide of Axis expansion in Europe and north Africa, 1942–1943.** Observe the number of nations occupied by or allied with the Axis powers.

*Given Axis dominance in Europe, what factors finally allowed the Allies to turn the tide of war in their favor?*



bombing by the United States and Britain leveling German cities, German resistance faded. Since early 1943, Britain's Royal Air Force had committed itself to area bombing in which centers of cities became the targets of nighttime raids. U.S. planes attacked industrial targets in daytime. The British firebombing raid on Dresden in February 1945 literally cooked German men, women, and children in their bomb shelters: 135,000 people died in the firestorm. A brutal street-by-street battle in Berlin between Germans and Russians, along with a British and U.S. sweep through western Germany,

forced Germany's unconditional surrender on 8 May 1945. A week earlier, on 30 April, as fighting flared right outside his Berlin bunker, Hitler committed suicide, as did many of his Nazi compatriots. He therefore did not live to see the Soviet red flag flying over the Berlin *Reichstag*, Germany's parliament building.

**Turning the Tide in the Pacific** The turning point in the Pacific war came in a naval engagement near the Midway Islands on 4 June 1942. The United States prevailed there

partly because U.S. aircraft carriers had survived the attack on Pearl Harbor. Although the United States had few carriers, it did have a secret weapon: a code-breaking operation known as *Magic*, which enabled a cryptographer monitoring Japanese radio frequencies to discover the plan to attack Midway. On the morning of 4 June, thirty-six carrier-launched

dive-bombers attacked the Japanese fleet, sinking three Japanese carriers in one five-minute strike and a fourth one later in the day. This victory changed the character of the war in the Pacific. Although there was no immediate shift in Japanese fortunes, the Allies took the offensive. They adopted an island-hopping strategy, capturing islands from which they could make direct air assaults on Japan. Deadly, tenacious fighting characterized these battles in which the United States and its allies gradually retook islands in the Marianas and the Philippines and then, early in 1945, moved toward areas more threatening to Japan: Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

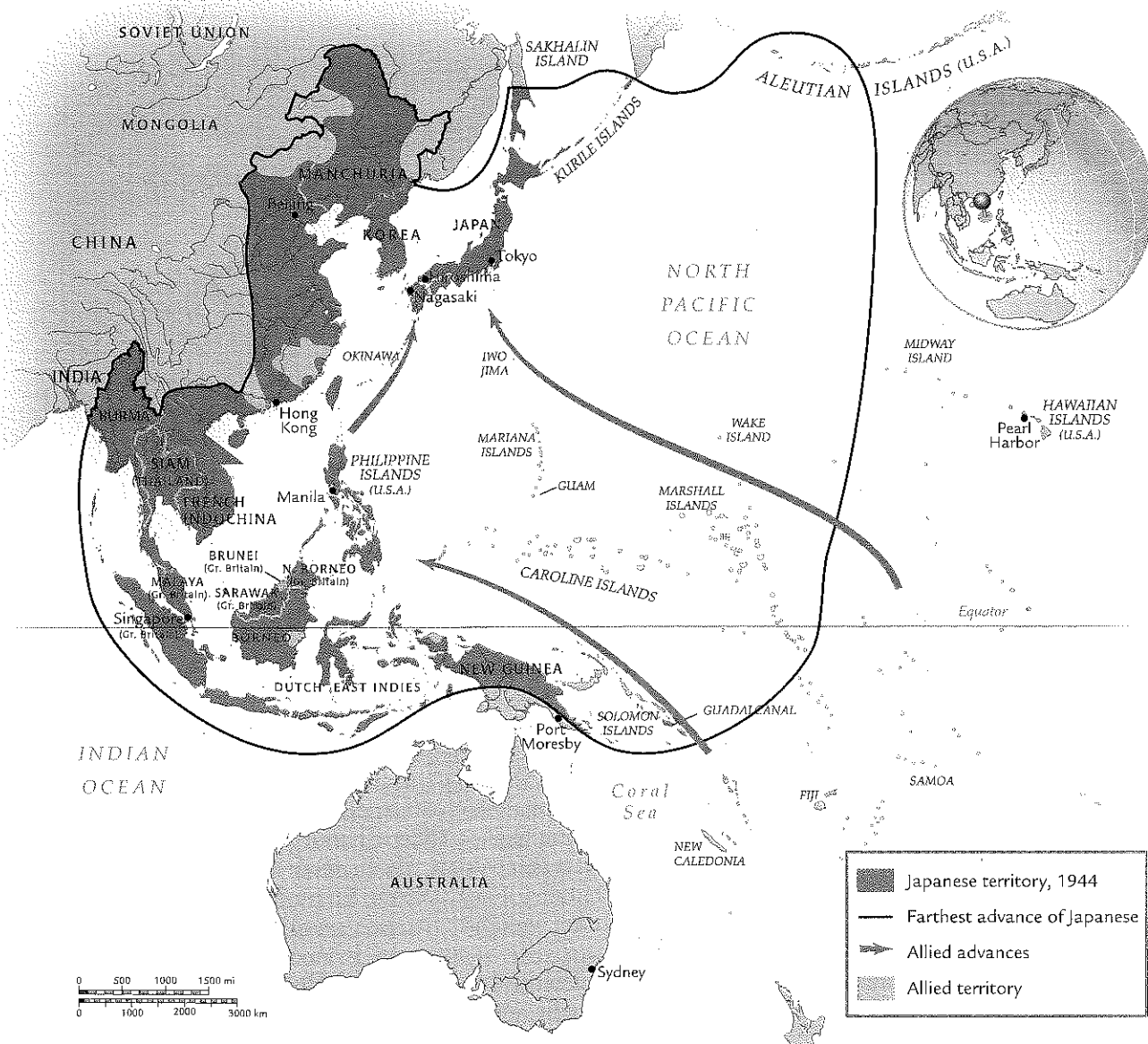
**Iwo Jima and Okinawa** The fighting on **Iwo Jima** and **Okinawa** was savage. Innovative U.S. amphibious tactics were

**MAP 36.2**

**World War II in Asia and the Pacific.**

Compare the geographic conditions of the Asian-Pacific theater with those of the European theater.

*What kinds of resources were necessary to win in the Asian-Pacific theater as opposed to the European theater?*



A photograph titled *Planes over Tokyo Bay*, taken from the U.S.S. *Missouri*, visually captured a sense of U.S. power and victory on V-J Day, 1945.

matched by the vigor and sacrifice of Japanese soldiers and pilots. On Okinawa the Japanese introduced the *kamikaze*—pilots who “volunteered” to fly planes with just enough fuel to reach an Allied ship and dive-bomb into it. In the two-month battle, the Japanese flew nineteen hundred kamikaze missions, sinking dozens of ships and killing more than five thousand U.S. soldiers. The kamikaze, and the defense mounted by Japanese forces and the 110,000 Okinawan civilians who died refusing to surrender, convinced many people in the United States that the Japanese would never capitulate.

**Japanese Surrender** The fall of Saipan in July 1944 and the subsequent conquest of Iwo Jima and Okinawa brought the Japanese homeland within easy reach of U.S. strategic bombers. Because high-altitude strikes in daylight failed to do much damage to industrial sites, military planners changed tactics. The release of napalm firebombs during low-altitude sorties at night met with devastating success. The firebombing of Tokyo in March 1945 destroyed 25 percent of the city’s buildings, annihilated approximately one hundred thousand people, and made more than a million homeless. The final blows came on 6 and 9 August 1945, when the United States used its revolutionary new weapon, the atomic bomb, against the cities of **Hiroshima** and **Nagasaki**. The atomic bombs

either instantaneously vaporized or slowly killed by radiation poisoning upward of two hundred thousand people.

The Soviet Union declared war on Japan on 8 August 1945, and this new threat, combined with the devastation caused by the bombs, persuaded Emperor Hirohito (1901–1989) to surrender unconditionally. The Japanese surrendered on 15 August, and the war was officially over on 2 September 1945. When Victor Tolley sipped his conciliatory cup of tea with a Nagasaki family, the images of ashen Hiroshima and firebombed Tokyo lingered as reminders of how World War II brought the war directly home to millions of civilians.

**LIFE DURING WARTIME**

The widespread bombing of civilian populations during World War II, from its beginning in China to its end in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, meant that there was no safe home front during the war. So too did the arrival of often brutal occupation forces in the wake of Japanese and German conquests in Asia and Europe. Strategic bombing slaughtered men, women, and children around the world, and occupation troops forced civilians to labor and die in work and extermination camps. In this total war, civilian death tolls far exceeded military casualties. Beside the record of the war’s brutality can be placed testimony to the endurance of the human spirit personified in the contributions of resistance groups battling occupying forces, in the mobilized women, and in the survivors of bombings or concentration camps.

**Occupation, Collaboration, and Resistance**

Axis bombardments and invasion were followed by occupation, but the administration imposed on conquered territories by Japanese and German forces varied in character. In territories such as **Manchukuo**, Japanese-controlled China, Burma, and the Philippines, Japanese authorities installed puppet governments that served as agents of Japanese rule. Thailand remained an independent state after it aligned itself with Japan, for which it was rewarded with grants of territory from bordering Laos and Burma. Other conquered territories either were considered too unstable or unreliable for self-rule or were deemed strategically too important to be left alone. Thus territories such as Indochina (Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam), Malaya, the Dutch East Indies, Hong Kong, Singapore, Borneo, and New Guinea came under direct military control.

In Europe, Hitler’s racist ideology played a large role in determining how occupied territories were administered. As a rule, Hitler intended that most areas of western and northern Europe—populated by racially valuable people, according to him—would become part of a Greater Germanic Empire. Accordingly, Denmark retained its elected government and monarchy under German supervision. In Norway and Holland,

**kamikaze** (KAH-mih-kah-zee)

The writing on the board displayed by German security forces in Minsk, Belarus, reads, "We are partisans who shot at German soldiers." The Germans shot some 700,000 civilians, mostly Belarusians and Poles, in so-called antipartisan reprisals. Women and children were included in the "reprisal" because they were considered an encumbrance.



whose governments had gone into exile, the Germans left the civilian administration intact. Though northern France and the Atlantic coast came under military rule, the Vichy government remained the civilian authority in the unoccupied southeastern part of the country. Named for its locale in central France, the Vichy government provided a prominent place for those French willing to collaborate with German rule. The Germans had varying levels of involvement in eastern European and Balkan countries, but most conquered territories came under direct military rule as a prelude for harsh occupation, economic exploitation, and German settlement.

**Exploitation** Japanese and German authorities administered their respective empires for economic gain and proceeded to exploit the resources of the lands under their control for their own benefit regardless of the consequences for the conquered peoples. The occupiers pillaged all forms of economic wealth that could fuel the German and Japanese war machines. The most notorious form of economic exploitation involved the use of slave labor. As the demands of total war stimulated an insatiable appetite for workers, Japanese and German occupation authorities availed themselves of prisoners of war (POWs) and local populations to help meet labor shortages. By August 1944, more than seven million foreign workers labored inside the Third Reich. In China alone, the Japanese military mobilized more than ten million civilians and prisoners of war for forced labor. These slave laborers worked under horrific conditions and received little in the way of sustenance. Reaction to Japanese and German occupation

**Vichy** (vee-shee)

varied from willing collaboration and acquiescence to open resistance.

**Atrocities** The treatment of POWs by German and Japanese authorities spoke to the horrors of the war as well. The death rate among soldiers in Japanese captivity averaged almost 30 percent, and the mortality rate among Chinese POWs was even higher. The racial ideologies of Hitler's regime were reflected in the treatment meted out to Soviet prisoners of war in particular. By February 1942, 2 million out of the 3.3 million Soviet soldiers in German custody had died from starvation, exposure, disease, or shootings.

Beyond the callous mistreatment of POWs, both German and Japanese authorities engaged in painful and often deadly medical experiments on thousands of unwilling subjects. In China, special Japanese military units, including the most infamous Unit 731, conducted cruel experiments on civilians and POWs. Victims, for example, became the subject of vivisection (defined as surgery conducted on a living organism) or amputation without anesthesia. Tens of thousands of Chinese became victims of germ warfare experiments, dying of bubonic plague, cholera, anthrax, and other diseases. German physicians carried out similarly unethical medical experiments in concentration camps. Experimentation ranged from high-altitude and hypothermia investigations by air force medical personnel, designed to facilitate the survival of German military personnel, to bone-grafting surgeries without anesthesia and exposing victims to phosgene and mustard gas to test possible antidotes. German doctors also directed painful serological experiments to determine how different "races" withstood various contagious diseases.

**Collaboration** The majority of people resented occupation forces but usually went on with life as much as possible. That response was especially true in many parts of Japanese-occupied lands in Asia, where local populations found little to resent in the change from one colonial administration to another. In Asia and Europe, moreover, local notables often joined the governments sponsored by the conquerors because collaboration offered them the means to gain power. In many instances, bureaucrats and police forces collaborated because they thought it was better that natives rule than Germans or Japanese. Businesspeople and companies often collaborated because they prospered financially from foreign rule. Still other people became collaborators and assisted occupation authorities by turning in friends and neighbors to get revenge for past grievances. In western Europe, anticommunism motivated Belgians, French, Danish, Dutch, and Norwegians to join units of Hitler's elite military formations, the Waffen SS, creating in the process a multinational army tens of thousands strong. In violation of its own racial policies, the SS also accepted volunteers from the Balkans, eastern Europe, and the Caucasus. In China several Guomindang generals went over to the Japanese, and local landowners and merchants in some regions of China set up substantial trade networks between the occupiers and the occupied.

**Resistance** Occupation and exploitation created an environment for resistance that took various forms. The most dramatic forms of resistance were campaigns of sabotage, armed assaults on occupation forces, and assassinations. Resistance fighters as diverse as Filipino guerrillas and Soviet partisans harassed and disrupted the military and economic activities of the occupiers by blowing up ammunition dumps, destroying communication and transportation facilities, and sabotaging industrial plants. More quietly, other resisters gathered intelligence, hid and protected refugees, or passed on clandestine newspapers. Resistance also comprised simple acts of defiance such as scribbling anti-German graffiti or walking out of bars and restaurants when Japanese soldiers entered. In the Netherlands, people associated the royal House of Orange with national independence and defiantly saluted traffic lights when they turned orange.

German and Japanese citizens faced different decisions about resistance than conquered peoples did. They had no antiforeign axe to grind, and any form of noncompliance constituted an act of treason that might assist the enemy and lead to defeat. Moreover, many institutions that might have formed the core of resistance in Japan and Germany, such as political parties, labor unions, or churches, were weak or had been destroyed. As a result, there was little or no opposition to the state and its policies in Japan, and in Germany resistance remained generally sparse and ineffective. The most spectacular act of resistance against the Nazi regime came from a group of officers and civilians who tried to kill Adolf Hitler on 20 July 1944. The plot failed when their bomb explosion

killed several bystanders but inflicted only minor injuries on Hitler.

Attempts to eradicate resistance movements in many instances merely fanned the flames of rebellion because of the indiscriminate reprisals against civilians. Despite the deadly retaliation meted out to people who resisted occupation, widespread resistance movements grew throughout the war. Life in resistance movements was tenuous at best and entailed great hardship—changing identities, hiding out, and risking capture and death. Nevertheless, the resisters kept alive their nations' hopes for liberation.

## The Holocaust

By the end of World War II, the Nazi regime and its accomplices had physically annihilated millions of Jews, Slavs, Roma (or Gypsies), and others targeted as undesirables. Jews were the primary target of Hitler's racially motivated genocidal policies, and the resulting Holocaust epitomized the tragedy of conquest and occupation in World War II. The **Holocaust**, the near destruction of European Jews by Germany, was a human disaster on a scale previously unknown.

The murder of European Jews was preceded by a long history of vilification and persecution of Jews. For centuries Jewish communities had been singled out by Christian society as a "problem," and by the time the Nazi regime assumed power in 1933, anti-Semitism had contributed significantly to the widespread tolerance for anti-Jewish measures. Marked as outsiders, Jews found few defenders in their societies. Nazi



This photograph, taken in 2003, shows a portion of the perimeter fence at Auschwitz concentration camp. The sign in the foreground reads: "Caution. High Voltage. Danger to Life." The Auschwitz complex established in German-occupied Poland was essentially two camps in one, a labor camp and an extermination camp that took the lives of some one million Jews.



## Reverberations of ●●●●●●●●

### The Destructive Potential of Industrial Technologies

World War I had demonstrated that states were willing to harness industrial technologies on a massive scale for the purpose of destroying their enemies. Many observers were horrified by this, as we know, and as a result large numbers of people around the world advocated peace as a global priority during the interwar years. But during World War II, states nevertheless utilized ever more destructive industrial technologies on their enemies than they had in World War I—and now, they specifically targeted civilian populations in addition to enemy combatants. One particularly chilling example of this was Hitler's "final solution," which sought to exterminate all the Jewish people using industrial technologies and methods. Using railways, poison gas, and a factory-like system that maximized the numbers of people who could be moved, murdered, and disposed of, the German system industrialized genocide. Consider the extent to which the use of industrial technologies during World War I might have impressed the young Adolf Hitler, who himself had fought in the war.

determination to destroy the Jewish population and Europeans' passive acceptance of anti-Semitism laid the groundwork for genocide. In most war-torn European countries, the social and political forces that might have been expected to rally to the defense of Jews did not materialize.

Initially, the regime encouraged Jewish emigration. Although tens of thousands of Jews availed themselves of the opportunity to escape from Germany and Austria, many more were unable to do so. Most nations outside the Nazi orbit limited the migration of Jewish refugees, especially if the refugees were impoverished, as most of them were because Nazi authorities had previously appropriated their wealth. This situation worsened as German armies overran Europe, bringing an ever-larger number of Jews under Nazi control. At that point Nazi "racial experts" toyed with the idea of deporting Jews to Nisko, a proposed reservation in eastern Poland, or to the island of Madagascar, near Africa. Those ideas proved to be impractical.

**The Final Solution** The German occupation of Poland in 1939 and invasion of the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941 gave Hitler an opportunity to solve what he considered the problem of Jews in Germany and throughout Europe. When German armies invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, the Nazis also dispatched three thousand troops in mobile detachments known as SS *Einsatzgruppen* ("action squads") to kill entire populations of Jews and Roma (or Gypsies) and many non-Jewish Slavs in the newly occupied territories. The action squads undertook mass shootings in ditches and ravines that

*Einsatzgruppen* (INE-zahts-GROO-pen)

became mass graves. By the spring of 1943, the special units had killed over one million Jews, and tens of thousands of Soviet citizens and Roma.

Sometime during 1941 the Nazi leadership committed to the "final solution" of the Jewish question, a solution that entailed the attempted murder of every Jew living in Europe. At the **Wannsee Conference** on 20 January 1942, fifteen leading Nazi bureaucrats gathered to discuss and coordinate the implementation of the final solution. They agreed to evacuate all Jews from Europe to camps in eastern Poland, where they would be worked to death or exterminated. Soon German forces—aided by collaborating authorities in foreign countries—rounded up Jews and deported them to specially constructed concentration camps in occupied Poland. The victims from nearby Polish ghettos and distant assembly points all across Europe traveled to their destinations by train. On the way the sick and the elderly often perished in overcrowded freight cars. The Jewish victims packed into these suffocating railway cars never knew their destinations, but rumors of mass deportations and mass deaths

nonetheless spread among Jews remaining at large and among the Allied government leaders, who were apparently apathetic to the fate of Jews.

In camps such as Kulmhof (Chelmno), Belzec, Majdanek, Sobibor, Treblinka, and Auschwitz, the final solution took on an organized and technologically sophisticated character. Here, the killers introduced gassing as the most efficient means for mass extermination, though other means of destruction were always retained, such as electrocution, phenol injections, flamethrowers, hand grenades, and machine guns. The largest of the camps was Auschwitz, where at least one million Jews perished. Nazi camp personnel subjected victims from all corners of Europe to industrial work, starvation, medical experiments, and outright extermination. The German commandant of **Auschwitz** explained proudly how his camp became the most efficient at killing Jews: by using the fast-acting crystallized prussic acid Zyklon B as the gassing agent, by enlarging the size of the gas chambers, and by lulling victims into thinking they were going through a delousing process. At Auschwitz and elsewhere, the Germans also constructed large crematories to incinerate the bodies of gassed Jews and hide the evidence of their crimes. This systematic murder of Jews constituted what war crime tribunals later termed a "crime against humanity."

**Jewish Resistance** The murder of European Jewry was carried out with the help of the latest technology and with the utmost efficiency. For most of the victims, the will to resist was sapped by prolonged starvation, disease, and mistreatment. Nevertheless, there was fierce Jewish resistance throughout the war. Thousands of Jews joined anti-Nazi partisan groups



**MAP 36.3**

#### The Holocaust in Europe, 1933–1945.

Observe the geographic locations of the concentration and extermination camps.

*Why were there more concentration camps in Germany and more extermination camps in Poland?*

and resistance movements while others led rebellions in concentration camps or participated in ghetto uprisings from Minsk to Krakow. The best-known uprising took place in the Warsaw ghetto in the spring of 1943. Lacking adequate weapons, sixty thousand Jews who remained in the ghetto that had once held four hundred thousand rose against their tormentors. It took German security forces using tanks and flamethrowers three weeks to crush the uprising. Approximately 5.7 million Jews perished in the Holocaust.

### Women and the War

Observing the extent to which British women mobilized for war, the U.S. ambassador to London noted, "This war, more

than any other war in history, is a woman's war." A poster encouraging U.S. women to join the **WAVES** (Women Appointed for Volunteer Emergency Service in the navy) mirrored the thought: "It's A Woman's War Too!" While hundreds of thousands of women in Great Britain and the United States joined the armed forces or entered war industries, women around the world were affected by the war in a variety of ways. Some nations, including Great Britain and the United States, barred women from engaging in combat or carrying weapons, but Soviet and Chinese women took up arms, as did women in resistance groups. In fact, women often excelled at resistance work because they were women: they were less suspect in the eyes of occupying security forces and less subject to searches. Nazi forces did not discriminate, though, when rounding up Jews for transport and extermination: Jewish women and girls died alongside Jewish men and boys.

**Women's Roles** Women who joined military services or took jobs on factory assembly lines gained an independence

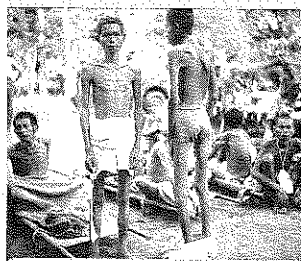
# Connecting the Sources

## Exploring perspective and neutrality in the historical interpretation of WWII

**The problem** More than sixty million people died in World War II. Millions more suffered intensely but ultimately survived the ordeal. Because World War II occurred within living memory, millions of individuals around the world still feel intimately connected with it—if not through their own experiences, then through those of their family members of an older generation. As a result, it is still understandably difficult for historians and non-historians alike to consider the war from a neutral perspective. Moreover, although all belligerents in the war engaged in brutalities, both the German and the Japanese states sanctioned extreme brutalities against civilian populations—which included massive campaigns of genocide, forced prostitution, forced labor, and medical experiments. These appalling events have resulted in a marked reluctance to discuss the suffering of ordinary Germans not targeted by the Holocaust or of ordinary Japanese, because doing so has been associated with cheapening the experience of the millions who suffered and died as a result of German and Japanese national policies. The implication, though not usually stated explicitly, is that not all human suffering in World War II should be explored equally. Let us consider two sources as a way of considering the ways that our own proximity to traumatic historical events might affect the ways we interpret the past.

**The documents** Read the documents below, and consider carefully the questions that follow.

**Document 1:** *Dulrahman, a Javanese farmer born in 1920, was one of approximately 250,000 laborers forced by the Japanese to work on various war-related projects in southeast Asia during World War II. These work battalions were called romushas. Although romushas were told they would receive pay when they were recruited, instead they found themselves working without*



Indonesians who had been recruited by the Japanese to work as *romushas* (forced laborers).



Devastation in the aftermath of the bombing of Hiroshima.

*pay in extremely difficult conditions and with little food. As a result, over half did not survive the war.*

*In June 1942, a Japanese soldier by the name of Kawakubu came to our village and asked my father if there were any people who could work, for wages, of course. My father then gave him my name. They first assigned me to help build a tunnel at Parangtritis, south of Yogya, on the coast. We didn't get paid at all, however, and they told my father they'd kill him if he'd come to fetch me. Sure, the Japanese told us repeatedly: "We've come to free you from colonial oppression." But meanwhile they forced us to work for them!*

*We left from Gunung Kidul for Parangtritis with about 500 people. My estimate is that about 300 survived. It's hard to be precise, for people were not buried but simply tossed into the sea. Some eight months later they shipped us out by the hundreds, including about 100 people belonging to the Gunung Kidul group. It turned out that they had taken us to Digul (in Irian Jaya, a former Dutch penal colony in what was then New Guinea) to cut trees for building a road and a prison. Compared to this place, Parangtritis had been pleasant. There at least we got a piece of cassava the size of my fist, and we could fetch water from a small mountain lake. In Digul, however, we were left to our own devices and so we had to forage for ourselves. For food, you had to look in the jungle. We ate leaves, and any snake you'd find was good for roasting.*

*Finally, they told us we could go home. Everybody was elated. . . . But about halfway, in the middle of the ocean, we began to ask ourselves: "Where on earth are they taking us this time?" There was no land to be seen anywhere. The voyage took a month. We finally arrived and got off the ship and that's when we panicked: Where on earth were we? This wasn't Indonesia, but then what country was it? After one week, I found out that we were in Burma.*

*In Burma, life for a romusha was terrible. But compared to Digul it was better. . . . if we did anything wrong, [the Japanese would] beat us up vigorously with their rubber truncheons. That was no joke. If you got beaten with that truncheon it would remove your skin when bouncing back, and that caused a lot of pain.*

*We spent exactly one year in Burma. . . . One day, our foreman let it slip that we'd be going home in two weeks. . . . When I arrived [back home], everybody cried. They thought I'd been dead long since. I certainly looked quite different. . . . During the first month, my family treated me a bit like a retiree, as it were. I was not allowed to work and they fed me very well. . . .*

*I still dream a lot about those days, especially about the work we did: dragging stones, that sort of thing. And about that voyage across the sea. Those high waves. That results in a nightmare once in a while, and then I find myself screaming out loud. . . . My gosh, to think that after 50 years I'm still dreaming about that!*

**Document 2:** *Yamaoka Michiko, at fifteen years of age, worked as an operator at a telephone exchange in Hiroshima and attended girls' high school. Many young women had been mobilized for work during World War II, and they viewed even civilian work on telephone exchanges as a means of helping to protect Japan during wartime. On the morning of 6 August 1945, when the first U.S. atomic bomb used in battle devastated Hiroshima, Yamaoka Michiko had just started off for work.*

*That morning I left the house at about seven forty-five. I heard that the B-29s [U.S. bomber planes] had already gone home. Mom told me, "Watch out, the B-29s might come again." My house was one point three kilometers from the hypocenter [the exact point of the atomic bomb's impact]. My place of work was five hundred meters from the hypocenter. I walked toward the hypocenter. . . . I heard the faint sound of planes. . . . I thought, how strange, so I put my right hand above my eyes and looked up to see if I could spot them. The sun was dazzling. That was the moment.*

*There was no sound. I felt something strong. It was terribly intense. I felt colors. It wasn't heat. You can't really say it was yellow, and it wasn't blue. At that moment I thought I would be the only one who would die. I said to myself, "Goodbye, Mom."*

*They say temperatures of seven thousand degrees centigrade hit me. You can't really say it washed over me. It's hard to describe. I simply fainted. I remember my body floating in the air. That was probably the blast, but I don't know how far I was blown. When I came to my senses, my surroundings were silent. There was no wind. I saw a threadlike light, so I felt I must be alive. I was under stones. I couldn't move my body. I heard voices crying, "Help! Water!" It was then I realized I wasn't the only one. . . .*

*"Fire! Run away! Help! Hurry up!" They weren't voices but moans of agony and despair. "I have to get help and shout," I thought. The person who rescued me was Mom, although she herself had been buried under our collapsed house. Mom knew the route I'd been taking. She came, calling out to me. I heard her voice and cried for help. . . .*

*My clothes were burnt and so was my skin. I was in rags. I had braided my hair, but now it was like a lion's mane. There were people, barely breathing, trying to push their intestines back in. People with their legs wrenched off. Without heads. Or with faces burned and swollen out of shape. The scene I saw was a living hell.*

*Mom didn't say anything when she saw my face and I didn't feel any pain. She just squeezed my hand and told me to run. She was going to rescue my aunt. Large numbers of people were moving away from the flames. My eyes were still able to see, so I made my way toward the mountain, where there was no fire. . . .*

*I spent the next year bedridden. All my hair fell out. When we went to relatives' houses later they wouldn't even let me in because they feared they'd catch the disease. There was neither treatment nor assistance for me. . . . It was just my Mom and me. Keloids [thick scar tissue] covered my face, my neck. I couldn't even move my neck. One eye was hanging down. I was unable to control my drooling because my lip had been burned off. . . .*

*The Japanese government just told us we weren't the only victims of the war. There was no support or treatment. It was probably harder for my Mom. Once she told me she tried to choke me to death. If a girl had terrible scars, a face you couldn't be born with, I understand that even a mother could want to kill her child. People threw stones at me and called me *Monster*. That was before I had my many operations.*

### AP Test Practice

- As exemplified in these documents, which of the following ideologies did the Japanese government use to justify its interactions with its citizens and subjects?
  - The ideology of anti-imperialism, which argued that domination of subject peoples interfered with proper governance
  - The ideology of militarism, which relied on the demonstration of national power through military might
  - The ideology of total war, which demanded full usage of all available resources to achieve military ends
  - The ideology of communism, which argued that all of a state's resources must be shared equally among its people
- What was one main effect of the treatment of Japanese citizens and subjects described in these excerpts?
  - The Japanese ground and sea forces were unable to mount adequate defenses to Allied attacks due to immense casualties.
  - Popular opinion turned against the government and military by the time of the Japanese surrender.
  - Local resistance movements, particularly those in colonized lands, caused great damage to the Japanese cause.
  - Japanese outrage at the actions of Allied opponents urged the government to fight on even after its resources were exhausted.

Source Citations: **Document 1:** [http://www.opendemocracy.net/arts-photography/war\\_2764.jsp](http://www.opendemocracy.net/arts-photography/war_2764.jsp), from Open Democracy, Jan Banning exhibition, 2005; *Traces of War: Dutch and Indonesian Survivors*. **Document 2:** Sources from the Past, *Traditions and Encounters Brief*, 2nd ed., chapter 32, "A Hiroshima Maiden's Tale."

## Sources from the Past

### “We Will Never Speak about It in Public”

On 4 October 1943, Heinrich Himmler, leader of the SS and chief of the German police, gave a three-hour speech to an assembly of SS generals in the city of Posen (Poznan), in what is now Poland. In the following excerpt, Himmler justified Nazi anti-Jewish policies that culminated in mass murder. The speech, recorded on tape and in handwritten notes, was entered into evidence at the Nuremberg war crimes trials in 1945.

**I also want to speak** to you here, in complete frankness, of a really grave chapter. Amongst ourselves, for once, it shall be said quite openly, but all the same we will never speak about it in public. . . .

I am referring here to the evacuation of the Jews, the extermination of the Jewish people. This is one of the things that is easily said: “The Jewish people are going to be exterminated,” that’s what every Party member says, “sure, it’s in our program, elimination of the Jews, extermination—it’ll be done.” And then they all come along, the 80 million worthy Germans, and each one has his one decent Jew. Of course, the others are swine, but this one, he is a first-rate Jew. Of all those who talk like that, not one has seen it happen, not one has had to go through with it. Most of you men know what it is like to see 100 corpses side by side, or 500 or 1,000. To have stood fast through this and except for cases of human weakness to have stayed decent, that has made us hard. This is an unwritten and never-to-be-written page of glory in our history. . . .

The wealth they possessed we took from them. I gave a strict order, which has been carried out by SS *Obergruppenfuhrer*

Pohl, that this wealth will of course be turned over to the Reich in its entirety. We have taken none of it for ourselves. Individuals who have erred will be punished in accordance with the order given by me at the start, threatening that anyone who takes as much as a single Mark of this money is a dead man. A number of SS men, they are not very many, committed this offense, and they shall die. There will be no mercy. We had the moral right, we had the duty towards our people, to destroy this people that wanted to destroy us. But we do not have the right to enrich ourselves by so much as a fur, as a watch, by one Mark or a cigarette or anything else. We do not want, in the end, because we destroyed a bacillus, to be infected by this bacillus and to die. I will never stand by and watch while even a small rotten spot develops or takes hold. Wherever it may form we will together burn it away. All in all, however, we can say that we have carried out this most difficult of tasks in a spirit of love for our people. And we have suffered no harm to our inner being, our soul, our character. . . .

#### For Further Reflection

- Himmler argued that SS officers and soldiers “stayed decent” while overseeing the extermination of the Jews; why then does he focus so much attention on punishing those who took money from the dead Jews?

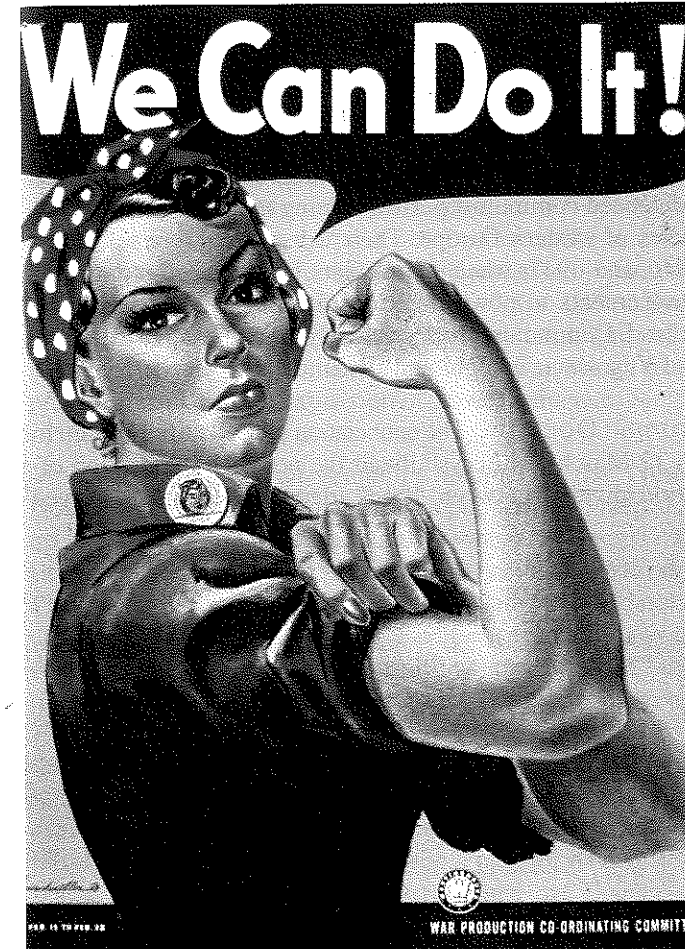
Source: International Military Tribunal. *Trial of the Major War Criminals*, Nuremberg, Germany, 1948; volume 29, Document 1919-PS. Translation Copyright 2002 Yad Vashem.

and confidence previously denied them, but so too did women who were forced to act as heads of household in the absence of husbands killed or away at war, captured as prisoners of war, or languishing in labor camps. Women’s roles changed during the war, often in dramatic ways, but those new roles were temporary. After the war, women warriors and workers were expected to return home and assume their traditional roles as wives and mothers. In the meantime, though, women made the most of their opportunities. In Britain, women served as noncombatant pilots, wrestled with the huge balloons and their tethering lines designed to snag Nazi aircraft from the skies, drove ambulances and transport vehicles, and labored in the fields to produce foodstuffs. More than 500,000 women joined British military services, and approximately 350,000 women did the same in the United States.

**Comfort Women** Women’s experiences in war were not always ennobling or empowering. The Japanese army forcibly

recruited, conscripted, and dragooned as many as two hundred thousand women aged fourteen to twenty to serve in military brothels, called “comfort houses” or “consolation centers.” The army presented the women to the troops as a gift from the emperor, and the women came from Japanese colonies such as Korea, Taiwan, and Manchuria and from occupied territories in the Philippines and elsewhere in southeast Asia. The majority of the women came from Korea and China.

Once forced into this imperial prostitution service, the “comfort women” catered to between twenty and thirty men each day. Stationed in war zones, the women often confronted the same risks as soldiers, and many became casualties of war. Others were killed by Japanese soldiers, especially if they tried to escape or contracted venereal diseases. At the end of the war, soldiers massacred large numbers of comfort women to cover up the operation. The impetus behind the establishment of comfort houses for Japanese soldiers came from the horrors of Nanjing, where the mass rape of Chinese



This famous 1942 poster of an idealized woman war worker in the United States featured the archetypal “Rosie the Riveter” and coined the motto for women meeting the challenges of the war: “We Can Do It!”

## THE COLD WAR

The end of World War II produced moving images of peace, such as Soviet and U.S. soldiers clasping hands in camaraderie at the Elbe River, celebrating their victory over the Germans. But by the time Germany surrendered in the spring of 1945, the wartime alliance between the Soviet Union, the United States, and Great Britain was disintegrating. The one-time partners increasingly sacrificed cooperation for their own national interests. Within two years the alliance forged by mutual danger gave way to a cold war between two principal rivals. It was a contest in which neither side gave way; yet, in the end, a direct clash of arms was always avoided, hence the term *cold war*.

The **cold war** became a confrontation for global influence principally between the United States and the Soviet Union. It was a tense encounter between rival political and economic systems—between liberal democracy and capitalism on the one hand and international communism and one-party rule on the other. The geopolitical and ideological rivalry between the Soviet Union and the United States and their respective allies lasted almost five decades and affected every corner of the world. The cold war was responsible for the formation of military and political alliances, the creation of client states, and an arms race of unprecedented scope. It engendered diplomatic crises, spawned military conflicts, and at times brought the world to the brink of nuclear annihilation. Among the first manifestations of the cold war was the division of the European continent into competing political, military, and economic blocs—one dependent on the United States and the other subservient to the USSR—separated by what Winston Churchill in 1946 called an “iron curtain.”

### Origins of the Cold War

**The United Nations** Despite their many differences, the Allies were among the nations that agreed to the creation of the **United Nations** (UN) in October 1945, a supranational organization dedicated to keeping world peace and security. The commitment to establish a new international organization derived from Allied cooperation during the war. Unlike its

predecessor, the League of Nations (1920), which failed in its basic mission to prevent another world war, the United Nations created a powerful Security Council responsible for maintaining international peace. Recognizing that peace could be maintained only if the great powers were in agreement, the UN founders made certain that the Security Council consists of five permanent members and six rotating elected members. The United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, France, and China—the members of the full Allied alliance in World War II—are the five permanent powers, and their unanimous

women had taken place. In trying to avoid such atrocities, the Japanese army created another horror of war. Comfort women who survived the war experienced deep shame and hid their past or faced shunning by their families. They found little comfort or peace after the war.

### Thinking about TRADITIONS

#### The “Home” Front

Many observers during World War II acknowledged the significant role women played in the war effort. Traditionally bound to the home, women worked both on the home front and in the armed forces to support their nations’ fight. In what ways did women transform their roles during the war? What sorts of jobs symbolized those changes?

vote is required on all substantive matters. The decisions of the Security Council are binding on all members.

Despite this initial cooperation, the wartime unity of the former Allies began to crack. Even before the defeat of Germany, the Allies had expressed differences over the future of Poland and eastern European nations liberated and subsequently occupied by the Soviet Red Army. On the surface, all sides agreed at the wartime conference at Yalta to “the earliest possible establishment through free elections of governments responsive

to the will of the people.” A determined Joseph Stalin, however, insisted on “friendly” governments that were controlled by the Soviet Union in order to safeguard against any future threat from Germany. From the American and British perspectives, Stalin’s intentions signaled the permanent Soviet domination of eastern Europe and the threat of Soviet-influenced communist parties coming to power in the democracies of western Europe. Their worst fears were realized in 1946 and 1947, when the Soviets helped bring communist governments to power in Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Poland. Communists had previously gained control in Albania and Yugoslavia in 1944 and 1945.

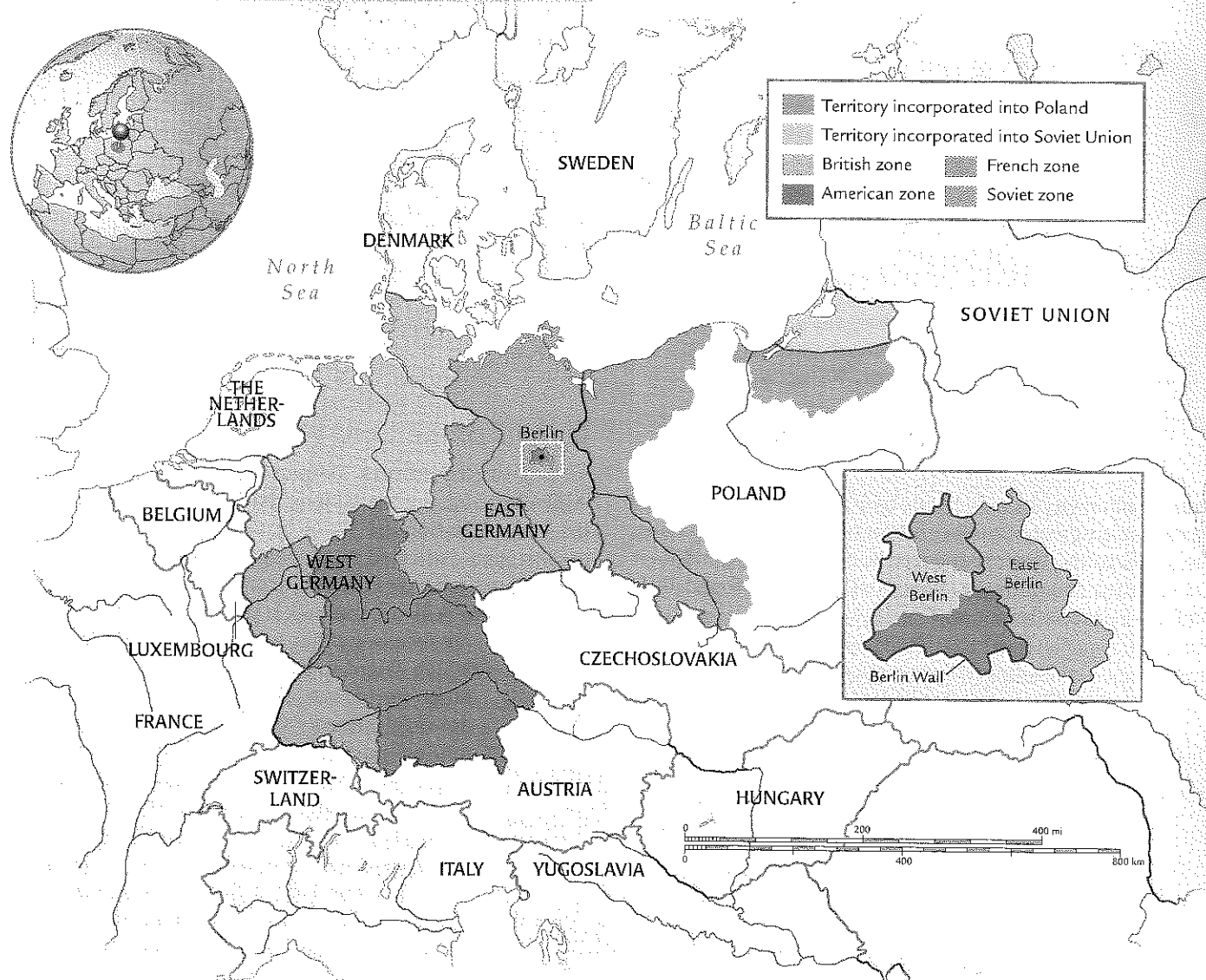
**Truman Doctrine** The enunciation of the **Truman Doctrine** on 12 March 1947 crystallized the new U.S. perception of a world divided between “free” (democratic) and “enslaved”

#### MAP 36.4

##### Occupied Germany, 1945–1949.

Locate the city of Berlin in Soviet-controlled territory.

How was it possible for the British, American, and French to maintain their zones of control in Berlin, given such geographic distance from western Germany?



(communist) peoples. Articulated partly in response to crises in Greece and Turkey, where communist movements seemed to threaten democracy and U.S. strategic interests, the Truman Doctrine starkly drew the battle lines of the cold war. As President Harry Truman (1884–1972) explained to the U.S. Congress: “At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.” The United States then committed itself to an interventionist foreign policy, dedicated to the “containment” of communism, which meant preventing any further expansion of Soviet influence.

**Marshall Plan** As an economic adjunct to the Truman Doctrine, the U.S. government developed a plan to help shore up the destroyed infrastructures of western Europe. The European Recovery Program, commonly called the **Marshall Plan** after U.S. Secretary of State George C. Marshall (1880–1959), proposed to rebuild European economies through cooperation and capitalism, forestalling communist or Soviet influence in the devastated nations of Europe. Proposed in 1947 and funded in 1948, the Marshall Plan provided more than \$13 billion to reconstruct western Europe. Although initially included in the nations invited to participate in the Marshall Plan, the Soviet Union resisted what it saw as capitalist imperialism and countered with a plan for its own satellite nations. The Soviet Union established the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (**COMECON**) in 1949, offering increased trade within the Soviet Union and eastern Europe as an alternative to the Marshall Plan.

**Military Alliances** The creation of the U.S.-sponsored North Atlantic Treaty Organization (**NATO**) and the Soviet-controlled **Warsaw Pact** signaled the militarization of the cold war. In 1949 the United States established NATO as a regional military alliance against Soviet aggression. The original members included Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Great Britain, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, and the United States. The intent of the alliance was to maintain peace in postwar Europe through collective security, which implied that a Soviet attack on any NATO member was an attack against all of them. NATO assumed a more structural military focus with the Soviet Union’s detonation of its first atomic bomb in 1949 and with the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950. When NATO admitted West Germany and allowed it to rearm in 1955, the Soviets formed the Warsaw Pact as a countermeasure. A military alliance of seven communist European nations, the Warsaw Pact matched the collective defense policies of NATO.

**A Divided Germany** The fault lines of cold war Europe were most visible in Germany. An international crisis arose

there in 1948–1949 when the Soviet Union pressured the western powers to relinquish their jurisdiction over Berlin. After the collapse of Hitler’s Third Reich, the forces of the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, and France occupied Germany and its capital, Berlin, both of which they divided for administrative purposes into four zones. When the western powers decided to merge their occupation zones in Germany—including their sectors in Berlin—the Soviets retaliated by blockading all road, rail, and water links between Berlin and western Germany.

**Blockade and Airlift** In the first serious test of the cold war, the Americans and the British responded with an airlift designed to keep West Berlin’s inhabitants alive, fed, and warm. For eleven months, in a daunting display of airpower, American and British aircrews flew around-the-clock missions to supply West Berlin with the necessities of life. Tensions remained high during the airlift, but the cold war did not turn hot. Stymied by British and U.S. resolve, the Soviet leadership called off the blockade in May 1949. In the aftermath of the blockade, the U.S., British, and French zones of occupation coalesced to form the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) in May 1949. In October the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) emerged out of the Soviet zone of occupation. A similar process repeated itself in Berlin, which was deep within the Soviet zone. The Soviet sector formed East Berlin and became the capital of the new



Barbed wire and a concrete wall in front of the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin symbolized the cold war division of Europe.

East Germany. The remaining three sectors united to form West Berlin, and the West German capital moved to the small town of Bonn.

**The Berlin Wall** By 1961 the communist East German state was hemorrhaging from a steady drain of refugees who preferred life in capitalist West Germany. Between 1949 and 1961 nearly 3.5 million East Germans—many of them young and highly skilled—left their homeland, much to the embarrassment of East Germany's communist leaders. In August 1961 the communists reinforced their fortification along the border between East and West Germany, following the construction of a fortified wall that divided the city of Berlin. The wall, which began as a layer of barbed wire, quickly turned into a barrier several layers deep, replete with watchtowers, searchlights, antipersonnel mines, and border guards ordered to shoot to kill. The **Berlin Wall** accomplished its purpose of stemming the flow of refugees, though at the cost of shaming a regime that obviously lacked legitimacy among its own people.

**Cold War Culture and Censorship** While the Berlin Wall physically divided east and west, ideologies and culture philosophically fractured the Soviet Union and the United States. Somewhat ironically, despite their intense competition, societies in the Soviet Union and the United States came to resemble one another in some ways, especially in their internal censorship policies. In the United States, cold war concerns about the spread of communism reached deeply into the domestic sphere. Politicians, agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), educators, and social commentators warned of communist spies trying to undermine the institutions of U.S. life. Senator **Joseph McCarthy** (1909–1957) became infamous in the early 1950s for his largely unsuccessful but nonetheless intimidating quest to expose communists in the U.S. government. Thousands of citizens who supported any radical or liberal cause—especially those who were or once had been members of the Communist Party—lost their jobs and reputations after being deemed risks to their nation's security. The culture industry, and Hollywood in particular, came under great scrutiny, limiting much overt criticism of the United States and its foreign policies.

In the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, cold war ideologies also profoundly influenced domestic culture and politics. After the war, Stalin imposed Soviet economic planning on governments in Eastern Europe and expected the peoples of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe to conform to anticapitalist ideological requirements. Rebellious artists and novelists found themselves silenced or denounced in a mirrored form of the McCarthyism evident in the United States. This policy of repression relaxed somewhat after Stalin's death in 1953, but there remained limits on Soviet liberalization. Soviet troops cracked down on Hungarian rebels in 1956,

and Soviet novelist **Boris Pasternak** (1890–1960), author of *Doctor Zhivago*, was not allowed to receive his Nobel Prize in Literature in 1958. There is little doubt that societies and cultures in the Soviet Union and the United States underwent dramatic transformations as a result of the international competition between communism and capitalism, and such changes continued to engulf these societies as the cold war globalized.

## The Globalization of the Cold War

**The People's Republic of China** The birth of a communist China simultaneously ended a long period of imperialist intrusion in China and further transformed the cold war, ostensibly enhancing the power of the Soviet Union and its communist allies. Although China had not been formally ruled by an imperial power, many countries had impinged on its sovereignty in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During the 1920s, two groups had arisen to reassert Chinese control over internal affairs: the nationalists and the communists. When World War II broke out, these two groups had been engaged in a civil war. After the Japanese defeat, the strategic balance favored the communists, who inflicted heavy military defeats on the nationalists throughout 1948 and 1949. With the communist People's Liberation Army controlling most of mainland China, the national government under Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek) sought refuge on the island of Taiwan, taking along most of the nation's gold reserves. Although Jiang Jieshi continued to proclaim that the government in Taiwan was the legitimate government of all China, Mao Zedong, chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, proclaimed the establishment of the People's Republic of China on 1 October 1949. That declaration brought to an end the long period of imperialist intrusion in China and spawned a close relationship between the world's largest and most powerful socialist states.

**Fraternal Cooperation** Moscow and Beijing drew closer during the early years of the cold war. This relationship was hardly astonishing, because the leaders of both communist states felt threatened by a common enemy, the United States, which sought to establish anticommunist bastions throughout Asia. Most disconcerting to Soviet and Chinese leaders was the American-sponsored rehabilitation of their former enemy, Japan, and the forming of client states in South Korea and Taiwan. The Chinese-Soviet partnership matured during the early 1950s and took on a distinct form when Beijing recognized Moscow's undisputed authority in world communism in exchange for Russian military equipment and economic aid.

**Confrontations in Korea** In conjunction with the communist victory in China, the unforeseen outbreak of hostilities on the Korean peninsula in the summer of 1950 shifted the focus

of the cold war from Europe to east Asia. At the end of World War II, the leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States had partitioned Korea along the thirty-eighth parallel of latitude into a northern Soviet zone and a southern U.S. zone. Because the superpowers were unable to agree on a framework for the reunification of the country, in 1948 they consented to the establishment of two separate Korean states: in the south, the Republic of Korea, with Seoul as its capital, and in the north, the People's Democratic Republic of Korea, with Pyongyang as its capital. After arming their respective clients, each of which claimed sovereignty over the entire country, U.S. and Soviet troops withdrew.

On the early morning of 25 June 1950, the unstable political situation in Korea came to a head. Determined to unify Korea by force, the Pyongyang regime ordered more than one hundred thousand troops across the thirty-eighth parallel in a surprise attack, quickly pushing back South Korean defenders and capturing Seoul on 27 June. Convinced that the USSR had sanctioned the invasion, the United States persuaded the United Nations to adopt a resolution to repel the aggressor. Armed with a UN mandate and supported by small armed forces from twenty countries, the U.S. military went into action, and within months had pushed the North Koreans back to the thirty-eighth parallel. However, sensing an opportunity to unify Korea under a pro-U.S. government, they pushed on into North Korea and within a few weeks had occupied Pyongyang. Subsequent U.S. advances toward the Yalu River on the Chinese border resulted in Chinese intervention in the Korean conflict. A combined force of Chinese and North Koreans pushed U.S. forces and their allies back into the south, and the war settled into a protracted stalemate near the original border at the thirty-eighth parallel. After two more years of fighting that raised the number of deaths to three million—mostly Korean civilians—both sides finally agreed to a cease-fire in July 1953. The failure to conclude a peace treaty ensured that the Korean peninsula would remain in a state of suspended strife that constantly threatened to engulf the region in a new round of hostilities.

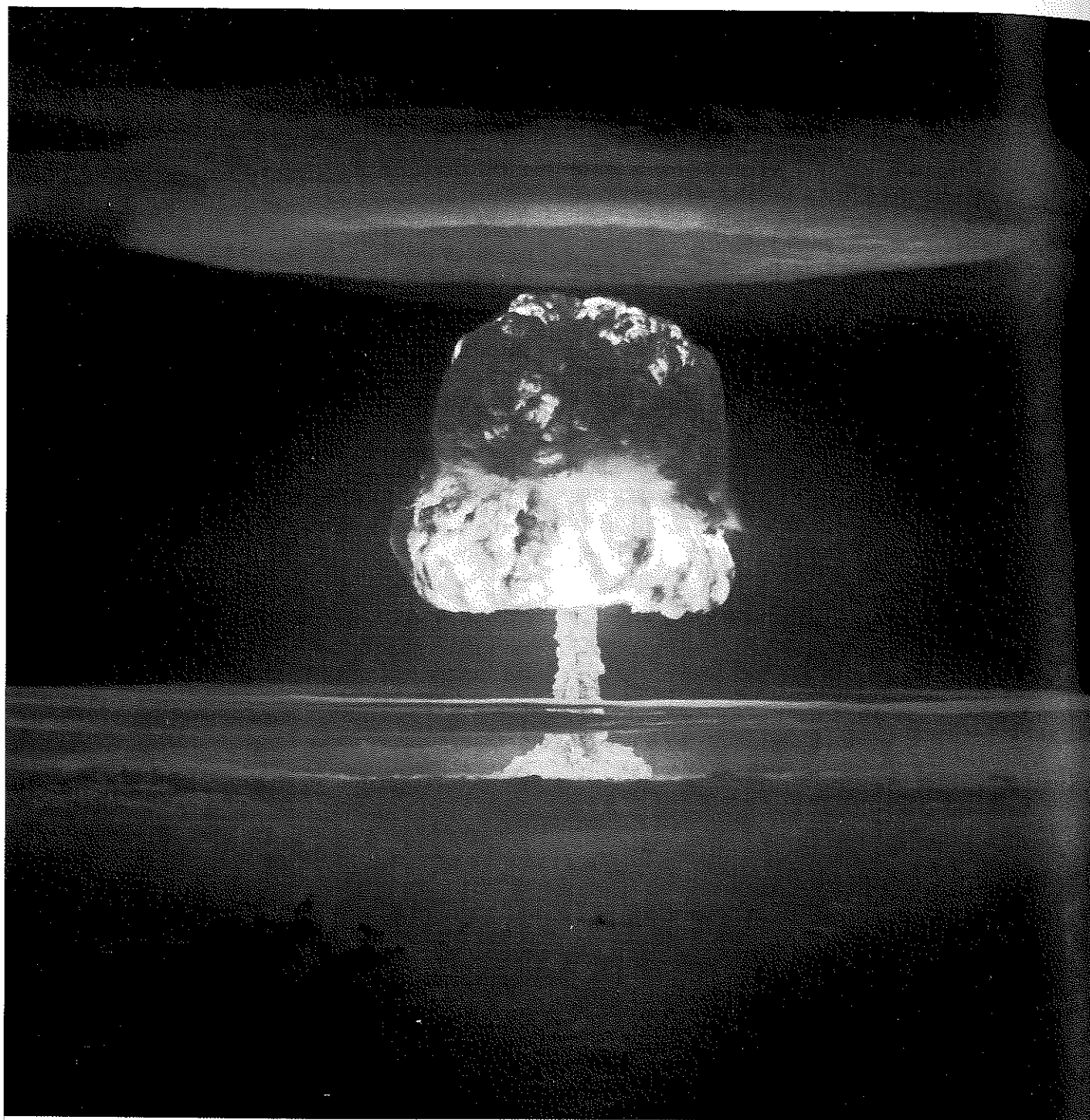
Beyond the human casualties and physical damage it wrought, the Korean conflict also encouraged the globalization of the U.S. strategy of containment. Viewing the North Korean offensive as part of a larger communist conspiracy to conquer the world, the U.S. government extended military protection and economic aid to the noncommunist governments of Asia. It also entered into security agreements that culminated in the creation of the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO), an Asian counterpart of NATO. By 1954 U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower (1890–1969), who had contemplated using nuclear weapons in Korea, asserted the famous **domino theory**. This strategic theory rationalized worldwide U.S. intervention on the assumption that if one country became communist, neighboring ones would collapse to communism the way a row of dominoes falls sequentially until none remains standing. Subsequent U.S. administrations extended the policy of containment to

areas beyond the nation's vital interests and applied it to local or imagined communist threats in Central and South America, Africa, and Asia.

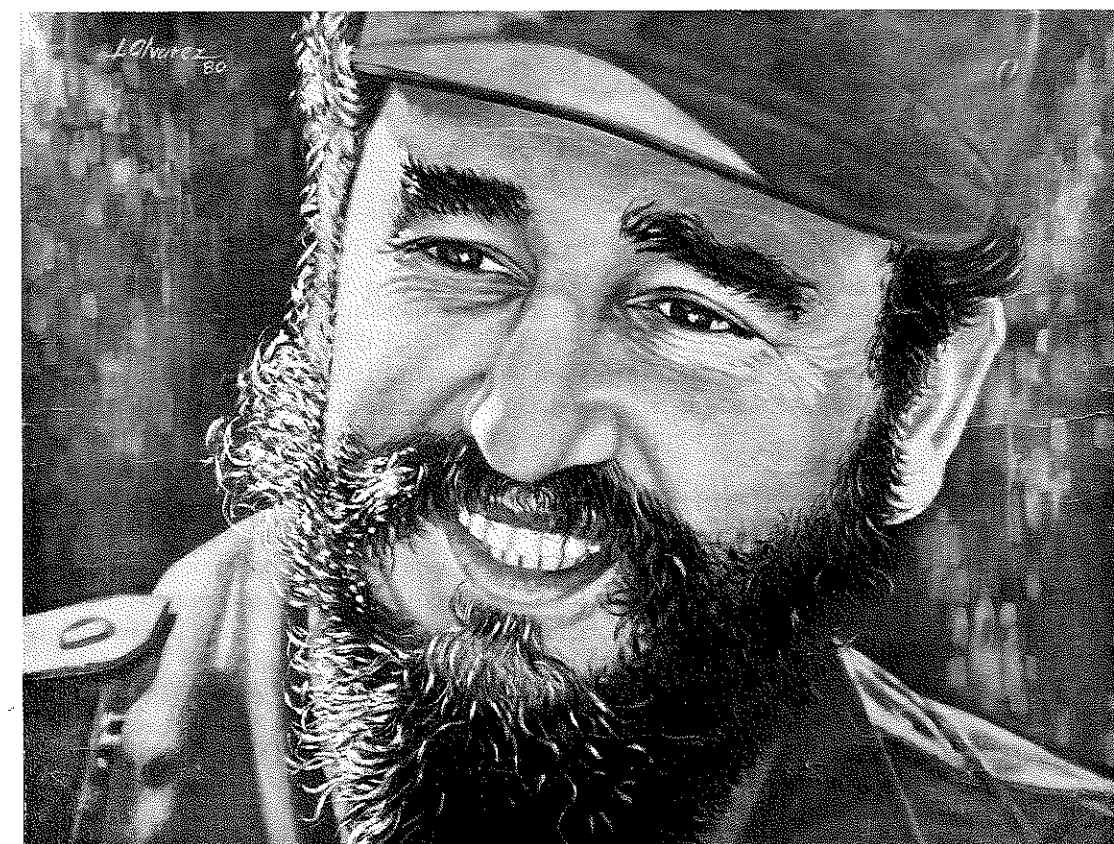
**Cracks in the Soviet-Chinese Alliance** Despite the assumptions of U.S. leaders, there was no one monolithic communist force in global politics, as was demonstrated by the divisions between Chinese and Soviet communists that appeared over time. The Chinese had embarked on a crash program of industrialization, and the Soviet Union rendered valuable assistance in the form of economic aid and technical advisors. By the mid-1950s the Soviet Union was China's principal trading partner, annually purchasing roughly half of all Chinese exports. Before long, however, cracks appeared in the Soviet-Chinese alliance. From the Chinese perspective, Soviet aid programs were far too modest and had too many strings attached. By the end of 1964, the rift between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China became embarrassingly public, with both sides engaging in name-calling. In addition, both nations openly competed for influence in Africa and Asia, especially in the nations that had recently gained independence. The fact that the People's Republic had conducted successful nuclear tests in 1964 enhanced its prestige. An unanticipated outcome of the Chinese-Soviet split was that many countries gained an opportunity to pursue a more independent course by playing capitalists against communists and by playing Soviet communists against Chinese communists.

**The Nuclear Arms Race** A central feature of the cold war world was a costly arms race and the terrifying proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union had broken the U.S. monopoly on atomic weaponry by testing its own atomic bomb in 1949, but because the United States was determined to retain military superiority and because the Soviet Union was equally determined to reach parity with the United States, both sides amassed enormous arsenals of nuclear weapons and developed a multitude of systems for deploying those weapons. In the 1960s and beyond, the superpowers acquired so many nuclear weapons that they reached the capacity for mutually assured destruction, or MAD. This balance of terror, while often frightening, tended to restrain the contestants and stabilize their relationship, with one important exception.

**Cuba: Nuclear Flashpoint** Ironically, the cold war confrontation that came closest to unleashing nuclear war took place not at the expected flashpoints in Europe or Asia but on the island of Cuba. In 1959 a revolutionary movement headed by Fidel Castro Ruz (1926–) overthrew the autocratic Fulgencio Batista y Zaldívar (1901–1973), whose regime had gone to great lengths to maintain the country's traditionally subservient relationship with the United States, especially with the U.S. sugar companies that controlled Cuba's economy. Fidel



The visceral beauty of nuclear explosions, such as this one in the Marshall Islands in 1954, masked the terror and the tensions that beset the Soviet Union, the United States, and the rest of the world during the cold war.



This propaganda poster celebrated the leadership of Fidel Castro during his rise to revolutionary power in Cuba.

Castro's new regime gladly accepted a Soviet offer of massive economic aid—including an agreement to purchase half of Cuba's sugar production—and arms shipments. In return for the Soviet largesse, Castro declared his support for the USSR's foreign policy. In December 1961 he confirmed the U.S. government's worst suspicions when he publicly announced: "I have been a Marxist-Leninist all along, and will remain one until I die."

**Bay of Pigs Invasion** Cuba's alignment with the Soviet Union spurred the U.S. government to action. Newly elected president John F. Kennedy (1917–1963) authorized a clandestine invasion of Cuba to overthrow Castro and his supporters. In April 1961 a force of fifteen hundred anti-Castro Cubans trained, armed, and transported by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) landed on Cuba at a place called the **Bay of Pigs**. The arrival of the invasion force failed to incite a hoped-for internal uprising, and when the promised American air support failed to appear, the invasion quickly fizzled. Within three days, Castro's military had either captured or killed the entire invasion force. The Bay of Pigs fiasco diminished U.S. prestige, especially in Latin America. It also, contrary to U.S. purposes, actually strengthened Castro's position in Cuba and encouraged

him to accept the deployment of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba as a deterrent to any future invasion.

**Cuban Missile Crisis** On 26 October 1962 the United States learned that Soviet technicians were assembling launch sites for medium-range nuclear missiles on Cuba. The deployment of nuclear missiles that could reach targets in the United States within minutes represented an unacceptable threat to U.S. national security. Thus President John F. Kennedy issued an ultimatum, calling on the Soviet leadership to withdraw all missiles from Cuba and stop the arrival of additional nuclear armaments. To back up his demand, Kennedy imposed an air and naval quarantine on the island

## Thinking about ENCOUNTERS

### Cold War in Cuba

The very definition of the cold war meant that the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, avoided direct military confrontations and struggled instead on a largely ideological plane. Why did this "cold" version of war turn potentially so hot in Cuba in 1962? What made this superpower contest in Cuba so frightening?

nation. The superpowers seemed poised for nuclear confrontation, and for two weeks the world's peoples held their collective breath. After two weeks, finally realizing the imminent possibility of nuclear war, the Soviet government yielded to the U.S. demands. In return, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev (1894–1971) extracted an open pledge from Kennedy to refrain from attempting to overthrow Castro's regime and a secret deal to remove U.S. missiles from Turkey. The world trembled during this **Cuban missile crisis**, awaiting the apocalypse that potentially lurked behind any superpower encounter.

### Dissent, Intervention, and Rapprochement

**De-Stalinization** Even before the Cuban missile crisis, developments within the Soviet Union caused serious changes in eastern Europe. Within three years of Joseph Stalin's death in 1953, several communist leaders startled the world when they openly attacked Stalin and questioned his methods of rule. The most vigorous denunciations came from Stalin's successor, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, who embarked on a policy of **de-Stalinization**, that is, the end of the rule of terror and the partial liberalization of Soviet society. Government officials removed portraits of Stalin from public places, renamed institutions and localities bearing his name, and commissioned historians to rewrite textbooks to deflate Stalin's reputation. The de-Stalinization period, which lasted from 1956 to 1964, also brought a "thaw" in government control and resulted in the release of millions of political prisoners. With respect to foreign policy, Khrushchev emphasized the possibility of "peaceful coexistence" between different social systems and the achievement of communism by peaceful means. This change in Soviet doctrine reflected the recognition that a nuclear war was more likely to lead to mutual annihilation than to victory.

**Soviet Intervention** The new political climate in the Soviet Union tempted communist leaders elsewhere to experiment with domestic reforms and seek a degree of independence from Soviet domination. Eastern European states also tried to become their own masters, or at least to gain a measure of autonomy from the Soviet Union. The nations of the Soviet bloc did not fare well in those endeavors. East Germans had an uprising crushed in 1953, but the most serious challenge to Soviet control came in 1956 from nationalist-minded communists in Hungary. When the communist regime in Hungary embraced the process of de-Stalinization, large numbers of

Hungarian citizens demanded democracy and the breaking of ties to Moscow and the Warsaw Pact. Soviet leaders viewed those moves as a serious threat to their security system. In the late autumn of 1956, Soviet tanks entered Budapest and crushed the Hungarian uprising.

Twelve years after the Hungarian tragedy, Soviets again intervened in eastern Europe, this time in Czechoslovakia. In 1968 the Communist Party leader, Alexander Dubček (1921–1992), launched a "democratic socialist revolution." He supported a liberal movement known as the "**Prague Spring**" and promised his fellow citizens "socialism with a human face." The Czechs' move toward liberal communism aroused fear in the Soviet Union because such ideas could lead to the unraveling of Soviet control in eastern Europe. Intervention by the Soviet and Warsaw Pact forces brought an end to the Prague Spring. Khrushchev's successor, Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev (1906–1982), justified the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Doctrine of Limited Sovereignty. This policy, more commonly called the "Brezhnev doctrine," reserved the right to invade any socialist country that was deemed to be threatened by internal or external elements "hostile to socialism." The destruction of the dramatic reform movement in Czechoslovakia served to reassert Soviet control over its satellite nations in eastern Europe and led to tightened controls within the Soviet Union.

**Détente** Amid those complications of the cold war and the challenges issuing from allies and enemies alike, Soviet and U.S. leaders began adjusting to the reality of an unmanageable world—a reality they could no longer ignore. By the late 1960s the leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States agreed on a policy of *détente*, or a reduction in hostility, trying to cool the costly arms race and slow their competition in developing countries. Although *détente* did not resolve the deep-seated antagonism between the superpowers, it did signal the relaxation of cold war tensions and prompted a new spirit of cooperation. The spirit of *détente* was most visible in negotiations designed to reduce the threat posed by strategic nuclear weapons. The two cold war antagonists cooperated despite the tensions caused by the U.S. incursion into Vietnam, Soviet involvement in Angola and other African states, and continued Soviet repression of dissidents in eastern Europe. Likewise symbolic of this rapprochement between democratic and communist nations were the state visits in 1972 to China and the Soviet Union made by U.S. President Richard Nixon (1913–1994). Nixon had entered politics in 1946 on the basis of his service in World War II and his staunch belief in anti-communism, and his trips to the two global centers of communism suggested a possible beginning to the end of World War II and cold war divisions.

### CHRONOLOGY

1937	Invasion of China by Japan
1937	The Rape of Nanjing
1939	Nazi-Soviet pact
1939	Invasion of Poland by Germany
1940	Fall of France, Battle of Britain
1941	German invasion of the Soviet Union
1941	Attack on Pearl Harbor by Japan
1942	U.S. victory at Midway
1943	Soviet victory at Stalingrad
1944	D-Day, Allied invasion at Normandy
1945	Capture of Berlin by Soviet forces
1945	Atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki
1945	Establishment of United Nations
1947	Truman Doctrine
1948	Marshall Plan
1949	Division of Berlin and Germany
1949	Establishment of the People's Republic of China
1950–1953	Korean War
1961	Construction of Berlin Wall
1962	Cuban missile crisis