

## DICTATORS AND WARLORDS THREATEN WORLD FREEDOM

Changes in the rest of the world were important to the future of the United States. In 1922, Benito Mussolini became the leader of Italy. He promised to make Italy as great as the Roman Empire. So he had roads built, swamps drained for farmland, and the army made much bigger. Italy even took over two more colonies. But for Italians, things started getting worse. Mussolini's **Fascist Party** used fear to keep the people in line. As **dictator**, Mussolini's word was law. His secret police made sure everyone obeyed that law. Jail, beatings, and death waited for anyone who went against the dictator.

North of Italy, another nation came under the power of a ruthless dictator. Adolf Hitler, leader of the **Nazi Party**, took charge of Germany in 1933. The German people had been in a depression even worse than the one in the United States. They, too, turned to a new leader who promised to help them. Hitler also promised to recapture the land taken from Germany at the end of World War I.

Once Hitler had gained control of the government, the secret police, or Gestapo, used prison, torture, and death to make sure the dictator's orders were followed. In Germany, the life of the Jewish people became one of constant fear. Hitler blamed the Jews for Germany's depression. Jews lost their homes, their businesses, and their lives.



Adolf Hitler

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**Fascist Party**—a political party in Italy headed by Benito Mussolini

**dictator**—a ruler who has complete authority over the government and its people

**Nazi Party**—a political party formed in Germany in the 1920s, led by Adolf Hitler

On the other side of the world, the island nation of Japan was governed by an emperor. This emperor was being influenced by **warlords**. These men were looking for lands to conquer. In 1931, the Japanese army marched into Manchuria, in northern China.

In 1935, Mussolini's Italian army invaded the free African nation of Ethiopia. Ethiopia's spears were useless against Italy's tanks. Italy took over Ethiopia by mid-1936. Ethiopia's ruler, Haile Selassie, asked the League of Nations for help. The League could not give military help, although it did ask that nations refuse to trade with Italy. This did not help Ethiopia very much. Selassie's nation was lost, and the League collapsed.

In 1936, German armies invaded the Rhineland, between Germany and France. In 1937, Japan marched into China. In 1938, Germany took over Austria without a fight. Also in that year, German armies captured Czechoslovakia.

**warlords**—  
aggressive military officers in Japan who took control of the government in the 1920s

## JESSE OWENS (1913–1980)

J. C. Owens was born James Cleveland Owens but is remembered by his nickname, Jesse. He worked hard to earn money to attend Ohio State. On May 25, 1935, Jesse Owens broke three world records and tied a fourth in a track meet. He was America's hope in the 1936 Olympic Games to be held in Germany.

Jesse Owens was African American. He did not fit Adolf Hitler's idea of a member of the Master Race. During the Olympics, Owens won four gold medals in track and field events. Hitler refused to give him these awards in person. Owens became a hero to the American people.

The rest of the world was not prepared for war. It was easier to let the dictators continue than to fight them. This is called **appeasement**. Many Americans insisted that what happened in Europe and Asia was not America's business.

In August 1939, Germany and the Soviet Union signed an agreement to remain friends. On September 1, Hitler's troops invaded Poland.

Two days later, Great Britain and France declared war on Germany. The Soviet Union invaded Poland to help Germany and acquire land for itself. Europe was again at war!

Entire nations were conquered by Germany in a few days or weeks. Countries such as Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Holland, and France were captured by German forces. British and French troops were pushed back into the sea at Dunkirk. British boats and ships, from warships to rowboats, crossed the English Channel to save their soldiers. A third of a million trapped soldiers were taken to England.

**appeasement**—  
giving in to the demands of an aggressor in the hope of avoiding war

Almost at once the Battle of Britain began. As many as a thousand German planes a day flew over Great Britain, bombing and killing. British pilots, outnumbered by as much as twenty to one, attacked the Germans again and again. German losses became so great that the bombing of Britain ended.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

St. Paul's Cathedral during bombing of London

Meanwhile, China was suffering from Japanese attacks. The only thing that saved the Chinese army from complete defeat was the great size of the Chinese nation. Japan had only so many soldiers; they could not be everywhere at once in that huge country. Other nations in Southeast Asia watched Japan in fear.

In 1941, Germany attacked the Soviet Union. Europe and Asia became one huge battleground.

What was the United States doing at this time? Americans were once again remaining neutral. Congress even passed neutrality laws saying the United States would have nothing to do with any nation at war.

Finally, when it was almost too late, the United States did begin to build its army and navy. The Lend-Lease Act was passed, which let the president sell or loan war materials to nations whose safety was important to us.

## TRAINING SOLDIERS WITHOUT EQUIPMENT

Long before the United States entered World War II, the government had begun to call up, or draft, men between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-five. Many problems were involved in preparing a military force on short notice. One was the lack of equipment with which to train the new troops. Soldiers drilled with broomsticks instead of rifles. Big

pipes had the word "cannon" written on them. Airplanes dropped sacks of flour that were supposed to represent bombs. Old cars and trucks carried signs calling themselves tanks. It's amazing that these men learned to be soldiers without the equipment needed for proper training.

**CRITICAL THINKING**

Americans hated the thought of fighting another war. Why did they not realize that what happened in the rest of the world affected the United States?

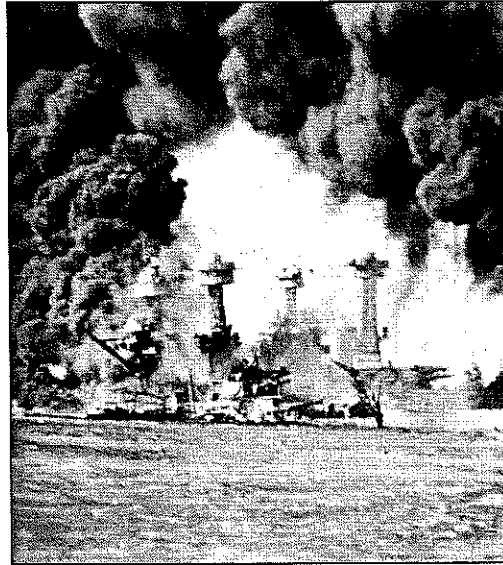
**WAR!**

On December 7, 1941, the American naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, was attacked by Japanese airplanes. When the surprise attack was over that Sunday morning, America's Pacific fleet was in ruins. Eight battleships were sunk or seriously damaged. Many smaller ships were also sunk or badly hurt. Over 3,000 Americans were killed or missing, and more than 1,000 were wounded. The next day, the United States declared war on Japan. On December 11, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States.

The war that followed brought great suffering for many Americans. Millions of men and women went to war.

In 1942, United States and British troops landed in North Africa and began a hot, bloody battle with the German tank corps there. When the terrible fighting ended, most of the Germans had been killed or captured. North Africa was freed from German control.

In 1943, the United States and its allies invaded the island of Sicily and defeated the enemy. Beginning with a terrible battle at Anzio, Allied troops fought their way up the country of Italy. The Italians forced out Mussolini in July 1943, and their troops stopped fighting. As the Allied forces moved on through Italy, they continued to fight German troops.



**Burning ships at Pearl Harbor**

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The Soviet Union, meanwhile, had lost millions of soldiers fighting German troops. Finally, the great German army was stopped at Stalingrad. The bitter cold winter of 1942–1943 ruined much of the invading German army and forced a large part of it to surrender in February 1943. Now the Soviets began to attack the remaining German troops. Soon the Germans were being driven back as they lost battle after battle. In one three-month period, the Soviets killed or captured half a million Germans.

On June 6, 1944, the D-Day invasion of France began. Troops from the United States, Canada, and Great Britain landed at Normandy in France and attacked the German armies. For the next eleven months, they fought their way closer and closer to the heart of Germany. American warplanes bombed German cities and targets by day, and the British bombed by night. Soviet armies moved forward from the east.

## RATIONING AND PRICE CONTROLS

Many items were needed for the war effort. In order to make certain the military received the material it needed to fight the war, the government imposed **rationing**.

Food, clothing, tires, and gasoline were rationed to American citizens. Sugar, meat, and shoes were in limited supply and came under the rationing program.

Citizens were issued ration books containing coupons for scarce items. At certain times, the government told the citizens which coupons were good for which items. Customers found the item they needed, presented their

ration coupon, and then paid for the item, such as a pair of shoes, a pound of coffee, or five pounds of sugar. If customers could not locate the items, then their coupons did not help. At times, some things just could not be found.

In order to keep merchants from raising prices so high that only the rich could have scarce items, the government established price controls. Tires and shoes were not the only things that came under these controls. So did rents. Without rent controls, many people could not have afforded a place to live.

**ration**—to limit the amount of certain items that any one person can buy

On May 8, 1945, Germany surrendered. Hitler was dead. Mussolini was dead. Much of Europe was in ruins. Only one building out of every twenty was left standing in Berlin, Germany's capital. Millions of soldiers and civilians were dead. The Germans had killed over 6 million Jewish men, women, and children, as well as many millions of gypsies, homosexuals, and political prisoners. The terrible war in Europe was over.

## CODETALKERS

Talking on the telephone or radio was a great way to pass messages during wartime. However, the telephone and radio were not safe to use. Spies could learn where American forces would be from overheard messages.

The United States began to use Native Americans to send messages in their own language. Enemy spies could not understand what was being said.

Most of the Codetalkers in combat were Navajo. Their tribe was large enough to furnish many speakers. The sound of the Navajo language was impossible to counterfeit. At the end of World War II, 420 Codetalkers were helping the United States win the war.

If anything, the war with Japan was worse than the war in Europe. Battles were fought at sea and on hot, wet, jungle islands. Every island the Japanese had captured had to be invaded and taken back. Thousands of American soldiers died on each island. When islands were captured, air bases were built, so American planes could bomb other islands held by the Japanese. In late 1944, the United States invaded the Philippine Islands, which Japan had taken in December 1941.

As American forces got closer and closer to Japan, military leaders hoped for a miracle. If the United States had to invade Japan itself, a million soldiers might die.

Then, President Harry S Truman received word that the **atomic bomb** was ready for use. On August 6, 1945, an atomic bomb was dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. This was the first atomic bomb used in warfare. The bomb totally destroyed about five square miles of the city. Between 70,000 and 100,000 people died in the explosion. Thousands more died later from **radiation** sickness. On August 9, a second atomic bomb hit Nagasaki. Shortly thereafter, the Japanese surrendered.



Flag raising on Iwo Jima,  
February 23, 1945



Bombing of Nagasaki

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**atomic bomb**—a nuclear weapon capable of causing massive destruction

**radiation**—the energy given off by an atomic explosion that can damage human tissue and organs

## WORLD WAR II WAS TOTAL WAR

World War II was the nation's first total war. It was a war that involved the entire world. This terrible war was fought not just by armed forces but also by the people at home. Citizens donated war material, such as metals and paper. They did without many things they were used to.

World War II made use of many new scientific discoveries. Radar, guided missiles, and rockets were new aids to fighting the war. Ships were

threatened by magnetic mines.

Eventually, the atomic bomb brought the war to an end.

New medical discoveries helped save lives. Treatment with penicillin brought antibiotics into use. Sulfa drugs were responsible for saving many more lives.

For the first time, people knew what total war actually meant.

### **CRITICAL THINKING**

Armed forces from many nations fought Germany and Japan. Besides troops, what did the United States have that made a major difference in the war effort?

### **REVIEW: WORLD WAR II**

The following are five groups of events that are related to World War II. The events in each group are out of order. Number the happenings in each group in correct order, from 1 to 4, on the lines provided.

1. \_\_\_ The Nazi Party took control of Germany.  
\_\_\_ The Fascist Party took control of Italy.  
\_\_\_ Japan invaded Manchuria.  
\_\_\_ Italy invaded Ethiopia.
  
2. \_\_\_ Japan invaded China.  
\_\_\_ Germany invaded Poland.  
\_\_\_ Germany took Austria.  
\_\_\_ Czechoslovakia was taken by Germany.
  
3. \_\_\_ The Battle of Britain was fought.  
\_\_\_ France was defeated.  
\_\_\_ Great Britain and France declared war on Germany.  
\_\_\_ The Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor.
  
4. \_\_\_ U.S. and British troops invaded North Africa.  
\_\_\_ The Italians killed Mussolini.  
\_\_\_ The United States declared war on Japan.  
\_\_\_ Germany and Italy declared war on the United States.
  
5. \_\_\_ The atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima.  
\_\_\_ The Germans were defeated at Stalingrad.  
\_\_\_ Germany surrendered.  
\_\_\_ The D-Day invasion started.

## **MAP ACTIVITY: EUROPE IN WORLD WAR II**

Use the map on page 160 to help you answer the following. Write your answers on the lines provided.

1. Name the two European Axis nations during World War II.

\_\_\_\_\_ and  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Five Allied nations were not taken over by the Axis powers. Name these five.

\_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_, and  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. “D-Day,” the Allied invasion to free Europe, took place in this country.

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What new countries can you find on this map next to the Soviet Union that are not on the World War I map on page 142?

\_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_, and  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the name of the new country between Germany and Romania?

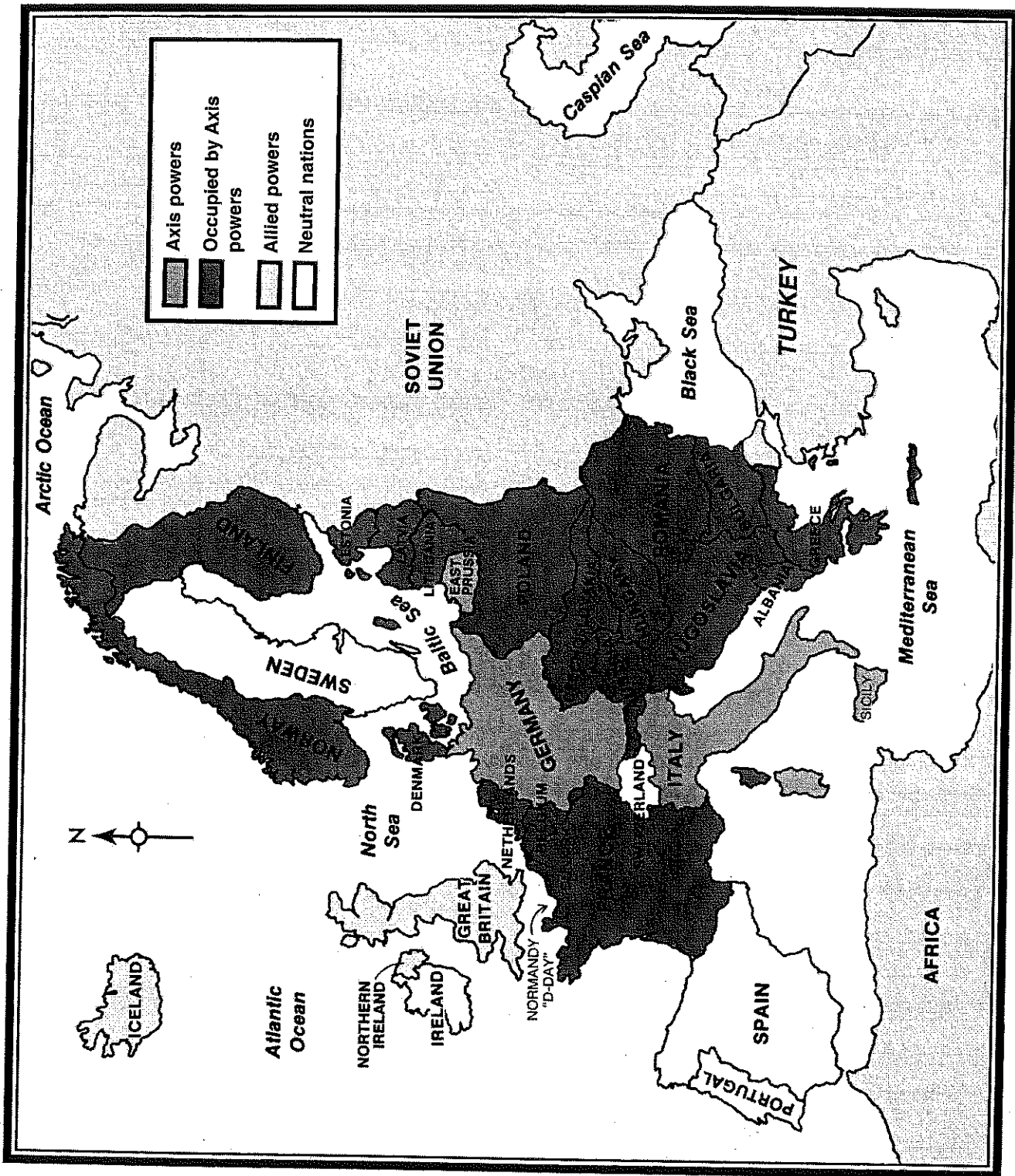
\_\_\_\_\_

6. What new country lies south of Austria and Hungary and north of Albania?

\_\_\_\_\_



Europe: 1939–1941



### **MAP ACTIVITY: JAPANESE EXPANSION**

Use the map on page 162 as well as the pages in this unit to answer the following questions. Write your answers on the lines provided.

1. What United States naval base was attacked by the Japanese in 1941?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What two European nations declared war on the United States four days after the Japanese raid on the U.S. naval base?

\_\_\_\_\_ and

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Which seven nations or islands did the Japanese control at least a part of during World War II?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ and

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What two cities in Japan were devastated by the atomic bombs that ended World War II?

\_\_\_\_\_ and

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What English-speaking country was on the edge of Japanese-held territory during World War II?

\_\_\_\_\_