

World War II

The Deadliest Conflict in Human History

Contents

1	World War II	1
1.1	Chronology	2
1.2	Background	2
1.2.1	Europe	2
1.2.2	Asia	3
1.3	Pre-war events	3
1.3.1	Italian invasion of Ethiopia (1935)	3
1.3.2	Spanish Civil War (1936–39)	4
1.3.3	Japanese invasion of China (1937)	4
1.3.4	Soviet-Japanese border conflicts	4
1.3.5	European occupations and agreements	5
1.4	Course of the war	6
1.4.1	War breaks out in Europe (1939–40)	6
1.4.2	Western Europe (1940–41)	7
1.4.3	Mediterranean (1940–41)	8
1.4.4	Axis attack on the USSR (1941)	9
1.4.5	War breaks out in the Pacific (1941)	10
1.4.6	Axis advance stalls (1942–43)	11
1.4.7	Allies gain momentum (1943–44)	14
1.4.8	Allies close in (1944)	15
1.4.9	Axis collapse, Allied victory (1944–45)	16
1.5	Aftermath	17
1.6	Impact	19
1.6.1	Casualties and war crimes	19
1.6.2	Concentration camps, slave labour, and genocide	20
1.6.3	Occupation	21
1.6.4	Home fronts and production	21
1.6.5	Advances in technology and warfare	22
1.7	See also	23
1.8	Notes	24
1.9	Citations	24
1.10	References	31

1.11 External links	44
2 Causes of World War II	45
2.1 Anti-communism	46
2.2 Expansionism	46
2.3 Militarism	47
2.4 Racism	47
2.5 Interrelations and economics	47
2.5.1 Problems with the Treaty of Versailles	47
2.5.2 French security demands	48
2.5.3 Competition for resources and markets	49
2.5.4 Problems with the League of Nations	49
2.5.5 The Mason-Overy Debate: “The Flight into War” theory	50
2.6 Specific developments	51
2.6.1 Nazi dictatorship	51
2.6.2 Re-militarization of the Rhineland	51
2.6.3 Italian invasion of Ethiopia	51
2.6.4 Spanish Civil War	51
2.6.5 Second Sino-Japanese War	52
2.6.6 Anschluss	52
2.6.7 Munich Agreement	52
2.6.8 Italian invasion of Albania	53
2.6.9 Soviet–Japanese Border War	53
2.6.10 Danzig crisis	53
2.6.11 Invasion of the Soviet Union	55
2.6.12 Attack on Pearl Harbor	55
2.7 See also	56
2.8 References	56
2.9 Further reading	57
2.10 External links	58
3 Axis powers	59
3.1 Origins and creation	60
3.1.1 Initial proposals of a German–Italian alliance	60
3.1.2 Danube alliance, dispute over Austria	61
3.1.3 Development of German–Japanese–Italian alliance	63
3.2 Ideology	64
3.3 Economic resources	65
3.4 Major Axis powers	65
3.4.1 Germany	65
3.4.2 Italy	70
3.4.3 Japan	75

3.5	Minor Axis powers	77
3.5.1	Bulgaria	78
3.5.2	Hungary	78
3.5.3	Romania	79
3.5.4	Thailand	80
3.5.5	Yugoslavia: membership lasts two days	81
3.6	Co-belligerent state combatants	81
3.6.1	Finland	81
3.6.2	Iraq	82
3.7	Client states	83
3.7.1	Japanese	83
3.7.2	Italian	85
3.7.3	German	86
3.7.4	Joint German-Italian client states	87
3.8	Controversial cases	89
3.8.1	Denmark	89
3.8.2	Soviet Union	89
3.8.3	Spain	90
3.8.4	Vichy France	91
3.9	German, Japanese and Italian World War II cooperation	93
3.9.1	German-Japanese Axis-cooperation	93
3.9.2	Germany's and Italy's declaration of war against the United States	93
3.10	See also	93
3.11	Citations	94
3.12	References	97
3.13	Further reading	99
3.14	External links	99
4	Allies of World War II	100
4.1	Origins and creation	101
4.2	Major affiliated state combatants	102
4.2.1	United Kingdom	102
4.2.2	China	103
4.2.3	France	105
4.2.4	Soviet Union	107
4.2.5	United States	108
4.3	Minor affiliated state combatants	110
4.3.1	Australia	110
4.3.2	Belgium	110
4.3.3	Brazil	111
4.3.4	Canada	111
4.3.5	Cuba	111

4.3.6	Czechoslovakia	111
4.3.7	Greece	112
4.3.8	Luxembourg	112
4.3.9	Mexico	112
4.3.10	Netherlands	113
4.3.11	New Zealand	113
4.3.12	Norway	113
4.3.13	Poland	113
4.3.14	South Africa	114
4.3.15	Yugoslavia	114
4.4	Client states	115
4.4.1	British	115
4.4.2	Soviet	116
4.5	Co-belligerent state combatants	116
4.5.1	Italy	116
4.6	Associated power	117
4.6.1	Albania	117
4.7	United Nations	117
4.7.1	Declaration by United Nations	117
4.7.2	Alliance growing	118
4.7.3	Charter of the United Nations	118
4.8	Timeline of nations entering war on the Axis Powers	119
4.8.1	1939	119
4.8.2	1940	119
4.8.3	1941	119
4.8.4	1942	120
4.8.5	1943	120
4.8.6	1944	120
4.8.7	1945	120
4.9	See also	120
4.10	Footnotes	120
4.11	Bibliography	123
4.12	External links	123
5	Nazi Germany	124
5.1	Name	125
5.2	Background	125
5.3	History	125
5.3.1	Nazi seizure of power	125
5.3.2	Militaristic foreign policy	127
5.3.3	Austria and Czechoslovakia	127
5.3.4	Poland	128

5.3.5	World War II	128
5.4	Geography	132
5.4.1	Territorial changes	132
5.4.2	Occupied territories	132
5.4.3	Post-war changes	132
5.5	Politics	133
5.5.1	Ideology	133
5.5.2	Government	133
5.5.3	Law	134
5.5.4	Military and paramilitary	134
5.6	Economy	136
5.6.1	Reich economics	136
5.6.2	Wartime economy and forced labour	137
5.7	Racial policy	137
5.7.1	Persecution of Jews	138
5.7.2	Persecution of Roma and other groups	138
5.7.3	The Holocaust	139
5.7.4	Oppression of ethnic Poles	139
5.7.5	Mistreatment of Soviet POWs	140
5.8	Society	140
5.8.1	Education	140
5.8.2	Oppression of churches	141
5.8.3	Health	142
5.8.4	Role of women and family	142
5.8.5	Environmentalism	143
5.9	Culture	144
5.10	Legacy	145
5.11	See also	146
5.12	Notes	146
5.13	References	146
5.13.1	Citations	146
5.13.2	Bibliography	152
5.13.3	Historiography and memory	157
5.14	Further reading	158
5.15	External links	158
6	Invasion of Poland	159
6.1	Prelude	159
6.1.1	Breakdown of talks	160
6.2	Opposing forces	162
6.2.1	Germany	162
6.2.2	Poland	162

6.3	Details of the campaign	164
6.3.1	German plan	164
6.3.2	Polish defense plan	165
6.3.3	Phase 1: German invasion	166
6.3.4	Phase 2: after Soviet Union invasion from the east	168
6.3.5	Civilian deaths	169
6.4	Aftermath	170
6.4.1	Misconceptions	172
6.5	See also	173
6.6	Notes	173
6.7	Citations	174
6.8	References	177
6.9	Further reading	178
6.10	External links	178
7	Operation Barbarossa	180
7.1	Background	180
7.1.1	Racial policies of Nazi Germany	180
7.1.2	German-Soviet relations of 1939–40	181
7.1.3	German invasion plans	182
7.2	German preparations	184
7.3	Soviet preparations	185
7.4	Order of battle	187
7.5	Invasion	187
7.6	Phase one	187
7.6.1	Air war	188
7.6.2	Baltic states	188
7.6.3	Ukraine and Moldavia	188
7.6.4	Belorussia	189
7.7	Phase two	190
7.8	Phase three	190
7.9	Phase four	191
7.10	Aftermath	192
7.10.1	War crimes	193
7.10.2	Historical significance	194
7.11	See also	194
7.12	References	194
7.12.1	Informational notes	194
7.12.2	Citations	195
7.12.3	Bibliography	198
7.13	Further reading	202
7.14	External links	202

8 Operation Downfall	203
8.1 Planning	203
8.1.1 Considerations	203
8.1.2 Assumptions	204
8.1.3 <i>Olympic</i>	204
8.1.4 <i>Coronet</i>	205
8.1.5 Redeployment	205
8.1.6 Projected initial commitment	206
8.2 Operation <i>Ketsugō</i>	206
8.2.1 <i>Kamikaze</i>	207
8.2.2 Naval forces	207
8.2.3 Ground forces	207
8.3 Allied re-evaluation of Olympic	208
8.3.1 Air threat	208
8.3.2 Ground threat	208
8.3.3 Chemical weapons	209
8.3.4 Nuclear weapons	209
8.3.5 Alternative targets	209
8.3.6 Prospects for Olympic	209
8.3.7 Soviet intentions	210
8.4 Estimated casualties	211
8.5 Available equipment for defenders	212
8.6 See also	212
8.7 Notes	212
8.8 References	214
8.9 External links	215
9 Attack on Pearl Harbor	216
9.1 Background to conflict	216
9.1.1 Diplomatic background	217
9.1.2 Military planning	217
9.1.3 Objectives	218
9.2 Approach and attack	218
9.2.1 Submarines	219
9.2.2 Japanese declaration of war	219
9.2.3 First wave composition	220
9.2.4 Second wave composition	222
9.2.5 American casualties and damages	222
9.2.6 Japanese losses	223
9.2.7 Possible third wave	223
9.3 Ships lost or damaged	224
9.3.1 Battleships	224

9.3.2	Ex-battleship (target/AA training ship)	224
9.3.3	Cruisers	224
9.3.4	Destroyers	224
9.3.5	Auxiliaries	224
9.4	Salvage	224
9.5	Aftermath	225
9.5.1	Niihau Incident	226
9.5.2	Strategic implications	226
9.5.3	Present day	226
9.6	Media	227
9.6.1	Non-fiction/historical	228
9.6.2	Alternate history	228
9.7	See also	228
9.8	Notes	229
9.9	References	230
9.9.1	Bibliography	233
9.10	Further reading	234
9.11	External links	235
10	Western Allied invasion of Germany	237
10.1	Order of battle	237
10.1.1	Allied forces	237
10.1.2	German forces	238
10.2	Eisenhower's plans	238
10.3	Occupation process	239
10.4	Operations	239
10.4.1	U.S. 12th Army Group crosses the Rhine (22 March)	239
10.4.2	U.S. 6th Army Group crosses the Rhine (26 March)	240
10.4.3	British 21st Army Group plans <i>Operation Plunder</i>	240
10.4.4	Montgomery launches <i>Operation Plunder</i> (23 March)	241
10.4.5	German Army Group B surrounded in the Ruhr pocket (1 April)	242
10.4.6	Eisenhower switches his main thrust to U.S. 12th Army Group front (28 March)	243
10.4.7	Ruhr pocket cleared (18 April)	244
10.4.8	U.S. 12th Army Group prepares its final thrust	244
10.4.9	U.S. 12th Army Group advances to the Elbe (9 April)	245
10.4.10	U.S. First Army makes first contact with the advancing Russians (25 April)	246
10.4.11	U.S. 6th Army Group heads for Austria	246
10.4.12	Link-up of U.S. forces in Germany and Italy (4 May)	247
10.4.13	British 21st Army Group crosses the Elbe (29 April)	247
10.4.14	German surrender (8 May)	247
10.5	Analysis	248
10.6	Footnotes	248

10.7 References	249
10.8 External links	250
11 Atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki	251
11.1 Background	251
11.1.1 Pacific War	251
11.1.2 Preparations to invade Japan	252
11.1.3 Air raids on Japan	253
11.1.4 Atomic bomb development	254
11.2 Preparations	254
11.2.1 Organization and training	254
11.2.2 Choice of targets	255
11.2.3 Proposed demonstration	257
11.2.4 Leaflets	257
11.2.5 Potsdam Declaration	258
11.2.6 Bombs	258
11.3 Hiroshima	258
11.3.1 Hiroshima during World War II	258
11.3.2 Bombing of Hiroshima	259
11.3.3 Events on the ground	260
11.3.4 Japanese realization of the bombing	261
11.4 Events of August 7–9	261
11.5 Nagasaki	262
11.5.1 Nagasaki during World War II	262
11.5.2 Bombing of Nagasaki	263
11.5.3 Events on the ground	265
11.6 Plans for more atomic attacks on Japan	265
11.7 Surrender of Japan and subsequent occupation	266
11.8 Depiction, public response, and censorship	266
11.9 Post-attack casualties	268
11.10 Hibakusha	268
11.10.1 Double survivors	269
11.10.2 Korean survivors	269
11.11 Debate over bombings	269
11.12 Notes	270
11.13 References	275
11.14 Further reading	279
11.15 External links	279
12 Surrender of Japan	281
12.1 Impending defeat	282
12.1.1 Defense preparations	282

12.2 Supreme Council for the Direction of the War	283
12.3 Divisions within the Japanese leadership	283
12.4 Attempts to deal with the Soviet Union	285
12.4.1 Soviet intentions	286
12.5 Manhattan Project	287
12.6 Events at Potsdam	287
12.6.1 Negotiations	287
12.6.2 The Potsdam Declaration	287
12.6.3 Japanese reaction	288
12.7 Hiroshima, Manchuria, and Nagasaki	289
12.7.1 August 6: Hiroshima	289
12.7.2 August 8–9: Soviet invasion and Nagasaki	289
12.8 Imperial intervention, Allied response, and Japanese reply	290
12.8.1 August 12	291
12.8.2 August 13–14	292
12.9 Attempted military coup d'état (August 12–15)	293
12.10 Surrender	295
12.10.1 Broadcast of the Imperial Rescript on surrender	295
12.10.2 Beginning of occupation and the surrender ceremony	296
12.11 Further surrenders and continued Japanese military resistance	296
12.12 See also	297
12.13 References	297
12.13.1 Footnotes	297
12.13.2 Texts	301
12.14 External links	302
13 Decolonisation of Asia	303
13.1 Background	303
13.2 Asian colonies from the 19th century to the end of the Second World War	303
13.3 Individual countries	304
13.3.1 Burma	304
13.3.2 Cambodia	304
13.3.3 Ceylon	304
13.3.4 Hong Kong	304
13.3.5 Philippines	304
13.4 Timeline	305
13.5 See also	305
13.6 Notes	305
14 The Holocaust	307
14.1 Etymology and use of the term	307
14.2 Distinctive features	308

14.2.1 Institutional collaboration	308
14.2.2 Ideology and scale	308
14.2.3 Extermination camps	309
14.2.4 Medical experiments	309
14.3 Development and execution	309
14.3.1 Origins	309
14.3.2 Legal repression and emigration	311
14.3.3 Kristallnacht (1938)	313
14.3.4 Resettlement and deportation	313
14.3.5 Early measures	314
14.3.6 Concentration and labor camps (1933–1945)	316
14.3.7 Ghettos (1939–1945)	317
14.3.8 Pogroms (1939–1942)	318
14.3.9 Death squads (1941–1943)	318
14.3.10 New methods of mass murder	321
14.3.11 Wannsee Conference and the Final Solution (1942–1945)	321
14.3.12 Reaction	322
14.3.13 Motivation	323
14.3.14 Extermination camps	323
14.3.15 Jewish resistance	325
14.3.16 Climax	328
14.3.17 Escapes, publication of existence (April–June 1944)	330
14.3.18 Death marches (1944–1945)	332
14.3.19 Liberation	333
14.4 Victims	334
14.4.1 Jewish	334
14.4.2 Non-Jewish	336
14.4.3 Other	341
14.5 Uniqueness question	344
14.6 Aftermath	345
14.6.1 Nuremberg trials	345
14.6.2 Reparations	346
14.7 See also	346
14.8 Notes	347
14.9 Citations	347
14.10 Bibliography	356
14.11 External links	363
15 Timeline of World War II	365
15.1 See also	365
15.2 External links	365

16 Diplomatic history of World War II	366
16.1 The United Nations	366
16.1.1 Cairo Conference	366
16.1.2 Big Three conferences	366
16.1.3 Dumbarton Oaks Conference	367
16.1.4 San Francisco Conference	367
16.2 Britain - United States	367
16.2.1 Arcadia	368
16.2.2 Technical collaboration	368
16.2.3 Casablanca conference	368
16.3 Britain	368
16.3.1 India	369
16.3.2 Britain and France	369
16.3.3 Britain and Soviet Union	370
16.3.4 Middle East	370
16.3.5 Commonwealth	370
16.4 United States	371
16.4.1 1941-42	371
16.5 China	371
16.5.1 Wartime	372
16.6 Soviet Union	372
16.7 France	373
16.7.1 French Republic	373
16.7.2 Vichy France	373
16.7.3 Free France	374
16.8 Neutrals	374
16.8.1 Latin America	375
16.8.2 Baltic States	375
16.8.3 Ireland	375
16.8.4 Portugal	375
16.8.5 Spain	375
16.8.6 Sweden	376
16.8.7 Switzerland	376
16.8.8 Turkey	376
16.9 Axis	377
16.9.1 Germany	377
16.9.2 Italy	378
16.9.3 Balkans	379
16.9.4 Japan	380
16.9.5 Finland	382
16.10 Governments in Exile	383

16.10.1 Poland	383
16.10.2 Norway	384
16.10.3 Netherlands	384
16.10.4 Czechoslovakia	384
16.10.5 Belgium	385
16.10.6 Yugoslavia	385
16.10.7 Korea	385
16.11 List of all War Declarations and other outbreaks of hostilities	385
16.12 See also	385
16.13 Notes	385
16.14 Further reading	389
16.14.1 Allies	390
16.14.2 Governments in exile	390
16.14.3 Axis	390
16.14.4 Historiography	391
16.15 External links	391
17 Aftermath of World War II	392
17.1 Immediate effects	392
17.1.1 United Kingdom	392
17.1.2 Soviet Union	393
17.1.3 Germany	393
17.1.4 Italy	395
17.1.5 Austria	395
17.1.6 Japan	395
17.1.7 Finland	395
17.1.8 The Baltic states	395
17.1.9 Population displacement	396
17.1.10 Rape during occupation	396
17.2 Post-war tensions	397
17.2.1 Europe	397
17.2.2 Asia	399
17.2.3 Covert operations and espionage	401
17.2.4 Recruitment of former enemy scientists	401
17.3 Demise of the League of Nations and the founding of the United Nations	402
17.4 Unresolved conflicts	403
17.5 Economic aftermath	403
17.6 See also	403
17.7 Notes	403
17.8 Further reading	406
17.9 External links	407

18 Consequences of Nazism	408
18.1 Jewish people	408
18.2 Poland	408
18.2.1 See also	409
18.3 Central Europe	409
18.4 Soviet Union	409
18.4.1 Belarus	409
18.4.2 Ukraine	410
18.4.3 See also	410
18.5 Yugoslavia	410
18.6 Western Europe	410
18.7 Greece	411
18.8 Germany	411
18.8.1 See also	414
18.9 World politics	414
18.10 International law	414
18.11 Racism	414
18.12 Military	414
18.13 References	415
18.14 Footnotes	415
18.15 Text and image sources, contributors, and licenses	417
18.15.1 Text	417
18.15.2 Images	441
18.15.3 Content license	465

Chapter 1

World War II

“The Second World War” and “WWII” redirect here. For other uses, see [The Second World War \(disambiguation\)](#) and [WWII \(disambiguation\)](#).

World War II (often abbreviated to **WWII** or **WW2**), also known as the **Second World War**, was a global war that lasted from 1939 to 1945, although related conflicts began earlier. It involved the vast majority of the world's nations—including all of the great powers—eventually forming two opposing military alliances: the **Allies** and the **Axis**. It was the most widespread war in history, and directly involved more than 100 million people from over 30 countries. In a state of "total war", the major participants threw their entire economic, industrial, and scientific capabilities behind the war effort, erasing the distinction between civilian and military resources. Marked by mass deaths of civilians, including the **Holocaust** (in which approximately 11 million people were killed)^{*[1]*[2]} and the strategic bombing of industrial and population centres (in which approximately one million were killed, and which included the **atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki**),^{*[3]} it resulted in an estimated 50 million to 85 million fatalities. These made World War II the deadliest conflict in human history.^{*[4]}

The Empire of Japan aimed to dominate Asia and the Pacific and was already at war with the Republic of China in 1937,^{*[5]} but the world war is generally said to have begun on 1 September 1939^{*[6]} with the invasion of Poland by Nazi Germany and subsequent declarations of war on Germany by France and the United Kingdom. From late 1939 to early 1941, in a series of campaigns and treaties, Germany conquered or controlled much of continental Europe, and formed the Axis alliance with Italy and Japan. Under the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact of August 1939, Germany and the Soviet Union partitioned and annexed territories of their European neighbours, Poland, Finland, Romania and the Baltic states. The war continued primarily between the European Axis powers and the coalition of the United Kingdom and the British Commonwealth, with campaigns including the North Africa and East Africa campaigns, the aerial Battle of Britain, the Blitz bombing campaign, the Balkan Campaign as well as the long-running Battle of the Atlantic. In June 1941, the European Axis powers launched an invasion of

the Soviet Union, opening the largest land theatre of war in history, which trapped the major part of the Axis' military forces into a war of attrition. In December 1941, Japan attacked the United States and European territories in the Pacific Ocean, and quickly conquered much of the Western Pacific.

The Axis advance halted in 1942 when Japan lost the critical **Battle of Midway**, near Hawaii, and Germany was defeated in North Africa and then, decisively, at Stalingrad in the Soviet Union. In 1943, with a series of German defeats on the Eastern Front, the **Allied invasion of Sicily** and the **Allied invasion of Italy** which brought about Italian surrender, and Allied victories in the Pacific, the Axis lost the initiative and undertook strategic retreat on all fronts. In 1944, the Western Allies invaded German-occupied France, while the Soviet Union regained all of its territorial losses and invaded Germany and its allies. During 1944 and 1945 the Japanese suffered major reverses in mainland Asia in **South Central China** and Burma, while the Allies crippled the Japanese Navy and captured key Western Pacific islands.

The war in Europe concluded with an invasion of Germany by the Western Allies and the Soviet Union, culminating in the capture of Berlin by Soviet and Polish troops and the subsequent German unconditional surrender on 8 May 1945. Following the Potsdam Declaration by the Allies on 26 July 1945 and the refusal of Japan to surrender under its terms, the United States dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6 August and 9 August respectively. With an invasion of the Japanese archipelago imminent, the possibility of additional atomic bombings, and the Soviet Union's declaration of war on Japan and invasion of Manchuria, Japan surrendered on 15 August 1945. Thus ended the war in Asia, cementing the total victory of the Allies.

World War II altered the political alignment and social structure of the world. The **United Nations** (UN) was established to foster international co-operation and prevent future conflicts. The victorious great powers—the United States, the Soviet Union, China, the United Kingdom, and France—became the permanent members of the **United Nations Security Council**.^{*[7]} The Soviet Union and the United States emerged as rival superpowers, setting the stage for the **Cold War**, which lasted for the next 46

years. Meanwhile, the influence of European great powers waned, while the decolonisation of Asia and Africa began. Most countries whose industries had been damaged moved towards economic recovery. Political integration, especially in Europe, emerged as an effort to end pre-war enmities and to create a common identity.* [8]

1.1 Chronology

See also: [Timeline of World War II](#)

The start of the war in Europe is generally held to be 1 September 1939,* [9]* [10] beginning with the German invasion of Poland; Britain and France declared war on Germany two days later. The dates for the beginning of war in the Pacific include the start of the Second Sino-Japanese War on 7 July 1937,* [11]* [12] or even the Japanese invasion of Manchuria on 19 September 1931.* [13]* [14]

Others follow the British historian A. J. P. Taylor, who held that the Sino-Japanese War and war in Europe and its colonies occurred simultaneously and the two wars merged in 1941. This article uses the conventional dating. Other starting dates sometimes used for World War II include the Italian invasion of Abyssinia on 3 October 1935.* [15] The British historian Antony Beevor views the beginning of World War II as the Battles of Khalkhin Gol fought between Japan and the forces of Mongolia and the Soviet Union from May to September 1939.* [16]

The exact date of the war's end is also not universally agreed upon. It was generally accepted at the time that the war ended with the armistice of 14 August 1945 (V-J Day), rather than the formal surrender of Japan (2 September 1945). A peace treaty with Japan was signed in 1951 to formally tie up any loose ends such as compensation to be paid to Allied prisoners of war who had been victims of atrocities.* [17] A treaty regarding Germany's future allowed the reunification of East and West Germany to take place in 1990 and resolved other post-World War II issues.* [18]

1.2 Background

Main article: [Causes of World War II](#)

1.2.1 Europe

World War I had radically altered the political European map, with the defeat of the Central Powers—including Austria-Hungary, Germany and the Ottoman Empire—and the 1917 Bolshevik seizure of power in Russia, which eventually led to the founding of the Soviet Union.

Meanwhile, the victorious Allies of World War I, such as France, Belgium, Italy, Greece and Romania, gained territory, and new nation-states were created out of the collapse of Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman and Russian Empires.

To prevent a future world war, the League of Nations was created during the 1919 Paris Peace Conference. The organisation's primary goals were to prevent armed conflict through collective security, military and naval disarmament, and settling international disputes through peaceful negotiations and arbitration.



The League of Nations assembly, held in Geneva, Switzerland, 1930

Despite strong pacifist sentiment after World War I,* [19] its aftermath still caused irredentist and revanchist nationalism in several European states. These sentiments were especially marked in Germany because of the significant territorial, colonial, and financial losses incurred by the Treaty of Versailles. Under the treaty, Germany lost around 13 per cent of its home territory and all of its overseas possessions, while German annexation of other states was prohibited, reparations were imposed, and limits were placed on the size and capability of the country's armed forces.* [20]

The German Empire was dissolved in the German Revolution of 1918–1919, and a democratic government, later known as the Weimar Republic, was created. The interwar period saw strife between supporters of the new republic and hardline opponents on both the right and left. Italy, as an Entente ally, had made some post-war territorial gains; however, Italian nationalists were angered that the promises made by Britain and France to secure Italian entrance into the war were not fulfilled with the peace settlement. From 1922 to 1925, the Fascist movement led by Benito Mussolini seized power in Italy with a nationalist, totalitarian, and class collaborationist agenda that abolished representative democracy, repressed socialist, left-wing and liberal forces, and pursued an aggressive expansionist foreign policy aimed at making Italy a world power, promising the creation of a "New Roman Empire".* [21]

Adolf Hitler, after an unsuccessful attempt to overthrow the German government in 1923, eventually became the



Adolf Hitler at a German National Socialist political rally in Weimar, October 1930

Chancellor of Germany in 1933. He abolished democracy, espousing a radical, racially motivated revision of the world order, and soon began a massive rearmament campaign.* [22] It was at this time that political scientists began to predict that a second Great War might take place.* [23] Meanwhile, France, to secure its alliance, allowed Italy a free hand in Ethiopia, which Italy desired as a colonial possession. The situation was aggravated in early 1935 when the Territory of the Saar Basin was legally reunited with Germany and Hitler repudiated the Treaty of Versailles, accelerated his rearmament programme, and introduced conscription.* [24]

Hoping to contain Germany, the United Kingdom, France and Italy formed the **Stresa Front**; however, in June 1935, the United Kingdom made an independent naval agreement with Germany, easing prior restrictions. The Soviet Union, concerned by Germany's goals of capturing vast areas of eastern Europe, drafted a treaty of mutual assistance with France. Before taking effect though, the Franco-Soviet pact was required to go through the bureaucracy of the League of Nations, which rendered it essentially toothless.* [25] The United States, concerned with events in Europe and Asia, passed the Neutrality Act in August of the same year.* [26]

Hitler defied the Versailles and Locarno treaties by remilitarising the Rhineland in March 1936. He encountered little opposition from other European powers.* [27] In October 1936, Germany and Italy formed the **Rome–Berlin Axis**. A month later, Germany and Japan signed the **Anti-Comintern Pact**, which Italy would join in the following year.

1.2.2 Asia

The Kuomintang (KMT) party in China launched a unification campaign against regional warlords and nominally unified China in the mid-1920s, but was soon embroiled in a civil war against its former Chinese communist allies.* [28] In 1931, an increasingly militaristic Japanese Empire, which had long sought influence in

China* [29] as the first step of what its government saw as the country's right to rule Asia, used the **Mukden Incident** as a pretext to launch an invasion of Manchuria and establish the **puppet state of Manchukuo**.* [30]

Too weak to resist Japan, China appealed to the **League of Nations** for help. Japan withdrew from the League of Nations after being condemned for its incursion into Manchuria. The two nations then fought several battles, in **Shanghai**, **Rehe** and **Hebei**, until the **Tanggu Truce** was signed in 1933. Thereafter, Chinese volunteer forces continued the resistance to Japanese aggression in **Manchuria**, and **Chahar** and **Suiyuan**.* [31] After the 1936 Xi'an Incident, the Kuomintang and communist forces agreed on a ceasefire to present a united front to oppose Japan.* [32]

1.3 Pre-war events

1.3.1 Italian invasion of Ethiopia (1935)

Main article: **Second Italo-Abyssinian War**

The Second Italo–Abyssinian War was a brief colonial



Italian soldiers recruited in 1935, on their way to fight the Second Italo-Abyssinian War

war that began in October 1935 and ended in May 1936. The war began with the invasion of the **Ethiopian Empire** (also known as **Abyssinia**) by the armed forces of the Kingdom of Italy (*Regno d'Italia*), which was launched from **Italian Somaliland** and **Eritrea**.* [33] The war resulted in the military occupation of Ethiopia and its annexation into the newly created colony of **Italian East Africa** (*Africa Orientale Italiana*, or AOI); in addition, it exposed the weakness of the **League of Nations** as a force to preserve peace. Both Italy and Ethiopia were member nations, but the League did nothing when the former clearly violated the League's own Article X.* [34] Germany was the only major European nation to support the invasion. Italy subsequently dropped its objections to Germany's goal of absorbing Austria.* [35]

1.3.2 Spanish Civil War (1936–39)

Main article: Spanish Civil War

When civil war broke out in Spain, Hitler and Mussolini



The bombing of Guernica in 1937, sparked Europe-wide fears that the next war would be based on bombing of cities with very high civilian casualties

lent military support to the Nationalist rebels, led by General Francisco Franco. The Soviet Union supported the existing government, the Spanish Republic. Over 30,000 foreign volunteers, known as the International Brigades, also fought against the Nationalists. Both Germany and the USSR used this proxy war as an opportunity to test in combat their most advanced weapons and tactics. The bombing of Guernica by the German Condor Legion in April 1937 heightened widespread concerns that the next major war would include extensive terror bombing attacks on civilians.*[36]*[37] The Nationalists won the civil war in April 1939; Franco, now dictator, bargained with both sides during the Second World War, but never concluded any major agreements. He did send volunteers to fight on the Eastern Front under German command but Spain remained neutral and did not allow either side to use its territory.*[38]

1.3.3 Japanese invasion of China (1937)

Main article: Second Sino-Japanese War

In July 1937, Japan captured the former Chinese imperial capital of Beijing after instigating the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, which culminated in the Japanese campaign to invade all of China.*[39] The Soviets quickly signed a non-aggression pact with China to lend materiel support, effectively ending China's prior co-operation with Germany. Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek deployed his best army to defend Shanghai, but, after three months of fighting, Shanghai fell. The Japanese continued to push the Chinese forces back, capturing the capital Nanking in December 1937. After the fall of Nanking, tens of thousands if not hundreds of thousands of Chinese civilians and disarmed combatants were murdered by the Japanese.*[40]*[41]



Japanese Imperial Army soldiers during the Battle of Shanghai, 1937

In March 1938, Nationalist Chinese forces won their first major victory at Taierzhuang but then the city of Xuzhou was taken by Japanese in May.*[42] In June 1938, Chinese forces stalled the Japanese advance by flooding the Yellow River; this manoeuvre bought time for the Chinese to prepare their defences at Wuhan, but the city was taken by October.*[43] Japanese military victories did not bring about the collapse of Chinese resistance that Japan had hoped to achieve; instead the Chinese government relocated inland to Chongqing and continued the war.*[44]*[45]

1.3.4 Soviet-Japanese border conflicts



Red Army artillery unit during the Battle of Lake Khasan, 1938

Main article: Soviet–Japanese border conflicts

In the mid-to-late 1930s, Japanese forces in Manchukuo had sporadic border clashes with the Soviet Union and Mongolia. The Japanese doctrine of Hokushin-ron, which emphasised Japan's expansion northward, was favoured by the Imperial Army during this time. With the devastating Japanese defeat at Khalkin Gol in 1939 and ally Nazi Germany pursuing neutrality with the Soviets, this policy would prove difficult to maintain. Japan and the Soviet Union eventually signed a Neutrality Pact in April 1941, and Japan adopted the doctrine of Nanshin-

ron, promoted by the Navy, which took its focus southward, eventually leading to its war with the United States and the Western Allies.*[46]*[47]

1.3.5 European occupations and agreements

Further information: Anschluss, Appeasement, Munich Agreement, German occupation of Czechoslovakia, and Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact

In Europe, Germany and Italy were becoming more



Chamberlain, Daladier, Hitler, Mussolini, and Ciano pictured just before signing the Munich Agreement, 29 September 1938

aggressive. In March 1938, Germany annexed Austria, again provoking little response from other European powers.*[48] Encouraged, Hitler began pressing German claims on the Sudetenland, an area of Czechoslovakia with a predominantly ethnic German population; and soon Britain and France followed the counsel of British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and conceded this territory to Germany in the Munich Agreement, which was made against the wishes of the Czechoslovak government, in exchange for a promise of no further territorial demands.*[49] Soon afterwards, Germany and Italy forced Czechoslovakia to cede additional territory to Hungary and Poland annexed Czechoslovakia's Zaolzie region.*[50]

Although all of Germany's stated demands had been satisfied by the agreement, privately Hitler was furious that British interference had prevented him from seizing all of Czechoslovakia in one operation. In subsequent speeches Hitler attacked British and Jewish "war-mongers" and in January 1939 secretly ordered a major build-up of the German navy to challenge British naval supremacy. In March 1939, Germany invaded the remainder of Czechoslovakia and subsequently split it into the German Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and a pro-German client state, the Slovak Republic.*[51] Hitler also delivered an ultimatum to Lithuania, forcing the concession of the Klaipėda Region.

Greatly alarmed and with Hitler making further demands on the Free City of Danzig, Britain and France



German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop and the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin, after signing the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, 23 August 1939

guaranteed their support for Polish independence; when Italy conquered Albania in April 1939, the same guarantee was extended to Romania and Greece.*[52] Shortly after the Franco-British pledge to Poland, Germany and Italy formalised their own alliance with the Pact of Steel.*[53] Hitler accused Britain and Poland of trying to "encircle" Germany and renounced the Anglo-German Naval Agreement and the German–Polish Non-Aggression Pact.

In August 1939, Germany and the Soviet Union signed the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact,*[54] a non-aggression treaty with a secret protocol. The parties gave each other rights to "spheres of influence" (western Poland and Lithuania for Germany; eastern Poland, Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Bessarabia for the USSR). It also raised the question of continuing Polish independence.*[55] The agreement was crucial to Hitler because it assured that Germany would not have to face the prospect of a two-front war, as it had in World War I, after it defeated Poland.

The situation reached a general crisis in late August as German troops continued to mobilise against the Polish border. In a private meeting with the Italian foreign minister, Count Ciano, Hitler asserted that Poland was a "doubtful neutral" that needed to either yield to his demands or be "liquidated" to prevent it from draw-

ing off German troops in the future “unavoidable” war with the Western democracies. He did not believe Britain or France would intervene in the conflict.*[56] On 23 August Hitler ordered the attack to proceed on 26 August, but upon hearing that Britain had concluded a formal mutual assistance pact with Poland and that Italy would maintain neutrality, he decided to delay it.*[57]

In response to British requests for direct negotiations to avoid war, Germany made demands on Poland, which only served as a pretext to worsen relations.*[58] On 29 August, Hitler demanded that a Polish plenipotentiary immediately travel to Berlin to negotiate the handover of Danzig, and to allow a plebiscite in the Polish Corridor in which the German minority would vote on secession.*[58] The Poles refused to comply with the German demands and on the night of 30–31 August in a violent meeting with the British ambassador Neville Henderson, Ribbentrop declared that Germany considered its claims rejected.*[59]

1.4 Course of the war

Further information: [Diplomatic history of World War II](#)

fully independent Dominions*[61] of the British Commonwealth*[62]—Australia (3 September), Canada (10 September), New Zealand (3 September), and South Africa (6 September)—declared war on Germany. However, initially the alliance provided limited direct military support to Poland, consisting of a cautious, half-hearted French probe into the Saarland.*[63] The Western Allies also began a naval blockade of Germany, which aimed to damage the country's economy and war effort.*[64] Germany responded by ordering U-boat warfare against Allied merchant and warships, which was to later escalate into the Battle of the Atlantic.



German tanks near the city of Bydgoszcz, during the Invasion of Poland, September 1939

1.4.1 War breaks out in Europe (1939–40)

Main articles: [Invasion of Poland](#), [Occupation of Poland \(1939–45\)](#), [Nazi crimes against the Polish nation](#), [Soviet invasion of Poland](#), and [Soviet repressions of Polish citizens \(1939–46\)](#)

On 1 September 1939, Germany invaded Poland un-



Soldiers of the German Wehrmacht tearing down the border crossing between Poland and the Free City of Danzig, 1 September 1939

der the false pretext that the Poles had carried out a series of [sabotage operations](#) against German targets near the border.*[60] Two days later, on 3 September, after a British ultimatum to Germany to cease military operations was ignored, Britain and France, followed by the

On 17 September 1939, after signing a cease-fire with Japan, the Soviets invaded Poland from the east.*[65] The Polish army was defeated and Warsaw surrendered to the Germans on 27 September, with final pockets of resistance surrendering on 6 October. Poland's territory was divided between Germany and the Soviet Union, with Lithuania and Slovakia also receiving small shares. After the defeat of Poland's armed forces, the Polish resistance established an [Underground State](#) and a partisan [Home Army](#).*[66] About 100,000 Polish military personnel were evacuated to Romania and the Baltic countries; many of these soldiers later fought against the Germans in other theatres of the war.*[67] Poland's Enigma codebreakers were also evacuated to France.*[68]

On 6 October Hitler made a public peace overture to Britain and France, but said that the future of Poland was to be determined exclusively by Germany and the Soviet Union. Chamberlain rejected this on 12 October, saying “Past experience has shown that no reliance can be placed upon the promises of the present German Government.”*[59] After this rejection Hitler ordered an immediate offensive against France,*[69] but bad weather forced repeated postponements until the spring of 1940.*[70]*[71]*[72]

After signing the [German–Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Demarcation](#), the Soviet Union forced the Baltic countries—Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania—to allow it to station Soviet troops in their countries under pacts of “mutual assistance”.*[73]*[74]*[75] Finland re-

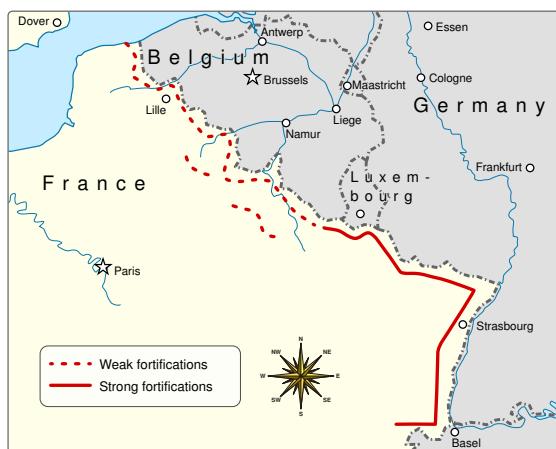


German and Soviet army officers pictured shaking hands—after Nazi Germany and Soviet Union annexed new territories in Eastern Europe, 1939

jected territorial demands, prompting a Soviet invasion in November 1939.* [76] The resulting Winter War ended in March 1940 with Finnish concessions.* [77] Britain and France, treating the Soviet attack on Finland as tantamount to its entering the war on the side of the Germans, responded to the Soviet invasion by supporting the USSR's expulsion from the League of Nations.* [75]

In June 1940, the Soviet Union forcibly annexed Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania,* [74] and the disputed Romanian regions of Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina and Hertza. Meanwhile, Nazi-Soviet political rapprochement and economic co-operation* [78]* [79] gradually stalled,* [80]* [81] and both states began preparations for war.* [82]

1.4.2 Western Europe (1940–41)



Map of the French Maginot Line

In April 1940, Germany invaded Denmark and Norway to protect shipments of iron ore from Sweden, which the Allies were attempting to cut off by unilaterally mining neutral Norwegian waters.* [83] Denmark capitulated after a few hours, and despite Allied support, during which

the important harbour of Narvik temporarily was recaptured from the Germans, Norway was conquered within two months.* [84] British discontent over the Norwegian campaign led to the replacement of the British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, with Winston Churchill on 10 May 1940.* [85]

Germany launched an offensive against France and, adhering to the Manstein Plan also attacked the neutral nations of Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg on 10 May 1940.* [86] That same day British forces landed in Iceland and the Faroes to preempt a possible German invasion of the islands.* [87] The U.S. in close co-operation with the Danish envoy to Washington D.C., agreed to protect Greenland, laying the political framework for the formal establishment of bases in April 1941. The Netherlands and Belgium were overrun using blitzkrieg tactics in a few days and weeks, respectively.* [88] The French-fortified Maginot Line and the main body the Allied forces which had moved into Belgium were circumvented by a flanking movement through the thickly wooded Ardennes region,* [89] mistakenly perceived by Allied planners as an impenetrable natural barrier against armoured vehicles.* [90]* [91] As a result, the bulk of the Allied armies found themselves trapped in an encirclement and were beaten. The majority were taken prisoner, whilst over 300,000, mostly British and French, were evacuated from the continent at Dunkirk by early June, although abandoning almost all of their equipment.* [92]

On 10 June, Italy invaded France, declaring war on both France and the United Kingdom.* [93] Paris fell to the Germans on 14 June and eight days later France signed an armistice with Germany and was soon divided into German and Italian occupation zones,* [94] and an unoccupied rump state under the Vichy Regime, which, though officially neutral, was generally aligned with Germany. France kept its fleet but the British feared the Germans would seize it, so on 3 July, the British attacked it.* [95]



View of London after the German Blitz, 29 December 1940

The Battle of Britain^{*[96]} began in early July with Luftwaffe attacks on shipping and harbours.^{*[97]} On 19 July, Hitler again publicly offered to end the war, saying he had no desire to destroy the British Empire. The United Kingdom rejected this ultimatum.^{*[98]} The main German air superiority campaign started in August but failed to defeat RAF Fighter Command, and a proposed invasion was postponed indefinitely on 17 September. The German strategic bombing offensive intensified as night attacks on London and other cities in the Blitz, but largely failed to disrupt the British war effort.^{*[97]}



German Luftwaffe, Heinkel He 111 bombers during the Battle of Britain

Using newly captured French ports, the German Navy enjoyed success against an over-extended Royal Navy, using U-boats against British shipping in the Atlantic.^{*[99]} The British scored a significant victory on 27 May 1941 by sinking the German battleship *Bismarck*.^{*[100]} Perhaps most importantly, during the Battle of Britain the Royal Air Force had successfully resisted the Luftwaffe's assault, and the German bombing campaign largely ended in May 1941.^{*[101]}

Throughout this period, the neutral United States took measures to assist China and the Western Allies. In November 1939, the American Neutrality Act was amended to allow “cash and carry” purchases by the Allies.^{*[102]} In 1940, following the German capture of Paris, the size of the United States Navy was significantly increased. In September, the United States further agreed to a trade of American destroyers for British bases.^{*[103]} Still, a large majority of the American public continued to oppose any direct military intervention into the conflict well into 1941.^{*[104]}

Although Roosevelt had promised to keep the United States out of the war, he nevertheless took concrete steps to prepare for war. In December 1940 he accused Hitler of planning world conquest and ruled out negotiations as useless, calling for the US to become an “arsenal for democracy” and promoted the passage of Lend-Lease aid to support the British war effort.^{*[98]} In January 1941

secret high level staff talks with the British began for the purposes of determining how to defeat Germany should the US enter the war. They decided on a number of offensive policies, including an air offensive, the “early elimination” of Italy, raids, support of resistance groups, and the capture of positions to launch an offensive against Germany.^{*[105]}

At the end of September 1940, the Tripartite Pact united Japan, Italy and Germany to formalise the Axis Powers. The Tripartite Pact stipulated that any country, with the exception of the Soviet Union, not in the war which attacked any Axis Power would be forced to go to war against all three.^{*[106]} The Axis expanded in November 1940 when Hungary, Slovakia and Romania joined the Tripartite Pact.^{*[107]} Romania would make a major contribution (as did Hungary) to the Axis war against the USSR, partially to recapture territory ceded to the USSR, partially to pursue its leader Ion Antonescu's desire to combat communism.^{*[108]}

1.4.3 Mediterranean (1940–41)



Australian troops of the British Commonwealth Forces man a front-line trench during the Siege of Tobruk; North African Campaign, August 1941

Italy began operations in the Mediterranean, initiating a siege of Malta in June, conquering British Somaliland in August, and making an incursion into British-held Egypt in September 1940. In October 1940, Italy started the Greco-Italian War because of Mussolini's jealousy of Hitler's success but within days was repulsed and pushed back into Albania, where a stalemate soon occurred.^{*[109]} The United Kingdom responded to Greek requests for assistance by sending troops to Crete and providing air support to Greece. Hitler decided that when the weather improved he would take action against Greece to assist the Italians and prevent the British from gaining a foothold in the Balkans, to strike against the British naval dominance of the Mediterranean, and to secure his hold on Romanian oil.^{*[110]}

In December 1940, British Commonwealth forces be-

gan counter-offensives against Italian forces in Egypt and Italian East Africa.* [111] The offensive in North Africa was highly successful and by early February 1941 Italy had lost control of eastern Libya and large numbers of Italian troops had been taken prisoner. The Italian Navy also suffered significant defeats, with the Royal Navy putting three Italian battleships out of commission by a carrier attack at Taranto, and neutralising several more warships at the Battle of Cape Matapan.* [112]



Captured German Afrika Korps soldiers, December 1941

The Germans soon intervened to assist Italy. Hitler sent German forces to Libya in February, and by the end of March they had launched an offensive which drove back the Commonwealth forces which had been weakened to support Greece.* [113] In under a month, Commonwealth forces were pushed back into Egypt with the exception of the besieged port of Tobruk.* [114] The Commonwealth attempted to dislodge Axis forces in May and again in June, but failed on both occasions.* [115]

By late March 1941, following Bulgaria's signing of the Tripartite Pact, the Germans were in position to intervene in Greece. Plans were changed, however, because of developments in neighbouring Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav government had signed the Tripartite Pact on 25 March, only to be overthrown two days later by a British-encouraged coup. Hitler viewed the new regime as hostile and immediately decided to eliminate it. On 6 April Germany simultaneously invaded both Yugoslavia and Greece, making rapid progress and forcing both nations to surrender within the month. The British were driven from the Balkans after Germany conquered the Greek island of Crete by the end of May.* [116] Although the Axis victory was swift, bitter partisan warfare subsequently broke out against the Axis occupation of Yugoslavia, which continued until the end of the war.

The Allies did have some successes during this time. In the Middle East, Commonwealth forces first quashed an uprising in Iraq which had been supported by German aircraft from bases within Vichy-controlled Syria,* [117] then, with the assistance of the Free French, invaded Syria and Lebanon to prevent further such occurrences.* [118]

1.4.4 Axis attack on the USSR (1941)

Further information: Operation Barbarossa, Einsatzgruppen, World War II casualties of the Soviet Union, and Nazi crimes against Soviet POWs

With the situation in Europe and Asia relatively stable,



European theatre of World War II animation map, 1939–1945

—Red: Western Allies and Soviet Union after 1941; Green: Soviet Union before 1941; Blue: Axis Powers

Germany, Japan, and the Soviet Union made preparations. With the Soviets wary of mounting tensions with Germany and the Japanese planning to take advantage of the European War by seizing resource-rich European possessions in Southeast Asia, the two powers signed the Soviet–Japanese Neutrality Pact in April 1941.* [119] By contrast, the Germans were steadily making preparations for an attack on the Soviet Union, massing forces on the Soviet border.* [120]

Hitler believed that Britain's refusal to end the war was based on the hope that the United States and the Soviet Union would enter the war against Germany sooner or later.* [121] He therefore decided to try to strengthen Germany's relations with the Soviets, or failing that, to attack and eliminate them as a factor. In November 1940, negotiations took place to determine if the Soviet Union would join the Tripartite Pact. The Soviets showed some interest, but asked for concessions from Finland, Bulgaria, Turkey, and Japan that Germany considered unacceptable. On 18 December 1940, Hitler issued the directive to prepare for an invasion of the Soviet Union.

On 22 June 1941, Germany, supported by Italy and Romania, invaded the Soviet Union in Operation Barbarossa, with Germany accusing the Soviets of plotting against them. They were joined shortly by Finland and Hungary.* [122] The primary targets of this surprise offensive* [123] were the Baltic region, Moscow and Ukraine, with the ultimate goal of ending the 1941

campaign near the Arkhangelsk-Astrakhan line, from the Caspian to the White Seas. Hitler's objectives were to eliminate the Soviet Union as a military power, exterminate Communism, generate *Lebensraum* ("living space")^{*[124]} by dispossessing the native population^{*[125]} and guarantee access to the strategic resources needed to defeat Germany's remaining rivals.^{*[126]}

Although the Red Army was preparing for strategic counter-offensives before the war,^{*[127]} *Barbarossa* forced the Soviet supreme command to adopt a strategic defence. During the summer, the Axis made significant gains into Soviet territory, inflicting immense losses in both personnel and materiel. By the middle of August, however, the German Army High Command decided to suspend the offensive of a considerably depleted Army Group Centre, and to divert the 2nd Panzer Group to reinforce troops advancing towards central Ukraine and Leningrad.^{*[128]} The Kiev offensive was overwhelmingly successful, resulting in encirclement and elimination of four Soviet armies, and made further advance into Crimea and industrially developed Eastern Ukraine (the First Battle of Kharkov) possible.^{*[129]}



Soviet civilians in Leningrad leaving destroyed houses, after a German bombardment of the city; Battle of Leningrad, 10 December 1942

The diversion of three quarters of the Axis troops and the majority of their air forces from France and the central Mediterranean to the Eastern Front^{*[130]} prompted Britain to reconsider its grand strategy.^{*[131]} In July, the UK and the Soviet Union formed a military alliance against Germany^{*[132]} The British and Soviets invaded Iran to secure the Persian Corridor and Iran's oil fields.^{*[133]} In August, the United Kingdom and the United States jointly issued the Atlantic Charter.^{*[134]}

By October Axis operational objectives in Ukraine and the Baltic region were achieved, with only the sieges of Leningrad^{*[135]} and Sevastopol continuing.^{*[136]} A major offensive against Moscow was renewed; after two months of fierce battles in increasingly harsh weather the German army almost reached the outer suburbs of Moscow, where the exhausted troops^{*[137]} were forced to suspend their offensive.^{*[138]} Large territorial gains were made by Axis forces, but their campaign had failed to achieve its main objectives: two key cities remained in

Soviet hands, the Soviet capability to resist was not broken, and the Soviet Union retained a considerable part of its military potential. The blitzkrieg phase of the war in Europe had ended.^{*[139]}

By early December, freshly mobilised reserves^{*[140]} allowed the Soviets to achieve numerical parity with Axis troops.^{*[141]} This, as well as intelligence data which established that a minimal number of Soviet troops in the East would be sufficient to deter any attack by the Japanese Kwantung Army,^{*[142]} allowed the Soviets to begin a massive counter-offensive that started on 5 December all along the front and pushed German troops 100–250 kilometres (62–155 mi) west.^{*[143]}

1.4.5 War breaks out in the Pacific (1941)

In 1939 the United States had renounced its trade treaty with Japan; and, beginning with an aviation gasoline ban in July 1940, Japan became subject to increasing economic pressure.^{*[98]} During this time, Japan launched its first attack against Changsha, a strategically important Chinese city, but was repulsed by late September.^{*[144]} Despite several offensives by both sides, the war between China and Japan was stalemated by 1940. To increase pressure on China by blocking supply routes, and to better position Japanese forces in the event of a war with the Western powers, Japan invaded and occupied northern Indochina.^{*[145]} Afterwards, the United States embargoed iron, steel and mechanical parts against Japan.^{*[146]} Other sanctions soon followed.

In August of that year, Chinese communists launched an offensive in Central China; in retaliation, Japan instituted harsh measures in occupied areas to reduce human and material resources for the communists.^{*[147]} Continued antipathy between Chinese communist and nationalist forces culminated in armed clashes in January 1941, effectively ending their co-operation.^{*[148]} In March, the Japanese 11th army attacked the headquarters of the Chinese 19th army but was repulsed during Battle of Shanghai.^{*[149]} In September, Japan attempted to take the city of Changsha again and clashed with Chinese nationalist forces.^{*[150]}

German successes in Europe encouraged Japan to increase pressure on European governments in Southeast Asia. The Dutch government agreed to provide Japan some oil supplies from the Dutch East Indies, but negotiations for additional access to their resources ended in failure in June 1941.^{*[151]} In July 1941 Japan sent troops to southern Indochina, thus threatening British and Dutch possessions in the Far East. The United States, United Kingdom and other Western governments reacted to this move with a freeze on Japanese assets and a total oil embargo.^{*[152]}^{*[153]}

Since early 1941 the United States and Japan had been engaged in negotiations in an attempt to improve their strained relations and end the war in China. During



Mitsubishi A6M2 "Zero" fighters on the Imperial Japanese Navy aircraft carrier Shōkaku, just before the attack on Pearl Harbor

these negotiations Japan advanced a number of proposals which were dismissed by the Americans as inadequate.*[154] At the same time the US, Britain, and the Netherlands engaged in secret discussions for the joint defence of their territories, in the event of a Japanese attack against any of them.*[155] Roosevelt reinforced the Philippines (an American protectorate scheduled for independence in 1946) and warned Japan that the US would react to Japanese attacks against any "neighbouring countries".*[155]



USS Arizona during the Japanese surprise air attack on the American Pacific fleet, 7 December 1941

Frustrated at the lack of progress and feeling the pinch of the American-British-Dutch sanctions, Japan prepared for war, as IJA General Hideki Tojo became Imperial Japan's Prime Minister on October 17. On 20 November it presented an interim proposal as its final offer. It called for the end of American aid to China and for the supply of oil and other resources to Japan. In exchange they promised not to launch any attacks in Southeast Asia and to withdraw their forces from their threatening positions in southern Indochina.*[154] The American counter-proposal of 26 November required that Japan evacuate all of China without conditions and conclude

non-aggression pacts with all Pacific powers.*[156] That meant Japan was essentially forced to choose between abandoning its ambitions in China, or seizing the natural resources it needed in the Dutch East Indies by force;* [157] the Japanese military did not consider the former an option, and many officers considered the oil embargo an unspoken declaration of war.*[158]

Japan planned to rapidly seize European colonies in Asia to create a large defensive perimeter stretching into the Central Pacific; the Japanese would then be free to exploit the resources of Southeast Asia while exhausting the over-stretched Allies by fighting a defensive war.*[159] To prevent American intervention while securing the perimeter it was further planned to neutralise the United States Pacific Fleet and the American military presence in the Philippines from the outset.*[160] On 7 December 1941 (8 December in Asian time zones), Japan attacked British and American holdings with near-simultaneous offensives against Southeast Asia and the Central Pacific.*[161] These included an attack on the American fleet at Pearl Harbor, the Philippines, landings in Thailand and Malaya*[161] and the battle of Hong Kong.

These attacks led the United States, Britain, China, Australia and several other states to formally declare war on Japan, whereas the Soviet Union, being heavily involved in large-scale hostilities with European Axis countries, maintained its neutrality agreement with Japan.*[162] Germany, followed by the other Axis states, declared war on the United States*[163] in solidarity with Japan, citing as justification the American attacks on German war vessels that had been ordered by Roosevelt.*[122]*[164]

1.4.6 Axis advance stalls (1942–43)



Seated at the Casablanca Conference; US President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British PM Winston Churchill, January 1943

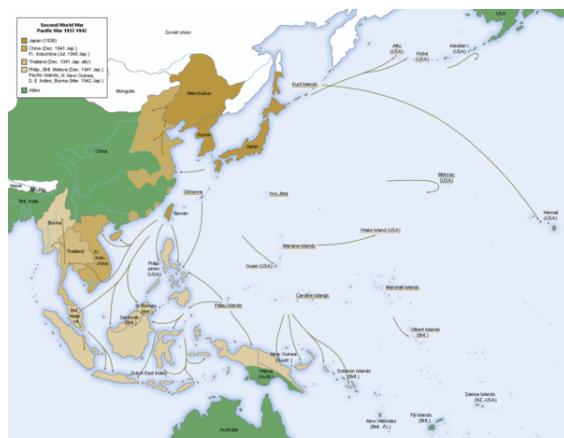
In January 1942, the Allied Big Four *[165] (the United States, Britain, the Soviet Union and China) and 22 smaller or exiled governments issued the Declaration

by United Nations, thereby affirming the Atlantic Charter,*[166] and agreeing to not to sign a separate peace with the Axis powers.

During 1942, Allied officials debated on the appropriate grand strategy to pursue. All agreed that defeating Germany was the primary objective. The Americans favoured a straightforward, large-scale attack on Germany through France. The Soviets were also demanding a second front. The British, on the other hand, argued that military operations should target peripheral areas to wear out German strength, lead to increasing demoralisation, and bolster resistance forces. Germany itself would be subject to a heavy bombing campaign. An offensive against Germany would then be launched primarily by Allied armour without using large-scale armies.*[167] Eventually, the British persuaded the Americans that a landing in France was infeasible in 1942 and they should instead focus on driving the Axis out of North Africa.*[168]

At the Casablanca Conference in early 1943, the Allies reiterated the statements issued in the 1942 Declaration by the United Nations, and demanded the unconditional surrender of their enemies. The British and Americans agreed to continue to press the initiative in the Mediterranean by invading Sicily to fully secure the Mediterranean supply routes.*[169] Although the British argued for further operations in the Balkans to bring Turkey into the war, in May 1943, the Americans extracted a British commitment to limit Allied operations in the Mediterranean to an invasion of the Italian mainland and to invade France in 1944.*[170]

Pacific (1942–43)



Map of Japanese military advances, until mid-1942

By the end of April 1942, Japan and its ally Thailand had almost fully conquered Burma, Malaya, the Dutch East Indies, Singapore, and Rabaul, inflicting severe losses on Allied troops and taking a large number of prisoners.*[171] Despite stubborn resistance by Filipino and US forces, the Philippine Commonwealth was eventu-

ally captured in May 1942, forcing its government into exile.*[172] On 16 April, in Burma, 7,000 British soldiers were encircled by the Japanese 33rd Division during the Battle of Yenangyaung and rescued by the Chinese 38th Division.*[173] Japanese forces also achieved naval victories in the South China Sea, Java Sea and Indian Ocean,*[174] and bombed the Allied naval base at Darwin, Australia. In January 1942, the only Allied success against Japan was a Chinese victory at Changsha.*[175] These easy victories over unprepared US and European opponents left Japan overconfident, as well as overextended.*[176]

In early May 1942, Japan initiated operations to capture Port Moresby by amphibious assault and thus sever communications and supply lines between the United States and Australia. The planned invasion was thwarted when an Allied task force centred on two American fleet carriers fought Japanese naval forces to a draw in the Battle of the Coral Sea.*[177] Japan's next plan, motivated by the earlier Doolittle Raid, was to seize Midway Atoll and lure American carriers into battle to be eliminated; as a diversion, Japan would also send forces to occupy the Aleutian Islands in Alaska.*[178] In early June, Japan put its operations into action but the Americans, having broken Japanese naval codes in late May, were fully aware of the plans and force dispositions and used this knowledge to achieve a decisive victory at Midway over the Imperial Japanese Navy.*[179]



US Marines during the Guadalcanal Campaign, in the Pacific theatre, 1942

With its capacity for aggressive action greatly diminished as a result of the Midway battle, Japan chose to focus on a belated attempt to capture Port Moresby by an overland campaign in the Territory of Papua.*[180] The Americans planned a counter-attack against Japanese positions in the southern Solomon Islands, primarily Guadalcanal, as a first step towards capturing Rabaul, the main Japanese base in Southeast Asia.*[181]

Both plans started in July, but by mid-September, the Battle for Guadalcanal took priority for the Japanese, and troops in New Guinea were ordered to withdraw from

the Port Moresby area to the northern part of the island, where they faced Australian and United States troops in the **Battle of Buna-Gona**.^{*[182]} Guadalcanal soon became a focal point for both sides with heavy commitments of troops and ships in the battle for Guadalcanal. By the start of 1943, the Japanese were defeated on the island and withdrew their troops.^{*[183]} In Burma, Commonwealth forces mounted two operations. The first, an offensive into the Arakan region in late 1942, went disastrously, forcing a retreat back to India by May 1943.^{*[184]} The second was the insertion of irregular forces behind Japanese front-lines in February which, by the end of April, had achieved mixed results.^{*[185]}

Eastern Front (1942–43)



Red Army soldiers on the counterattack, during the Battle of Stalingrad, February 1943

Despite considerable losses, in early 1942 Germany and its allies stopped a major Soviet offensive in central and southern Russia, keeping most territorial gains they had achieved during the previous year.^{*[186]} In May the Germans defeated Soviet offensives in the **Kerch Peninsula** and at **Kharkov**,^{*[187]} and then launched their main summer offensive against southern Russia in June 1942, to seize the oil fields of the **Caucasus** and occupy Kuban steppe, while maintaining positions on the northern and central areas of the front. The Germans split **Army Group South** into two groups: **Army Group A** advanced to the lower **Don River** and struck south-east to the Caucasus, while **Army Group B** headed towards the **Volga River**. The Soviets decided to make their stand at Stalingrad on the Volga.^{*[188]}

By mid-November, the Germans had nearly taken Stalingrad in bitter street fighting when the Soviets began their second winter counter-offensive, starting with an encirclement of German forces at Stalingrad^{*[189]} and an assault on the Rzhev salient near Moscow, though the latter failed disastrously.^{*[190]} By early February 1943, the German Army had taken tremendous losses; German troops at Stalingrad had been forced to surrender,^{*[191]} and the front-line had been pushed back beyond its position before the summer offensive. In mid-February, after the Soviet push had tapered off, the Germans launched another attack on Kharkov, creating a salient in their front line around the Russian city of **Kursk**.^{*[192]}

Western Europe/Atlantic & Mediterranean (1942–43)



American 8th Air Force Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress bombing raid on the Focke-Wulf factory in Germany, 9 October 1943

Exploiting poor American naval command decisions, the German navy ravaged Allied shipping off the American Atlantic coast.^{*[193]} By November 1941, Commonwealth forces had launched a counter-offensive, **Operation Crusader**, in North Africa, and reclaimed all the gains the Germans and Italians had made.^{*[194]} In North Africa, the Germans launched an offensive in January, pushing the British back to positions at the **Gazala Line** by early February,^{*[195]} followed by a temporary lull in combat which Germany used to prepare for their upcoming offensives.^{*[196]} Concerns the Japanese might use bases in Vichy-held **Madagascar** caused the British to invade the island in early May 1942.^{*[197]} An Axis offensive in Libya forced an Allied retreat deep inside Egypt until Axis forces were stopped at **El Alamein**.^{*[198]} On the Continent, raids of Allied commandos on strategic targets, culminating in the disastrous **Dieppe Raid**,^{*[199]} demonstrated the Western Allies' inability to launch an invasion of continental Europe without much better preparation, equipment, and operational security.^{*[200]}

In August 1942, the Allies succeeded in repelling a second attack against El Alamein^{*[201]} and, at a high cost, managed to deliver desperately needed supplies to the besieged Malta.^{*[202]} A few months later, the Allies commenced an attack of their own in Egypt, dislodging the Axis forces and beginning a drive west across Libya.^{*[203]} This attack was followed up shortly after by Anglo-American landings in French North Africa, which resulted in the region joining the Allies.^{*[204]} Hitler responded to the French colony's defection by ordering the occupation of Vichy France;^{*[204]} although Vichy forces did not resist this violation of the armistice, they managed to scuttle their fleet to prevent its capture by German forces.^{*[204]}^{*[205]} The now pincerred Axis forces in Africa withdrew into **Tunisia**, which was conquered by

the Allies in May 1943.*[204]*[206]

In early 1943 the British and Americans began the Combined Bomber Offensive, a strategic bombing campaign against Germany. The goals were to disrupt the German war economy, reduce German morale, and "de-house" the civilian population.*[207]

1.4.7 Allies gain momentum (1943–44)



US Navy Douglas SBD Dauntless flies patrol over the USS Washington and USS Lexington during the Gilbert and Marshall Islands campaign, 1943

After the Guadalcanal Campaign, the Allies initiated several operations against Japan in the Pacific. In May 1943, Canadian and U.S. forces were sent to eliminate Japanese forces from the Aleutians.*[208] Soon after, the U.S. with support from Australian and New Zealand forces began major operations to isolate Rabaul by capturing surrounding islands, and to breach the Japanese Central Pacific perimeter at the Gilbert and Marshall Islands.*[209] By the end of March 1944, the Allies had completed both of these objectives, and additionally neutralised the major Japanese base at Truk in the Caroline Islands. In April, the Allies launched an operation to retake Western New Guinea.*[210] In the Soviet Union, both the Germans and the Soviets spent the spring and early summer of 1943 preparing for large offensives in central Russia. On 4 July 1943, Germany attacked Soviet forces around the Kursk Bulge. Within a week, German forces had exhausted themselves against the Soviets' deeply echeloned and well-constructed defences*[211] and, for the first time in the war, Hitler cancelled the operation before it had achieved tactical or operational success.*[212] This decision was partially affected by the Western Allies' invasion of Sicily launched on 9 July which, combined with previous Italian failures, resulted in the ousting and arrest of Mussolini later that month.*[213] Also, in July 1943 the British firebombed Hamburg killing over 40,000 people.

On 12 July 1943, the Soviets launched their own counter-offensives, thereby dispelling any chance of German vic-

tory or even stalemate in the east. The Soviet victory at Kursk marked the end of German superiority,*[214] giving the Soviet Union the initiative on the Eastern Front.*[215]*[216] The Germans tried to stabilise their eastern front along the hastily fortified Panther-Wotan line, but the Soviets broke through it at Smolensk and by the Lower Dnieper Offensives.*[217]

On 3 September 1943, the Western Allies invaded the Italian mainland, following Italy's armistice with the Allies.*[218] Germany responded by disarming Italian forces, seizing military control of Italian areas,*[219] and creating a series of defensive lines.*[220] German special forces then rescued Mussolini, who then soon established a new client state in German occupied Italy named the Italian Social Republic,*[221] causing an Italian civil war. The Western Allies fought through several lines until reaching the main German defensive line in mid-November.*[222]



The Allied leaders of the Asian and Pacific Theatre: Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Winston Churchill meeting at the Cairo Conference, 25 November 1943

German operations in the Atlantic also suffered. By May 1943, as Allied counter-measures became increasingly effective, the resulting sizeable German submarine losses forced a temporary halt of the German Atlantic naval campaign.*[223] In November 1943, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill met with Chiang Kai-shek in Cairo and then with Joseph Stalin in Tehran.*[224] The former conference determined the post-war return of Japanese territory*[225] and the military planning for Burma Campaign ,*[226] while the latter included agreement that the Western Allies would invade Europe in 1944 and that the Soviet Union would declare war on Japan within three months of Germany's defeat.*[227]

From November 1943, during the seven-week Battle of Changde, the Chinese forced Japan to fight a costly war of attrition, while awaiting Allied relief.*[228]*[229]*[230] In January 1944, the Allies launched a series of attacks in Italy against the line at Monte Cassino and tried to outflank it with landings at Anzio.*[231] By the end of January, a major Soviet offensive expelled German forces



Ruins of the Benedictine monastery, during the Battle of Monte Cassino; Italian Campaign, May 1944



American troops approaching Omaha Beach, during the Invasion of Normandy on D-Day, 6 June 1944

from the Leningrad region,* [232] ending the longest and most lethal siege in history.

The following Soviet offensive was halted on the pre-war Estonian border by the German Army Group North aided by Estonians hoping to re-establish national independence. This delay slowed subsequent Soviet operations in the Baltic Sea region.* [233] By late May 1944, the Soviets had liberated Crimea, largely expelled Axis forces from Ukraine, and made incursions into Romania, which were repulsed by the Axis troops.* [234] The Allied offensives in Italy had succeeded and, at the expense of allowing several German divisions to retreat, on 4 June, Rome was captured.* [235]

The Allies had mixed success in mainland Asia. In March 1944, the Japanese launched the first of two invasions, an operation against British positions in Assam, India,* [236] and soon besieged Commonwealth positions at Imphal and Kohima.* [237] In May 1944, British forces mounted a counter-offensive that drove Japanese troops back to Burma,* [237] and Chinese forces that had invaded northern Burma in late 1943 besieged Japanese troops in Myitkyina.* [238] The second Japanese invasion of China aimed to destroy China's main fighting forces, secure railways between Japanese-held territory and capture Allied airfields.* [239] By June, the Japanese had conquered the province of Henan and begun a new attack on Changsha in the Hunan province.* [240]

1.4.8 Allies close in (1944)

On 6 June 1944 (known as D-Day), after three years of Soviet pressure,* [241] the Western Allies invaded northern France. After reassigning several Allied divisions from Italy, they also attacked southern France.* [242] These landings were successful, and led to the defeat of the German Army units in France. Paris was liberated by the local resistance assisted by the Free French Forces, both led by General Charles de Gaulle, on 25 August* [243] and the Western Allies continued to push back German forces in western Europe during the latter part of

the year. An attempt to advance into northern Germany spearheaded by a major airborne operation in the Netherlands failed.* [244] After that, the Western Allies slowly pushed into Germany, but failed to cross the Rur river in a large offensive. In Italy, Allied advance also slowed due to the last major German defensive line.* [245]

On 22 June, the Soviets launched a strategic offensive in Belarus ("Operation Bagration") that destroyed the German Army Group Centre almost completely.* [246] Soon after that another Soviet strategic offensive forced German troops from Western Ukraine and Eastern Poland. The Soviet advance prompted resistance forces in Poland to initiate several uprisings against the German occupation. However, the largest of these in Warsaw where German soldiers massacred 200,000 civilians and a national uprising in Slovakia did not receive Soviet support and were subsequently suppressed by the Germans.* [247] The Red Army's strategic offensive in eastern Romania cut off and destroyed the considerable German troops there and triggered a successful coup d'état in Romania and in Bulgaria, followed by those countries' shift to the Allied side.* [248]



German SS soldiers from the Dirlewanger Brigade, tasked with suppressing the Warsaw Uprising against Nazi occupation, August 1944

In September 1944, Soviet troops advanced into

Yugoslavia and forced the rapid withdrawal of German Army Groups E and F in Greece, Albania and Yugoslavia to rescue them from being cut off.* [249] By this point, the Communist-led Partisans under Marshal Josip Broz Tito, who had led an increasingly successful guerrilla campaign against the occupation since 1941, controlled much of the territory of Yugoslavia and engaged in delaying efforts against German forces further south. In northern Serbia, the Red Army, with limited support from Bulgarian forces, assisted the Partisans in a joint liberation of the capital city of Belgrade on 20 October. A few days later, the Soviets launched a massive assault against German-occupied Hungary that lasted until the fall of Budapest in February 1945.*[250] Unlike impressive Soviet victories in the Balkans, bitter Finnish resistance to the Soviet offensive in the Karelian Isthmus denied the Soviets occupation of Finland and led to a Soviet-Finnish armistice on relatively mild conditions,*[251]*[252] although Finland later shifted to the Allied side.

By the start of July 1944, Commonwealth forces in Southeast Asia had repelled the Japanese sieges in Assam, pushing the Japanese back to the Chindwin River*[253] while the Chinese captured Myitkyina. In China, the Japanese had more successes, having finally captured Changsha in mid-June and the city of Hengyang by early August.*[254] Soon after, they invaded the province of Guangxi, winning major engagements against Chinese forces at Guilin and Liuzhou by the end of November*[255] and successfully linking up their forces in China and Indochina by mid-December.*[256]

In the Pacific, US forces continued to press back the Japanese perimeter. In mid-June 1944, they began their offensive against the Mariana and Palau islands, and decisively defeated Japanese forces in the Battle of the Philippine Sea. These defeats led to the resignation of the Japanese Prime Minister, Hideki Tojo, and provided the United States with air bases to launch intensive heavy bomber attacks on the Japanese home islands. In late October, American forces invaded the Filipino island of Leyte; soon after, Allied naval forces scored another large victory in the Battle of Leyte Gulf, one of the largest naval battles in history.*[257]

1.4.9 Axis collapse, Allied victory (1944–45)

On 16 December 1944, Germany made a last attempt on the Western Front by using most of its remaining reserves to launch a massive counter-offensive in the Ardennes to split the Western Allies, encircle large portions of Western Allied troops and capture their primary supply port at Antwerp to prompt a political settlement.*[258] By January, the offensive had been repulsed with no strategic objectives fulfilled.*[258] In Italy, the Western Allies remained stalemated at the German defensive line. In mid-January 1945, the Soviets and Poles attacked in



Yalta Conference held in February 1945, with Winston Churchill, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Joseph Stalin

Poland, pushing from the Vistula to the Oder river in Germany, and overran East Prussia.*[259] On 4 February, US, British, and Soviet leaders met for the Yalta Conference. They agreed on the occupation of post-war Germany, and on when the Soviet Union would join the war against Japan.*[260]

In February, the Soviets entered Silesia and Pomerania, while Western Allies entered western Germany and closed to the Rhine river. By March, the Western Allies crossed the Rhine north and south of the Ruhr, encircling the German Army Group B,*[261] while the Soviets advanced to Vienna. In early April, the Western Allies finally pushed forward in Italy and swept across western Germany, while Soviet and Polish forces stormed Berlin in late April. American and Soviet forces joined on Elbe river on 25 April. On 30 April 1945, the Reichstag was captured, signalling the military defeat of Nazi Germany.*[262]

Several changes in leadership occurred during this period. On 12 April, President Roosevelt died and was succeeded by Harry Truman. Benito Mussolini was killed by Italian partisans on 28 April.*[263] Two days later, Hitler committed suicide, and was succeeded by Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz.*[264]

German forces surrendered in Italy on 29 April. Total and unconditional surrender was signed on 7 May, to be effective by the end of 8 May.*[265] German Army Group Centre resisted in Prague until 11 May.*[266]

In the Pacific theatre, American forces accompanied by the forces of the Philippine Commonwealth advanced in the Philippines, clearing Leyte by the end of April 1945. They landed on Luzon in January 1945 and recaptured Manila in March following a battle which reduced the city to ruins. Fighting continued on Luzon, Mindanao, and other islands of the Philippines until the end of the war.*[267] Meanwhile, the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) were destroying strategic and populated



The German Reichstag after its capture by the Allies, 3 June 1945

cities and towns in Japan in an effort to destroy Japanese war industry and civilian morale. On the night of 9–10 March, USAAF B-29 bombers struck Tokyo with thousands of incendiary bombs, which killed 100,000 civilians and destroyed 16 square miles within a few hours. Over the next five months, the USAAF firebombed a total of 67 Japanese cities, killing 393,000 civilians and destroying 65% of built up areas.*[268]



Japanese foreign affairs minister Mamoru Shigemitsu signs the Japanese Instrument of Surrender on board the USS Missouri, 2 September 1945

In May 1945, Australian troops landed in Borneo, overrunning the oilfields there. British, American, and Chinese forces defeated the Japanese in northern Burma in March, and the British pushed on to reach Rangoon by 3 May.*[269] Chinese forces started to counterattack in Battle of West Hunan that occurred between 6 April and 7 June 1945. American naval and amphibious forces also moved towards Japan, taking Iwo Jima by March, and Okinawa by the end of June.*[270] At the same

time, American submarines cut off Japanese imports, drastically reducing Japan's ability to supply its overseas forces.*[271]

On 11 July, Allied leaders met in Potsdam, Germany. They confirmed earlier agreements about Germany,*[272] and reiterated the demand for unconditional surrender of all Japanese forces by Japan, specifically stating that “the alternative for Japan is prompt and utter destruction”.*[273] During this conference, the United Kingdom held its general election, and Clement Attlee replaced Churchill as Prime Minister.*[274]

The Allies called for unconditional Japanese surrender in the Potsdam Declaration of 27 July, but the Japanese government rejected the call. In early August, the USAAF dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Allies justified the atomic bombings as a military necessity to avoid invading the Japanese home islands which would cost the lives of between 250,000–500,000 Allied servicemen and millions of Japanese troops and civilians.*[275] Between the two bombings, the Soviets, pursuant to the Yalta agreement, invaded Japanese-held Manchuria, and quickly defeated the Kwantung Army, which was the largest Japanese fighting force.*[276]*[277] The Red Army also captured Sakhalin Island and the Kuril Islands. On 15 August 1945, Japan surrendered, with the surrender documents finally signed aboard the deck of the American battleship *USS Missouri* on 2 September 1945, ending the war.*[278]

1.5 Aftermath

Main articles: Aftermath of World War II and Consequences of Nazism

The Allies established occupation administrations in



Ruins of Warsaw in January 1945, after the deliberate destruction of the city by the occupying German forces

Austria and Germany. The former became a neutral state, non-aligned with any political bloc. The latter

was divided into western and eastern occupation zones controlled by the Western Allies and the USSR, accordingly. A denazification programme in Germany led to the prosecution of Nazi war criminals and the removal of ex-Nazis from power, although this policy moved towards amnesty and re-integration of ex-Nazis into West German society.*[279]

Germany lost a quarter of its pre-war (1937) territory. Among the eastern territories, Silesia, Neumark and most of Pomerania were taken over by Poland, East Prussia was divided between Poland and the USSR, followed by the expulsion of the 9 million Germans from these provinces, as well as the expulsion of 3 million Germans from the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia to Germany. By the 1950s, every fifth West German was a refugee from the east. The Soviet Union also took over the Polish provinces east of the Curzon line, from which 2 million Poles were expelled;*[280] north-east Romania,*[281]*[282] parts of eastern Finland,*[283] and the three Baltic states were also incorporated into the USSR.*[284]*[285]

In an effort to maintain peace,*[286] the Allies formed the United Nations, which officially came into existence on 24 October 1945,*[287] and adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, as a common standard for all member nations.*[288] The great powers that were the victors of the war—the United States, Soviet Union, China, Britain, and France—formed the permanent members of the UN's Security Council.*[7] The five permanent members remain so to the present, although there have been two seat changes, between the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China in 1971, and between the Soviet Union and its successor state, the Russian Federation, following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The alliance between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union had begun to deteriorate even before the war was over.*[289]

Germany had been *de facto* divided, and two independent states, the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic*[290] were created within the borders of Allied and Soviet occupation zones, accordingly. The rest of Europe was also divided into Western and Soviet spheres of influence.*[291] Most eastern and central European countries fell into the Soviet sphere, which led to establishment of Communist-led regimes, with full or partial support of the Soviet occupation authorities. As a result, Poland, Hungary, East Germany,*[292] Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Albania*^[293] became Soviet satellite states. Communist Yugoslavia conducted a fully independent policy, causing tension with the USSR.*[294]

Post-war division of the world was formalised by two international military alliances, the United States-led NATO and the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact;*[295] the long period of political tensions and military competition between them, the Cold War, would be accompanied by an

unprecedented arms race and proxy wars.*[296]



Post-war Soviet territorial expansion resulted in Central European border changes, the creation of a Communist Bloc and start of the Cold War

In Asia, the United States led the occupation of Japan and administrated Japan's former islands in the Western Pacific, while the Soviets annexed Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands.*[297] Korea, formerly under Japanese rule, was divided and occupied by the US in the South and the Soviet Union in the North between 1945 and 1948. Separate republics emerged on both sides of the 38th parallel in 1948, each claiming to be the legitimate government for all of Korea, which led ultimately to the Korean War.*[298]

In China, nationalist and communist forces resumed the civil war in June 1946. Communist forces were victorious and established the People's Republic of China on the mainland, while nationalist forces retreated to Taiwan in 1949.*[299] In the Middle East, the Arab rejection of the United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine and the creation of Israel marked the escalation of the Arab-Israeli conflict. While European powers attempted to retain some or all of their colonial empires, their losses of prestige and resources during the war rendered this unsuccessful, leading to decolonisation.*[300]*[301]

The global economy suffered heavily from the war, al-

though participating nations were affected differently. The US emerged much richer than any other nation; it had a baby boom and by 1950 its gross domestic product per person was much higher than that of any of the other powers and it dominated the world economy.* [302] The UK and US pursued a policy of industrial disarmament in Western Germany in the years 1945–1948.* [303] Because of international trade interdependencies this led to European economic stagnation and delayed European recovery for several years.* [304]* [305]

Recovery began with the mid-1948 currency reform in Western Germany, and was sped up by the liberalisation of European economic policy that the Marshall Plan (1948–1951) both directly and indirectly caused.* [306]* [307] The post-1948 West German recovery has been called the German economic miracle.* [308] Italy also experienced an economic boom* [309] and the French economy rebounded.* [310] By contrast, the United Kingdom was in a state of economic ruin,* [311] and although it received a quarter of the total Marshall Plan assistance, more than any other European country,* [312] continued relative economic decline for decades.* [313]

The Soviet Union, despite enormous human and material losses, also experienced rapid increase in production in the immediate post-war era.* [314] Japan experienced incredibly rapid economic growth, becoming one of the most powerful economies in the world by the 1980s.* [315] China returned to its pre-war industrial production by 1952.* [316]

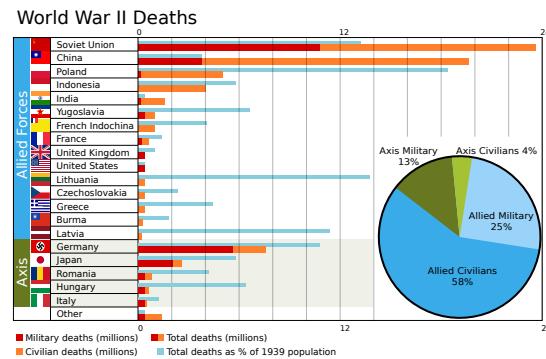
1.6 Impact

1.6.1 Casualties and war crimes

Main articles: World War II casualties, War crimes during World War II, War crimes in occupied Poland during World War II, German war crimes, War crimes of the Wehrmacht, Italian war crimes, Japanese war crimes, Allied war crimes during World War II, and Soviet war crimes

Estimates for the total number of casualties in the war vary, because many deaths went unrecorded. Most suggest that some 60 million people died in the war, including about 20 million military personnel and 40 million civilians.* [317]* [318]* [319] Many of the civilians died because of deliberate genocide, massacres, mass-bombings, disease, and starvation.

The Soviet Union lost around 27 million people during the war,* [320] including 8.7 million military and 19 million civilian deaths. The largest portion of military dead were 5.7 million ethnic Russians, followed by 1.3 million ethnic Ukrainians.* [321] A quarter of the people in the Soviet Union were wounded or killed.* [322] Germany sustained 5.3 million military losses, mostly on the East-



World War II deaths

ern Front and during the final battles in Germany.* [323] Of the total number of deaths in World War II, approximately 85 per cent—mostly Soviet and Chinese—were on the Allied side and 15 per cent were on the Axis side. Many of these deaths were caused by war crimes committed by German and Japanese forces in occupied territories. An estimated 11* [324] to 17 million* [325] civilians died either as a direct or as an indirect result of Nazi ideological policies, including the systematic genocide of around 6 million Jews during the Holocaust, along with a further 5 to 6 million ethnic Poles and other Slavs (including Ukrainians and Belarusians)* [326]—Roma, homosexuals, and other ethnic and minority groups.* [325] Hundreds of thousands (varying estimates) of ethnic Serbs, along with gypsies and Jews, were murdered by the Axis-aligned Croatian Ustaše in Yugoslavia,* [327] and retribution-related killings were committed just after the war ended.



Chinese civilians being buried alive by soldiers of the Imperial Japanese Army, during the Nanking Massacre, December 1937

In Asia and the Pacific, between 3 million and more than 10 million civilians, mostly Chinese (estimated at 7.5 million* [328]), were killed by the Japanese occupation forces.* [329] The best-known Japanese atrocity was the Nanking Massacre, in which fifty to three hun-

dred thousand Chinese civilians were raped and murdered.* [330] Mitsuyoshi Himeta reported that 2.7 million casualties occurred during the *Sankō Sakusen*. General Yasuji Okamura implemented the policy in Heipei and Shantung.* [331]

Axis forces employed biological and chemical weapons. The Imperial Japanese Army used a variety of such weapons during its invasion and occupation of China (see *Unit 731*)* [332]* [333] and in early conflicts against the Soviets.* [334] Both the Germans and Japanese tested such weapons against civilians* [335] and, sometimes on prisoners of war.* [336]

The Soviet Union was responsible for the Katyn massacre of 22,000 Polish officers,* [337] and the imprisonment or execution of thousands of political prisoners by the NKVD,* [338] in the Baltic states, and eastern Poland annexed by the Red Army.

The mass-bombing of civilian areas, notably the cities of Warsaw, Rotterdam and London; including the aerial targeting of hospitals and fleeing refugees* [339] by the German Luftwaffe, along with the bombing of Tokyo, and German cities of Dresden, Hamburg and Cologne by the Western Allies may be considered as war crimes. The latter resulted in the destruction of more than 160 cities and the death of more than 600,000 German civilians.* [340] However, no positive or specific customary international humanitarian law with respect to aerial warfare existed before or during World War II.* [341]

1.6.2 Concentration camps, slave labour, and genocide

Further information: Genocide, The Holocaust, Nazi concentration camps, Extermination camp, Forced labour under German rule during World War II, Kidnapping of children by Nazi Germany, and Nazi human experimentation

The German government led by Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party was responsible for the Holocaust, the killing of approximately 6 million Jews, as well as 2.7 million ethnic Poles,* [342] and 4 million others who were deemed "unworthy of life" (including the disabled and mentally ill, Soviet prisoners of war, homosexuals, Freemasons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Romani) as part of a programme of deliberate extermination. About 12 million, most of whom were Eastern Europeans, were employed in the German war economy as forced labourers.* [343]

In addition to Nazi concentration camps, the Soviet gulags (labour camps) led to the death of citizens of occupied countries such as Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, as well as German prisoners of war (POWs) and even Soviet citizens who had been or were thought to be supporters of the Nazis.* [344] Sixty per cent of Soviet POWs of the Germans died during the war.* [345] Richard Overy gives the number of 5.7 million Soviet



SS female camp guards remove prisoners' bodies from lorries and carry them to a mass grave, inside the German Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, 1945

POWs. Of those, 57 per cent died or were killed, a total of 3.6 million.* [346] Soviet ex-POWs and repatriated civilians were treated with great suspicion as potential Nazi collaborators, and some of them were sent to the Gulag upon being checked by the NKVD.* [347]



Prisoner identity photograph taken by the German SS of a fourteen-year-old Polish girl, deported as forced labour to Auschwitz, December 1942

Japanese prisoner-of-war camps, many of which were used as labour camps, also had high death rates. The International Military Tribunal for the Far East found the death rate of Western prisoners was 27.1 per cent (for American POWs, 37 per cent),* [348] seven times that of POWs under the Germans and Italians.* [349] While 37,583 prisoners from the UK, 28,500 from the Netherlands, and 14,473 from the United States were released after the surrender of Japan, the number of Chinese released was only 56.* [350]

According to historian Zhifen Ju, at least five million Chinese civilians from northern China and Manchukuo were enslaved between 1935 and 1941 by the East Asia Development Board, or *Kōain*, for work in mines and war industries. After 1942, the number reached 10 million.* [351] The US Library of Congress estimates that in Java, between 4 and 10 million *rōmusha*

(Japanese: “manual labourers”), were forced to work by the Japanese military. About 270,000 of these Japanese labourers were sent to other Japanese-held areas in South East Asia, and only 52,000 were repatriated to Java.*[352]

On 19 February 1942, Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, interning about 100,000 Japanese living on the West Coast. Canada had a similar programme.*[353]*[354] In addition, 14,000 German and Italian citizens who had been assessed as being security risks were also interned.*[355]

In accordance with the Allied agreement made at the Yalta Conference millions of POWs and civilians were used as forced labour by the Soviet Union.*[356] In Hungary's case, Hungarians were forced to work for the Soviet Union until 1955.*[357]



Russian Academy of Sciences in 1995 reported civilian victims in the USSR at German hands totalled 13.7 million dead, 20% of the 68 million persons in the occupied USSR

1.6.3 Occupation

Main articles: German-occupied Europe, Lebensraum, Untermensch, Collaboration with the Axis Powers during World War II, Resistance during World War II, and Nazi plunder

In Europe, occupation came under two forms. In West-



Polish civilians wearing blindfolds photographed just before their execution by German soldiers in Palmiry forest, 1940

ern, Northern and Central Europe (France, Norway, Denmark, the Low Countries, and the annexed portions of Czechoslovakia) Germany established economic policies through which it collected roughly 69.5 billion reichsmarks (27.8 billion US Dollars) by the end of the war, this figure does not include the sizeable plunder of industrial products, military equipment, raw materials and other goods.*[358] Thus, the income from occupied nations was over 40 per cent of the income Germany collected from taxation, a figure which increased to nearly 40 per cent of total German income as the war went on.*[359]

In the East, the much hoped for bounties of *Lebensraum* were never attained as fluctuating front-lines and Soviet scorched earth policies denied resources to the German invaders.*[360] Unlike in the West, the Nazi racial policy encouraged excessive brutality against what it con-

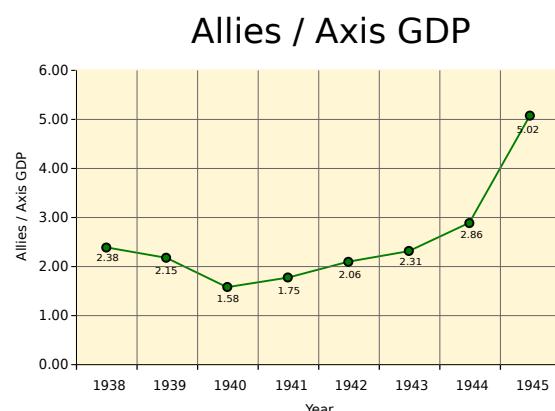
sidered to be the “inferior people” of Slavic descent; most German advances were thus followed by mass executions.*[361] Although resistance groups formed in most occupied territories, they did not significantly hamper German operations in either the East* [362] or the West* [363] until late 1943.

In Asia, Japan termed nations under its occupation as being part of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, essentially a Japanese hegemony which it claimed was for purposes of liberating colonised peoples.*[364] Although Japanese forces were originally welcomed as liberators from European domination in some territories, their excessive brutality turned local public opinion against them within weeks.*[365] During Japan's initial conquest it captured 4,000,000 barrels (640,000 m³) of oil (~5.5×10⁵ tonnes) left behind by retreating Allied forces, and by 1943 was able to get production in the Dutch East Indies up to 50 million barrels (~6.8×10⁶ t), 76 per cent of its 1940 output rate.*[365]

1.6.4 Home fronts and production

Main articles: Military production during World War II and Home front during World War II

In Europe, before the outbreak of the war, the Allies



Allied to Axis GDP ratio

had significant advantages in both population and economics. In 1938, the Western Allies (United Kingdom, France, Poland and British Dominions) had a 30 per cent larger population and a 30 per cent higher gross domestic product than the European Axis (Germany and Italy); if colonies are included, it then gives the Allies more than a 5:1 advantage in population and nearly 2:1 advantage in GDP.* [366] In Asia at the same time, China had roughly six times the population of Japan, but only an 89 per cent higher GDP; this is reduced to three times the population and only a 38 per cent higher GDP if Japanese colonies are included.* [366]

Though the Allies' economic and population advantages were largely mitigated during the initial rapid blitzkrieg attacks of Germany and Japan, they became the decisive factor by 1942, after the United States and Soviet Union joined the Allies, as the war largely settled into one of attrition.* [367] While the Allies' ability to out-produce the Axis is often attributed to the Allies having more access to natural resources, other factors, such as Germany and Japan's reluctance to employ women in the labour force,* [368] Allied strategic bombing,* [369] and Germany's late shift to a war economy* [370] contributed significantly. Additionally, neither Germany nor Japan planned to fight a protracted war, and were not equipped to do so.* [371] To improve their production, Germany and Japan used millions of slave labourers;* [372] Germany used about 12 million people, mostly from Eastern Europe,* [343] while Japan used more than 18 million people in Far East Asia.* [351]* [352]

1.6.5 Advances in technology and warfare

Main article: Technology during World War II

Aircraft were used for reconnaissance, as fighters,



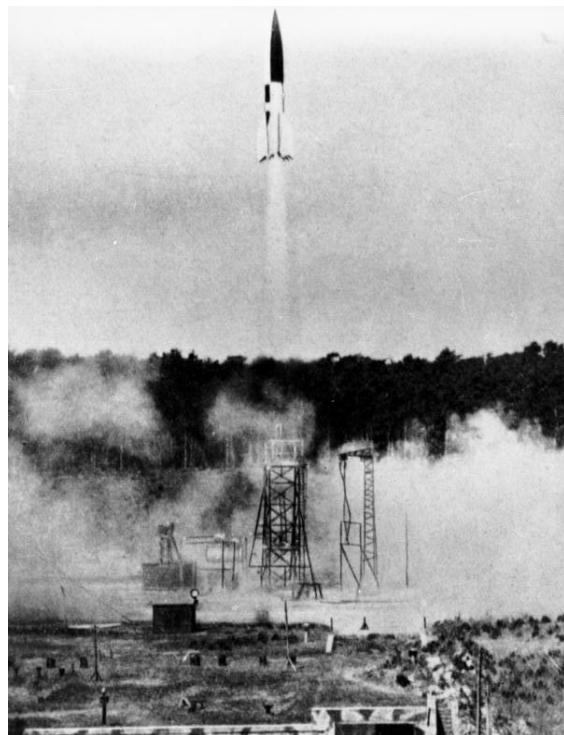
B-29 Superfortress strategic bombers on the Boeing assembly line in Wichita, Kansas, 1944

bombers, and ground-support, and each role was advanced considerably. Innovation included airlift (the capability to quickly move limited high-priority supplies, equipment, and personnel);* [373] and of strategic bomb-

ing (the bombing of enemy industrial and population centres to destroy the enemy's ability to wage war).* [374] Anti-aircraft weaponry also advanced, including defences such as radar and surface-to-air artillery, such as the German 88 mm gun. The use of the jet aircraft was pioneered and, though late introduction meant it had little impact, it led to jets becoming standard in air forces worldwide.* [375]

Advances were made in nearly every aspect of naval warfare, most notably with aircraft carriers and submarines. Although aeronautical warfare had relatively little success at the start of the war, actions at Taranto, Pearl Harbor, and the Coral Sea established the carrier as the dominant capital ship in place of the battleship.* [376]* [377]* [378]

In the Atlantic, escort carriers proved to be a vital part of Allied convoys, increasing the effective protection radius and helping to close the Mid-Atlantic gap.* [379] Carriers were also more economical than battleships because of the relatively low cost of aircraft* [380] and their not requiring to be as heavily armoured.* [381] Submarines, which had proved to be an effective weapon during the First World War,* [382] were anticipated by all sides to be important in the second. The British focused development on anti-submarine weaponry and tactics, such as sonar and convoys, while Germany focused on improving its offensive capability, with designs such as the Type VII submarine and wolfpack tactics.* [383] Gradually, improving Allied technologies such as the Leigh light, hedgehog, squid, and homing torpedoes proved victorious.



A V-2 rocket launched from a fixed site in Peenemünde, 1943

Land warfare changed from the static front lines of World

War I to increased mobility and combined arms. The tank, which had been used predominantly for infantry support in the First World War, had evolved into the primary weapon.*[384] In the late 1930s, tank design was considerably more advanced than it had been during World War I,*[385] and advances continued throughout the war with increases in speed, armour and firepower.

At the start of the war, most commanders thought enemy tanks should be met by tanks with superior specifications.*[386] This idea was challenged by the poor performance of the relatively light early tank guns against armour, and German doctrine of avoiding tank-versus-tank combat. This, along with Germany's use of combined arms, were among the key elements of their highly successful blitzkrieg tactics across Poland and France.*[384] Many means of destroying tanks, including indirect artillery, anti-tank guns (both towed and self-propelled), mines, short-ranged infantry antitank weapons, and other tanks were utilised.*[386] Even with large-scale mechanisation, infantry remained the backbone of all forces,*[387] and throughout the war, most infantry were equipped similarly to World War I.*[388]



Nuclear Gadget being raised to the top of the detonation “shot tower”, at Alamogordo Bombing Range; Trinity nuclear test, July 1945

The portable machine gun spread, a notable example being the German MG34, and various submachine guns which were suited to close combat in urban and jungle settings.*[388] The assault rifle, a late war development incorporating many features of the rifle and submachine gun, became the standard postwar infantry weapon for most armed forces.*[389]*[390]

Most major belligerents attempted to solve the problems of complexity and security involved in using large codebooks for cryptography by designing ciphering machines, the most well known being the German Enigma machine.*[391] Development of SIGINT (signals intelligence) and cryptanalysis enabled the countering process of decryption. Notable examples were the Allied decryption of Japanese naval codes* [392] and British Ultra, a pioneering method for decoding Enigma

benefiting from information given to Britain by the Polish Cipher Bureau, which had been decoding early versions of Enigma before the war.*[393] Another aspect of military intelligence was the use of deception, which the Allies used to great effect, such as in operations Mincemeat and Bodyguard.*[392]*[394] Other technological and engineering feats achieved during, or as a result of, the war include the world's first programmable computers (Z3, Colossus, and ENIAC), guided missiles and modern rockets, the Manhattan Project's development of nuclear weapons, operations research and the development of artificial harbours and oil pipelines under the English Channel.

1.7 See also

- Air warfare of World War II
- Bibliography of World War II
- Declarations of war during World War II
- Historiography of World War II
- Home front during World War II
- List of World War II battles
- List of World War II conferences
- List of World War II military operations
- Women in World War II
- World War II in popular culture
- List of World War II films

Documentaries

See also *List of World War II documentary films*

- *The World Wars (miniseries)* The World Wars is a three-part, six-hour event miniseries by the History Channel that premiered on Monday, May 26, 2014, (Memorial Day) airing for three consecutive nights. An extended version of the series with never before seen footage was subsequently broadcast on H2 and in more than 160 countries on June 22, 2014
- *Apocalypse: The Second World War* (2009), a six-part French documentary by Daniel Costelle and Isabelle Clarke about World War II
- *Battlefield*, a documentary television series initially issued in 1994–5, that explores many important World War II battles
- *BBC History of World War II*, a television series, initially issued from 1989 to 2005.

- *The World at War* (1974), a 26-part Thames Television series that covers most aspects of World War II from many points of view. It includes interviews with many key figures including Karl Dönitz, Albert Speer, and Anthony Eden.

1.8 Notes

- [1] While various other dates have been proposed as the date on which World War II began or ended, this is the time span most frequently cited.
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1.11 External links

- West Point Maps of the European War
- West Point Maps of the Asian-Pacific War
- Atlas of the World Battle Fronts (July 1943 to August 1945)

Chapter 2

Causes of World War II



German battleship Schleswig-Holstein attacks Polish forts at the start of the war, September 1, 1939



Destroyer USS Shaw exploding during the Attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941

Some long-term causes of World War II are found in the conditions preceding World War I and seen as common for both World Wars. Supporters of this view paraphrase Clausewitz: World War II was a continuation of World War I by the same means. In fact, World Wars had been expected before Mussolini and Hitler came to power and Japan invaded China.* [1]

Among the causes of World War II were Italian fascism in the 1920s, Japanese militarism and invasions of China in the 1930s, and especially the political takeover in 1933

of Germany by Hitler and his Nazi Party and its aggressive foreign policy. The immediate cause was Britain and France declaring war on Germany after it invaded Poland in September 1939.

Problems arose in Weimar Germany that experienced strong currents of revanchism after the Treaty of Versailles that concluded its defeat in World War I in 1918. Dissatisfactions of treaty provisions included the demilitarization of the Rhineland, the prohibition of unification with Austria and the loss of German-speaking territories such as Danzig, Eupen-Malmédy and Upper Silesia despite Wilson's Fourteen Points, the limitations on the Reichswehr making it a token military force, the war-guilt clause, and last but not least the heavy tribute that Germany had to pay in the form of war reparations, which became an unbearable burden after the Great Depression. The most serious internal cause in Germany was the instability of the political system, as large sectors of politically active Germans rejected the legitimacy of the Weimar Republic.

After his rise and take-over of power in 1933 to a large part based on these grievances, Adolf Hitler and the Nazis heavily promoted them and also ideas of vastly ambitious additional demands based on Nazi ideology such as uniting all Germans (and further all Germanic peoples) in Europe in a single nation; the acquisition of "living space" (Lebensraum) for primarily agrarian settlers (Blut und Boden), creating a "pull towards the East" (Drang nach Osten) where such territories were to be found and colonized, in a model that the Nazis explicitly derived from the American Manifest Destiny in the Far West and its clearing of native inhabitants; the elimination of Bolshevism; and the hegemony of an "Aryan"/"Nordic" so-called Master Race over the "sub-humans" (Untermenschen) of inferior races, chief among them Slavs and Jews.

Tensions created by those ideologies and the dissatisfactions of those powers with the interwar international order steadily increased. Italy laid claim on Ethiopia and conquered it in 1935, Japan created a puppet state in Manchuria in 1931 and expanded beyond in China from 1937, and Germany systematically flouted the Versailles treaty, reintroducing conscription in 1935 with the Stresa Front's failure after having secretly started re-armament,

remilitarizing the Rhineland in 1936, annexing Austria in March 1938, and the Sudetenland in October 1938.

All those aggressive moves met only feeble and ineffectual policies of appeasement from the League of Nations and the Entente Cordiale, in retrospect symbolized by the “peace for our time” speech following the Munich Conference, that had allowed the annexation of the Sudeten from interwar Czechoslovakia. When the German Führer broke the promise he had made at that conference to respect that country's future territorial integrity in March 1939 by sending troops into Prague, its capital, breaking off Slovakia as a German client state, and absorbing the rest of it as the “Protectorate of Bohemia-Moravia”, Britain and France tried to switch to a policy of deterrence.

As Nazi attentions turned towards resolving the “Polish Corridor Question” during the summer of 1939, Britain and France committed themselves to an alliance with Poland, threatening Germany with a two-front war. On their side, the Germans assured themselves of the support of the USSR by signing a non-aggression pact with them in August, secretly dividing Eastern Europe into Nazi and Soviet spheres of influence.

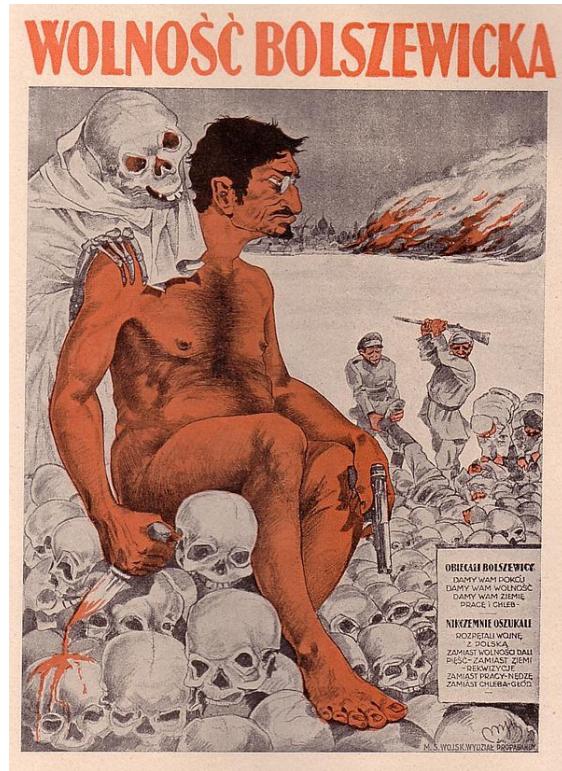
The stage was then set for the Danzig crisis to become the immediate trigger of the war in Europe started on 1 September 1939. Following the Fall of France in June 1940, the Vichy regime signed an armistice, which tempted the Empire of Japan to join the Axis powers and invade French Indochina to improve their military situation in their war with China. This provoked the then neutral United States to respond with an embargo. The Japanese leadership, whose goal was Japanese domination of the Asia-Pacific, thought they had no option but to pre-emptively strike at the US Pacific fleet, which they did by attacking Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941.

2.1 Anti-communism

Main article: Anti-communism

The internationalist-minded, radical Bolsheviks seized power in Russia in November 1917, with the goal of overthrowing capitalism across the world. They supported Communist parties in many lands and helped set up similar regimes in Hungary and Bavaria, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia. This caused many Europeans to fear that a violent Communist revolution would overwhelm their own countries. The Red expansion was stopped outside Warsaw by the Polish army, and by 1920 there was a corridor of border states just west of Russia that rejected Communism. However, they feuded among themselves, and such alliances they formed, like the Little Entente, were unstable.* [2]

Both Italian and German fascism were in part a reaction to international communist and socialist uprisings,



“Bolshevik freedom” – Polish propaganda poster with nude caricature of Leon Trotsky

in conjunction with nationalist fears of a Slavic empire. A further factor in Germany was the success of Freikorps (voluntary paramilitary groups of World War I veterans) in crushing the Bolshevik Bavarian Soviet Republic in Munich in 1919. Many of these veterans became early components of the Nazis' SA (“Stormtroopers”), which would be the party's troops in the street warfare with the Communist armed militia in the decade before 1933. The street violence would help shift moderate opinion towards the need for Germany to find an anti-Communist strongman to restore stability to German life.* [3]* [4]

2.2 Expansionism

Expansionism is the doctrine of expanding the territorial base (or economic influence) of a country, usually by means of military aggression. In Europe, Italy under Benito Mussolini sought to create a New Roman Empire based around the Mediterranean. It invaded Albania in early 1939, at the start of the war, and later invaded Greece. Italy had also invaded Ethiopia as early as 1935. This provoked angry words and an oil embargo from the League of Nations, which failed.

Under the Nazi regime, Germany began its own program of expansion, seeking to restore the “rightful” boundaries of historic Germany. As a prelude toward these goals the Rhineland was remilitarized in March 1936.* [5]

Also, of importance was the idea of a **Greater Germany**, supporters hoped to unite the **German people** under one nation state, which included all territories where Germans lived, regardless of whether they happened to be a minority in a particular territory. After the **Treaty of Versailles**, a unification between Germany and a newly formed **German-Austria**, a successor **rump state** of **Austria-Hungary**, was prohibited by the Allies despite the majority of **Austrian Germans** supporting such a union.



Japanese march into Zhengyangmen of Beijing after capturing the city in July 1937

In Asia, the Empire of Japan harbored expansionist desires towards Manchuria and Republic of China.

2.3 Militarism

Main articles: Japanese militarism, Statism in Shōwa Japan, and Militarism

Militarism is the principle or policy of maintaining a large military establishment, with the view that military efficiency is the supreme ideal of a state.* [6] A highly militaristic and aggressive national ideology prevailed in Germany, Japan and Italy.* [7] This attitude fuelled military advancement and expansion as well while their revolutionary motivated background were commanding an increase in propaganda, which led to increased tensions among the Axis powers and their opponents in the run up to the war. In addition to this, the leaders of militaristic countries often feel a need to prove that their armies are important and formidable, and this was often a contributing factor in the start of conflicts, including the aggressive foreign policy of Germany (European expansionism), Italy (the Second Italo-Abyssinian War) and Japan (the Second Sino-Japanese War), which in itself is a contributing factor to the World War.* [8]

2.4 Racism

Main articles: Racial policy of Nazi Germany, **Lebensraum**, and **Drang nach Osten**

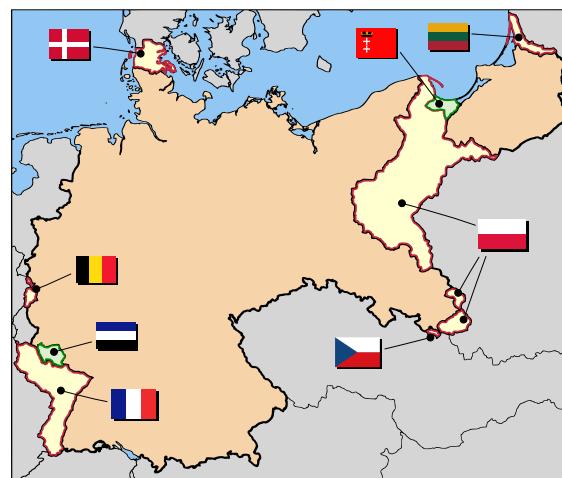
Twentieth-century events marked the culmination of a millennium-long process of intermingling between Germans and Slavs. Over the centuries, many Germans had settled in the east (examples being the Volga Germans invited to Russia by Catherine the Great, and the **Ostsiedlung** in medieval times). Such migratory patterns created enclaves and blurred ethnic frontiers. The rise of nationalism in the 19th century made race a centerpiece of political loyalty. The rise of the nation-state had given way to the politics of identity, including Pan-Germanism and Pan-Slavism. Furthermore, Social-Darwinist theories framed the coexistence as a “Teuton vs. Slav” struggle for domination, land and limited resources.* [9] Integrating these ideas into their own world-view, the Nazis believed that the Germans, the **"Aryan race"**, were the master race and that the Slavs were inferior.* [10]

2.5 Interrelations and economics

2.5.1 Problems with the Treaty of Versailles

Main article: **Treaty of Versailles**

The **Treaty of Versailles** was neither lenient enough to ap-



Germany after Versailles ----

Administered by the League of Nations

Annexed or transferred to neighboring countries by the treaty, or later via plebiscite and League of Nation action

Weimar Germany

pease Germany, nor harsh enough to prevent it from becoming the dominant continental power again.* [11] The treaty placed the blame, or "war guilt" on Germany and

Austria-Hungary, and punished them for their “responsibility” rather than working out an agreement that would assure long-term peace. The treaty provided for harsh monetary **reparations**, separated millions of ethnic Germans into neighboring countries, **territorial dismemberment**, and caused mass ethnic resettlement. In an effort to pay war reparations to Britain and France, the **Weimar Republic** printed trillions of marks, causing extremely high inflation of the German currency (see **Hyperinflation in the Weimar Republic**).

The treaty created bitter resentment towards the victors of World War I, who had promised the people of Germany that U.S. President **Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points** would be a guideline for peace; however, the US played a minor role in World War I and Wilson could not convince the Allies to agree to adopt his Fourteen Points. Many Germans felt that the German government had agreed to an **armistice** based on this understanding, while others felt that the **German Revolution of 1918–1919** had been orchestrated by the “November criminals” who later assumed office in the new Weimar Republic.

The **German colonies** were taken during the war, and Italy took the southern half of **Tyrol** after an armistice had been agreed upon. The war in the east ended with the defeat and collapse of Russian Empire, and German troops **occupied** large parts of Eastern and Central Europe (with varying degree of control), establishing various client states such as a **kingdom of Poland** and the **United Baltic Duchy**. After the destructive and indecisive battle of Jutland (1916) and the mutiny of its sailors in 1917, the **Kaiserliche Marine** spent most of the war in port, only to be turned over to the allies and scuttled at surrender by its own officers. The lack of an obvious military defeat was one of the pillars that held together the **Dolchstosslegende** (“Stab-in-the-back myth”) and gave the Nazis another propaganda tool at their disposal.

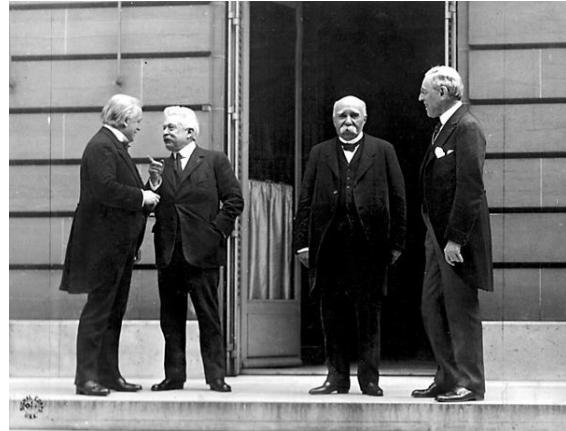
2.5.2 French security demands

French security demands, such as reparations, coal payments, and a demilitarized Rhineland, took precedence at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 and shaped the Treaty of Versailles by severely punishing Germany; however, Austria found the treaty to be unjust which encouraged Hitler's popularity. Ginsberg argues, “France was greatly weakened and, in its weakness and fear of a resurgent Germany, sought to isolate and punish Germany....French revenge would come back to haunt France during the Nazi invasion and occupation twenty years later.” *[12]

Paris Peace Conference (1919)

As World War I ended in 1918, France, along with the other victor countries, were in a desperate situation regarding their economies, security, and morale. The Paris Peace Conference of 1919 was their chance to pun-

ish Germany for starting the war. The war “must be someone's fault – and that's a very natural human reaction” analyzed historian Margaret MacMillan.*[13] Germany was charged with the sole responsibility of starting World War I. The War Guilt Clause was the first step towards a satisfying revenge for the victor countries, namely France, against Germany. France understood that its position in 1918 was “artificial and transitory”. *[14] Thus, Clemenceau, the French leader at the time, worked to gain French security via the Treaty of Versailles.*[14]



“The Big Four” made all the major decisions at the Paris Peace Conference (from left to right, David Lloyd George of Britain, Vittorio Emanuele Orlando of Italy, Georges Clemenceau of France, Woodrow Wilson of the U.S.)

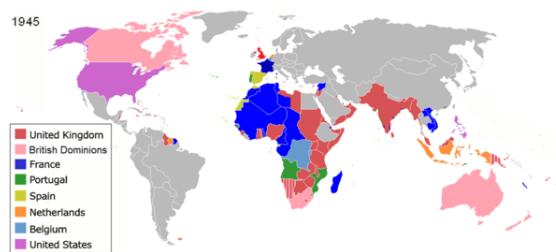
The two main provisions of the French security agenda were reparations from Germany in the form of money and coal and a detached German Rhineland. The French government printed excess currency, which created inflation, to compensate for the lack of funds in addition to borrowing money from the United States. Reparations from Germany were necessary to stabilize the French economy.*[15] France also demanded that Germany give France their coal supply from the Ruhr to compensate for the destruction of French coalmines during the war. Because France feared for its safety as a country, the French demanded an amount of **coal** that was a “technical impossibility” for the Germans to pay back.*[16] France wanted the German Rhineland demilitarized because that would hinder a German attack. This gave France a physical security barrier between itself and Germany.*[17] The inordinate amount of reparations, coal payments, and the principle of a demilitarized Rhineland were viewed by the Germans to be insulting and unreasonable.

Germany's reaction to Treaty of Versailles

“No postwar German government believed it could accept such a burden on future generations and survive ...” .*[15] Paying reparations is a classic punishment of war but in this instance it was the “extreme immoderation” (History) that caused German resentment. Germany made its last World War I reparation payment on

3 October 2010,*[18] ninety-two years after the end of World War I. Germany also fell behind in their coal payments. They fell behind because of a passive resistance movement against the French.*[19] In response, the French invaded the Ruhr, the region filled with German coal, and occupied it. At this point the majority of Germans were enraged with the French and placed the blame for their humiliation on the Weimar Republic. Adolf Hitler, a leader of the Nazi Party, attempted a coup d'état against the republic to establish a Greater German Reich*[20] known as the Beer Hall Putsch in 1923. Although this failed, Hitler gained recognition as a national hero amongst the German population. The demilitarized Rhineland and additional cutbacks on military infuriated the Germans. Although it is logical that France would want the Rhineland to be a neutral zone, the fact that France had the power to make that desire happen merely added onto the resentment of the Germans against the French. In addition, the Treaty of Versailles dissolved the German general staff and possession of navy ships, aircraft, poison gas, tanks, and heavy artillery was made illegal.*[17] The humiliation of being bossed around by the victor countries, especially France, and being stripped of their prized military made the Germans resent the Weimar Republic and idolize anyone who stood up to it.*[21]

2.5.3 Competition for resources and markets



World map of colonialism at the end of the Second World War in 1945

Other than a few coal and iron deposits, and a small oil field on Sakhalin Island, Japan lacked strategic mineral resources. At the start of the 20th century in the Russo-Japanese War, Japan had succeeded in pushing back the East Asian expansion of the Russian Empire in competition for Korea and Manchuria.

Japan's goal after 1931 was economic dominance of most of East Asia, often expressed in Pan-Asian terms of "Asia for the Asians." .*[22] Japan was determined to dominate the China market, which the U.S. and other European powers had been dominating. On October 19, 1939, the American Ambassador to Japan, Joseph C. Grew, in a formal address to the America-Japan Society stated:

the new order in East Asia has appeared to in-

clude, among other things, depriving Americans of their long established rights in China, and to this the American people are opposed ... American rights and interests in China are being impaired or destroyed by the policies and actions of the Japanese authorities in China."

*[23]

In 1937 Japan invaded Manchuria and China proper. Under the guise of the **Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere**, with slogans as "Asia for the Asians!" Japan sought to remove the Western powers' influence in China and replace it with Japanese domination.*[24]*[25]

The ongoing conflict in China led to a deepening conflict with the U.S., where public opinion was alarmed by events such as the **Nanking Massacre** and growing Japanese power. Lengthy talks were held between the U.S. and Japan. When Japan moved into the southern part of **French Indochina**, President Roosevelt chose to freeze all Japanese assets in the U.S. The intended consequence of this was the halt of oil shipments from the U.S. to Japan, which had supplied 80 percent of Japanese oil imports. The Netherlands and Britain followed suit. With oil reserves that would last only a year and a half during peace time (much less during wartime), this **ABCD line** left Japan two choices: comply with the U.S.-led demand to pull out of China, or seize the oilfields in the **East Indies** from the Netherlands. The Japan government deemed it unacceptable to retreat from China.*[26]

2.5.4 Problems with the League of Nations

Main article: [League of Nations](#)

The League of Nations was an international organization founded after World War I to prevent future wars. The League's methods included disarmament; preventing war through collective security; settling disputes between countries through negotiation diplomacy; and improving global welfare. The diplomatic philosophy behind the League represented a fundamental shift in thought from the preceding century. The old philosophy of "concert of nations", growing out of the **Congress of Vienna** (1815), saw Europe as a shifting map of alliances among nation-states, creating a balance of power maintained by strong armies and secret agreements. Under the new philosophy, the League was a government of governments, with the role of settling disputes between individual nations in an open and legalist forum. The impetus for the founding of the League came from U.S. President Wilson, though the United States never joined. This lessened the power and credibility of the League—the addition of a burgeoning industrial and military world power would have added more force behind the League's demands and requests.

The League lacked an armed force of its own and so depended on the members to enforce its resolutions, uphold



The official opening of the League of Nations, 15 November 1920

economic sanctions that the League ordered, or provide an army when needed for the League to use. However, they were often very reluctant to do so.

After numerous notable successes and some early failures in the 1920s, the League ultimately proved incapable of preventing aggression by the Axis powers in the 1930s. The reliance upon unanimous decisions, the lack of an armed force, and the continued self-interest of its leading members meant that this failure was arguably inevitable.^{*[27]}

2.5.5 The Mason-Overy Debate: “The Flight into War” theory

In the late 1980s the British historian Richard Overy was involved in a historical dispute with Timothy Mason that mostly played out over the pages of the *Past and Present* journal over the reasons for the outbreak of World War II in 1939. Mason had contended that a “flight into war” had been imposed on Adolf Hitler by a structural economic crisis, which confronted Hitler with the choice of making difficult economic decisions or aggression. Overy argued against Mason’s thesis, maintaining that though Germany was faced with economic problems in 1939, the extent of these problems cannot explain aggression against Poland and the reasons for the outbreak of war were due to the choices made by the Nazi leadership.

Mason had argued that the German working-class was always opposed to the Nazi dictatorship; that in the over-heated German economy of the late 1930s, German workers could force employers to grant higher wages by leaving for another firm that would grant the desired wage increases; that this was a form of political resistance and this resistance forced Adolf Hitler to go to war in 1939.^{*[28]} Thus, the outbreak of the Second World War was caused by structural economic problems, a “flight into war” imposed by a domestic crisis.^{*[28]} The key aspects of the crisis were according to Mason, a shaky economic recovery was threatened by a rearmament program

that was overwhelming the economy and in which the Nazi regime’s nationalist bluster limited its options.^{*[28]} In this way, Mason articulated a *Primat der Innenpolitik* (“primacy of domestic politics”) view of World War II’s origins through the concept of social imperialism.^{*[29]} Mason’s *Primat der Innenpolitik* thesis was in marked contrast to the *Primat der Außenpolitik* (“primacy of foreign politics) usually used to explain World War II.^{*[28]} In Mason’s opinion, German foreign policy was driven by domestic political considerations, and the launch of World War II in 1939 was best understood as a “barbaric variant of social imperialism”.^{*[30]}

Mason argued that “Nazi Germany was always bent *at some time* upon a major war of expansion.”^{*[31]} However, Mason argued that the timing of such a war was determined by domestic political pressures, especially as relating to a failing economy, and had nothing to do with what Hitler wanted.^{*[31]} In Mason’s view in the period between 1936–41, it was the state of the German economy, and not Hitler’s ‘will’ or ‘intentions’ that was the most important determinate on German decision-making on foreign policy.^{*[32]} Mason argued that the Nazi leaders were deeply haunted by the November Revolution of 1918, and was most unwilling to see any fall in working class living standards out of the fear that it might provoke another November Revolution.^{*[32]} According to Mason, by 1939, the “overheating” of the German economy caused by rearmament, the failure of various rearmament plans produced by the shortages of skilled workers, industrial unrest caused by the breakdown of German social policies, and the sharp drop in living standards for the German working class forced Hitler into going to war at a time and place not of his choosing.^{*[33]} Mason contended that when faced with the deep socio-economic crisis the Nazi leadership had decided to embark upon a ruthless ‘smash and grab’ foreign policy of seizing territory in Eastern Europe which could be pitilessly plundered to support living standards in Germany.^{*[34]} Mason described German foreign policy as driven by an opportunistic ‘next victim’ syndrome after the *Anschluss*, in which the “promiscuity of aggressive intentions” was nurtured by every successful foreign policy move.^{*[35]} In Mason’s opinion, the decision to sign the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact with the Soviet Union and to attack Poland and the running of the risk of a war with Britain and France were the abandonment by Hitler of his foreign policy program outlined in *Mein Kampf* forced on him by his need to stop a collapsing German economy by seizing territory abroad to be plundered.^{*[33]}

For Overy, the problem with Mason’s thesis was that it rested on the assumption that in a way not shown by records, information was passed on to Hitler about the Reich’s economic problems.^{*[36]} Overy argued that there was a difference between economic pressures induced by the problems of the Four Year Plan and economic motives to seize raw materials, industry and foreign reserves of neighboring states as a way of accelerating the Four

Year Plan.*[37] Overy asserted that the repressive capacity of the German state as a way of dealing with domestic unhappiness was somewhat downplayed by Mason.*[36] Finally, Overy argued that there is considerable evidence that the German state felt they could master the economic problems of rearmament; as one civil servant put it in January 1940 “we have already mastered so many difficulties in the past, that here too, if one or other raw material became extremely scarce, ways and means will always yet be found to get out of a fix” .*[38]



This coin was minted for Edward VIII.

2.6 Specific developments

2.6.1 Nazi dictatorship

Main articles: Nazi Germany and Nazi Party

Hitler and his Nazis took full control of Germany in 1933–34 ([Machtergreifung](#)), turning it into a [dictatorship](#) with a highly hostile outlook toward the [Treaty of Versailles](#) and Jews.*[39] It solved its unemployment crisis by heavy military spending.*[40]

Hitler's diplomatic strategy was to make seemingly reasonable demands, threatening war if they were not met.*[41] When opponents tried to appease him, he accepted the gains that were offered, then went to the next target. That aggressive strategy worked as Germany pulled out of the League of Nations (1933), rejected the Versailles Treaty and began to re-arm (1935) with the [Anglo-German Naval Agreement](#), won back the Saar (1935), re-militarized the Rhineland (1936), formed an alliance (“axis”) with Mussolini's Italy (1936), sent massive military aid to Franco in the Spanish Civil War (1936–39), seized Austria (1938), took over Czechoslovakia after the British and French appeasement of the Munich Agreement of 1938, formed a peace pact with Stalin's Russia in August 1939, and finally invaded Poland in September 1939.*[42]

2.6.2 Re-militarization of the Rhineland

Main article: Remilitarization of the Rhineland

In violation of the [Treaty of Versailles](#) and the spirit of the [Locarno Pact](#) and the [Stresa Front](#), Germany [re-militarized the Rhineland](#) on March 7, 1936. It moved German troops into the part of western Germany where, according to the Versailles Treaty, they were not allowed. France could not act because of political instability at the time. According to his official Biography, King [Edward VIII](#), who thought the Versailles provision was unjust,*[43] ordered the government to stand down.*[44]

2.6.3 Italian invasion of Ethiopia

Main article: Second Italo-Abyssinian War

After the [Stresa Conference](#) and even as a reaction to the [Anglo-German Naval Agreement](#), Italian dictator Benito Mussolini attempted to expand the [Italian Empire](#) in Africa by invading the [Ethiopian Empire](#) (also known as Abyssinia). The [League of Nations](#) declared Italy the aggressor and imposed sanctions on oil sales that proved ineffective. Italy annexed Ethiopia in May 7 and merged Ethiopia, Eritrea, and [Somaliland](#) into a single colony known as [Italian East Africa](#). On June 30, 1936, Emperor Haile Selassie gave a stirring speech before the League of Nations denouncing Italy's actions and criticizing the world community for standing by. He warned that “It is us today. It will be you tomorrow” . As a result of the League's condemnation of Italy, Mussolini declared the country's withdrawal from the organization.*[45]

2.6.4 Spanish Civil War

Main article: Spanish Civil War

Between 1936 and 1939, Germany and Italy lent support to the [Nationalists](#) led by general Francisco Franco in Spain, while the Soviet Union supported the existing democratically elected government, the [Spanish Republic](#), led by Manuel Azaña. Both sides experimented with new weapons and tactics. The League of Nations was never involved, and the major powers of the League remained neutral and tried (with little success) to stop arms shipments into Spain. The Nationalists eventually defeated the Republicans in 1939.*[46]

Spain negotiated with joining the Axis but remained neu-

tral during World War II, and did business with both sides. It also sent a volunteer unit to help the Germans against the USSR. Whilst it was considered in the 1940s and 1950s to be a prelude to World War II and It prefigured the war to some extent (as it changed it into an antifascists contest after 1941), it bore no resemblance to the war that started in 1939 and had no major role in causing it.*[47]*[48]

2.6.5 Second Sino-Japanese War

Main article: Second Sino-Japanese War

In 1931 Japan took advantage of China's weakness in the Warlord Era and fabricated the **Mukden Incident** in 1931 to set up the puppet state of **Manchukuo** in Manchuria, with **Puyi**, who had been the last emperor of China, as its emperor. In 1937 the **Marco Polo Bridge Incident** triggered the **Second Sino-Japanese War**.

The invasion was launched by the bombing of many cities such as **Shanghai**, **Nanjing** and **Guangzhou**. The latest, which began on 22 and 23 September 1937, called forth widespread protests culminating in a resolution by the Far Eastern Advisory Committee of the League of Nations. The **Imperial Japanese Army** captured the Chinese capital city of Nanjing, and committed **war crimes** in the **Nanjing massacre**. The war tied down large numbers of Chinese soldiers, so Japan set up three different Chinese puppet states to enlist some Chinese support.*[49]

2.6.6 Anschluss

Main article: **Anschluss**

The **Anschluss** was the 1938 annexation by threat of



Cheering crowds greet the Nazis in Innsbruck

force of Austria into Germany. Historically, the **Pan-Germanism** idea of creating a **Greater Germany** to include all **ethnic Germans** into one nation-state was popular for Germans in both Austria and Germany.

One of the **Nazi** party's points was "We demand the uni-

fication of all Germans in the Greater Germany on the basis of the people's right to self-determination."

The **Stresa Front** of 1935 between Britain, France and Italy had guaranteed the independence of Austria, but after the creation of the **Rome-Berlin Axis** Mussolini was much less interested in upholding its independence.

The Austrian government resisted as long as possible, but had no outside support and finally gave in to Hitler's fiery demands. No fighting occurred as most Austrians were enthusiastic, and Austria was fully absorbed as part of Germany. Outside powers did nothing. Italy had little reason for continued opposition to Germany, and was if anything drawn in closer to the Nazis.*[50]*[51]

2.6.7 Munich Agreement

Main articles: **Munich Agreement** and **Appeasement**

The **Sudetenland** was a predominantly German region inside **Czechoslovakia** alongside its border with Germany. Its more than 3 million ethnic Germans comprised almost a quarter of the population of Czechoslovakia. In the **Treaty of Versailles** it was given to the new Czechoslovak state against the wishes of much of the local population. The decision to disregard their right to **self determination** was based on French intent to weaken Germany. Much of Sudetenland was industrialized.*[52]

Czechoslovakia had a modern army of 38 divisions, backed by a well-noted armament industry (**Škoda**) as well as military alliances with France and Soviet Union. However its defensive strategy against Germany was based on the mountains of the Sudetenland.

Hitler pressed for the Sudetenland's incorporation into the Reich, supporting German separatist groups within the Sudeten region. Alleged Czech brutality and persecution under Prague helped to stir up nationalist tendencies, as did the Nazi press. After the **Anschluss**, all German parties (except German Social-Democratic party) merged with the **Sudeten German Party** (SdP). Paramilitary activity and extremist violence peaked during this period and the Czechoslovakian government declared martial law in parts of the Sudetenland to maintain order. This only complicated the situation, especially now that Slovakian nationalism was rising, out of suspicion towards Prague and Nazi encouragement. Citing the need to protect the Germans in Czechoslovakia, Germany requested the immediate annexation of the Sudetenland.

In the **Munich Agreement** of September 30, 1938, British, French and Italian prime ministers appeased Hitler by giving him what he wanted, hoping he would not want any more. The conferring powers allowed Germany to move troops into the region and incorporate it into the Reich "for the sake of peace." In exchange for this, Hitler gave his word that Germany would make no further territorial claims in Europe.*[53] Czechoslovakia was not al-



British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and Hitler at a meeting in Germany on 24 September 1938, where Hitler demanded annexation of Czech border areas without delay

lived to participate in the conference. When the French and British negotiators informed the Czechoslovak representatives about the agreement, and that if Czechoslovakia would not accept it, France and Britain would consider Czechoslovakia to be responsible for war, President Edvard Beneš capitulated. Germany took the Sudetenland unopposed.*[54]

German occupation and Slovak independence

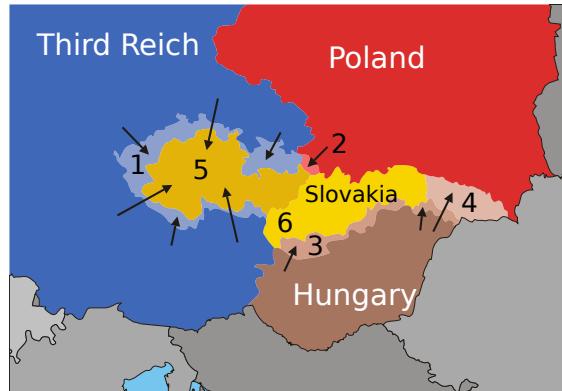
Main articles: Protectorate of Bohemia-Moravia and Slovak Republic (1939–1945)

In March 1939, breaking the Munich Agreement, German troops invaded Prague, and with the Slovaks declaring independence, the country of Czechoslovakia disappeared. The entire ordeal was the last show of the French and British policy of appeasement.

2.6.8 Italian invasion of Albania

Main article: Italian invasion of Albania

After the German occupation of Czechoslovakia, Benito Mussolini feared for Italy becoming a second-rate member of the Axis. Rome delivered Tirana an ultimatum on March 25, 1939, demanding that it accede to Italy's oc-



All territories taken from Czechoslovakia by its neighbours in October 1938 ("Munich Dictate") and March 1939

cupation of Albania. King Zog refused to accept money in exchange for countenancing a full Italian takeover and colonization of Albania. On April 7, 1939, Italian troops invaded Albania. Albania was occupied after a 3 days campaign with minimal resistance offered by the Albanian forces.

2.6.9 Soviet–Japanese Border War

Main article: Battle of Khalkhin Gol

In 1939, the Japanese attacked west from Manchuria into the Mongolian People's Republic, following the earlier Battle of Lake Khasan in 1938. They were decisively beaten by Soviet units under General Georgy Zhukov. Following this battle, the Soviet Union and Japan were at peace until 1945. Japan looked south to expand its empire, leading to conflict with the United States over the Philippines and control of shipping lanes to the Dutch East Indies. The Soviet Union focused on her western border, but leaving 1 million to 1.5 million troops to guard the frontier with Japan.

2.6.10 Danzig crisis



The Polish Corridor and the Free City of Danzig

See also: Free City of Danzig (interwar) and Polish Corridor

After the final fate of Czechoslovakia proved that the Führer's word could not be trusted, Britain and France decided to change tack. They decided any further unilateral German expansion would be met by force. The natural next target for the Third Reich's further expansion was Poland, whose access to the Baltic sea had been carved out of West Prussia by the Versailles treaty, making East Prussia an **exclave**. The main port of the area, Danzig, had been made a **free city-state** under Polish influence guaranteed by the League of Nations, a stark reminder to German nationalists of the **Napoleonic free city** established after the French emperor's crushing victory over Prussia in 1807.

After taking power, the Nazi government made efforts to establish friendly relations with Poland, resulting in the signing of the ten-year **German–Polish Non-Aggression Pact** with the Piłsudski regime in 1934. In 1938, Poland participated in the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia by annexing Zaolzie. In 1939, Hitler claimed **extra-territoriality** for the Reichsautobahn Berlin-Königsberg and a change in Danzig's status, in exchange for promises of territory in Poland's neighbours and a 25-year extension of the non-aggression pact. Poland refused, fearing losing de facto access to the sea, subjugation as a German satellite state or **client state**, and future further German demands.*[55]*[56] In August 1939, Hitler delivered an ultimatum to Poland on Danzig's status.

Polish alliance with the Entente

Main articles: British-Polish Military Alliance and Franco-Polish alliance (1921)

In March 1939, Britain and France guaranteed the independence of Poland. Hitler's claims in the summer of 1939 on Danzig and the Polish provoked yet another international crisis. On August 25, Britain signed the Polish-British Common Defence Pact.

Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact

Main articles: Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, Soviet invasion of Poland, Occupation of the Baltic States, Soviet occupation of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, and Winter War

Nominally, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was a **non-aggression treaty** between Germany and the Soviet Union. It was signed in Moscow on August 23, 1939, by the Soviet foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov and the German foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop.

In 1939, neither Germany nor the Soviet Union were

ready to go to war with each other. The Soviet Union had lost territory to Poland in 1920. Although officially labeled a “**non-aggression treaty**”, the pact included a secret protocol, in which the independent countries of Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania were divided into **spheres of interest** of the parties. The secret protocol explicitly assumed “**territorial and political rearrangements**” in the areas of these countries. Subsequently, all the mentioned countries were invaded, occupied, or forced to cede part of their territory by either the Soviet Union, Germany, or both.

Invasion of Poland



The Soviet Union joined Germany's Invasion of Poland.

Main article: Invasion of Poland (1939)

Between 1919 and 1939 Poland pursued a policy of balance between Soviet Union and Nazi Germany seeking non-aggression treaties with both.*[57] In early 1939 Germany demanded that Poland join the Anti-Comintern Pact as a satellite state of Germany.*[58] Poland, fearing a loss of independence, refused, and Hitler told his generals on 23 May 1939 that the reason for invading Poland was "*Danzig is not the object to which it goes. It is for us the extension of the living space in the East.*"*^[59] To deter Hitler, Britain and France announced that an invasion meant war, and tried to convince the Soviet Union to join in this deterrence. Moscow played along but found it could gain control of the Baltic states and parts of Poland by allying with Germany, which it did in August 1939. London's deterrence had failed, but Hitler did not expect a wider war. Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939 and rejected the British and French demands that it withdraw resulting in their declaration of war on September 3, 1939 in accordance to the defense treaties they signed with Poland and publicly announced.*[60]*[61]

2.6.11 Invasion of the Soviet Union

Main articles: Operation Barbarossa and Soviet offensive plans controversy

Germany attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941. Hitler believed that the Soviet Union could be defeated in a fast-paced and relentless assault that capitalized on the Soviet Union's ill-prepared state, and hoped that success there would bring Britain to the negotiation table, ending the war altogether. Hitler further wanted to preempt an attack by the Soviet Union, and in doing so catch the Soviets off-guard.

2.6.12 Attack on Pearl Harbor

For more details on this topic, see Events leading to the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Usually, the US government and the American public in general had been supportive of China, condemning the colonialist policies of the European powers and Japan in that country, and promoting a so-called **Open Door Policy**. Also, many Americans viewed the Japanese as an aggressive or inferior race, or both. The Nationalist Government of Chiang Kai-shek held close relations with the United States, which opposed Japan's invasion of China in 1937 that it considered an illegal violation of the sovereignty of the Republic of China, and offered the Nationalist Government diplomatic, economic, and military assistance during its war against Japan. Diplomatic friction between the US and Japan manifested itself in events like the Panay incident in 1937 and the Allison incident in 1938.



Japanese troops entering Saigon

Reacting to Japanese pressure on French authorities of French Indochina to stop trade with China, the U.S. began restricting trade with Japan in July 1940. The cut-off of all oil shipments in 1941 was decisive, for the U.S., Britain and the Netherlands provided almost all of Japan's oil.*[62] In September 1940, the Japanese in-

vaded Vichy French Indochina and occupied Tonkin in order to prevent China from importing arms and fuel through French Indochina along the Sino-Vietnamese Railway, from the port of Haiphong through Hanoi to Kunming in Yunnan.*[63] This tightening of the blockade of China made a continuation of the drawn-out Battle of South Guangxi unnecessary. The agreement also allowed Japan to station troops in the rest of Indochina, though this did not happen immediately.

Taking advantage of the situation, Thailand launched the Franco-Thai War in October 1940. In November 1940, American military aviator Claire Lee Chennault upon observing the dire situation in the air war between China and Japan, set out to organize a volunteer squadron of American fighter pilots to fight alongside the Chinese against Japan, known as the Flying Tigers.*[64] US President Franklin D. Roosevelt accepted dispatching them to China in early 1941.*[64] However, they only became operational shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Japan stepped in as a mediator for the French-Thai war in May 1941, allowing its ally to occupy bordering provinces in Cambodia and Laos. In July 1941, as operation Barbarossa had neutralized the Soviet threat, the faction of the Japanese military junta supporting the "Southern Strategy", pushed through the occupation of the rest of French Indochina.

The United States reacted by seeking to bring the Japanese war effort to a complete halt by imposing a full embargo on all trade between the United States to Japan on 1 August 1941, demanding that Japan withdraw all troops from both China and Indochina. Japan was dependent on the United States for 80 percent of its oil, resulting in an economic and military crisis for Japan that could not continue its war effort with China without access to petroleum and oil products.*[65]



Attack on Pearl Harbor, December 1941

On 7 December 1941, without any prior declaration of war,*[66] the Imperial Japanese Navy attacked Pearl Harbor with the aim of destroying the main American battle fleet at anchor. At the same time, other Japanese forces

attacked the U.S.-held Philippines and the British Empire in Malaya, Singapore, and Hong Kong. These attacks led both the USA and the United Kingdom to declare war upon Japan the next day.

Four days later the U.S was brought into the European war when on December 11, 1941, Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy declared war on the United States. Hitler chose to declare that the Tripartite Pact required that Germany follow Japan's declaration of war; although American destroyers escorting convoys and German U-boats were already de facto at war in the Battle of the Atlantic. This declaration effectively ended isolationist sentiment in the U.S. and the United States immediately reciprocated, formally entering the war in Europe.*[67]

2.7 See also

- Areas annexed by Nazi Germany and the pre-war German territorial claims on them
- Diplomatic history of World War II
- Interwar Britain
- Military globalization
- Neville Chamberlain's European Policy
- World war

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2.10 External links

- Why Did World War II Break Out? An online lecture by Prof. Yehuda Bauer on the Yad Vashem website
- France, Germany and the Struggle for the War-making Natural Resources of the Rhineland Explains the long term conflict between Germany and France over the centuries, which was a contributing factor to the World Wars.
- The Way to Pearl Harbor: US vs Japan
- Czechoslovakia primary sources

Chapter 3

Axis powers

“The Axis” redirects here. For other uses, see Axis (disambiguation). For the manga and an anime series, see Hetalia: Axis Powers.

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The **Axis powers** (German: *Achsenmächte*, Japanese:



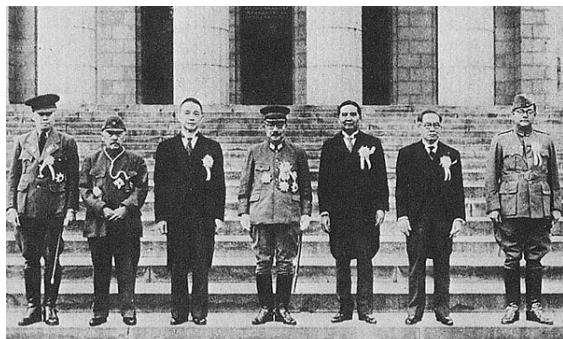
Flags of Germany, Japan, and Italy draping the facade of the Embassy of Japan on the Tiergartenstraße (Zoo Street) in Berlin (September 1940)

枢軸国 *Sūjikukoku*, Italian: *Potenze dell'Asse*), also known as the **Rome–Berlin–Tokyo Axis**, were the nations that fought in World War II against the **Allied Powers**. The Axis agreed on their opposition to the Allies, but did not completely coordinate their activity.

The Axis grew out of the diplomatic efforts of Germany, Italy, and Japan to secure their own specific expansionist interests in the mid-1930s. The first step was the treaty



Germany's Führer Adolf Hitler (right) beside Italy's Duce Benito Mussolini (left)



Japan's Prime Minister Hideki Tojo (center) with fellow government representatives of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. To the left of Tojo, from left to right: Ba Maw from Burma, Zhang Jinghui, Wang Jingwei from China. To the right of Tojo, from left to right, Wan Waithayakon from Thailand, José P. Laurel from the Philippines, Subhas Chandra Bose from India

signed by Germany and Italy in October 1936. Mussolini declared on 1 November that all other European countries would from then on rotate on the Rome–Berlin axis, thus creating the term “Axis”. ^[1] ^[2] The almost simultaneous second step was the signing in November 1936 of the Anti-Comintern Pact, an anti-communist treaty between Germany and Japan. Italy joined the Pact in 1937. The “Rome–Berlin Axis” became a military alliance in 1939 under the so-called “Pact of Steel”, with the Tripartite Pact of 1940 leading to the integration of the military



The signing of the Tripartite Pact by Germany, Japan, and Italy on 27 September 1940 in Berlin. Seated from left to right are the Japanese ambassador to Germany Saburō Kurusu, Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Galeazzo Ciano, and Adolf Hitler.

aims of Germany and its two treaty-bound allies.

At its zenith during **World War II**, the Axis presided over territories that occupied large parts of Europe, North Africa, and East Asia. There were no three-way summit meetings and cooperation and coordination was minimal, with a bit more between Germany and Italy. The war ended in 1945 with the defeat of the Axis powers and the dissolution of their alliance. As in the case of the Allies, membership of the Axis was fluid, with some nations switching sides or changing their degree of military involvement over the course of the war.

3.1 Origins and creation

Main article: [Tripartite Pact](#)

The term “axis” was first applied to the Italo-German relationship by the Italian prime minister **Benito Mussolini** in September 1923, when he wrote in the preface to Roberto Suster's *Germania Repubblica* that “there is no doubt that in this moment the axis of European history passes through Berlin” (*non v'ha dubbio che in questo momento l'asse della storia europea passa per Berlino*).^[3] At the time he was seeking an alliance with the **Weimar Republic** against Yugoslavia and France in the dispute over the **Free State of Fiume**.^[4]

The term was used by Hungary's prime minister **Gyula Gömbös** when advocating an alliance of Hungary with Germany and Italy in the early 1930s.^[5] Gömbös' efforts did effect the Italo-Hungarian Rome Protocols, but his sudden death in 1936 while negotiating with Germany in **Munich** and the arrival of **Kálmán Darányi**, his successor, ended Hungary's involvement in pursuing a trilateral axis.^[5] Contentious negotiations between the Italian foreign minister, **Galeazzo Ciano**, and the German ambassador, **Ulrich von Hassell**, resulted in a **Nineteen-Point Protocol**, signed by Ciano and his German counterpart, **Konstantin von Neurath**, in 1936. When Mussolini

publicly announced the signing on 1 November, he proclaimed the creation of a Rome–Berlin axis.^[4]

3.1.1 Initial proposals of a German–Italian alliance

Italy under **Duce Benito Mussolini** had pursued a strategic alliance of Italy with Germany against France since the early 1920s.^[6] Prior to becoming head of government in Italy as leader of the **Italian Fascist movement**, Mussolini had advocated alliance with recently defeated Germany after the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 settled World War I.^[6] He believed that Italy could expand its influence in Europe by allying with Germany against France.^[6] In early 1923, as a goodwill gesture to Germany, Italy secretly delivered weapons for the German Army, which had faced major disarmament under the provisions of the **Treaty of Versailles**.^[6]



Benito Mussolini, Head of Government, Duce of Fascism, and Founder of the Empire, 1922–1943, Duce of the Italian Social Republic, 1943–1945

In September 1923, Mussolini offered German Chancellor **Gustav Stresemann** a “common policy”: he sought German military support against potential French military intervention over Italy's diplomatic dispute with Yugoslavia over **Fiume**, should an Italian seizure of Fiume result in war between Italy and Yugoslavia. The German ambassador to Italy in 1924 reported that Mussolini saw a nationalist Germany as an essential ally for Italy against



Gustav Stresemann, Reich Chancellor of the German People, 1923, foreign minister of Germany, 1923–1929

France, and hoped to tap into the desire within the German army and the German political right for a war of revenge against France.*[6]

During the Weimar Republic, the German government did not respect the Treaty of Versailles that it had been pressured to sign, and various government figures at the time rejected Germany's post-Versailles borders. General Hans von Seeckt (head of the *Reichswehr* command from 1920 to 1926) supported an alliance between Germany and the Soviet Union to invade and partition Poland between them and restore the German-Russian border of 1914.*[7] Gustav Stresemann as German foreign minister in 1925 declared that the reincorporation of territories lost to Poland and Danzig in the Treaty of Versailles was a major task of German foreign policy*[7] The *Reichswehr* Ministry memorandum of 1926 declared its intention to seek the reincorporation of German territory lost to Poland as its first priority, to be followed by the return of the Saar territory, the annexation of Austria, and remilitarization of the Rhineland.*[7]

Since the 1920s Italy had identified the year 1935 as a crucial date for preparing for a war against France, as 1935 was the year when Germany's obligations under the Treaty of Versailles were scheduled to expire.*[8]

Meetings took place in Berlin in 1924 between Italian General Luigi Capello and prominent figures in the German military, such as von Seeckt and Erich Ludendorff, over military collaboration between Germany and Italy.

The discussions concluded that Germans still wanted a war of revenge against France but were short on weapons and hoped that Italy could assist Germany.*[9]

However at this time Mussolini stressed one important condition that Italy must pursue in an alliance with Germany: that Italy "must ... tow them, not be towed by them".*[6] Italian foreign minister Dino Grandi in the early 1930s stressed the importance of "decisive weight", involving Italy's relations between France and Germany, in which he recognized that Italy was not yet a major power, but perceived that Italy did have strong enough influence to alter the political situation in Europe by placing the weight of its support onto one side or another.*[10] However Grandi stressed that Italy must seek to avoid becoming a "slave of the rule of three" in order to pursue its interests, arguing that although substantial Italo-French tensions existed, Italy would not unconditionally commit itself to an alliance with Germany, just as it would neither unconditionally commit itself to an alliance with France over conceivable Italo-German tensions.*[11] Grandi's attempts to maintain a diplomatic balance between France and Germany were challenged in 1932 by pressure from the French, who had begun to prepare an alliance with Britain and the United States against the threat of a revanchist Germany.*[12] The French government warned Italy that it had to choose whether to be on the side of the pro-Versailles powers or that of the anti-Versailles revanchists.*[12] Grandi responded that Italy would be willing to offer France support against Germany if France gave Italy its mandate over Cameroon and allowed Italy a free hand in Ethiopia.*[12] France refused Italy's proposed exchange for support, as it believed Italy's demands were unacceptable and the threat from Germany was not yet immediate.*[12]

On 23 October 1932, Mussolini declared support for a Four Power Directorate that included Britain, France, Germany, and Italy, to bring about an orderly treaty revision outside of what he considered the outmoded League of Nations.*[12] The proposed Directorate was pragmatically designed to reduce French hegemony in continental Europe, in order to reduce tensions between the great powers in the short term to buy Italy relief from being pressured into a specific war alliance while at the same time allowing them to benefit from diplomatic deals on treaty revisions.*[12]

3.1.2 Danube alliance, dispute over Austria

In 1932, Gyula Gömbös and the Party of National Unity rose to power in Hungary, and immediately sought an alliance with Italy.*[12] Gömbös sought to alter Hungary's post-Treaty of Trianon borders, but knew that Hungary alone was not capable of challenging the Little Entente powers by forming an alliance with Austria and Italy.*[12] Mussolini was elated by Gömbös' offer of



Gyula Gömbös, Prime Minister of Hungary, 1932–1936



Adolf Hitler, Führer and Reich Chancellor of the German People, 1933–1945

alliance with Italy, and they cooperated in seeking to persuade Austrian Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss to join a tripartite economic agreement with Italy and Hungary.*[12] At the meeting between Gömbös and Mussolini in Rome on 10 November 1932, the question came up of the sovereignty of Austria in relation to the predicted rise to power in Germany of the Nazi Party.*[12] Mussolini was worried about Nazi ambitions towards Austria, and indicated that at least in the short term he was committed to maintaining Austria as a sovereign state.*[12] Italy had concerns over a Germany which included Austria laying land claims to German-populated territories of the South Tyrol (also known as Alto-Adige) within Italy, which bordered Austria on the Brenner Pass. Gömbös responded to Mussolini that as the Austrians primarily identified as Germans, the Anschluss of Austria to Germany was inevitable, and advised that it would be better for Italy to have a friendly Germany across the Brenner Pass than a hostile Germany bent on entering the Adriatic.*[12] Mussolini said he hoped the Anschluss could be postponed as long as possible until the breakout of a European war that he estimated would begin in 1938.*[12]

In 1933, Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party came to power in Germany. His first diplomatic visitor was Gömbös. In a letter to Hitler within a day of his being appointed Chancellor, Gömbös told the Hungarian ambassador to Germany to remind Hitler “that ten years ago, on the basis of our common principles and ideology, we were in contact via Dr. Scheubner-Richter”.*[13] Gömbös told the Hungarian ambassador to inform Hitler of Hungary's

intentions “for the two countries to cooperate in foreign and economic policy”.

Hitler had advocated an alliance between Germany and Italy since the 1920s.*[14] Shortly after being appointed Chancellor, Hitler sent a personal message to Mussolini, declaring “admiration and homage” and declaring his anticipation of the prospects of German-Italian friendship and even alliance.*[15] Hitler was aware that Italy held concerns over potential German land claims on South Tyrol, and assured Mussolini that Germany was not interested in South Tyrol. Hitler in *Mein Kampf* had declared that South Tyrol was a non-issue considering the advantages that would be gained from a German-Italian alliance. After Hitler's rise to power, the Four Power Directorate proposal by Italy had been looked at with interest by Britain, but Hitler was not committed to it, resulting in Mussolini urging Hitler to consider the diplomatic advantages Germany would gain by breaking out of isolation by entering the Directorate and avoiding an immediate armed conflict.*[16] The Four Power Directorate proposal stipulated that Germany would no longer be required to have limited arms and would be granted the right to re-armament under foreign supervision in stages.*[17] Hitler completely rejected the idea of controlled rearment under foreign supervision.*[17]

Mussolini did not trust Hitler's intentions regarding Anschluss nor Hitler's promise of no territorial claims on

South Tyrol.*[18] Mussolini informed Hitler that he was satisfied with the presence of the anti-Marxist government of Dollfuss in Austria, and warned Hitler that he was adamantly opposed to Anschluss.*[18] Hitler responded in contempt to Mussolini that he intended “to throw Dollfuss into the sea”.*[18] With this disagreement over Austria, relations between Hitler and Mussolini steadily became more distant.*[18]

Hitler attempted to break the impasse with Italy over Austria by sending Hermann Göring to negotiate with Mussolini in 1933 to convince Mussolini to press the Austrian government to appoint members of Austria's Nazis to the government.*[19] Göring claimed that Nazi domination of Austria was inevitable and that Italy should accept this, as well as repeating to Mussolini of Hitler's promise to “regard the question of the South Tyrol frontier as finally liquidated by the peace treaties”.*[19] In response to Göring's visit with Mussolini, Dollfuss immediately went to Italy to counter any German diplomatic headway.*[19] Dollfuss claimed that his government was actively challenging Marxists in Austria and claimed that once the Marxists were defeated in Austria, that support for Austria's Nazis would decline.*[19]

In 1934, Hitler and Mussolini met for the first time, in Venice. The meeting did not proceed amicably. Hitler demanded that Mussolini compromise on Austria by pressuring Dollfuss to appoint Austrian Nazis to his cabinet, to which Mussolini flatly refused the demand. In response, Hitler promised that he would accept Austria's independence for the time being, saying that due to the internal tensions in Germany (referring to sections of the Nazi SA that Hitler would soon kill in the *Night of the Long Knives*) that Germany could not afford to provoke Italy.*[20] Galeazzo Ciano told the press that the two leaders had made a “gentleman's agreement” to avoid interfering in Austria.*[21]

Several weeks after the Venice meeting, on 25 July 1934, Austrian Nazis assassinated Dollfuss.*[22] Mussolini was outraged as he held Hitler directly responsible for the assassination that violated Hitler's promise made only weeks ago to respect Austrian independence.*[23]*[21] Mussolini rapidly deployed several army divisions and air squadrons to the Brenner Pass, and warned that a German move against Austria would result in war between Germany and Italy.*[24] Hitler responded by both denying Nazi responsibility for the assassination and issuing orders to dissolve all ties between the German Nazi Party and its Austrian branch, which Germany claimed was responsible for the political crisis.*[25]

Italy effectively abandoned diplomatic relations with Germany while turning to France in order to challenge Germany's intransigence by signing a Franco-Italian accord to protect Austrian independence.*[26] French and Italian military staff discussed possible military cooperation involving a war with Germany should Hitler dare to attack Austria. As late as May 1935, Mussolini spoke of



Engelbert Dollfuss, Chancellor of Austria, 1932–1934



Kurt Schuschnigg, Chancellor of Austria, 1934–1938

his desire to destroy Hitler.

Relations between Germany and Italy recovered due to Hitler's support of Italy's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, while other countries condemned the invasion and advocated sanctions against Italy.

3.1.3 Development of German–Japanese–Italian alliance

Interest in Germany and Japan in forming an alliance began when Japanese diplomat Oshima Hiroshi visited Joachim von Ribbentrop in Berlin in 1935.*[27] Oshima informed von Ribbentrop of Japan's interest in forming a German-Japanese alliance against the Soviet Union.*[27] Von Ribbentrop expanded on Oshima's proposal by advocating that the alliance be based in a political context of a pact to oppose the Comintern.*[27] The proposed



Fumimaro Konoe, prime minister of Japan, 1937–1940

pact was met with mixed reviews in Japan, with a faction of ultra-nationalists within the government supporting the pact while the Japanese Navy and the Japanese Foreign Ministry were staunchly opposed to the pact.*[28] There was great concern in the Japanese government that such a pact with Germany could disrupt Japan's relations with Britain, endangering years of a beneficial Anglo-Japanese accord, that had allowed Japan to ascend in the international community in the first place.*[29] The response to the pact was met with similar division in Germany; while the proposed pact was popular amongst the upper echelons of the Nazi Party, it was opposed by many in the Foreign Ministry, the Army, and the business community who held financial interests in China to which Japan was hostile.

On learning of German–Japanese negotiations, Italy also began to take an interest in forming an alliance with Japan.*[27] Italy had hoped that due to Japan's long-term close relations with Britain, that an Italo-Japanese alliance could pressure Britain into adopting a more accommodating stance towards Italy in the Mediterranean.*[27] In the summer of 1936, Italian Foreign Minister Ciano informed Japanese Ambassador to Italy, Sugimura Yotaro, “I have heard that a Japanese-German agreement concerning the Soviet Union has been reached, and I think it would be natural for a similar agreement to be made between Italy and Japan”.*[27] Initially Japan's attitude towards Italy's proposal was generally dismissive, viewing a German–Japanese alliance against the Soviet Union as imperative while regarding an Italo-Japanese alliance



“Good friends in three countries” (1938): Japanese propaganda postcard celebrating the participation of Italy in the Anti-Comintern Pact on November 6, 1937. On top, Hitler, Konoe, and Mussolini are each in medallion.

as secondary, as Japan anticipated that an Italo-Japanese alliance would antagonize Britain that had condemned Italy's invasion of Ethiopia.*[27] This attitude by Japan towards Italy altered in 1937 after the League of Nations condemned Japan for aggression in China and faced international isolation, while Italy remained favourable to Japan.*[27] As a result of Italy's support for Japan against international condemnation, Japan took a more positive attitude towards Italy and offered proposals for a non-aggression or neutrality pact with Italy.*[30]

The “Axis powers” formally took the name after the Tripartite Pact was signed by Germany, Italy, and Japan on 27 September 1940, in Berlin. The pact was subsequently joined by Hungary (20 November 1940), Romania (23 November 1940), Slovakia (24 November 1940), and Bulgaria (1 March 1941).*[31]

3.2 Ideology

In ideological terms the Axis powers described their goals as breaking the hegemony of plutocratic-capitalist Western powers and defending civilization from communism.*[32]

3.3 Economic resources

The Axis population in 1938 was 258.9 million, while the Allied population (excluding the Soviet Union and the United States, who later joined the Allies) was 689.7 million.* [33] Thus the Allied powers outnumbered the Axis powers by 2.7 to 1.* [34] The leading Axis states had the following domestic populations: Germany 75.5 million (including 6.8 million from recently annexed Austria), Japan 71.9 million (excluding its colonies), and Italy 43.4 million (excluding its colonies). The United Kingdom (excluding its colonies) had a population of 47.5 million and France (excluding its colonies) 42 million.* [33]

The wartime gross domestic product (GDP) of the Axis was \$911 billion at its highest in 1941 in international dollars by 1990 prices.* [35] The GDP of the Allied powers was \$1,798 billion. The United States stood at \$1,094 billion, more than the Axis combined.* [36]

The burden of the war upon participating countries has been measured through the percentage of gross national product (GNP) devoted to military expenditures.* [37] Nearly one-quarter of Germany's GNP was committed to the war effort in 1939, and this rose to three-quarters of GNP in 1944, prior to the collapse of the economy.* [37] In 1939, Japan committed 22 percent of its GNP to its war effort in China; this rose to three-quarters of GNP in 1944.* [37] Italy did not mobilize its economy; its GNP committed to the war effort remained at prewar levels.* [37]

Italy and Japan lacked industrial capacity; their economies were small, dependent on international trade, external sources of fuel and other industrial resources.* [37] As a result, Italian and Japanese mobilization remained low, even by 1943.* [37]

Among the three major Axis powers, Japan had the lowest per capita income, while Germany and Italy had an income level comparable to the United Kingdom.* [38]



German Führer Adolf Hitler along with General Walther von Brauchitsch, during the victory parade in Warsaw after the defeat of Poland, September 1939



German Heinkel He-111 bomber aircraft during the Battle of Britain

3.4 Major Axis powers

3.4.1 Germany

Main articles: Nazi Germany, Greater Germanic Reich, and Flensburg Government

War justifications

Hitler in 1941 described the outbreak of World War II as the fault of the intervention of Western powers against Germany during its war with Poland, describing it as the result of “the European and American warmongers.”* [39] Hitler denied accusations by the Allies that he wanted a world war, and invoked anti-



German vehicles advancing during the Second Battle of El Alamein in the North African campaign



German soldiers during the Battle of Stalingrad in the Eastern Front campaign



German submarine U-118 under air attack in June 1943

Semitic claims that the war was wanted and provoked by politicians of Jewish origin or associated with Jewish interests.^{*[40]} However Hitler clearly had designs for Germany to become the dominant and leading state in the world, such as his intention for Germany's capital of Berlin to become the *Welthauptstadt* ("World Capital"), renamed *Germania*.^{*[41]} The German government also justified its actions by claiming that Germany inevitably needed to territorially expand because it was facing an overpopulation crisis that Hitler described: "We are overpopulated and cannot feed ourselves from our own resources".^{*[42]} Thus expansion was justified as an inevitable necessity to provide *lebensraum* ("living space") for the German nation and end the country's overpopulation within existing confined territory, and provide resources necessary to its people's well-being.^{*[42]} Since the 1920s, the Nazi Party publicly promoted the expansion of Germany into territories held by the Soviet Union.^{*[43]} However, from 1939 to 1941, the Nazi regime claimed to have discarded those plans in light of improved relations with the Soviet Union via the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, and claimed that central Africa was where Germany sought to achieve *lebensraum*.^{*[44]} Hitler publicly claimed that Germany wanted to settle the *lebensraum* issue peacefully through diplomatic negotiations that would require other powers to

make concessions to Germany.^{*[45]} At the same time however Germany did prepare for war in the cause of *lebensraum*, and in the late 1930s Hitler emphasized the need for a military build-up to prepare for a potential clash between the peoples of Germany and the Soviet Union.^{*[46]}

Germany justified its war against Poland on the issues of German minority within Poland and Polish opposition to the incorporation of the German-majority *Free City of Danzig* into Germany. While Hitler and the Nazi party before taking power openly talked about destroying Poland and were hostile to Poles, after gaining power until February 1939 Hitler tried to conceal his true intentions towards Poland and revealed them only to his closest associates.^{*[47]} Relations between Germany and Poland altered from the early to the late 1930s, as Germany sought rapprochement with Poland to avoid the risk of Poland entering the Soviet sphere of influence, and appealed to anti-Soviet sentiment in Poland.^{*[48]} The Soviet Union in turn at this time competed with Germany for influence in Poland.^{*[48]} At the same time Germany was preparing for a war with Poland and was secretly preparing the German minority in Poland for a war.^{*[49]} and since 1935 weapons were being smuggled and gathered in frontier Polish regions by German intelligence.^{*[50]} In November 1938, Germany organized German paramilitary units in the Polish region of Pomerania that were trained to engage in diversion, sabotage as well as murder and ethnic cleansing upon a German invasion of Poland.^{*[50]} At the end of 1938 one of the first editions of *Sonderfahndungsbuch Polen* was printed by the Nazis, containing several thousand names of Poles targeted for execution and imprisonment after an invasion of Poland.^{*[51]} From late 1938 to early 1939, Germany in talks with Poland suggested that as reward for Poland transferring territories in Pomerania to Germany that Poland could annex Ukrainian territories from the Soviet Union after a war with Soviet Union.^{*[52]} In January 1939, Ribbentrop held negotiations with Józef Beck, the Polish minister of foreign affairs; and Edward Rydz-Śmigły, the commander-in-chief of the Polish Army; in which Ribbentrop urged them to have Poland enter the Anti-Comintern Pact and work together with Germany for a mutual war in the East, whereby Poland would take Slovakia and the Ukraine.^{*[52]} Ribbentrop in private discussion with German officials stated that he hoped that by offering Poland large new territories in the Soviet Union, that Germany would gain not only from Polish cooperation in a war with the Soviet Union, but also that Poland would cooperate by transferring the Polish Corridor to Germany in exchange for these gains, because though it would lose access to the Baltic Sea, it would gain access to the Black Sea via Ukraine.^{*[52]} However Beck refused to discuss German demands for the Corridor and was recalcitrant to the idea of a war with the Soviet Union.^{*[52]} The Polish government distrusted Hitler and saw the plan as a threat to Polish sovereignty, practically subordinating Poland to the Axis and the Anti-Comintern Bloc while re-

ducing the country to a state of near-servitude as its entire trade with Western Europe through the Baltic Sea would become dependent on Germany.*[53]

A diplomatic crisis erupted following Hitler demanding that the Free City of Danzig be annexed to Germany, as it was led by a Nazi government seeking annexation to Germany. Germany used legal precedents to justify its intervention against Poland and annexation of the Free City of Danzig (led by a local Nazi government that sought incorporation into Germany) in 1939.*[54] Germany noted one such violation as being in 1933 when Poland sent additional troops into the city in violation of the limit of Polish troops admissible to Danzig as agreed to by treaty.*[54] Hitler believed that Poland could be pressured to cede claimed territory through diplomatic means combined with the threat of military force, and believed that Germany could gain such concessions from Poland without provoking a war with Britain or France.*[55] Hitler believed that Britain's guarantee of military support to Poland was a bluff, and with a German-Soviet agreement on both countries recognizing their mutual interests involving Poland.*[55] The Soviet Union had diplomatic grievances with Poland since the Soviet-Polish War of 1919–1921 in which the Soviets agreed that Northeastern Poland, Western Belarus and Western Ukraine will become part of restored Polish state after intense fighting in those years over the territories, and the Soviet Union sought to gain those territories.*[56]

Poland rejected Germany's demands and Germany in response prepared a general mobilization on the morning of 30 August 1939.*[57] Hitler believed that one of two outcomes would occur. The first was that the British would accept Germany's demands and pressure Poland to agree to them.*[57] The second was that a conflict with Poland would be an isolated conflict, as Britain would not engage in a war with both Germany and the Soviet Union.*[55] At midnight 30 August 1939, German foreign minister Joachim Ribbentrop was expecting the arrival of the British ambassador Neville Henderson as well as a Polish plenipotentiary to negotiate terms with Germany.*[57] Only Henderson arrived, and Henderson informed Ribbentrop that no Polish plenipotentiary was arriving.*[57] Ribbentrop became extremely upset and demanded the immediate arrival of a Polish diplomat, informing Henderson that the situation was "damned serious!", and read out to Henderson Germany's demands that Poland accept Germany annexing Danzig as well as Poland granting Germany the right to increase the connection of the infrastructure of East Prussia to mainland Germany by building an extraterritorial highway and railway that passed through the Polish Gdansk Pomerania, and a plebiscite to determine whether the Polish Corridor, that had a mixed composition of ethnic Poles and ethnic Germans, should remain within Poland or be transferred to Germany.*[57]

Germany justified its invasion of the Low Countries of Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands in May 1940

by claiming that it suspected that Britain and France were preparing to use the Low Countries to launch an invasion of the industrial Ruhr region of Germany.*[58] When war between Germany versus Britain and France appeared likely in May 1939, Hitler declared that the Netherlands and Belgium would need to be occupied, saying: "Dutch and Belgian air bases must be occupied ... Declarations of neutrality must be ignored".*[58] In a conference with Germany's military leaders on 23 November 1939, Hitler declared to the military leaders that "We have an Achilles heel, the Ruhr", and said that "If England and France push through Belgium and Holland into the Ruhr, we shall be in the greatest danger", and thus claimed that Belgium and the Netherlands had to be occupied by Germany to protect Germany from a British-French offensive against the Ruhr, irrespective of their claims to neutrality.*[58]

In April 1941, shortly after Germany and Yugoslavia completed negotiations for Yugoslavia to join the Axis, a coup d'état occurred in Yugoslavia that led to the Axis invasion of Yugoslavia. Germany needed access to the territory held by Yugoslavia to allow German forces to have a direct route to travel through, to reach and rescue Italian military forces that were faltering in their campaign in Greece. There was substantial animosity towards the alliance amongst Serbs, Yugoslavia's largest ethnic group, who had fought German Austrians and Germany on the side of the Allies in World War I, and three Serb cabinet ministers resigned their positions in protest after the alliance was signed. Hitler initially attempted to be conciliatory to the Serbs who held animosity to the agreement, saying that he "understood the feelings" of those Serbs who opposed the alliance. Amidst the negotiations, Hitler expressed concern to Italian foreign minister Ciano that he sensed trouble coming in Belgrade. A coup d'état occurred in Yugoslavia in which a government rose to power and abandoned its association with the Axis. Hitler accused the coup of being engineered by the British. The coup was at least partly supported by the British though there was substantial patriotic enthusiasm against the Pact with rallies in Belgrade. At the rallies in Belgrade immediately after the coup, people were heard to be shouting "Better war than pact!" and waving British, American, and French flags. Days after the coup d'état, Hitler ordered the invasion of Yugoslavia.*[59]

Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 involved issues of *lebensraum*, anti-communism, and Soviet foreign policy. Hitler in his early years as Nazi leader had claimed that he would be willing to accept friendly relations with Russia on the tactical condition that Russia agree to return to the borders established by the German-Russian peace agreement of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk signed by Vladimir Lenin of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic in 1918 which gave large territories held by Russia to German control in exchange for peace.*[43] Hitler in 1921 had commended the Treaty of Brest Litovsk as opening the possibility for restoration of

relations between Germany and Russia, saying:

Through the peace with Russia the sustenance of Germany as well as the provision of work were to have been secured by the acquisition of land and soil, by access to raw materials, and by friendly relations between the two lands.

—Adolf Hitler, 1921*[43]

From 1921 to 1922 Hitler evoked rhetoric of both the achievement of lebensraum involving the acceptance of a territorially reduced Russia as well as supporting Russian nationals in overthrowing the Bolshevik government and establishing a new Russian government.*[43] However Hitler's attitudes changed by the end of 1922, in which he then supported an alliance of Germany with Britain to destroy Russia.*[43] Later Hitler declared how far into Russia he intended to expand Germany to:

Asia, what a disquieting reservoir of men! The safety of Europe will not be assured until we have driven Asia back behind the Urals. No organized Russian state must be allowed to exist west of that line.

—Adolf Hitler.*[60]

Policy for *lebensraum* planned mass expansion of Germany eastwards to the Ural Mountains.*[60]*[61] Hitler planned for the “surplus” Russian population living west of the Urals to be deported to the east of the Urals.*[62] After Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, the Nazi regime's stance towards an independent, territorially-reduced Russia was affected by pressure beginning in 1942 from the German Army on Hitler to endorse a Russian national liberation army led by Andrey Vlasov that officially sought to overthrow Joseph Stalin and the communist regime and establish a new Russian state.*[63] Initially the proposal to support an anti-communist Russian army was met with outright rejection by Hitler, however by 1944 as Germany faced mounting losses on the Eastern Front, Vlasov's forces were recognized by Germany as an ally, particularly by Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler.*[64]

After the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact was signed, in 1940 when Molotov arrived in Berlin on a diplomatic visit during which Ribbentrop stated that Germany was directing its *lebensraum* southward.*[65] Ribbentrop described to Molotov that further extension of Germany's *lebensraum* was now going to be founded in Central Africa, and suggested that Germany would accept the Soviet Union taking part in the partitioning of the British Empire upon a British defeat in the war.*[44]

Germany and the Soviet Union in 1940 were in dispute over their respective influences in the Balkans and the

Turkish Straits. The Soviet seizure of Bessarabia from Romania in June 1940 placed the Soviet–Romanian frontier dangerously close to Romania's oil fields in Ploiești that Germany needed oil trade from to support its war effort.*[66] When negotiations with Molotov led to no resolution, Hitler determined that Britain was only continuing to fight in hope of Soviet intervention and therefore the defeat of the Soviet Union would result in the defeat of Britain and in July 1940 began planning for a possible invasion of the Soviet Union.*[66]

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the outbreak of war between Japan and the United States, Germany supported Japan by declaring war on the US. During the war Germany denounced the Atlantic Charter and the Lend-Lease Act that the US adopted to support the Allied powers prior to entry into the alliance, as imperialism directed at dominating and exploit countries outside of the continental Americas.*[67] Hitler denounced American President Roosevelt's invoking of the term “freedom” to describe US actions in the war, and accused the American meaning of “freedom” to be the freedom for democracy to exploit the world and the freedom for plutocrats within such democracy to exploit the masses.*[67]

History

At the end of World War I, German citizens felt that their country had been humiliated as a result of the Treaty of Versailles, which included a war guilt clause and forced Germany to pay enormous reparations payments and forfeit territories formerly controlled by German Empire and all its colonies. The pressure of the reparations on the German economy led to hyperinflation during the early 1920s. In 1923 the French occupied the Ruhr region when Germany defaulted on its reparations payments. Although Germany began to improve economically in the mid-1920s, the Great Depression created more economic hardship and a rise in political forces that advocated radical solutions to Germany's woes. The Nazis, under Hitler, promoted the nationalist stab-in-the-back legend stating that Germany had been betrayed by Jews and Communists. The party promised to rebuild Germany as a major power and create a Greater Germany that would include Alsace-Lorraine, Austria, Sudetenland, and other German-populated territories in Europe. The Nazis also aimed to occupy and colonize non-German territories in Poland, the Baltic states, and the Soviet Union, as part of the Nazi policy of seeking *Lebensraum* (“living space”) in eastern Europe.

Germany renounced the Versailles treaty and remilitarized the Rhineland in March 1936. Germany had already resumed conscription and announced the existence of a German air force in 1935. Germany annexed Austria in 1938, the Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia, and the Memel territory from Lithuania in 1939. Germany then invaded the rest of

Czechoslovakia in 1939, creating the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and the country of Slovakia.

On 23 August 1939, Germany and the Soviet Union signed the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, which contained a secret protocol dividing eastern Europe into spheres of influence.^{*[68]} Germany's invasion of its part of Poland under the Pact eight days later^{*[69]} triggered the beginning of World War II. By the end of 1941, Germany occupied a large part of Europe and its military forces were fighting the Soviet Union, nearly capturing Moscow. However, crushing defeats at the Battle of Stalingrad and the Battle of Kursk devastated the German armed forces. This, combined with Western Allied landings in France and Italy, led to a three-front war that depleted Germany's armed forces and resulted in Germany's defeat in 1945.

There was substantial internal opposition within the German military to the Nazi regime's aggressive strategy of rearmament and foreign policy in the 1930s.^{*[70]} From 1936 to 1938, Germany's top four military leaders, Ludwig Beck, Werner von Blomberg, Werner von Fritsch, Walther von Reichenau, were all in opposition to the rearmament strategy and foreign policy.^{*[71]} They criticized the hurried nature of rearmament, the lack of planning, Germany's insufficient resources to carry out a war, the dangerous implications of Hitler's foreign policy, and the increasing subordination of the army to the Nazi Party's rules.^{*[71]} These four military leaders were outspoken and public in their opposition to these tendencies.^{*[71]} The Nazi regime responded with contempt to the four military leaders' opposition, and Nazi members brewed a false crass scandal that alleged that the two top army leaders von Blomberg and von Fritsch were homosexual lovers, in order to pressure them to resign.^{*[71]} Though started by lower-ranking Nazi members, Hitler took advantage of the scandal by forcing von Blomberg and von Fritsch to resign and replaced them with opportunists who were subservient to him.^{*[71]} Shortly afterwards Hitler announced on 4 February 1938 that he was taking personal command over Germany's military with the new High Command of the Armed Forces with the *Führer* as its head.^{*[71]}

The opposition to the Nazi regime's aggressive foreign policy in the military became so strong from 1936 to 1938, that considerations of overthrowing the Nazi regime were discussed within the upper echelons of the military and remaining non-Nazi members of the German government.^{*[72]} Minister of Economics, Hjalmar Schacht met with Beck in 1936 in which Schacht declared to Beck that he was considering an overthrow of the Nazi regime and was inquiring what the stance was by the German military on support of an overthrow of the Nazi regime.^{*[72]} Beck was lukewarm to the idea, and responded that if a coup against the Nazi regime began with support at the civilian level, the military would not oppose it.^{*[72]} Schacht considered this promise by Beck to be inadequate because he knew that without the support of the army, any coup attempt would be crushed

by the Gestapo and the SS.^{*[73]} However, by 1938, Beck became a firm opponent of the Nazi regime out of his opposition to Hitler's military plans of 1937–38 that told the military to prepare for the possibility of a world war as a result of German annexation plans for Austria and Czechoslovakia.^{*[73]}

Colonies and dependencies

Further information: Areas annexed by Nazi Germany and German-occupied Europe

The Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was created from the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia. Shortly after Germany annexed the Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia, Slovakia declared its independence. The new Slovak State allied itself with Germany. The remainder of the country was occupied by German military forces and organized into the Protectorate. Czech civil institutions were preserved but the Protectorate was considered within the sovereign territory of Germany.

The General Government was the name given to the territories of occupied Poland that were not directly annexed into German provinces, but like Bohemia and Moravia was considered within the sovereign territory of Germany.

Belgium quickly surrendered to Germany, and the Belgian King remained in the country during the German military occupation from 1940 to 1944. The Belgian King cooperated closely with Germany and repeatedly sought assurances that Belgian rights would be retained once Germany achieved total victory. However, Hitler intended to annex Belgium and its Germanic population into the Greater Germanic Reich, initiated by the creation of Reichskommissariat Belgien, an authority run directly by the German government that sought the incorporation of the territory into the planned Germanic Reich. However Belgium was soon occupied by Allied forces in 1944.

Reichskommissariat Niederlande was an occupation authority and territory established in the Netherlands in 1940 designated as a colony to be incorporated into the planned Greater Germanic Reich.

Reichskommissariat Norwegen was established in Norway in 1940. Like the Reichskommissariats in Belgium and the Netherlands, its Germanic peoples were to be incorporated into the Greater Germanic Reich. In Norway, the Quisling regime, headed by Vidkun Quisling, was installed by the Germans as a client regime during the occupation, while king Haakon VII and the legal government were in exile. Quisling encouraged Norwegians to serve as volunteers in the Waffen-SS, collaborated in the deportation of Jews, and was responsible for the executions of members of the Norwegian resistance movement.

About 45,000 Norwegian collaborators joined the pro-Nazi party Nasjonal Samling (National Union), and some

police units helped arrest many Jews. However, Norway was one of the first countries where resistance during World War II was widespread before the turning point of the war in 1943. After the war, Quisling and other collaborators were executed. Quisling's name has become an international eponym for traitor.

Reichskommissariat Ostland was established in the Baltic region in 1941. Unlike the western Reichskommissariats that sought the incorporation of their majority Germanic peoples, Ostland were designed for settlement by Germans who would displace the non-Germanic majority living there, as part of *lebensraum*.

Reichskommissariat Ukraine was established in Ukraine in 1941. Like Ostland it was slated for settlement by Germans.

The Military Administration in Serbia was established on occupied Yugoslav territory in April 1941, following the invasion of the country. On 30 April a pro-German Serbian administration was formed under **Milan Aćimović** to serve as a civil administration in the military occupation zone. A joint Partisan and Chetnik uprising in late 1941 became a serious concern for the Germans, as most of their forces were deployed to Russia; only three divisions were in the country. On 13 August 546 Serbs, including some of the country's prominent and influential leaders, issued an appeal to the Serbian nation that condemned the Partisan and royalist resistance as unpatriotic. Two weeks after the appeal, with the Partisan and royalist insurgency beginning to gain momentum, 75 prominent Serbs convened a meeting in Belgrade and formed a **Government of National Salvation** under Serbian General **Milan Nedić** to replace the existing Serbian administration. The Germans were short of police and military forces in Serbia, and came to rely on poorly armed Serbian formations, the **Serbian State Guard** and **Serbian Volunteer Corps**, to maintain order. These forces, however, were not able to contain the resistance, and for the most of the war large parts of Serbia were under control of the Partisans or Chetniks (the two resistance movements soon became mutually-hostile). The Government of National Salvation, imbued with few powers upon formation, saw its functions further decreased and taken over by the **Wehrmacht** occupation authorities as the war progressed. After the initial mass revolts, the German authorities instituted an extreme regime of reprisals, proclaiming that 100 civilians would be executed for every German soldier killed, and 50 for each one wounded. These measures were actually implemented on more than one occasion: large-scale shootings took place in the Serbian towns of Kraljevo and Kragujevac during October 1941.

3.4.2 Italy

Main articles: Kingdom of Italy, Italian Empire, Imperial Italy (fascist), Latin Bloc (proposed alliance), and Military history of Italy during World War II



Italian soldiers in the North African Campaign in 1941



Italian Fiat M13/40 tanks in the North African Campaign in 1941



Italian battleship Vittorio Veneto firing at Allied warships during the Battle of Cape Matapan

War justifications

Duce Benito Mussolini described Italy's declaration of war against the Western Allies of Britain and France in June 1940 as the following: "We are going to war against the plutocratic and reactionary democracies of the



Italian Bersaglieri in the Balkans Campaign



Italian Macchi C.200 fighter aircraft during the war

West who have invariably hindered the progress and often threatened the very existence of the Italian people".*[74] Italy condemned the Western powers for enacting sanctions on Italy in 1935 for its actions in the Second Italo-Ethiopian War that Italy claimed was a response to an act of Ethiopian aggression against tribesmen in Italian Eritrea in the Walwal incident of 1934.*[75] Italy, like Germany, also justified its actions by claiming that Italy needed to territorially expand to provide *spazio vitale* ("vital space") for the Italian nation.*[76]

In October 1938 in the aftermath of the Munich Agreement, Italy demanded concessions from France to yield to Italy: a free port at Djibouti, control of the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railroad, Italian participation in the management of Suez Canal Company, some form of French-Italian condominium over Tunisia, and the preservation of Italian culture in French-held Corsica with no French assimilation of the people.*[77] Italy opposed the French monopoly over the Suez Canal because under the French-dominated Suez Canal Company all Italian merchant traffic to its colony of Italian East Africa was forced to pay tolls upon entering the canal.*[77]*[78] Mussolini hoped that in light of Italy's role in settling the Munich Agreement that prevented the outbreak of war, that Britain would react by putting pressure on France to yield to Italy's demands to preserve the peace.*[77] France refused to accept Italy's demands as it was widely suspected that Italy's true intentions were territorial acquisition of Nice, Corsica, Tunisia, and Djibouti and not the milder official demands put forth.*[77] Relations between Italy and France deteriorated with France's refusal to accept Italy's demands.*[77] France responded to Italy's demands with threatening naval maneuvers as a warning to Italy.*[77] As tensions between Italy and France grew, Hitler made a major speech on 30 January 1939 in which he promised German military support in the case of an unprovoked war against Italy.*[79]

Italy justified its intervention against Greece in October 1940 on the allegation that Greece was being used by Britain against Italy, Mussolini informed this to Hitler, saying: "Greece is one of the main points of English maritime strategy in the Mediterranean".*[80]

Italy justified its intervention against Yugoslavia in April 1941 by appealing to both Italian irredentist claims and the fact of Albanian, Croatian, and Macedonian separatists not wishing to be part of Yugoslavia.*[81] Croatian separatism soared after the assassination of Croatian political leaders in the Yugoslav parliament in 1928 including the death of Stjepan Radić, and Italy endorsed Croatian separatist Ante Pavelić and his fascist Ustaše movement that was based and trained in Italy with the Fascist regime's support prior to intervention against Yugoslavia.*[81]

History

In the late 19th century, after Italian unification, a nationalist movement had grown around the concept of *Italia irredenta*, which advocated the incorporation into Italy of Italian-populated areas still under foreign rule. There was a desire to annex Dalmatian territories, which had formerly been ruled by the Venetians, and which consequently had Italian-speaking elites. The intention of the Fascist regime was to create a "New Roman Empire" in which Italy would dominate the Mediterranean. In 1935–1936 Italy invaded and annexed Ethiopia and the Fascist government proclaimed the creation of the "Italian Em-

pire".*[82] Protests by the League of Nations, especially the British, who had interests in that area, led to no serious action, although The League did try to enforce economic sanctions upon Italy, but to no avail. The incident highlighted French and British weakness, exemplified by their reluctance to alienate Italy and lose her as their ally. The limited actions taken by the Western powers pushed Mussolini's Italy towards alliance with Hitler's Germany anyway. In 1937 Italy left the League of Nations and joined the Anti-Comintern Pact, which had been signed by Germany and Japan the preceding year. In March/April 1939 Italian troops invaded and annexed Albania. Germany and Italy signed the **Pact of Steel** on May 22.

Italy entered World War II on 10 June 1940. In September 1940 Germany, Italy, and Japan signed the **Tripartite Pact**.

Italy was ill-prepared for war, in spite of the fact that it had continuously been involved in conflict since 1935, first with Ethiopia in 1935–1936 and then in the **Spanish Civil War** on the side of **Francisco Franco's Nationalists**.*[83] Mussolini refused to heed warnings from his minister of exchange and currency, Felice Guarneri, who said that Italy's actions in Ethiopia and Spain meant that Italy was on the verge of bankruptcy.*[84] By 1939 military expenditures by Britain and France far exceeded what Italy could afford.*[84] As a result of Italy's economic difficulties its soldiers were poorly paid, often being poorly equipped and poorly supplied, and animosity arose between soldiers and class-conscious officers; these contributed to low morale amongst Italian soldiers.*[85] Military planning was deficient, as the Italian government had not decided on which theatre would be the most important. Power over the military was overcentralized to Mussolini's direct control; he personally undertook to direct the ministry of war, the navy, and the air force. The navy did not have any aircraft carriers to provide air cover for amphibious assaults in the Mediterranean, as the Fascist regime believed that the air bases on the Italian Peninsula would be able to do this task.*[86] Italy's army had outmoded artillery and the armoured units used outdated formations not suited to modern warfare.*[87] Diversion of funds to the air force and navy to prepare for overseas operations meant less money was available for the army; the standard rifle was a design that dated back to 1891.*[84] The Fascist government failed to learn from mistakes made in Ethiopia and Spain; it ignored the implications of the Italian Fascist volunteer soldiers being routed at the **Battle of Guadalajara** in the Spanish Civil War.*[84] Military exercises by the army in the **Po Valley** in August 1939 disappointed onlookers, including King Victor Emmanuel III.*[87] Mussolini who was angered by Italy's military unpreparedness, dismissed **Alberto Pariani** as Chief of Staff of the Italian military in 1939.*[88]

Italy's only strategic natural resource was an abundance of aluminum. Petroleum, iron, copper, nickel, chrome, and rubber all had to be imported.*[87] The Fascist gov-

ernment's economic policy of **autarky** and a recourse to synthetic materials was not able to meet the demand.*[83] Prior to entering the war, the Fascist government sought to gain control over resources in the **Balkans**, particularly oil from Romania.*[89] The agreement between Germany and the Soviet Union to invade and partition Poland between them resulted in Hungary that bordered the Soviet Union after Poland's partition, and Romania viewing Soviet invasion as an immediate threat, resulting in both countries appealing to Italy for support, beginning in September 1939.*[88] Italy - then still officially neutral - responded to appeals by the Hungarian and Romanian governments for protection from the Soviet Union, by proposing a Danube-Balkan neutrals bloc.*[88] The proposed bloc was designed to increase Italian influence in the Balkans: it met resistance from France, Germany, and the Soviet Union that did not want to lose their influence in the Balkans; however Britain, that still hoped that Italy would not enter the war on Germany's side, supported the neutral bloc.*[88] The efforts to form the bloc failed by November 1939 after **Turkey** made an agreement that it would protect Allied Mediterranean territory, along with **Greece** and **Romania**.*[88]

Initially upon the outbreak of war between Germany and the Allies, Mussolini pursued a non-belligerent role for Italy out of concerns that Germany may not win its war with the Allies. However Mussolini in private grew anxious that Italy not intervening in support of Germany in September 1939 upon Britain and France waging war on Germany, would eventually result in retribution by Germany if Italy did not get involved in the war on Germany's side.*[90]

By early 1940, Italy was still a non-belligerent, and Mussolini communicated to Hitler that Italy was not prepared to intervene soon. By March 1940, Mussolini decided that Italy would intervene, but the date was not yet chosen. His senior military leadership unanimously opposed the action because Italy was unprepared. No raw materials had been stockpiled and the reserves it did have would soon be exhausted, Italy's industrial base was only one-tenth of Germany's, and even with supplies the Italian military was not organized to provide the equipment needed to fight a modern war of a long duration. An ambitious rearment program was impossible because of Italy's limited reserves in gold and foreign currencies and lack of raw materials. Mussolini ignored the negative advice.*[91]

An April 1938 report by German Naval High Command (OKM) warned that Italy as a combatant ally would be a serious "burden" to Germany if a war between Germany and Britain occurred, and recommended that it would be preferable for Germany to seek for Italy to be a "benevolent neutral" during the war. On 18 March 1940, Hitler told Mussolini in person that the war would be over by the summer and that Italy's military involvement was not required.*[92]

Mussolini on 29 May 1940 discussed the situation of the Italian Army in which he acknowledged that it was not ideal but believed that it was satisfactory, and discussed the timeline for a declaration of war on Britain and France. He said: “a delay of two weeks or a month would not be an improvement, and Germany could think we entered the war when the risk was very small ... And this could be a burden on us when peace comes.” *[93]

After entering the war in 1940, Italy had been slated to be granted a series of territorial concessions from France that Hitler had agreed to with Italian foreign minister Ciano, that included Italian annexation of claimed territories in southeastern France, a military occupation of southeastern France up to the river Rhone, and receiving the French colonies of Tunisia and Djibouti.*[94] However, on 22 June 1940, Mussolini suddenly informed Hitler that Italy was abandoning its claims “in the Rhone, Corsica, Tunisia, and Djibouti”, instead requesting a demilitarized zone along the French border, and on 24 June Italy agreed to an armistice with the Vichy regime to that effect.*[94] Later on 7 July 1940, the Italian government changed its decision, and Ciano attempted to make an agreement with Hitler to have Nice, Corsica, Tunisia, and Djibouti be transferred to Italy; Hitler adamantly rejected any new settlement or separate French-Italian peace agreement for the time being prior to the defeat of Britain in the war.*[94] However Italy continued to press Germany for the incorporation of Nice, Corsica, and Tunisia into Italy, with Mussolini sending a letter to Hitler in October 1940, informing him that as the 850,000 Italians living under France's current borders formed the largest minority community, that ceding these territories to Italy would be beneficial to both Germany and Italy as it would reduce France's population from 35 million to 34 and forestall any possibility of resumed French ambitions for expansion or hegemony in Europe.*[94] Germany had considered the possibility of invading and occupying the non-occupied territories of Vichy France including occupying Corsica; Germany capturing the Vichy French fleet for use by Germany, in December 1940 with the proposed Operation Attila.*[95] An invasion of Vichy France by Germany and Italy took place with Case Anton in November 1942.

In mid-1940, in response to an agreement by Romanian *Conducător Ion Antonescu* to accept German “training troops” to be sent to Romania, both Mussolini and Stalin in the Soviet Union were angered by Germany's expanding sphere of influence into Romania, and especially because neither was informed in advance of the action in spite of German agreements with Italy and the Soviet Union at that time.*[80] Mussolini in a conversation with Ciano responded to Hitler's deployment of troops into Romania, saying: “Hitler always faces me with accomplished facts. Now I'll pay him back by his same currency. He'll learn from the papers that I have occupied Greece. So the balance will be re-established.” .*[80] However Mussolini later decided to inform Hitler in advance of

Italy's designs on Greece.*[80] Upon hearing of Italy's intervention against Greece, Hitler was deeply concerned as he said that the Greeks were not bad soldiers that Italy might not win in its war with Greece, as he did not want Germany to become embroiled in a Balkan conflict.*[80]

By 1941, Italy's attempts to run an autonomous campaign from Germany's, collapsed as a result of military setbacks in Greece, North Africa, and Eastern Africa; and the country became dependent and effectively subordinate to Germany. After the German-led invasion and occupation of Yugoslavia and Greece, that had both been targets of Italy's war aims, Italy was forced to accept German dominance in the two occupied countries.*[96] Furthermore, by 1941, German forces in North Africa under Erwin Rommel effectively took charge of the military effort ousting Allied forces from the Italian colony of Libya, and German forces were stationed in Sicily in that year.*[97] Germany's insolence towards Italy as an ally was demonstrated that year when Italy was pressured to send 350,000 “guest workers” to Germany who were used as forced labour.*[98] While Hitler was disappointed with the Italian military's performance, he maintained overall favorable relations with Italy because of his personal friendship with Mussolini.*[99]

Mussolini by mid-1941 recognized that Italy's war objectives had failed.*[96] Mussolini henceforth believed that Italy was left with no choice in such a subordinate status other than to follow Germany in its war and hope for a German victory.*[96] However Germany supported Italian propaganda of the creation of a “Latin Bloc” of Italy, Vichy France, Spain, and Portugal to ally with Germany against the threat of communism, and after the German invasion of the Soviet Union, the prospect of a Latin Bloc seemed plausible.*[100] From 1940 to 1941, Francisco Franco of Spain had endorsed a Latin Bloc of Italy, Vichy France, Spain and Portugal, in order to balance the countries' powers to that of Germany; however, the discussions failed to yield an agreement.*[101]

After the invasion and occupation of Yugoslavia, Italy annexed numerous Adriatic islands and a portion of Dalmatia that was formed into the Italian Governorship of Dalmatia including territory from the provinces of Spalato, Zara, and Cattaro.*[102] Though Italy had initially larger territorial aims that extended from the Velebit mountains to the Albanian Alps, Mussolini decided against annexing further territories due to a number of factors, including that Italy held the economically valuable portion of that territory within its possession while the northern Adriatic coast had no important railways or roads and because a larger annexation would have included hundreds of thousands of Slavs who were hostile to Italy, within its national borders.*[102] Mussolini and foreign minister Ciano demanded that the Yugoslav region of Slovenia to be directly annexed into Italy, however in negotiations with German foreign minister Ribbentrop in April 1941, Ribbentrop insisted on Hitler's demands that Germany be allocated the eastern Slovenia while Italy

would be allocated western Slovenia, Italy conceded to this German demand and Slovenia was partitioned between Germany and Italy.*[103]

With the commencing of the Allies' Operation Torch against Vichy French-held Morocco and Algeria, Germany and Italy intervened in Vichy France and in Vichy French-held Tunisia. Italy seized military control over a significant portion of southern France and Corsica, while a joint German-Italian force seized control over most of Tunisia.*[104] When the issue of sovereign control over Tunisia arose from seizure of control by the German-Italian force from Vichy French control, Ribbentrop proclaimed Italian predominance in Tunisia.*[104] However, in spite of Germany's claim to respect Italian predominance, Germans supervised public services and local government in Tunisia, and the German presence was more popular in Tunisia with both the local Arab population and Vichy French collaborators since Germany had no imperial aspirations in Tunisia while Italy did.*[104]

Internal opposition by Italians to the war and the Fascist regime accelerated by 1942, though significant opposition to the war had existed at the outset in 1940, as police reports indicated that many Italians were secretly listening to the BBC rather than Italian media in 1940.*[105] Underground Catholic, Communist, and socialist newspapers began to become prominent by 1942.*[106]

In spring 1941, Victor Emmanuel III visited Italian soldiers on the front in Yugoslavia and Albania, he was dismayed by the Fascist regime's brutal imperialism in Dalmatia, Slovenia, and Montenegro because he suspected it would impose impossible burdens on Italy by creating new enemies among the occupied peoples that Italy would be forced to fight.*[107] Victor Emmanuel was disappointed with the Italian military's performance in the war, as he noted the army, navy, and air force could not drop their mutual jealousies and competition to work together.*[107] Furthermore, he feared that overly ambitious generals attempting to win promotion were attempting to persuade Mussolini to divert military resources in an ever-widening field of action.*[107] In June 1941, Mussolini's decision to follow Germany by waging war on the Soviet Union in which Victor Emmanuel was informed at the last moment giving him time only to advise to Mussolini against sending anything more than a token force to fight against the Soviet Union; his advice was not taken.*[107] A few weeks after Italy's declaration of war against the Soviet Union, a senior general of the *Carabinieri* informed the royal palace that the military police were awaiting a royal order to act against the Fascist regime.*[107] In September 1941, Victor Emmanuel held a private discussion with Ciano, in which Ciano said to the King that Fascism was doomed.*[107] In 1942, opposition to Italy's involvement in the war expanded among the Fascist regime's senior officials, with Giuseppe Bottai in private stating that he and other Fascist officials should have resigned from office when Mussolini declared war on Britain and France in June 1940, while Dino Grandi

approached the King urging him to dismantle Mussolini's dictatorship in order to withdraw Italy from the war as he saw Italy facing ruin.*[108] By January 1943, King Victor Emmanuel III was persuaded by the Minister of the Royal Household, the Duke of Acquarone that Mussolini had to be removed from office.*[109]

In March 1943, the first sign of serious rebellion by Italians against the Fascist regime and the war began with a strike by factory workers who were joined by soldiers singing communist songs and even rank-in-file Fascist party members.*[108] The Fascist regime also faced passive resistance by civil servants who had begun to refuse to obey orders or pretend to obey orders.*[108]

On 25 July 1943, King Victor Emmanuel III dismissed Mussolini, placed him under arrest, and began secret negotiations with the Allies. An armistice was signed on 8 September 1943, and Italy joined the Allies as a co-belligerent. On 12 September 1943, Mussolini was rescued by the Germans in Operation Oak and placed in charge of a puppet state called the *Italian Social Republic* (*Repubblica Sociale Italiana/RSI*, or *Repubblica di Salò*) in northern Italy. The war went on for months as the Allies, the *Italian Co-Belligerent Army* and the partisans contended the Social Republic's forces and its German allies. Some areas in Northern Italy were liberated from the Germans as late as May, 1945. Mussolini was killed by Communist partisans on 28 April 1945 while trying to escape to Switzerland.*[110]

Colonies and dependencies



Every territory ever controlled by the Italian Empire at some point in time during World War II

In Europe The Dodecanese Islands were an Italian dependency from 1912 to 1943.

Montenegro was an Italian dependency from 1941 to 1943 known as the **Governorate of Montenegro** that was under the control of an Italian military governor. Initially, the Italians intended that Montenegro would become an “independent” state closely allied with Italy, reinforced through the strong dynastic links between Italy and Montenegro, as Queen Elena of Italy was a daughter of the last Montenegrin king **Nicholas I**. The Italian-backed Montenegrin nationalist **Sekula Drljević** and his followers attempted to create a Montenegrin state. On 12 July 1941, they proclaimed the “Kingdom of Montenegro” under the protection of Italy. In less than 24 hours, that triggered a general uprising against the Italians. Within three weeks, the insurgents managed to capture almost all the territory of Montenegro. Over 70,000 Italian troops and 20,000 of **Albanian** and **Muslim** irregulars were deployed to suppress the rebellion. Drljević was expelled from Montenegro in October 1941. Montenegro then came under full direct Italian control. With the Italian capitulation of 1943, Montenegro came directly under the control of Germany.

Albania was an Italian protectorate and dependency from 1939 to 1943. In spite of Albania's long-standing protection and alliance with Italy, on 7 April 1939 Italian troops invaded Albania, five months before the start of the Second World War. Following the invasion, Albania became a protectorate under Italy, with King Victor Emmanuel III of Italy being awarded the crown of Albania. An Italian governor controlled Albania.* [111] Albanian troops under Italian control were sent to participate in the Italian invasion of Greece and the Axis occupation of Yugoslavia. Following Yugoslavia's defeat, Kosovo was annexed to Albania by the Italians.* [111]

Politically and economically dominated by Italy from its creation in 1913, Albania was occupied by Italian military forces in 1939 as the Albanian king [Zog] fled the country with his family. The Albanian parliament voted to offer the Albanian throne to the King of Italy, resulting in a personal union between the two countries.* [111]*[112]

The Albanian army, having been trained by Italian advisors, was reinforced by 100,000 Italian troops. A Fascist militia was organized, drawing its strength principally from Albanians of Italian descent.

Albania served as the staging area for the Italian invasions of Greece and Yugoslavia. Albania annexed Kosovo in 1941 when Yugoslavia was dissolved, creating a Greater Albania.* [111]

Albanian troops were dispatched to the Eastern Front to fight the Soviets as part of the Italian Eighth Army.

Albania declared war on the United States in 1941.* [113]

When the Fascist regime of Italy fell, in September 1943 Albania fell under German occupation.

In Africa and Asia Italian East Africa was an Italian colony existing from 1936 to 1943. Prior to the inva-

sion and annexation of Ethiopia into this united colony in 1936, Italy had two colonies, Eritrea and Somalia since the 1880s.

Libya was an Italian colony existing from 1912 to 1943. The northern portion of Libya was incorporated directly into Italy in 1939, however the region remained united as a colony under a colonial governor.

There was also a minor Italian concession territory in Tientsin, Republic of China.

3.4.3 Japan

Main article: **Empire of Japan**



Japanese Mitsubishi A6M Zero fighter aircraft and other aircraft preparing for takeoff on the aircraft carrier Shōkaku on 7 December 1941, for the attack on Pearl Harbor



Japanese soldiers crossing the border from China into the British colony of Hong Kong during the Battle of Hong Kong in 1941

War justifications

The Japanese government justified its actions by claiming that it was seeking to unite **East Asia** under Japanese leadership in a **Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere** that would free East Asians from domination and rule



Japanese soldiers march along the shore of Guadalcanal in September 1942 during the Guadalcanal Campaign



Japanese battleship Yamato under attack by American aircraft during the Battle of Leyte Gulf

by clients of Western powers and particularly the United States.*[114] Japan invoked themes of Pan-Asianism and said that the Asian people needed to be free from Western influence.*[115]

The United States opposed the Japanese war in China, and recognized Chiang Kai-Shek's Nationalist Government as the legitimate government of China. As a result, the United States sought to bring the Japanese war effort to a halt by imposing an embargo on all trade between the United States and Japan. Japan was dependent on the United States for 80 percent of its petroleum, and as a consequence the embargo resulted in an economic and military crisis for Japan, as Japan could not continue its war effort against China without access to petroleum.*[116]

In order to maintain its military campaign in China with the major loss of petroleum trade with the United States, Japan saw the best means to secure an alternative source of petroleum in the petroleum-rich and natural-resources-rich Southeast Asia.*[117] This threat of retaliation by Japan to the total trade embargo by the United States was known by the American government, including Ameri-

can Secretary of State Cordell Hull who was negotiating with the Japanese to avoid a war, fearing that the total embargo would pre-empt a Japanese attack on the Dutch East Indies.*[118]

Japan identified the American Pacific fleet based in Pearl Harbor as the principal threat to its designs to invade and capture Southeast Asia.*[117] Thus Japan initiated the attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 as a means to inhibit an American response to the invasion of Southeast Asia, and buy time to allow Japan to consolidate itself with these resources to engage in a total war against the United States, and force the United States to accept Japan's acquisitions.*[117]

History

The Empire of Japan, a constitutional monarchy ruled by Hirohito, was the principal Axis power in Asia and the Pacific. Under the emperor were a political cabinet and the Imperial General Headquarters, with two chiefs of staff. By 1945 the Emperor of Japan was more than a symbolic leader; he played a major role in devising a strategy to keep himself on the throne.*[119]

At its height, Japan's Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere included Manchuria, Inner Mongolia, large parts of China, Malaysia, French Indochina, Dutch East Indies, The Philippines, Burma, a small part of India, and various Pacific Islands in the central Pacific.

As a result of the internal discord and economic downturn of the 1920s, militaristic elements set Japan on a path of expansionism. As the Japanese home islands lacked natural resources needed for growth, Japan planned to establish hegemony in Asia and become self-sufficient by acquiring territories with abundant natural resources. Japan's expansionist policies alienated it from other countries in the League of Nations and by the mid-1930s brought it closer to Germany and Italy, who had both pursued similar expansionist policies. Cooperation between Japan and Germany began with the Anti-Comintern Pact, in which the two countries agreed to ally to challenge any attack by the Soviet Union.

Japan entered into conflict against the Chinese in 1937. The Japanese invasion and occupation of parts of China resulted in numerous atrocities against civilians, such as the Nanking massacre and the Three Alls Policy. The Japanese also fought skirmishes with Soviet-Mongolian forces in Manchukuo in 1938 and 1939. Japan sought to avoid war with the Soviet Union by signing a non-aggression pact with it in 1941.

Japan's military leaders were divided on diplomatic relationships with Germany and Italy and the attitude towards the United States. The Imperial Japanese Army was in favour of war with the United States, but the Imperial Japanese Navy was generally strongly opposed. When Prime Minister of Japan General Hideki Tojo re-



The Empire of Japan (darker red) and territories controlled by Japanese puppet states during the war (lighter red). Thailand (lightest red) cooperated with Japan. All are members of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.

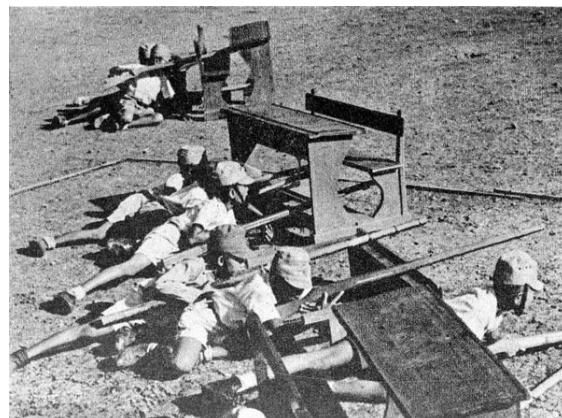
fused American demands that Japan withdraw its military forces from China, a confrontation became more likely.*[120] War with the United States was being discussed within the Japanese government by 1940.*[121] Commander of the Combined Fleet Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto was outspoken in his opposition, especially after the signing of the Tripartite Pact, saying on 14 October 1940: "To fight the United States is like fighting the whole world. But it has been decided. So I will fight the best I can. Doubtless I shall die on board *Nagato* [his flagship]. Meanwhile Tokyo will be burnt to the ground three times. Konoe and others will be torn to pieces by the revengeful people, I [shouldn't] wonder. "*[121] In October and November 1940, Yamamoto communicated with Navy Minister Oikawa, and stated, "Unlike the pre-Tripartite days, great determination is required to make certain that we avoid the danger of going to war. "*[121]

With the European powers focused on the war in Europe, Japan sought to acquire their colonies. In 1940 Japan responded to the German invasion of France by occupying French Indochina. The Vichy France regime, a *de facto* ally of Germany, accepted the takeover. The allied forces did not respond with war. However, the United States instituted an embargo against Japan in 1941 because of the continuing war in China. This cut off Japan's supply of scrap metal and oil needed for industry, trade, and the war effort.

To isolate the US forces stationed in the Philippines and to reduce US naval power, the Imperial General Headquarters ordered an attack on the US naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on 7 December 1941. They also invaded Malaya and Hong Kong. Initially achieving a series of victories, by 1943 the Japanese forces were driven back

towards the home islands. The Pacific War lasted until the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. The Soviets formally declared war in August 1945 and engaged Japanese forces in Manchuria and northeast China.

Colonies and dependencies



Japanese officers training Indonesian recruits

Taiwan, then known as Formosa, was a Japanese dependency established in 1895.

Korea was a Japanese protectorate and dependency formally established by the Japan–Korea Treaty of 1910.

The South Pacific Mandate were territories granted to Japan in 1919 in the peace agreements of World War I, that designated to Japan the German South Pacific islands. Japan received these as a reward by the Allies of World War I, when Japan was then allied against Germany.

Japan occupied the Dutch East Indies during the war. Japan planned to transform these territories into a client state of Indonesia and sought alliance with Indonesian nationalists including future Indonesian President Sukarno, however these efforts did not deliver the creation of an Indonesian state until after Japan's surrender.*[122]

3.5 Minor Axis powers

In addition to the 3 major Axis powers, 4 more countries and 2 puppet regimes signed the Tri-Partite Pact as its member states. Of the 4 countries, Romania, Hungary and Bulgaria participated in various Axis military operations with their national armed forces, while the 4th, Yugoslavia, saw its pro-Nazi government overthrown in a coup merely days after it signed the Pact, and the membership was reversed.

The 2 puppet regimes that signed the Tri-Partite Pact, Tiso-led Slovakia and the Independent State of Croatia are listed among the client states section below.

3.5.1 Bulgaria

Main article: Military history of Bulgaria during World War II

The Kingdom of Bulgaria was ruled by Tsar Boris III



Bulgarian soldiers in Vardar Macedonia during the Balkans campaign

when it signed the Tripartite Pact on 1 March 1941. Bulgaria had been on the losing side in the First World War and sought a return of lost ethnically and historically Bulgarian territories, specifically in Macedonia and Thrace (all within Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Kingdom of Greece and Turkey). During the 1930s, because of traditional right-wing elements, Bulgaria drew closer to Nazi Germany. In 1940 Germany pressured Romania to sign the Treaty of Craiova, returning to Bulgaria the region of Southern Dobrudja, which it had lost in 1913. The Germans also promised Bulgaria—if it joined the Axis—an enlargement of its territory to the borders specified in the Treaty of San Stefano.

Bulgaria participated in the Axis invasion of Yugoslavia and Greece by letting German troops attack from its territory and sent troops to Greece on April 20. As a reward, the Axis powers allowed Bulgaria to occupy parts of both countries—southern and south-eastern Yugoslavia (Vardar Banovina) and north-eastern Greece (parts of Greek Macedonia and Greek Thrace). The Bulgarian forces in these areas spent the following years fighting various nationalist groups and resistance movements. Despite German pressure, Bulgaria did not take part in the Axis invasion of the Soviet Union and actually never declared war on the Soviet Union. The Bulgarian Navy was nonetheless involved in a number of skirmishes with the Soviet Black Sea Fleet, which attacked Bulgarian shipping.

Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, the Bulgarian government declared war on the Western Allies. This action remained largely symbolic (at least from the Bulgarian perspective), until August 1943, when Bulgarian air defense and air force attacked Allied bombers, returning (heavily damaged) from a mission over the Romanian oil refineries. This turned into a disaster for the citizens of Sofia and other major Bulgarian cities, which were heavily bombed by the Allies in the

winter of 1943–1944.

On 2 September 1944, as the Red Army approached the Bulgarian border, a new Bulgarian government came to power and sought peace with the Allies, expelled the few remaining German troops, and declared neutrality. These measures however did not prevent the Soviet Union from declaring war on Bulgaria on 5 September, and on 8 September the Red Army marched into the country, meeting no resistance. This was followed by the coup d'état of 9 September 1944, which brought a government of the pro-Soviet Fatherland Front to power. After this, the Bulgarian army (as part of the Red Army's 3rd Ukrainian Front) fought the Germans in Yugoslavia and Hungary, sustaining numerous casualties. Despite this, the Paris Peace Treaty treated Bulgaria as one of the defeated countries. Bulgaria was allowed to keep Southern Dobruja, but had to give up all claims to Greek and Yugoslav territory.

3.5.2 Hungary

Main article: Hungary during World War II

Hungary, ruled by Regent Admiral Miklós Horthy, was



Hungarian Toldi I tank as used during the 1941 Axis invasion of the Soviet Union



Hungarian soldiers in the Carpathian mountains in 1944

the first country apart from Germany, Italy, and Japan to adhere to the Tripartite Pact, signing the agreement on 20 November 1940. Slovakia had been a client state of Germany since 1938.* [123]

Political instability plagued the country until Miklós Horthy, a Hungarian nobleman and Austro-Hungarian naval officer, became regent in 1920. Hungarian nationalists desired to recover territories lost through the Trianon Treaty. The country drew closer to Germany and Italy largely because of a shared desire to revise the peace settlements made after World War I.*[124] Many people sympathized with the anti-Semitic policy of the Nazi regime. Due to its pro-German stance, Hungary received favourable territorial settlements when Germany annexed Czechoslovakia in 1938–1939 and received Northern Transylvania from Romania via the Second Vienna Award in 1940. Hungarians permitted German troops to transit through their territory during the invasion of Yugoslavia, and Hungarian forces took part in the invasion. Parts of Yugoslavia were annexed to Hungary; the United Kingdom immediately broke off diplomatic relations in response.

Although Hungary did not initially participate in the German invasion of the Soviet Union, Hungary declared war on the Soviet Union on 27 June 1941. Over 500,000 soldiers served on the Eastern Front. All five of Hungary's field armies ultimately participated in the war against the Soviet Union; a significant contribution was made by the Hungarian Second Army.

On 25 November 1941, Hungary was one of thirteen signatories to the revived Anti-Comintern Pact. Hungarian troops, like their Axis counterparts, were involved in numerous actions against the Soviets. By the end of 1943, the Soviets had gained the upper hand and the Germans were retreating. The Hungarian Second Army was destroyed in fighting on the Voronezh Front, on the banks of the Don River. In 1944, with Soviet troops advancing toward Hungary, Horthy attempted to reach an armistice with the Allies. However, the Germans replaced the existing regime with a new one. After fierce fighting, Budapest was taken by the Soviets. A number of pro-German Hungarians retreated to Italy and Germany, where they fought until the end of the war.

Relations between Germany and the regency of Miklós Horthy collapsed in Hungary in 1944. Horthy was forced to abdicate after German armed forces held his son hostage as part of Operation Panzerfaust. Hungary was reorganized following Horthy's abdication in December 1944 into a totalitarian fascist regime called the Government of National Unity, led by Ferenc Szálasi. He had been Prime Minister of Hungary since October 1944 and was leader of the anti-Semitic fascist Arrow Cross Party. In power, his government was a puppet regime with little authority, and the country was effectively under German control. Days after the Szálasi government took power, the capital of Budapest was surrounded by the Soviet Red Army. German and Hungarian fascist forces tried to hold off the Soviet advance but failed. In March 1945, Szálasi fled to Germany as the leader of a government in exile, until the surrender of Germany in May 1945.

3.5.3 Romania

Main article: [Romania in World War II](#)

When war erupted in Europe in 1939, the Kingdom of



Romanian soldiers on the outskirts of Stalingrad during the Battle of Stalingrad in 1942



A formation of Romanian IAR80 fighter aircraft

Romania was pro-British and allied to the Poles. Following the [invasion of Poland](#) by Germany and the Soviet Union, and the German conquest of France and the Low Countries, Romania found itself increasingly isolated; meanwhile, pro-German and pro-Fascist elements began to grow.

The August 1939 Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact between Germany and the Soviet Union contained a secret protocol ceding Bessarabia, and Northern Bukovina to the Soviet Union.*[68] On June 28, 1940, the Soviet Union occupied and annexed Bessarabia, as well as part of northern Romania and the Hertza region.*[125] On 30 August 1940, Germany forced Romania to cede Northern Transylvania to Hungary as a result of the second Vienna Award. Southern Dobruja was ceded to Bulgaria

in September 1940. In an effort to appease the Fascist elements within the country and obtain German protection, King Carol II appointed the General Ion Antonescu as Prime Minister on September 6, 1940.

Two days later, Antonescu forced the king to abdicate and installed the king's young son Michael (Mihai) on the throne, then declared himself *Conducător* ("Leader") with dictatorial powers. Under King Michael I and the military government of Antonescu, Romania signed the Tripartite Pact on November 23, 1940. German troops entered the country in 1941 and used the country as a platform for invasions of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. Romania was a key supplier of resources, especially oil and grain.

Romania joined the German-led invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941; nearly 800,000 Romanian soldiers fought on the Eastern front. Areas that were annexed by the Soviets were reincorporated into Romania, along with the newly established Transnistria Governorate. After suffering devastating losses at Stalingrad, Romanian officials began secretly negotiating peace conditions with the Allies. By 1943, the tide began to turn. The Soviets pushed further west, retaking Ukraine and eventually launching an unsuccessful invasion of eastern Romania in the spring of 1944. Foreseeing the fall of Nazi Germany, Romania switched sides during King Michael's Coup on August 23, 1944. Romanian troops then fought alongside the Soviet Army until the end of the war, reaching as far as Czechoslovakia and Austria.

3.5.4 Thailand

See also: Thailand in World War II

Thailand waged the Franco-Thai War in October 1940



Thai Prime Minister Phot Phahonyothin (far left) with Japanese Prime Minister Hideki Tōjō (center) in Tokyo, Japan, 1942

to May 1941 to reclaim territory from French Indochina. It became a formal ally of Japan from 25 January 1942.

Japanese forces invaded Thailand's territory an hour and a half before the attack on Pearl Harbor, (because of the International Dateline, the local time was on the morn-

ing of 8 December 1941). Only hours after the invasion, prime minister Field Marshal Phibunsongkhram ordered the cessation of resistance against the Japanese. On 21 December 1941, a military alliance with Japan was signed and on 25 January 1942, Sang Phathanothai read over the radio Thailand's formal declaration of war on the United Kingdom and the United States. The Thai ambassador to the United States, Mom Rajawongse Seni Pramoj, did not deliver his copy of the declaration of war. Therefore, although the British reciprocated by declaring war on Thailand and considered it a hostile country, the United States did not.

When Thailand signed the Tripartite Pact on 15 February 1942, the Thais and Japanese also agreed that Shan State and Kayah State were to be under Thai control. The rest of Burma was to be under Japanese control. On 10 May 1942, the Thai Phayap Army entered Burma's eastern Shan State, which had been claimed by Siamese kingdoms. Three Thai infantry and one cavalry division, spearheaded by armoured reconnaissance groups and supported by the air force, engaged the retreating Chinese 93rd Division. Kengtung, the main objective, was captured on 27 May. Renewed offensives in June and November saw the Chinese retreat into Yunnan.* [126] The area containing the Shan States and Kayah State was annexed by Thailand in 1942. The areas were ceded back to Burma in 1945.

The Free Thai Movement ("Seri Thai") was established during these first few months. Parallel Free Thai organizations were also established in the United Kingdom. Queen Ramphaiphanni was the nominal head of the British-based organization, and Pridi Phanomyong, the regent, headed its largest contingent, which was operating within Thailand. Aided by elements of the military, secret airfields and training camps were established, while Office of Strategic Services and Force 136 agents slipped in and out of the country.

As the war dragged on, the Thai population came to resent the Japanese presence. In June 1944, Phibun was overthrown in a coup d'état. The new civilian government under Khuang Aphaiwong attempted to aid the resistance while maintaining cordial relations with the Japanese. After the war, U. S. influence prevented Thailand from being treated as an Axis country, but the British demanded three million tons of rice as reparations and the return of areas annexed from Malaya during the war. Thailand also returned the portions of British Burma and French Indochina that had been annexed. Phibun and a number of his associates were put on trial on charges of having committed war crimes and of collaborating with the Axis powers. However, the charges were dropped due to intense public pressure. Public opinion was favourable to Phibun, since he was thought to have done his best to protect Thai interests.

3.5.5 Yugoslavia: membership lasts two days

Main articles: Axis–Yugoslav Pact, Yugoslav coup d'état, and Invasion of Yugoslavia

In February 1941, Hitler called for Yugoslavia's accession to the Tripartite Pact. In March, the German army arrived at the Bulgarian-Yugoslav border. On 25 March 1941, fearing that Yugoslavia would be invaded otherwise, the Yugoslav government signed the Tripartite Pact with significant reservations. Unlike other Axis powers, Yugoslavia was not obliged to provide military assistance, nor to provide its territory for Axis to move military forces during the war. Less than two days later, after demonstrations in the streets of Belgrade, Prince Paul and the government were removed from office by a coup d'état. Seventeen-year-old King Peter was declared to be of age. The new Yugoslav government under General Dušan Simović, refused to ratify Yugoslavia's signing of the Tripartite Pact, and started negotiations with Great Britain and Soviet Union. Winston Churchill commented that "Yugoslavia has found its soul". However Hitler invaded and quickly took control.

3.6 Co-belligerent state combatants

Various countries fought side by side with the Axis powers for a common cause. These countries were not signatories of the Tripartite Pact and thus not formal members of the Axis.

3.6.1 Finland

Main article: Military history of Finland during World War II

Although Finland never signed the Tripartite Pact and legally (*de jure*) was not a part of the Axis, it was Axis-aligned in its fight against the Soviet Union.^{*[127]} Finland signed the revived Anti-Comintern Pact of November 1941.^{*[128]}

The August 1939 Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact between Germany and the Soviet Union contained a secret protocol dividing much of eastern Europe and assigning Finland to the Soviet sphere of influence.^{*[68]^[129]} After unsuccessfully attempting to force territorial and other concessions on the Finns, the Soviet Union tried to invade Finland in November 1939 during the Winter War, intending to establish a communist puppet government in Finland.^{*[130]^[131]} The conflict threatened Germany's iron-ore supplies and offered the prospect of Allied interference in the region.^{*[132]} Despite Finnish resistance, a

peace treaty was signed in March 1940, wherein Finland ceded some key territory to the Soviet Union, including the Karelian Isthmus, containing Finland's second-largest city, Viipuri, and the critical defensive structure of the Mannerheim Line. After this war, Finland sought protection and support from the United Kingdom^{*[133]^[134]} and non-aligned Sweden,^{*[135]} but was thwarted by Soviet and German actions. This resulted in Finland being drawn closer to Germany, first with the intent of enlisting German support as a counterweight to thwart continuing Soviet pressure, and later to help regain lost territories.

In the opening days of Operation Barbarossa, Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union, Finland permitted German planes returning from mine dropping runs over Kronstadt and Neva River to refuel at Finnish airfields before returning to bases in East Prussia. In retaliation, the Soviet Union launched a major air offensive against Finnish airfields and towns, which resulted in a Finnish declaration of war against the Soviet Union on 25 June 1941. The Finnish conflict with the Soviet Union is generally referred to as the Continuation War.



Mannerheim with Hitler

Finland's main objective was to regain territory lost to the Soviet Union in the Winter War. However, on 10 July 1941, Field Marshal Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim issued an Order of the Day that contained a formulation understood internationally as a Finnish territorial interest in Russian Karelia.

Diplomatic relations between the United Kingdom and Finland were severed on 1 August 1941, after the British bombed German forces in the Finnish village and port of Petsamo. The United Kingdom repeatedly called on Finland to cease its offensive against the Soviet Union, and declared war on Finland on 6 December 1941, although no other military operations followed. War was never declared between Finland and the United States, though relations were severed between the two countries in 1944 as a result of the Ryti-Ribbentrop Agreement.



Finnish troops passing by the remains of a destroyed Soviet T-34 at the battle of Tali-Ihantala

Finland maintained command of its armed forces and pursued war objectives independently of Germany. Germans and Finns did work closely together during Operation Silverfox, a joint offensive against Murmansk. Finland refused German requests to participate actively in the Siege of Leningrad, and also granted asylum to Jews, while Jewish soldiers continued to serve in its army.

The relationship between Finland and Germany more closely resembled an alliance during the six weeks of the Ryti-Ribbentrop Agreement, which was presented as a German condition for help with munitions and air support, as the Soviet offensive coordinated with D-Day threatened Finland with complete occupation. The agreement, signed by President Risto Ryti but never ratified by the Finnish Parliament, bound Finland not to seek a separate peace.

After Soviet offensives were fought to a standstill, Ryti's successor as president, Marshall Mannerheim, dismissed the agreement and opened secret negotiations with the Soviets, which resulted in a ceasefire on 4 September and the Moscow Armistice on 19 September 1944. Under the terms of the armistice, Finland was obliged to expel German troops from Finnish territory, which resulted in the Lapland War. Finland signed a peace treaty with the Allied powers in 1947.

3.6.2 Iraq

The Kingdom of Iraq was briefly an ally of the Axis, fighting the United Kingdom in the Anglo-Iraqi War of May



An RAF officer investigates wrecked Iraqi artillery near Habbaniya.

1941.

Anti-British sentiments were widespread in Iraq prior to 1941. Seizing power on 1 April 1941, the nationalist government of Prime Minister Rashid Ali repudiated the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1930 and demanded that the British abandon their military bases and withdraw from the country. Ali sought support from Germany and Italy in expelling British forces from Iraq.

On 9 May 1941, Mohammad Amin al-Husayni, the Mufti of Jerusalem and associate of Ali, declared holy war*[136] against the British and called on Arabs throughout the Middle East to rise up against British rule. On 25 May 1941, the Germans stepped up offensive operations in the Middle East.

Hitler issued Order 30: "The Arab Freedom Movement in the Middle East is our natural ally against England. In this connection special importance is attached to the liberation of Iraq ... I have therefore decided to move forward in the Middle East by supporting Iraq. "*[137]

Hostilities between the Iraqi and British forces began on 2 May 1941, with heavy fighting at the RAF air base in Habbaniyah. The Germans and Italians dispatched aircraft and aircrew to Iraq utilizing Vichy French bases in Syria, which would later invoke fighting between Allied and Vichy French forces in Syria.

The Germans planned to coordinate a combined German-Italian offensive against the British in Egypt, Palestine, and Iraq. Iraqi military resistance ended by 31 May 1941. Rashid Ali and the Mufti of Jerusalem fled to Iran, then Turkey, Italy, and finally Germany, where Ali was welcomed by Hitler as head of the Iraqi government-in-exile in Berlin. In propaganda broadcasts from Berlin, the Mufti continued to call on Arabs to rise up against the British and aid German and Italian forces. He also helped

recruit Muslim volunteers in the Balkans for the *Waffen-SS*.

3.7 Client states

Further information: [Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere](#)

3.7.1 Japanese

The Empire of Japan created a number of client states in the areas occupied by its military, beginning with the creation of Manchukuo in 1932. These puppet states achieved varying degrees of international recognition.

Burma (Ba Maw regime)

Main article: [Japanese occupation of Burma](#)

The Japanese Army and Burma nationalists, led by Aung San, seized control of Burma from the United Kingdom during 1942. A State of Burma was formed on 1 August under the Burmese nationalist leader Ba Maw. The Ba Maw regime established the Burma Defence Army (later renamed the Burma National Army), which was commanded by Aung San.

Cambodia

The Kingdom of Cambodia was a short-lived Japanese puppet state that lasted from 9 March 1945 to 15 August 1945.

The Japanese entered Cambodia in mid-1941, but allowed Vichy French officials to remain in administrative posts. The Japanese calls for an “Asia for the Asiatics” won over many Cambodian nationalists.

This policy changed during the last months of the war. The Japanese wanted to gain local support, so they dissolved French colonial rule and pressured Cambodia to declare its independence within the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Four days later, King Sihanouk declared Kampuchea (the original Khmer pronunciation of Cambodia) independent. Co-editor of the *Nagaravatta*, Son Ngoc Thanh, returned from Tokyo in May and was appointed foreign minister.

On the date of Japanese surrender, a new government was proclaimed with Son Ngoc Thanh as prime minister. When the Allies occupied Phnom Penh in October, Son Ngoc Thanh was arrested for collaborating with the Japanese and was exiled to France. Some of his supporters went to northwestern Cambodia, which had been under Thai control since the French-Thai War of 1940,

where they banded together as one faction in the Khmer Issarak movement, originally formed with Thai encouragement in the 1940s.

China (Reorganized National Government of China)

During the Second Sino-Japanese War, Japan advanced from its bases in Manchuria to occupy much of East and Central China. Several Japanese puppet states were organized in areas occupied by the Japanese Army, including the Provisional Government of the Republic of China at Beijing, which was formed in 1937, and the Reformed Government of the Republic of China at Nanjing, which was formed in 1938. These governments were merged into the Reorganized National Government of China at Nanjing on 29 March 1940. Wang Jingwei became head of state. The government was to be run along the same lines as the Nationalist regime and adopted its symbols.

The Nanjing Government had no real power; its main role was to act as a propaganda tool for the Japanese. The Nanjing Government concluded agreements with Japan and Manchukuo, authorising Japanese occupation of China and recognising the independence of Manchukuo under Japanese protection. The Nanjing Government signed the Anti-Comintern Pact of 1941 and declared war on the United States and the United Kingdom on 9 January 1943.

The government had a strained relationship with the Japanese from the beginning. Wang's insistence on his regime being the true Nationalist government of China and in replicating all the symbols of the Kuomintang led to frequent conflicts with the Japanese, the most prominent being the issue of the regime's flag, which was identical to that of the Republic of China.

The worsening situation for Japan from 1943 onwards meant that the Nanking Army was given a more substantial role in the defence of occupied China than the Japanese had initially envisaged. The army was almost continuously employed against the communist New Fourth Army.

Wang Jingwei died on 10 November 1944, and was succeeded by his deputy, Chen Gongbo. Chen had little influence; the real power behind the regime was Zhou Fo-hai, the mayor of Shanghai. Wang's death dispelled what little legitimacy the regime had. The state stuttered on for another year and continued the display and show of a fascist regime.

On 9 September 1945, following the defeat of Japan, the area was surrendered to General He Yingqin, a nationalist general loyal to Chiang Kai-shek. The Nanking Army generals quickly declared their alliance to the Generalissimo, and were subsequently ordered to resist Communist attempts to fill the vacuum left by the Japanese surrender. Chen Gongbo was tried and executed in 1946.

India (Provisional Government of Free India)

Main articles: Azad Hind Fauj and Arzi Hukumat-e-Azad Hind
The *Arzi Hukumat-e-Azad Hind*, the Provisional Gov-



Indian National Army soldiers in Asia

ernment of Free India was a state that was recognized by nine Axis governments. It was led by **Subhas Chandra Bose**, an Indian nationalist who rejected Mohandas K. Gandhi's nonviolent methods for achieving independence. The First INA faltered after its leadership objected to being a propaganda tool for Japanese war aims, and the role of **I Kikan**. It was revived by the **Indian Independence League** with Japanese support in 1942 after the ex-PoWs and Indian civilians in South-east Asia agreed to participate in the INA venture on the condition it was led by **Subhash Chandra Bose**. Bose declared India's independence on October 21, 1943. The Indian National Army was committed as a part of the **U Go Offensive**. It played a largely marginal role in the battle, and suffered serious casualties and had to withdraw with the rest of Japanese forces after the siege of Imphal was broken. It was later committed to the defence of Burma against the **Allied offensive**. It suffered a large number of desertions in this latter part. The remaining troops of the INA maintained order in Rangoon after the withdrawal of Ba Maw's government withdrew. although The provisional government was given nominal control of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands from November 1943 to August 1945.

Inner Mongolia (Mengjiang)

Mengjiang was a Japanese puppet state in Inner Mongolia. It was nominally ruled by Prince Demchugdongrub, a Mongol nobleman descended from Genghis Khan, but was in fact controlled by the Japanese military. Mengjiang's independence was proclaimed on 18 February 1936, following the Japanese occupation of the region.

The Inner Mongolians had several grievances against the central Chinese government in Nanking, including their policy of allowing unlimited migration of Han Chinese to the region. Several of the young princes of Inner Mongolia began to agitate for greater freedom from the central government, and it was through these men that Japanese saw their best chance of exploiting Pan-Mongol nationalism and eventually seizing control of Outer Mongolia from the Soviet Union.

Japan created Mengjiang to exploit tensions between ethnic Mongolians and the central government of China, which in theory ruled Inner Mongolia. When the various puppet governments of China were unified under the Wang Jingwei government in March 1940, Mengjiang retained its separate identity as an autonomous federation. Although under the firm control of the Japanese Imperial Army, which occupied its territory, Prince Demchugdongrub had his own independent army.

Mengjiang vanished in 1945 following Japan's defeat in World War II. As Soviet forces advanced into Inner Mongolia, they met limited resistance from small detachments of Mongolian cavalry, which, like the rest of the army, were quickly overwhelmed.

Laos

Fears of Thai irredentism led to the formation of the first Lao nationalist organization, the Movement for National Renovation, in January 1941. The group was led by Prince Phetxarāt and supported by local French officials, though not by the Vichy authorities in Hanoi. This group wrote the current Lao national anthem and designed the current Lao flag, while paradoxically pledging support for France. The country declared its independence in 1945.

The liberation of France in 1944, bringing **Charles de Gaulle** to power, meant the end of the alliance between Japan and the Vichy French administration in Indochina. The Japanese had no intention of allowing the Gaullists to take over, and in March 1945 they staged a military coup in Hanoi. Some French units fled over the mountains to Laos, pursued by the Japanese, who occupied Viang Chan in March 1945 and Luang Phrabāng in April. King Sīsavāngvong was detained by the Japanese, but his son Crown Prince Savāngvatthanā called on all Lao to assist the French, and many Lao died fighting against the Japanese occupiers.

Prince Phetxarāt opposed this position. He thought that Lao independence could be gained by siding with the Japanese, who made him Prime Minister of Luang Phrabāng, though not of Laos as a whole. The country was in chaos, and Phetxarāt's government had no real authority. Another Lao group, the Lao Sēri (Free Lao), received unofficial support from the Free Thai movement in the *Isan* region.

Manchuria (Manchukuo)

Main article: Manchukuo

Manchukuo, in the northeast region of China, had



Manchurian soldiers training in a military exercise



Manchurian pilots of the Manchukuo Air Force

been a Japanese puppet state in Manchuria since the 1930s. It was nominally ruled by Puyi, the last emperor of the *Qing Dynasty*, but was in fact controlled by the Japanese military, in particular the *Kwantung Army*. While Manchukuo ostensibly was a state for ethnic *Manchus*, the region had a *Han Chinese* majority.

Following the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931, the independence of Manchukuo was proclaimed on 18 February 1932, with Puyi as head of state. He was proclaimed the Emperor of Manchukuo a year later. The new Manchu nation was recognized by 23 of the League of Nations' 80 members. Germany, Italy, and the Soviet Union were among the major powers who recog-

nised Manchukuo. Other countries who recognized the State were the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, El Salvador, and *Vatican City*. Manchukuo was also recognised by the other Japanese allies and puppet states, including Mengjiang, the Burmese government of *Ba Maw*, Thailand, the Wang Jingwei regime, and the Indian government of *Subhas Chandra Bose*. The League of Nations later declared in 1934 that Manchuria lawfully remained a part of China. This precipitated Japanese withdrawal from the League. The Manchukuoan state ceased to exist after the *Soviet invasion of Manchuria* in 1945.

Philippines (Second Republic)

Main article: Japanese occupation of the Philippines

After the surrender of the Filipino and American forces in *Bataan Peninsula* and *Corregidor Island*, the Japanese established a puppet state in the Philippines in 1942.* [138] The following year, the *Philippine National Assembly* declared the Philippines an independent Republic and elected José Laurel as its President.* [139] There was never widespread civilian support for the state, largely because of the general anti-Japanese sentiment stemming from atrocities committed by the Imperial Japanese Army.* [140] The Second Philippine Republic ended with Japanese surrender in 1945, and Laurel was arrested and charged with treason by the US government. He was granted amnesty by President *Manuel Roxas*, and remained active in politics, ultimately winning a seat in the post-war Senate.

Vietnam (Empire of Vietnam)

The Empire of Vietnam was a short-lived Japanese puppet state that lasted from 11 March to 23 August 1945.

When the Japanese seized control of *French Indochina*, they allowed Vichy French administrators to remain in nominal control. This French rule ended on 9 March 1945, when the Japanese officially took control of the government. Soon after, Emperor Bảo Đại voided the 1884 treaty with France and Trần Trọng Kim, a historian, became prime minister.

The state suffered through the *Vietnamese Famine of 1945* and replaced French-speaking schools with Vietnamese language schools, taught by Vietnamese scholars.

3.7.2 Italian

Italy occupied several nations and set up clients in those regions to carry out administrative tasks and maintain order.

Monaco

The Principality of Monaco was officially neutral during the war. The population of the country was largely of Italian descent and sympathized with Italy. Its prince was a close friend of the Vichy French leader, Marshal Philippe Pétain, an Axis collaborator. A fascist regime was established under the nominal rule of the prince when the Italian Fourth Army occupied the country on November 10, 1942 as a part of [Case Anton](#). Monaco's military forces, consisting primarily of police and palace guards, collaborated with the Italians during the occupation. German troops occupied Monaco in 1943, and Monaco was liberated by Allied forces in 1944.

3.7.3 German

The collaborationist administrations of German-occupied countries in Europe had varying degrees of autonomy, and not all of them qualified as fully recognized sovereign states. The General Government in occupied Poland was a German administration, not a Polish government. In occupied Norway, the National Government headed by Vidkun Quisling – whose name came to symbolize pro-Axis collaboration in several languages – was subordinate to the Reichskommissariat Norwegen. It was never allowed to have any armed forces, be a recognized military partner, or have autonomy of any kind. In the occupied Netherlands, Anton Mussert was given the symbolic title of “Führer of the Netherlands' people”. His National Socialist Movement formed a cabinet assisting the German administration, but was never recognized as a real Dutch government. The following list of German client states includes only those entities that were officially considered to be independent countries allied with Germany. They were under varying degrees of German influence and control, but were not ruled directly by Germans.

Albania (under German control)

Main article: [Albanian Kingdom \(1943–1944\)](#)

After the Italian armistice, a vacuum of power opened up in Albania. The Italian occupying forces were rendered largely powerless, as the National Liberation Movement took control of the south and the National Front (Balli Kombëtar) took control of the north. Albanians in the Italian army joined the guerrilla forces. In September 1943 the guerrillas moved to take the capital of Tirana, but German paratroopers dropped into the city. Soon after the battle, the German High Command announced that they would recognize the independence of a greater Albania. They organized an Albanian government, police, and military in collaboration with the Balli Kombëtar. The Germans did not exert heavy control over Alba-

nia's administration, but instead attempted to gain popular appeal by giving their political partners what they wanted. Several Balli Kombëtar leaders held positions in the regime. The joint forces incorporated Kosovo, western Macedonia, southern Montenegro, and Presevo into the Albanian state. A High Council of Regency was created to carry out the functions of a head of state, while the government was headed mainly by Albanian conservative politicians. Albania was the only European country occupied by the Axis powers that ended World War II with a larger Jewish population than before the war.* [141] The Albanian government had refused to hand over their Jewish population. They provided Jewish families with forged documents and helped them disperse in the Albanian population.* [142] Albania was completely liberated on November 29, 1944.

Italy (Italian Social Republic)

Main article: [Italian Social Republic](#)

Italian Fascist leader Benito Mussolini formed the Italian



Italian Social Republic



RSI (Repubblica Sociale Italiana) soldiers, March 1944

Social Republic (*Repubblica Sociale Italiana* in Italian) on 23 September 1943, succeeding the Kingdom of Italy as a member of the Axis.

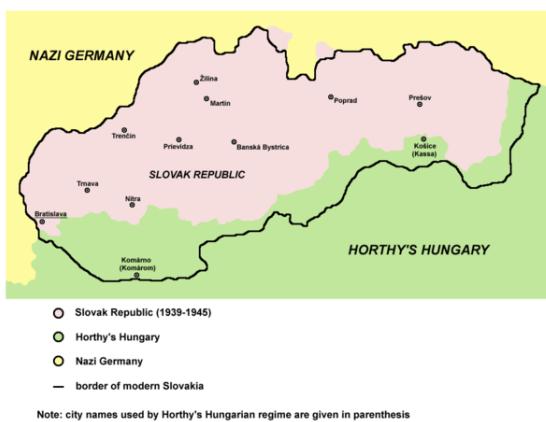
Mussolini had been removed from office and arrested by King Victor Emmanuel III on 25 July 1943. After the Italian armistice, in a raid led by German paratrooper Otto Skorzeny, Mussolini was rescued from arrest.

Once restored to power, Mussolini declared that Italy was a republic and that he was the new head of state. He was subject to German control for the duration of the war.

Slovakia (Tiso regime)

See also: Slovak invasion of Poland (1939)

The Slovak Republic under President Josef Tiso signed



Slovakia in 1941

the Tripartite Pact on 24 November 1940.

Slovakia had been closely aligned with Germany almost immediately from its declaration of independence from Czechoslovakia on 14 March 1939. Slovakia entered into a treaty of protection with Germany on 23 March 1939.

Slovak troops joined the German invasion of Poland, having interest in Spiš and Orava. Those two regions, along with Cieszyn Silesia, had been disputed between Poland and Czechoslovakia since 1918. The Poles fully annexed them following the Munich Agreement. After the invasion of Poland, Slovakia reclaimed control of those territories.

Slovakia invaded Poland alongside German forces, contributing 50,000 men at this stage of the war.

Slovakia declared war on the Soviet Union in 1941 and signed the revived Anti-Comintern Pact in 1941. Slovak troops fought on Germany's Eastern Front, furnishing Germany with two divisions totaling 80,000 men. Slovakia declared war on the United Kingdom and the United States in 1942.

Slovakia was spared German military occupation until the Slovak National Uprising, which began on 29 August 1944, and was almost immediately crushed by the Waffen



Slovak troops led by General Ferdinand Čatloš (center) pose with a statue of Tadeusz Kościuszko in Sanok during the Invasion of Poland.

SS and Slovak troops loyal to Josef Tiso.

After the war, Tiso was executed and Slovakia once again became part of Czechoslovakia. The border with Poland was shifted back to the pre-war state. Slovakia and the Czech Republic finally separated into independent states in 1993.

3.7.4 Joint German-Italian client states

Croatia (Independent State of Croatia)

Main article: Independent State of Croatia

Not to be confused with Federal State of Croatia.

On 10 April 1941, the Independent State of Croatia



Adolf Hitler meeting with NDH leader Ante Pavelić.

(*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*, or NDH) declared itself a member of the Axis, co-signing the Tripartite Pact. The NDH remained a member of the Axis until the end of Second World War, its forces fighting for Germany even after its territory had been overrun by Yugoslav Partisans. On 16 April 1941, Ante Pavelić, a Croatian nationalist and one of the founders of the Ustaše ("Croatian Liberation Movement"), was proclaimed *Poglavnik* (leader) of the new regime.

Initially the Ustaše had been heavily influenced by

Italy. They were actively supported by Mussolini's Fascist regime in Italy, which gave the movement training grounds to prepare for war against Yugoslavia, as well as accepting Pavelić as an exile and allowing him to reside in Rome. Italy intended to use the movement to destroy Yugoslavia, which would allow Italy to expand its power through the Adriatic. Hitler did not want to engage in a war in the Balkans until the Soviet Union was defeated. The Italian occupation of Greece was not going well; Mussolini wanted Germany to invade Yugoslavia to save the Italian forces in Greece. Hitler reluctantly agreed; Yugoslavia was invaded and the Independent State of Croatia was created. Pavelić led a delegation to Rome and offered the crown of Croatia to an Italian prince of the House of Savoy, who was crowned *Tomislav II, King of Croatia, Prince of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Voivode of Dalmatia, Tuzla and Knin, Prince of Cisterna and of Belriguardo, Marquess of Voghera, and Count of Ponderano*. The next day, Pavelić signed the Contracts of Rome with Mussolini, ceding Dalmatia to Italy and fixing the permanent borders between the NDH and Italy. Italian armed forces were allowed to control all of the coastline of the NDH, effectively giving Italy total control of the Adriatic coastline.

However, strong German influence began to be asserted soon after the NDH was founded. When the King of Italy ousted Mussolini from power and Italy capitulated, the NDH became completely under German influence.

The platform of the Ustaše movement proclaimed that Croatians had been oppressed by the Serb-dominated Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and that Croatians deserved to have an independent nation after years of domination by foreign empires. The Ustaše perceived Serbs to be racially inferior to Croats and saw them as infiltrators who were occupying Croatian lands. They saw the extermination of Serbs as necessary to racially purify Croatia. While part of Yugoslavia, many Croatian nationalists violently opposed the Serb-dominated Yugoslav monarchy, and assassinated Alexander I of Yugoslavia, together with the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization. The regime enjoyed support amongst radical Croatian nationalists. Ustashe forces fought against communist Yugoslav Partisan guerrilla throughout the war.

Upon coming to power, Pavelić formed the Croatian Home Guard (*Hrvatsko domobranstvo*) as the official military force of the NDH. Originally authorized at 16,000 men, it grew to a peak fighting force of 130,000. The Croatian Home Guard included an air force and navy, although its navy was restricted in size by the Contracts of Rome. In addition to the Croatian Home Guard, Pavelić was also the supreme commander of the Ustaše militia, although all NDH military units were generally under the command of the German or Italian formations in their area of operations.

The Ustaše government declared war on the Soviet Union, signed the Anti-Comintern Pact of 1941, and sent

troops to Germany's Eastern Front. Ustaše militia were garrisoned in the Balkans, battling the communist partisans.

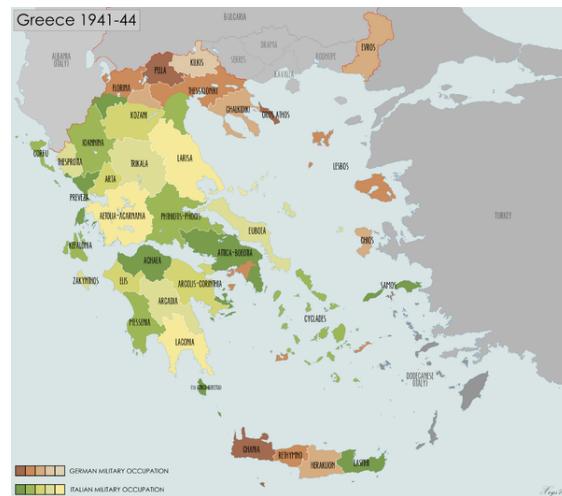
The Ustaše government applied racial laws on Serbs, Jews, and Romani people, and after June 1941 deported them to the Jasenovac concentration camp or to German camps in Poland. The racial laws were enforced by the Ustaše militia. The exact number of victims of the Ustaše regime is uncertain due to the destruction of documents and varying numbers given by historians. According to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, between 320,000 and 340,000 Serbs were killed in the NDH.* [143]

The Ustaše never had widespread support among the population of the NDH. Their own estimates put the number of sympathizers, even in the early phase, at around 40,000 out of total population of 7 million. However, they were able to rely on the passive acceptance of much of the Croat population of the NDH.

Greece

Main article: Axis occupation of Greece

Following the German invasion of Greece and the flight



Greece, 1941–1944

of the Greek government to Crete and then Egypt, the Hellenic State was formed in May 1941 as a puppet state of both Italy and Germany. Initially, Italy had wished to annex Greece, but was pressured by Germany to avoid civil unrest such as had occurred in Bulgarian-annexed areas. The result was Italy accepting the creation of a puppet regime with the support of Germany. Italy had been assured by Hitler of a primary role in Greece. Most of the country was held by Italian forces, but strategic locations (Central Macedonia, the islands of the northeastern Aegean, most of Crete, and parts of Attica) were held by the Germans, who seized most of the country's economic assets and effectively controlled the collaborationist government. The puppet regime never com-

manded any real authority, and did not gain the allegiance of the people. It was somewhat successful in preventing secessionist movements like the Vlach "Roman Legion" from establishing themselves. By mid-1943, the Greek Resistance had liberated large parts of the mountainous interior ("Free Greece"), setting up a separate administration there. After the Italian armistice, the Italian occupation zone was taken over by the German armed forces, who remained in charge of the country until their withdrawal in autumn 1944. In some Aegean islands, German garrisons were left behind, and surrendered only after the end of the war.

3.8 Controversial cases

See also: Foreign relations of the Axis powers

States listed in this section were not officially members of the Axis, but at some point during the war engaged in cooperation with one or more Axis members on level that makes their neutrality disputable.

3.8.1 Denmark

Main article: Occupation of Denmark

Denmark was occupied by Germany after April 1940



Kingdom of Denmark

but never joined the Axis. On 31 May 1939, Denmark and Germany signed a treaty of non-aggression, which did not contain any military obligations for either party.^{*[144]} On April 9, Germany attacked Scandinavia, and the speed of the German invasion of Denmark prevented King Christian X and the Danish government from going into exile. They had to accept "protection by the Reich" and the stationing of German forces in exchange for nominal independence. Denmark coordinated its foreign policy with Germany, extending diplomatic recognition to Axis collaborator and puppet regimes, and breaking diplomatic relations with

the Allied governments-in-exile. Denmark broke diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and signed the Anti-Comintern Pact in 1941.^{*[145]} However the United States and Britain ignored Denmark and worked with Denmark's ambassadors when it came to dealings about using Iceland, Greenland, and the Danish merchant fleet against Germany.^{*[146]*[147]}

In 1941 Danish Nazis set up the *Frikorps Danmark*. Thousands of volunteers fought and many died as part of the German Army on the Eastern Front. Denmark sold agricultural and industrial products to Germany and made loans for armaments and fortifications. The German presence in Denmark, including the construction of the Danish paid for part of the Atlantic Wall fortifications and was never reimbursed.

The Danish protectorate government lasted until 29 August 1943, when the cabinet resigned after the regularly scheduled and largely free election concluding the Folketing's current term. The Germans imposed martial law, and Danish collaboration continued on an administrative level, with the Danish bureaucracy functioning under German command. The Danish navy scuttled 32 of its larger ships; Germany seized 64 ships and later raised and refitted 15 of the sunken vessels.^{*[148]*[149]} 13 warships escaped to Sweden and formed a Danish naval flotilla in exile. Sweden allowed formation of a Danish military brigade in exile; it did not see combat.^{*[150]} The resistance movement was active in sabotage and issuing underground newspapers and blacklists of collaborators.^{*[151]}

3.8.2 Soviet Union

See also: Soviet-German relations before 1941, German-Soviet Axis talks, and Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact

Relations between the Soviet Union and the major Axis powers were generally hostile before 1938. In the Spanish Civil War, the Soviet Union gave military aid to the Second Spanish Republic, against Spanish Nationalist forces, which were assisted by Germany and Italy. However, the Nationalist forces were victorious. The Soviets suffered another political defeat when their ally Czechoslovakia was partitioned and taken over by Germany in 1938-39. In 1938 and 1939, the USSR fought and defeated Japan in two separate border conflicts, at Lake Khasan and Khalkhin Gol. The latter was a major Soviet victory that led the Japanese Army to avoid war with the Soviets and instead call for expansion south.

In 1939 the Soviet Union considered forming an alliance with either Britain and France or with Germany.^{*[152]*[153]} When negotiations with Britain and France failed, they turned to Germany and signed the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact in August 1939. Germany was now freed from the risk of war with the Soviets, and was assured a supply of oil. This included a secret protocol whereby the independent countries of Finland,



German and Soviet soldiers during the official transfer of Brest to Soviet control in front of picture of Stalin, in the aftermath of the invasion and partition of Poland by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in 1939.

Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Romania were divided into spheres of interest of the parties.* [68] The Soviet Union had been forced to cede Western Belarus and Western Ukraine to Poland after losing the Soviet-Polish War of 1919–1921, and the Soviet Union sought to regain those territories.* [56]

On 1 September, barely a week after the pact had been signed, Germany invaded Poland. The Soviet Union invaded Poland from the east on 17 September and on 28 September signed a secret treaty with Nazi Germany to arrange coordination of fighting against Polish resistance. The Soviets targeted intelligence, entrepreneurs, and officers, committing a string of atrocities that culminated in the Katyn massacre and mass relocation to the Gulag in Siberia.* [154]

Soon thereafter, the Soviet Union occupied the Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania,* [125]* [155] and annexed Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina from Romania. The Soviet Union attacked Finland on 30 November 1939, which started the Winter War.* [131] Finnish defences prevented an all-out invasion, resulting in an interim peace, but Finland was forced to cede strategically important border areas near Leningrad.

The Soviet Union provided material support to Germany

in the war effort against Western Europe through a pair of commercial agreements, the first in 1939 and the second in 1940, which involved exports of raw materials (phosphates, chromium and iron ore, mineral oil, grain, cotton, and rubber). These and other export goods transported through Soviet and occupied Polish territories allowed Germany to circumvent the British naval blockade.

In October and November 1940, German-Soviet talks about the potential of joining the Axis took place in Berlin.* [156]* [157] Joseph Stalin later personally countered with a separate proposal in a letter on 25 November that contained several secret protocols, including that “the area south of Batum and Baku in the general direction of the Persian Gulf is recognized as the center of aspirations of the Soviet Union”, referring to an area approximating present day Iraq and Iran, and a Soviet claim to Bulgaria.* [157]* [158] Hitler never responded to Stalin's letter.* [159]* [160] Shortly thereafter, Hitler issued a secret directive on the invasion of the Soviet Union.* [158]* [161]

Germany ended the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact by invading the Soviet Union in Operation Barbarossa on 22 June 1941.* [69] That resulted in the Soviet Union becoming one of the main members of the Allies.

Germany then revived its Anti-Comintern Pact, enlisting many European and Asian countries in opposition to the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union and Japan remained neutral towards each other for most of the war by the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact. The Soviet Union ended the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact by invading Manchukuo on 8 August 1945, due to agreements reached at the Yalta Conference with Roosevelt and Churchill.

3.8.3 Spain

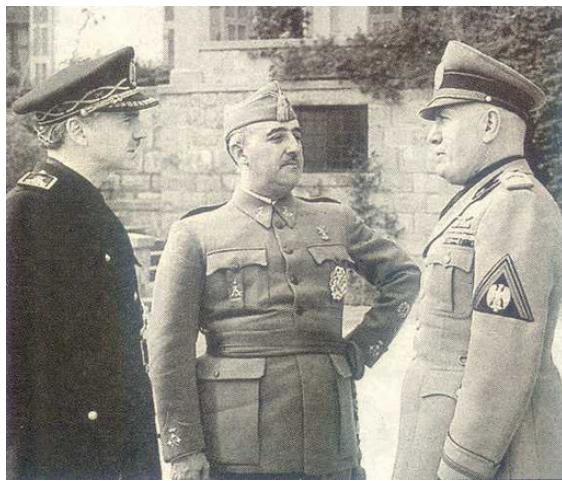
Main article: Spain in World War II

Caudillo Francisco Franco's Spanish State gave moral,



Front row in order from left to right: Karl Wolff, Heinrich Himmler, Francisco Franco and Spain's Foreign Minister Serrano Súñer in Madrid, October 1940.

economic, and military assistance to the Axis powers, while nominally maintaining neutrality. Franco de-



Francisco Franco (centre) and Serrano Suñer (left) meeting with Mussolini (right) in Bordighera, Italy in 1941. At Bordighera, Franco and Mussolini discussed the creation of a Latin Bloc.* [101]

scribed Spain as a member of the Axis and signed the Anti-Comintern Pact in 1941 with Hitler and Mussolini. Members of the ruling Falange party in Spain held irredentist designs on Gibraltar.* [162] Falangists also supported Spanish colonial acquisition of Tangier, French Morocco and northwestern French Algeria.* [163] In addition, Spain held ambitions on former Spanish colonies in Latin America.* [164] In June 1940 the Spanish government approached Germany to propose an alliance in exchange for Germany recognizing Spain's territorial aims: the annexation of the Oran province of Algeria, the incorporation of all Morocco, the extension of Spanish Sahara southward to the twentieth parallel, and the incorporation of French Cameroons into Spanish Guinea.* [165] Spain invaded and occupied the Tangier International Zone, maintaining its occupation until 1945.* [165] The occupation caused a dispute between Britain and Spain in November 1940; Spain conceded to protect British rights in the area and promised not to fortify the area.* [165] The Spanish government secretly held expansionist plans towards Portugal that it made known to the German government. In a communiqué with Germany on 26 May 1942, Franco declared that Portugal should be annexed into Spain.* [166]

Franco had previously won the Spanish Civil War with the help of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. Both were eager to establish another fascist state in Europe. Spain owed Germany over \$212 million for supplies of matériel during the Spanish Civil War, and Italian combat troops had actually fought in Spain on the side of Franco's Nationalists.

From 1940 to 1941, Franco endorsed a Latin Bloc of Italy, Vichy France, Spain, and Portugal, with support from the Vatican in order to balance the countries' powers to that of Germany.* [101] Franco discussed the Latin Bloc alliance with Pétain of Vichy France

in Montpellier, France in 1940, and with Mussolini in Bordighera, Italy.* [101]

When Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, Franco immediately offered to form a unit of military volunteers to join the invasion. This was accepted by Hitler and, within two weeks, there were more than enough volunteers to form a division – the Blue Division (*División Azul*) under General Agustín Muñoz Grandes.

The possibility of Spanish intervention in World War II was of concern to the United States, which investigated the activities of Spain's ruling Falange party in Latin America, especially Puerto Rico, where pro-Falange and pro-Franco sentiment was high, even amongst the ruling upper classes.* [167] The Falangists promoted the idea of supporting Spain's former colonies in fighting against American domination.* [164] Prior to the outbreak of war, support for Franco and the Falange was high in the Philippines.* [168] The Falange Exterior, the international department of the Falange, collaborated with Japanese forces against U.S. and Filipino forces in the Philippines through the Philippine Falange.* [169]

3.8.4 Vichy France

Main article: **Vichy France**

Although officially neutral, Marshal Philippe Pétain's



France during the war; Occupied and annexed zones by Germany in shades of red, Italian occupation zones in shades of green, "Free zone" in blue.

"Vichy regime" collaborated with the Axis from June 1940. It retained full control of the non-occupied part of France until November 1942 - when the whole of France was occupied by Germany - and of a large part of France's colonial empire, until the colonies gradually fell under Free French control.

The German invasion army entered Paris on 14 June 1940, following the battle of France. Pétain became

the last Prime Minister of the French Third Republic on 16 June 1940. He sued for peace with Germany and on 22 June 1940, the Vichy government concluded an armistice with Hitler. Under the terms of the agreement, Germany occupied two-thirds of France, including Paris. Pétain was permitted to keep an “armistice army” of 100,000 men within the unoccupied southern zone. This number included neither the army based in the French colonial empire nor the French fleet. In Africa the Vichy regime was permitted to maintain 127,000.*[170] The French also maintained substantial garrisons at the French-mandated territory of Syria and Greater Lebanon, the French colony of Madagascar, and in French Somaliland. Some members of the Vichy government pushed for closer cooperation, but they were rebuffed by Pétain. Neither did Hitler accept that France could ever become a full military partner,*[171] and constantly prevented the buildup of Vichy's military strength.

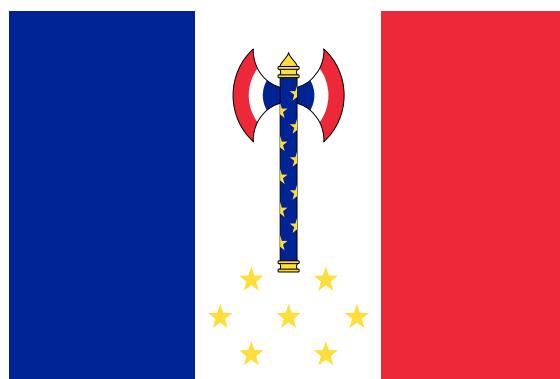
After the armistice, relations between the Vichy French and the British quickly worsened. Fearful that the powerful French fleet might fall into German hands, the British launched several naval attacks, the most notable of which was against the Algerian harbour of Mers el-Kebir on 3 July 1940. Though Churchill defended his controversial decision to attack the French Fleet, the action deteriorated greatly the relations between France and Britain. German propaganda trumpeted these attacks as an absolute betrayal of the French people by their former allies.



Philippe Pétain (left) meeting with Hitler in October 1940.

On 10 July 1940, Pétain was given emergency “full powers” by a majority vote of the French National Assembly. The following day approval of the new constitution by the Assembly effectively created the French State (*l'État Français*), replacing the French Republic with the government unofficially called “Vichy France,” after the resort town of Vichy, where Pétain maintained his seat of government. This continued to be recognised as the lawful government of France by the neutral United States until 1942, while the United Kingdom had recognised de Gaulle's government-in-exile in London. Racial laws were introduced in France and its colonies and many French Jews were deported to Germany. Albert Lebrun, last President of the Republic, did not resign from the

presidential office when he moved to Vizille on 10 July 1940. By 25 April 1945, during Pétain's trial, Lebrun argued that he thought he would be able to return to power after the fall of Germany, since he had not resigned.*[172]



Personal flag of Philippe Pétain, Chief of State of Vichy France.

In September 1940, Vichy France was forced to allow Japan to occupy French Indochina, a federation of French colonial possessions and protectorates encompassing modern day Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The Vichy regime continued to administer them under Japanese military occupation. French Indochina was the base for the Japanese invasions of Thailand, Malaya, and the Dutch East Indies. In 1945, under Japanese sponsorship, the Empire of Vietnam and the Kingdom of Kampuchea were proclaimed as Japanese puppet states.

On 26 September 1940, de Gaulle led an attack by Allied forces on the Vichy port of Dakar in French West Africa. Forces loyal to Pétain fired on de Gaulle and repulsed the attack after two days of heavy fighting, drawing Vichy France closer to Germany.

During the Anglo-Iraqi War of May 1941, Vichy France allowed Germany and Italy to use air bases in the French mandate of Syria to support the Iraqi revolt. British and Free French forces attacked later Syria and Lebanon in June–July 1941, and in 1942 Allied forces took over French Madagascar. More and more colonies abandoned Vichy, joining the Free French territories of French Equatorial Africa, Polynesia, New Caledonia and others who had sided with de Gaulle from the start.

In November 1942 Vichy French troops briefly resisted the landing of Allied troops in French North Africa for a couple of days, until Admiral François Darlan negotiated a local ceasefire with the Allies. In response to the landings, Axis troops invaded the non-occupied zone in southern France and ended Vichy France as an entity with any kind of autonomy; it then became a puppet government for the occupied territories.

In June 1943, the formerly Vichy-loyal colonial authorities in French North Africa led by Henri Giraud came to an agreement with the Free French to merge with their own interim regime with the French National Committee

(*Comité Français National*, CFN) to form a provisional government in Algiers, known as the French Committee of National Liberation (*Comité Français de Libération Nationale*, CFLN) initially led by Darlan. After his assassination De Gaulle emerged as the uncontested French leader. The CFLN raised more troops and re-organised, re-trained and re-equipped the Free French military, in cooperation with Allied forces in preparation of future operations against Italy and the German Atlantic wall.

In 1943 the Milice, a paramilitary force which had been founded by Vichy, was subordinated to the Germans and assisted them in rounding up opponents and Jews, as well as fighting the French Resistance. The Germans recruited volunteers in units independent of Vichy. Partly as a result of the great animosity of many right-wingers against the pre-war Front Populaire, volunteers joined the German forces in their anti-communist crusade against the USSR. Almost 7,000 joined *Légion des Volontaires Français* (LVF) from 1941 to 1944. The LVF then formed the cadre of the Waffen-SS Division *Charlemagne* in 1944-1945, with a maximum strength of some 7,500. Both the LVF and the *Division Charlemagne* fought on the eastern front.

Deprived of any military assets, territory or resources, the members of the Vichy government continued to fulfil their role as German puppets, being quasi-prisoners in the so-called "Sigmaringen enclave" in a castle in Baden-Württemberg at the end of the war in May 1945.

3.9 German, Japanese and Italian World War II cooperation

3.9.1 German-Japanese Axis-cooperation

Main article: German-Japanese relations § WWII

3.9.2 Germany's and Italy's declaration of war against the United States

On 7 December 1941, Japan attacked the US naval bases in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. According to the stipulation of the Tripartite Pact, Nazi Germany was required to come to the defense of her allies only if they were attacked. Since Japan had made the first move, Germany and Italy were not obliged to aid her until the United States counterattacked. Nevertheless, Hitler ordered the Reichstag to formally declare war on the United States.^{*[173]} Italy also declared war.

Historian Ian Kershaw suggests that this declaration of war against the United States was a serious blunder made by Germany, as it allowed the United States to join the war in Europe without any limitation.^{*[174]} On the other hand, American destroyers escorting convoys had already

been de facto at war for months with German U-boats in the Atlantic, and the immediate war declaration made the Second Happy Time possible for U-boats.^{*[175]} The US had officially abandoned its neutral stance in March 1941 with the beginning of Lend-Lease. The US destroyer Reuben James was torpedoed and sunk by the submarine U-562 on 31 October 1941. Hitler could no longer ignore the amount of economic and military aid the US was giving Britain and the USSR.^{*[176]} Americans played a key role in financing and supplying the Allies, in the strategic bombardment of Germany, and in the final invasion of the continent.

- Hitler declaring war on the United States on 11 December 1941
- Italian pilots of a Savoia-Marchetti SM.75 long-range cargo aircraft meeting with Japanese officials upon arriving in East Asia in 1942.
- German and Japanese direct spheres of influence at their greatest extents in Autumn 1942. Arrows show planned movements to an agreed demarcation line at 70° E, which was, however, never even approximated.

3.10 See also

- Axis leaders of World War II
- Axis power negotiations on the division of Asia during World War II
- Axis victory in World War II
- Central Powers
- Expansion operations and planning of the Axis powers
- Foreign relations of the Axis powers
- Greater Japanese Empire
- Greater Germanic Reich
- Imperial Italy
- Hakkō ichiu
- List of pro-Axis leaders and governments or direct control in occupied territories
- New Order (Nazism)
- Participants in World War II
- Hetalia: Axis Powers
- Zweites Buch

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3.14 External links

- Axis History Factbook
- Full text of The Tripartite Pact
- Silent movie of the signing of The Tripartite Pact

Online sources

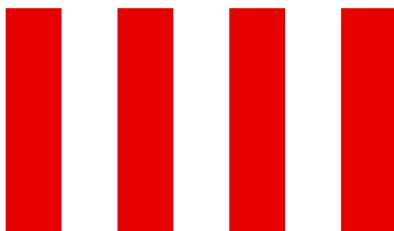
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Chapter 4

Allies of World War II



The "United Nations Honour Flag", used as a symbol of the wartime allies, ca. 1943–1948



The Allied leaders of the Asian and Pacific Theater: Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Winston Churchill meeting at the Cairo Conference in 1943



The Allied leaders of the European theatre: Joseph Stalin, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill meeting at the Tehran Conference in 1943



United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and their advisors in Casablanca Conference, 1943

The **Allies of World War II**, called the **United Nations** from the 1 January 1942 declaration, were the countries that together opposed the Axis powers during the Second World War (1939–1945). The Allies promoted the alliance as seeking to stop German, Japanese and Italian aggression.

At the start of the war on 1 September 1939, the Allies consisted of France, Poland and the United Kingdom, and dependent states, such as the British India. Within days they were joined by the independent Dominions of the British Commonwealth: Australia, Canada, New Zealand

and South Africa.* [1] Poland was a minor factor after its defeat in 1939; France was a minor factor after its defeat in 1940. After first having cooperated with Germany in invading Poland whilst remaining neutral in the Allied-Axis conflict, the Soviet Union force joined the Allies in June 1941 after being invaded by Germany. Greece

joined the Allies in 1940, after Italy's failed invasion, which triggered the intervention of Germany. The United States provided war materiel and money all along, and officially joined in December 1941 after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. China had already been into a prolonged war with Japan since the Marco Polo Bridge Incident of 1937, but officially joined the Allies in 1941.

The alliance was formalised by the Declaration by United Nations, from 1 January 1942. However, the name United Nations was rarely used to describe the Allies during the war. The leaders of the "Big Three" – the UK, the Soviet Union, and the United States – controlled Allied strategy; relations between the United Kingdom and the United States were especially close. China and the Big Three were referred as a "trusteeship of the powerful", *[2] then were recognized as the Allied "Big Four" in Declaration by United Nations*[3] and later the "Four Policemen".

Other key Allies included the Netherlands, Yugoslavia and Free France, although there were numerous others.

In 1945, the Allied nations became the basis of the United Nations.*[4]

4.1 Origins and creation

Main articles: Causes of World War II and Grand Alliance (World War II)

The origins of the Allied powers stem from the Allies of World War I and cooperation of the victorious powers at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919. Germany represented signing Treaty of Versailles. The new Weimar republic's legitimacy became shaken. However, the 1920s were peaceful.

With the Stock Market Crash of 1929 and the ensuing Great Depression, political unrest in Europe soared including the rise in support of revanchist nationalists in Germany who falsely blamed the severity of the economic crisis on the Treaty of Versailles. By the early 1930s, the Nazi Party led by Adolf Hitler became the dominant revanchist movement in Germany and Hitler and the Nazis gained power in 1933. The Nazi regime demanded the immediate cancellation of the Treaty of Versailles and made claims to German-populated Austria, and German-populated territories of Czechoslovakia. The likelihood of war was high, and the question was whether it could be avoided through strategies such as appeasement.

In Asia, when Japan seized Manchuria in 1931, the League of Nations condemned it for aggression against China. Japan responded by leaving the League of Nations in March 1933. After four quiet years, the Sino-Japanese War erupted in 1937 with Japanese forces invading China. The League of Nations condemned Japan's actions and initiated sanctions on Japan. The United

States, in particular, was angered at Japan and sought to support China.



Poland first to fight —British wartime poster supporting Poland after the German invasion, 1939

In March 1939, Germany took over Czechoslovakia, violating the Munich Agreement signed six months before, and demonstrating that the appeasement policy was a failure. Britain and France decided that Hitler had no intention to uphold diplomatic agreements and responded by preparing for war. On 31 March 1939, Britain formed the Anglo-Polish military alliance in an effort to avert a German attack on the country. Also, the French had a long-standing alliance with Poland since 1921. The Western powers also sought an alliance with the Soviet Union, but Hitler ended the risk of a war with Stalin by signing the Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact in August 1939. The agreement secretly divided the independent nations of eastern Europe between the two powers and assured adequate oil supplies for the German war machine. On 1 September 1939, Germany invaded Poland; two days later Britain and France declared war on Germany. Then, on 17 September 1939, the Soviet Union invaded Poland from the east. A Polish government-in-exile was set up and it continued to be one of the Allies, a model followed by other occupied countries. After a quiet winter, Germany in April 1940 invaded and quickly defeated Denmark, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands and France. Britain and its Empire stood alone against Hitler and Mussolini. In June 1941, Hitler broke the non-

aggression agreement with Stalin and Germany invaded the Soviet Union. In December, Japan attacked the US and Britain. The main lines of World War II had formed.

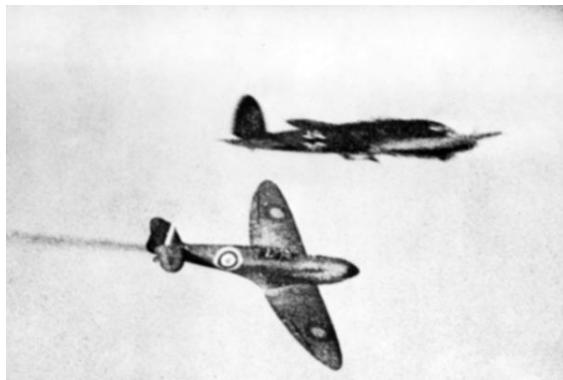
4.2 Major affiliated state combatants

Main articles: Four Policemen and Diplomatic history of World War II

During December 1941, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt devised the name "United Nations" for the Allies and proposed it to British Prime Minister Winston Churchill.^{*[5]*[6]} He referred to the Big Three and China as a "trusteeship of the powerful", and then later the "Four Policemen".^{*[2]} The *Declaration by United Nations* on 1 January 1942 was the basis of the modern United Nations (UN).^{*[7]} At the Potsdam Conference of July–August 1945, Roosevelt's successor, Harry S. Truman, proposed that the foreign ministers of China, France, the Soviet Union, United Kingdom, and the United States "should draft the peace treaties and boundary settlements of Europe", which led to the creation of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the "Big Five", and soon thereafter the establishment of those states as the permanent members of the UNSC.^{*[8]}

4.2.1 United Kingdom

Further information: Military history of the United Kingdom during World War II



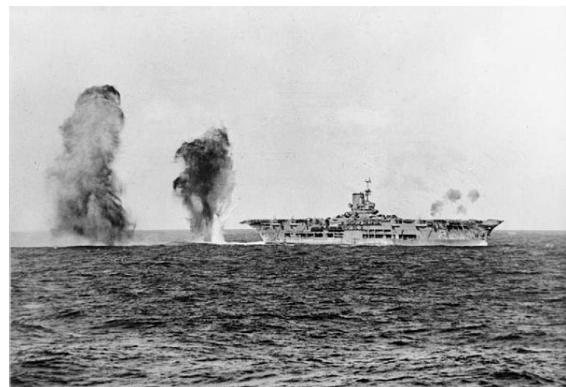
British Supermarine Spitfire fighter aircraft (bottom) flying past a German Heinkel He-111 bomber aircraft (top) during the Battle of Britain

War declared

Great Britain and other members of the British Commonwealth, most known as the Dominions, declared war



British Crusader tanks during the North African Campaign



British aircraft carrier HMS Ark Royal under attack from Italian aircraft during the Battle of Cape Spartivento.

on Germany separately from 3 September 1939 with the UK first, all within one week of each other; these countries were Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India and the Union of South Africa.

Colonies and dependencies Further information: British Empire in World War II

In Africa Further information: Southern Rhodesia in World War II

British West Africa and the British colonies in East and Southern Africa participated, mainly in the North African, East African and Middle-Eastern theatres. Two West African and one East African division served in the Burma Campaign.

Southern Rhodesia was a self-governing colony, having received responsible government in 1923. It was not a



British soldiers of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry in Elst, Netherlands on 2 March 1945

sovereign dominion. It governed itself internally and controlled its own armed forces, but had no diplomatic autonomy, and, therefore, was officially at war as soon as Britain was at war. The Southern Rhodesian colonial government issued a symbolic declaration of war nevertheless on 3 September 1939, which made no difference diplomatically, but preceded the declarations of war made by all other British dominions and colonies.*[9]

In the Americas These included: the British West Indies, British Honduras, British Guiana and the Falkland Islands.

Newfoundland was ruled as a royal colony in 1933–49, with a governor appointed by London who made the decisions.

In Asia Further information: India in World War II and Indian Army during World War II

British India included the areas and peoples covered by later India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and (until 1937) Burma/Myanmar, which later became a separate colony.

British Malaya covers the areas of Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore, while British Borneo covers the area of Brunei, including Sabah and Sarawak of Malaysia.

Territories controlled by the Colonial Office, namely the Crown Colonies, were controlled politically by the UK and therefore also entered hostilities with Britain's declaration of war. At the outbreak of World War II, the British Indian Army numbered 205,000 men. Later during World War II, the Indian Army became the largest all-volunteer force in history, rising to over 2.5 million men in size.[10] These forces included tank, artillery

and airborne forces. Indian soldiers earned 30 Victoria Crosses during the Second World War. It suffered 1,500,000 civilian casualties (more than the United Kingdom), mainly from the Bengal famine of 1943 caused by the fall of Burma to the Japanese*[10] and the transfer of food to the war effort, and 87,000 military casualties (more than any Crown colony but fewer than the United Kingdom). The UK suffered 382,000 military casualties.

Protectorates included: Kuwait was a protectorate of the United Kingdom formally established in 1920. The Trucial States were protectorates in the Persian Gulf.

Palestine was a mandate dependency created in the peace agreements after World War I from former territory of the Ottoman Empire. Iraq

In Europe The Cyprus Regiment was formed by the British Government during the Second World War and made part of the British Army structure. It was mostly Greek Cypriots volunteers and Turkish speaking Cypriot inhabitants of Cyprus but also included other Commonwealth nationalities. On a brief visit to Cyprus in 1943, Winston Churchill praised the “soldiers of the Cyprus Regiment who have served honourably on many fields from Libya to Dunkirk”. About 30,000 Cypriots served in the Cyprus Regiment. The regiment was involved in action from the very start and served at Dunkirk, in the Greek Campaign (Battle of Greece) (about 600 soldiers were captured in Kalamata in 1941), North Africa (Operation Compass), France, the Middle East and Italy. Many soldiers were taken prisoner especially at the beginning of the war and were interned in various POW camps (Stalag) including Lamsdorf (Stalag VIII-B), Stalag IVC at Wistritz bei Teplitz and Stalag 4b near Most in the Czech Republic. The soldiers captured in Kalamata were transported by train to prisoner of war camps.

4.2.2 China



Chiang Kai-shek (first row, second from left side), Mao Zedong (first row, third from left), United States ambassador Patrick J. Hurley (first row, first on left), 1945.

Main article: Second Sino-Japanese War

In the 1920s the Soviet Union provided military assistance to **Kuomintang**, or the Nationalists and helped re-organize their party along **Leninist** lines: a unification of party, state, and army. In exchange the Nationalists agreed to let members of the **Chinese Communist Party** join the Nationalists on an individual basis. However, following the nominal unification of China at the end of the **Northern Expedition** in 1928, **Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek** purged leftists from his party and fought against the revolting Chinese Communist Party, former **warlords**, and other militarist factions. A fragmented China provided easy opportunities for Japan to gain territories piece by piece without engaging in total war. Following the 1931 **Mukden Incident**, the puppet state of **Manchukuo** was established. Throughout the early to mid-1930s, Chiang's anti-communist and anti-militarist campaigns continued while he fought small, incessant conflicts against Japan, usually followed by unfavorable settlements and concessions after military defeats.

In 1936 Chiang was forced to cease his anti-communist military campaigns after his kidnap and release by **Zhang Xueliang**, and reluctantly formed a nominal alliance with the Communists, while the Communists agreed to fight under the nominal command of the Nationalists against the Japanese. Following the **Marco Polo Bridge Incident** of 7 July 1937, China and Japan became embroiled in a full-scale war. The Soviet Union, wishing to keep China in the fight against Japan, supplied China with military assistance until 1941, when it signed a non-aggression pact with **Japan**. Continuous clashes between the Communists and Nationalists behind enemy lines cumulated in a major military conflict between these two former allies that effectively ended their cooperation against the Japanese, and China had been divided between the internationally recognized **Nationalist China** under the leadership of **Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek** and the **Communist China** under the leadership of **Mao Zedong** until the Japanese surrendered in 1945.

Factions

Nationalists Main article: **Nationalist Government**

Prior to the alliance of Germany and Italy to Japan, the Nationalist Government held close relations with both Germany and Italy. In the early 1930s, **Sino-German cooperation** between the Nationalist Government and Germany in military and industrial matters. **Nazi Germany** provided the largest proportion of Chinese arms imports and technical expertise. Relations between the Nationalist Government and Italy during the 1930s varied, however even after the Nationalist Government followed League of Nations sanctions against Italy for its invasion of **Ethiopia**, the international sanctions proved unsuccessful, and relations between the Fascist government in Italy and the Nationalist Government in China



Soldiers of the National Revolutionary Army associated with Nationalist China, during the Sino-Japanese War.

returned to normal shortly afterwards.^{*[11]} Up until 1936, Mussolini had provided the Nationalists with Italian military air and naval missions to help the Nationalists fight against Japanese incursions and communist insurgents.^{*[11]} Italy also held strong commercial interests and a strong commercial position in China supported by the **Italian concession in Tianjin**.^{*[11]} However, after 1936 the relationship between the Nationalist Government and Italy changed due to a Japanese diplomatic proposal to recognize the **Italian Empire** that included occupied Ethiopia within it in exchange for Italian recognition of **Manchukuo**, Italian Foreign Minister Galeazzo Ciano accepted this offer by Japan, and on 23 October 1936 Japan recognized the Italian Empire and Italy recognized Manchukuo, as well as discussing increasing commercial links between Italy and Japan.^{*[12]}

The Nationalist Government held close relations with the **United States**. The United States opposed Japan's invasion of China in 1937 that it considered an illegal violation of China's sovereignty, and offered the Nationalist Government diplomatic, economic, and military assistance during its war against Japan. In particular, the United States sought to bring the Japanese war effort to a complete halt by imposing a full embargo on all trade between the United States to Japan, Japan was dependent on the United States for 80 percent of its **petroleum**, resulting in an economic and military crisis for Japan that could not continue its war effort with China without access to petroleum.^{*[13]} In November 1940, American military aviator **Claire Lee Chennault** upon observing the dire situation in the air war between China and Japan, set out to organize a volunteer squadron of American fighter pilots to fight alongside the Chinese against Japan, known as the

Flying Tigers.*[14] US President Franklin D. Roosevelt accepted dispatching them to China in early 1941.*[14] However, they only became operational shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

The Soviet Union recognised the Republic of China but urged reconciliation with the Communist Party of China and inclusion of Communists in the government.*[15] The Soviet Union also urged military and cooperation between Nationalist China and Communist China during the war.*[15]

Even though the Republic of China had been fighting the longest among all the Allied powers, it only officially joined the Allies after the attack on Pearl Harbor, on 7 December 1941. China fought the Japanese Empire before joining the Allies In the Pacific War. Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek thought Allied victory was assured with the entrance of the United States into the war, and he declared war on Germany and the other Axis nations. However, Allied aid remained low because the Burma Road was closed and the Allies suffered a series of military defeats against Japan early on in the campaign. General Sun Li-jen led the R.O.C. forces to the relief of 7,000 British forces trapped by the Japanese in the Battle of Yenangyaung. He then reconquered North Burma and re-established the land route to China by the Ledo Road. But the bulk of military aid did not arrive until the spring of 1945. More than 1.5 million Japanese troops were trapped in the China Theatre, troops that otherwise could have been deployed elsewhere if China had collapsed and made a separate peace.

Communists Main article: [Communist-controlled China \(1927–1949\)](#)

Communist China had been tacitly supported by the



Soldiers of the First Workers' and Peasants' Army associated with Communist China, during the Sino-Japanese War.

Soviet Union since the 1920s, though the Soviet Union diplomatically recognised the Republic of China, Joseph Stalin supported cooperation between the Nationalists and the Communists—including pressuring the Nationalist Government to grant the Communists state and mil-



Victorious Chinese Communist soldiers holding the flag of the Republic of China during Hundred Regiments Offensive

itary positions in the government.*[15] This was continued into the 1930s that fell in line with the Soviet Union's subversion policy of popular fronts to increase communists' influence in governments.*[15] The Soviet Union urged military and cooperation between Soviet China and Nationalist China during China's war against Japan.*[15] Initially Mao Zedong accepted the demands of the Soviet Union and in 1938 had recognized Chiang Kai-shek as the "leader" of the "Chinese people".*[16] In turn, the Soviet Union accepted Mao's tactic of "continuous guerilla warfare" in the countryside that involved a goal of extending the Communist bases, even if it would result in increased tensions with the Nationalists.*[16]

After the breakdown of their cooperation with the Nationalists in 1941, the Communists prospered and grew as the war against Japan dragged on, building up their sphere of influence wherever opportunities were presented, mainly through rural mass organizations, administrative, land and tax reform measures favoring poor peasants; while the Nationalists attempted to neutralize the spread of Communist influence by military blockade and fighting the Japanese at the same time.*[17]

The Communist Party's position in China was boosted further upon the Soviet invasion of Manchuria in August 1945 against the Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo and the Japanese Kwantung Army in China and Manchuria. Upon the intervention of the Soviet Union against Japan in World War II in 1945, Mao Zedong in April and May 1945 had planned to mobilize 150,000 to 250,000 soldiers from across China to work with forces of the Soviet Union in capturing Manchuria.*[18]

4.2.3 France

Main article: [France during World War II](#)

Further information: [Free France](#) and [Military history of France during World War II](#)



Free French forces at the Battle of Bir Hakeim.

War declared



FAFL Free French GC II/5 "LaFayette" receiving ex-USAAF Curtiss P-40 fighters at Casablanca, French Morocco.



The French fleet scuttled itself rather than fall into the hands of the Axis after their invasion of Vichy France on 11 November 1942.

After Germany invaded Poland, France declared war on

Germany on 3 September 1939.*[19] In January 1940, French Prime Minister Édouard Daladier made a major speech denouncing the actions of Germany:

At the end of five months of war, one thing has become more and more clear. It is that Germany seeks to establish a domination of the world completely different from any known in world history.

The domination at which the Nazis aim is not limited to the displacement of the balance of power and the imposition of the supremacy of one nation. It seeks the systematic and total destruction of those conquered by Hitler and it does not treaty with the nations which it has subdued. He destroys them. He takes from them their whole political and economic existence and seeks even to deprive them of their history and culture. He wishes only to consider them as vital space and a vacant territory over which he has every right.

The human beings who constitute these nations are for him only cattle. He orders their massacre or migration. He compels them to make room for their conquerors. He does not even take the trouble to impose any war tribute on them. He just takes all their wealth and, to prevent any revolt, he scientifically seeks the physical and moral degradation of those whose independence he has taken away.*[19]

France experienced several major phases of action during World War II:

- The "Phoney War" of 1939–1940, also called *drôle de guerre* in France, *dziwna wojna* in Poland (both meaning "Strange War"), or the "*Sitzkrieg*" ("Sitting War") in Germany.
- The Battle of France in May–June 1940, which resulted in the defeat of the Allies, the fall of the French Third Republic, the German occupation of northern and western France, and the creation of the rump state Vichy France, which received diplomatic recognition from the Axis and most neutral countries including the United States.*[20]
- The period of resistance against the occupation and Franco-French struggle for control of the colonies between the Vichy regime and the Free French, who continued the fight on the Allies' side after the Appeal of 18 June by General Charles de Gaulle, recognized by the United Kingdom as France's government-in-exile. It culminated in the Allied landings in North Africa on 11 November 1942, when Vichy ceased to exist as an independent entity after having been invaded by both the Axis and the Allies simultaneously, being thereafter only

the nominal government in charge during the occupation of France. Vichy forces in French North Africa switched allegiance and merged with the Free French to participate in the campaigns of Tunisia and of Italy campaigns and the invasion of Corsica in 1943–44.

- The liberation of mainland France beginning with D-Day on 6 June 1944 and operation *Overlord*, and then with operation *Dragoon* on 15 August 1944, leading to the Liberation of Paris on 25 August 1944 by the Free French 2e Division Blindée and the installation of the Provisional Government of the French Republic in the newly liberated capital.
- Participation of the re-established provisional French Republic's First Army in the Allied advance from Paris to the Rhine and the Western Allied invasion of Germany until V-E Day on 8 May 1945.

Colonies and dependencies

In Africa In Africa these included: French West Africa, French Equatorial Africa, the League of Nations mandates of French Cameroun and French Togo, Madagascar, French Somaliland, and the protectorates of French Tunisia and French Morocco.

French Algeria was then not a colony or dependency but a fully-fledged part of metropolitan France.



The fall of Damascus to the Allies, late June 1941. A car carrying Free French commanders General Georges Catroux and General Paul Louis Le Gentilhomme enters the city, escorted by French Circassian cavalry (Gardes Tcherkess).

In Asia and Oceania In Asia these included: French Polynesia, Wallis and Futuna, New Caledonia, the New Hebrides, French Indochina, French India, the mandates of Greater Lebanon and French Syria. The French government in 1936 attempted to grant independence to its mandate of Syria in the Franco-Syrian Treaty of Independence of 1936 signed by France and Syria. However, opposition to the treaty grew in France and the treaty was not ratified. Syria had become an official republic in 1930

and was largely self-governing. In 1941, a British-led invasion supported by Free French forces expelled Vichy French forces in operation *Exporter*.

In the Americas In the Americas these included: Martinique, Guadeloupe, French Guiana and Saint Pierre and Miquelon.

4.2.4 Soviet Union



Soviet soldiers and T-34 tanks advance in skirmish near Bryansk in 1942.



Soviet soldiers fighting in the ruins of Stalingrad during the Battle of Stalingrad.

Outbreak

German invasion of the Soviet Union, Operation Barbarossa, began on 22 June 1941. General Secretary Joseph Stalin and the government of the Soviet Union described the Soviet war effort as a war being fought by the Soviet people for their survival.*[21] Stalin had supported popular front movements of anti-fascists including communists and non-communists from 1935 to 1939.*[22] The popular front strategy was terminated from 1939 to 1941 when the Soviet Union cooperated with Germany in



Soviet Il-2 ground attack aircraft attacking German ground forces during the Battle of Kursk.

1939 in the occupation and partitioning of Poland while the Soviet Union refused to endorse either the Allies or the Axis from 1939 to 1941, as it called the Allied-Axis conflict an “imperialist war”.*[22] After the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, Stalin endorsed the Western Allies as part of a renewed popular front strategy against Germany and called for the international communist movement to make a coalition with all those who opposed the Nazis.*[22]

The Soviet Union intervened against Japan and its client state in Manchuria in 1945, cooperating with the Nationalist Government of China and Nationalist Party led by Chiang Kai-shek; though also cooperating, preferring, and encouraging the Communist Party led by Mao Zedong to take effective control of Manchuria after expelling Japanese forces.*[23]

History

In the lead up to the war between the Soviet Union and Germany, relations between the Soviet Union and Germany underwent several stages. Stalin studied Hitler, including reading *Mein Kampf* and from it knew of Hitler's desire to destroy the Soviet Union.*[24] In 1933, the Soviet Union had immediate concerns with the threat of a potential German invasion of the country should Germany attempt a conquest of the Baltic states, and in December of that year, Polish-Soviet negotiations began for the issuing of a joint declaration by the two countries guaranteeing the sovereignty of the Baltic states.*[25] However, Poland withdrew from the negotiations following German and Finnish objections.*[25] The Soviet Union and Germany at this time competed with each other for influence in Poland.*[26] The Soviet government also was concerned with the anti-Soviet sentiment in Poland and particularly Józef Piłsudski's proposed Polish federation that would include the territories of Poland, Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine within it that threatened the territorial integrity of the Soviet Union.*[27]

On 20 August 1939, forces of the Union of Soviet So-

cialist Republics under General Georgy Zhukov, together with the People's Republic of Mongolia eliminated the threat of conflict in the east with a decisive victory over Japan at the Battle of Khalkhin Gol in eastern Mongolia.

On the same day, Soviet party leader Joseph Stalin received a telegram from German Chancellor Adolf Hitler, suggesting that German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop fly to Moscow for diplomatic talks. (After receiving a lukewarm response throughout the spring and summer, Stalin abandoned attempts for a better diplomatic relationship with France and the United Kingdom.)*[28]

On 23 August, Ribbentrop and Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov signed the non-aggression pact including secret protocols dividing Eastern Europe into defined “spheres of influence” for the two regimes, and specifically concerning the partition of the Polish state in the event of its “territorial and political rearrangement”.*[29]

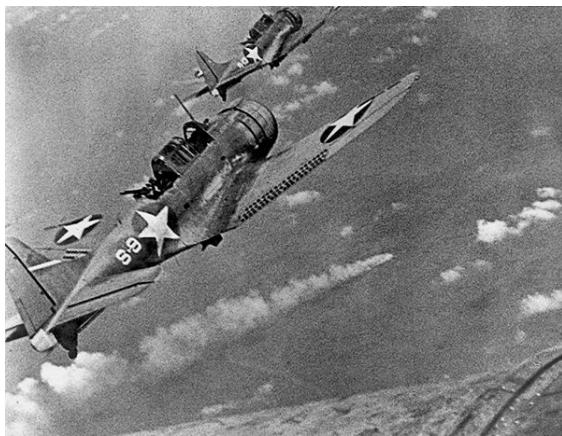
On 15 September 1939, Stalin concluded a durable ceasefire with Japan, to take effect the following day (it would be upgraded to a nonaggression pact in April 1941).*[30] The day after that, 17 September, Soviet forces invaded Poland from the east. Although some fighting continued until 5 October, the two invading armies held at least one joint military parade on 25 September, and reinforced their non-military partnership with a German-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Demarcation on 28 September.

On 30 November, the Soviet Union attacked Finland, for which it was expelled from the League of Nations. In the following year of 1940, while the world's attention was focussed upon the German invasion of France and Norway,*[31] the USSR militarily*[32] occupied the Baltic states*[33] of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as well as parts of Romania.

German-Soviet treaties were brought to an end by the German surprise attack on the USSR on 22 June 1941. The Soviet Union soon entered in alliance with the United Kingdom. Following the USSR, a number of other communist, pro-Soviet or Soviet-controlled forces fought against the Axis powers during the Second World War. They were as follows: the Albanian National Liberation Front, the Chinese Red Army, the Greek National Liberation Front, the Hukbalahap, the Malayan Communist Party, the People's Republic of Mongolia, the Polish People's Army, the Tuvan People's Republic (annexed by Soviet Union in 1944),*[34] the Viet Minh and the Yugoslav Partisans.

4.2.5 United States

Further information: Military history of the United States during World War II



American Douglas SBD Dauntless dive-bomber aircraft attacking the Japanese cruiser Mikuma during the *Battle of Midway* in June 1942.



American soldiers depart landing craft during the *Normandy landings* on 6 June 1944 known as *D-Day*, in the *Battle of Normandy*.



American Marines during the *Guadalcanal Campaign* in November 1942.



American Consolidated B-24 Liberator bomber aircraft during the bombing of oil refineries in Ploiești, Romania on 1 August 1943 during *Operation Tidal Wave*.

War justifications

The United States had indirectly supported Britain's war effort against Germany up to 1941 and declared its opposition to territorial aggrandizement. Materiel support to Britain was provided while the U.S. was officially neutral via the *Lend Lease Act* starting in 1941.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill in August 1941 promulgated the *Atlantic Charter* that pledged commitment to achieving “the final destruction of Nazi tyranny”. * [35] Signing the *Atlantic Charter*, and thereby joining the “United Nations” was the way a nation joined the Allies, and also became eligible for membership in the *United Nations* world body that formed in 1945.

The US strongly supported the Nationalist Government in China in its war with Japan, and provided military equipment, supplies, and volunteers to the Nationalist Government of China to assist in its war effort.* [36] In December 1941 Japan opened the war with its attack on Pearl Harbor, the US declared war on Japan, and Japan's allies Germany and Italy declared war on the US, bringing the US into World War II.

History

On 8 December 1941, following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States Congress declared war on Japan at the request of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. This was followed by Germany and Italy declaring war on the United States on 11 December, bringing the country into the European theatre.

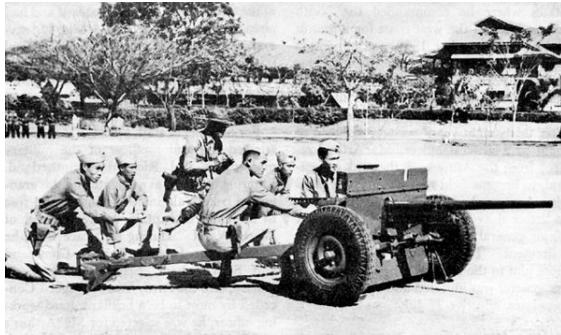
The US led Allied forces in the Pacific theatre against Japanese forces from 1941 to 1945. From 1943 to 1945, the US led and coordinated the Western Allies' war effort in Europe under the leadership of General Dwight Eisenhower.

The surprise attack on Pearl Harbor followed by Japan's swift attacks on Allied locations throughout the Pacific, resulted in major US losses in the first several months in the war, including losing control of the **Philippines**, **Guam**, **Wake Island** and several Aleutian islands including **Attu** and **Kiska** to Japanese forces. American naval forces attained some early successes against Japan. One was the bombing of Japanese industrial centres in the Doolittle Raid. Another was repelling a Japanese invasion of Port Moresby in New Guinea during the Battle of the Coral Sea.*[37] A major turning point in the Pacific War was the **Battle of Midway** where American naval forces were outnumbered by Japanese forces that had been sent to Midway to draw out and destroy American aircraft carriers in the Pacific and seize control of Midway that would place Japanese forces in proximity to Hawaii.*[38] However American forces managed to sink four of Japan's six large aircraft carriers that had initiated the attack on Pearl Harbor along with other attacks on Allied forces. Afterwards the US began an offensive against Japanese-captured positions. The **Guadalcanal Campaign** from 1942 to 1943 was a major contention point where American and Japanese forces struggled to gain control of Guadalcanal.

Colonies and dependencies

In the Americas and the Pacific The United States held multiple dependencies in the Americas, such as **Alaska**, the **Panama Canal Zone**, **Puerto Rico**, and the **U.S. Virgin Islands**.

In the Pacific it held multiple island dependencies such as **American Samoa**, **Guam**, **Hawaii**, **Midway Islands**, **Wake Island** and others. These dependencies were directly involved in the Pacific campaign of the war.



Philippine Scouts at Fort William McKinley firing a 37 mm anti-tank gun in training.

In Asia The Commonwealth of the Philippines was a sovereign protectorate referred to as an “associated state” of the United States. From late 1941 to 1944, the Philippines was occupied by Japanese forces, who established the Second Philippine Republic as a client state that had nominal control over the country.

4.3 Minor affiliated state combatants

4.3.1 Australia

Further information: [Military history of Australia during World War II](#)

Australia was a sovereign Dominion under the **Australian monarchy**, as per the Statute of Westminster 1931. At the start of the war Australia followed Britain's foreign policies, and accordingly declared war against Germany on 3 September 1939. Australian foreign policy became more independent after the **Australian Labor Party** formed government in October 1941, and Australia separately declared war against Finland, Hungary and Romania on 8 December 1941 and against Japan the next day.*[39]

4.3.2 Belgium



Members of the Belgian resistance with a Canadian soldier in Bruges, September 1944 during the Battle of the Scheldt.

Main article: [Belgium in World War II](#)

Before the war, Belgium had pursued a policy of **neutrality** and only became an Allied member after being invaded by Germany on 10 May 1940. During the ensuing fighting, Belgian forces fought alongside French and British forces against the invaders. While the British and French were struggling against the fast German advance elsewhere on the front, the Belgian forces were pushed into a pocket to the north. Finally, on 28 May, the King Leopold III surrendered himself and his military to the Germans, having decided the Allied cause was lost. The legal Belgian government was reformed as a **government in exile in London**. Belgian troops and pilots continued to fight on the Allied side as the **Free Belgian Forces**. Belgium itself was occupied, but a sizeable Resistance was

formed and was loosely coordinated by the government in exile and other Allied powers.

British and Canadian troops arrived in Belgium in September 1944 and the capital, Brussels, was liberated on 6 September. Because of the Ardennes Offensive, the country was only fully liberated in early 1945.

Colonies and dependencies

Belgium had the colony of the Belgian Congo and the League of Nations mandate of Ruanda-Urundi. The Belgian Congo was not occupied and remained loyal to the Allies as an important economic asset while its deposits of uranium were useful to the Allied efforts to develop the atomic bomb. Troops from the Belgian Congo participated in the East African Campaign against the Italians. The colonial *Force Publique* also served in other theatres including Madagascar, the Middle-East, India and Burma within British units.

4.3.3 Brazil

Main article: Brazilian Expeditionary Force

Initially, Brazil maintained a position of neutrality, trad-



Brazilian soldiers of the Brazilian Expeditionary Force greet civilians in the city of Massarosa, Italy, September 1944.

ing with both the Allies and the Axis Powers, while Brazilian president Getúlio Vargas's quasi-Fascist policies indicated a leaning toward the Axis powers. However, as the war progressed, trade with the Axis countries became almost impossible and the United States initiated forceful diplomatic and economic efforts to bring Brazil onto the Allied side.

At the beginning of 1942, Brazil permitted the United States to set up air bases on its territory, especially in Natal, strategically located at the easternmost corner of the South American continent, and on 28 January the country severed diplomatic relations with Germany, Japan, and Italy. After that, 36 Brazilian merchant ships were sunk by the German and Italian navies, which led

the Brazilian government to declare war against Germany and Italy on 22 August 1942.

Brazil then sent a 25,700 strong Expeditionary Force to Europe that fought mainly on the Italian front, from September 1944 to May 1945. Also, the Brazilian Navy and Air Force acted in the Atlantic Ocean from the middle of 1942 until the end of the war. Brazil was the only South American country to send troops to fight in the European theatre in the Second World War.

4.3.4 Canada

Further information: Declaration of war by Canada § Nazi Germany, and Military history of Canada during World War II

Canada was a sovereign Dominion under the Canadian monarchy, as per the Statute of Westminster 1931. In a symbolic statement of autonomous foreign policy Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King delayed parliament's vote on a declaration of war for seven days after Britain had declared war. Canada was the last member of the Commonwealth to declare war on Germany on 10 September 1939.* [40]

4.3.5 Cuba

Main article: Cuba in World War II

Because of Cuba's geographical position at the entrance of the Gulf of Mexico, Havana's role as the principal trading port in the West Indies, and the country's natural resources, Cuba was an important participant in the American Theater of World War II, and subsequently one of the greatest beneficiaries of the United States' Lend-Lease program. Cuba declared war on the Axis powers in December 1941* [41], making it one of the first Latin American countries to enter the conflict, and by the war's end in 1945 its military had developed a reputation as being the most efficient and cooperative of all the Caribbean nations.* [42] On 15 May 1943, the Cuban patrol boat CS-13 sank the German submarine U-176.* [43]* [44]

4.3.6 Czechoslovakia

Czechoslovakia along with the United Kingdom and France attempted to resolve German irredentist claims to the Sudetenland region in 1938 with the Munich Agreement, however in March 1939, Czechoslovakia was invaded by Germany and partitioned between Germany, Hungary, Poland, and a German client state of Slovakia. The Czechoslovak government-in-exile joined the Allies, the occupation and partition of Czechoslovakia amongst the Axis powers was not accepted by the Allied powers. Czechoslovakian military units took part in the war.



Ludvík Svoboda with Czechoslovak soldiers of the 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps on the Eastern Front in 1943.

4.3.7 Greece

Further information: [Military history of Greece during World War II](#) and [Axis occupation of Greece](#)
Greece was invaded by Italy on 28 October 1940 and sub-



Greek soldiers in March 1941 during the Greco-Italian War.

sequently joined the Allies. The Greek Army managed to stop the Italian offensive from Italy's protectorate of Albania, and Greek forces pushed Italian forces back into Albania. However, after the German invasion of Greece in April 1941, German forces managed to occupy mainland Greece and, a month later, the island of Crete. The Greek government went into exile, while the country was placed under a puppet government and divided into occupation zones run by Italy, Germany and Bulgaria. From 1942, a strong Resistance movement appeared, chiefly in the mountainous interior, where it established a "Free Greece" by mid-1943. Following the Italian capitulation in September 1943, the Italian zone was taken over by the Germans. Axis forces left mainland Greece in October 1944, although some Aegean islands, notably Crete, remained under German occupation until the end of the war.

4.3.8 Luxembourg

Main article: [Luxembourg in World War II](#)

Free Luxembourgish Forces and the Government in Exile



Soldiers from Luxembourg training in Britain, 1943.

See also: [Luxembourgish government-in-exile](#) and [Luxembourg Resistance](#)

Before the war, Luxembourg had pursued a policy of neutrality and only became an Allied member after being invaded by Germany on 10 May 1940. The Government in Exile fled, winding up in England. It made Luxembourgish language broadcasts to the occupied country on BBC radio.*[45] In 1944, the government in exile signed a treaty with the Belgian and Dutch governments, creating the Benelux Economic Union and also signed into the Bretton Woods system.

See also: [Battle of the Bulge](#) and [Luxembourg American Cemetery and Memorial](#)

4.3.9 Mexico

Mexico declared war on Germany in 1942 after German submarines attacked the Mexican oil tankers *Potrero del Llano* and *Faja de Oro* that were transporting crude oil to the United States. These attacks prompted President Manuel Ávila Camacho to declare war on the Axis powers.

Mexico formed Escuadrón 201 fighter squadron as part of the *Fuerza Aérea Expedicionaria Mexicana* (FAEM—"Mexican Expeditionary Air Force"). The squadron was attached to the 58th Fighter Group of the [United States Army Air Forces](#) and carried out tactical air support missions during the liberation of the main Philippine island of Luzon in the summer of 1945.*[46]

Some 300,000 Mexican citizens went to the United States to work on farms and factories. Some 15,000 US nationals of Mexican origin and Mexican residents in the US enrolled in the US Armed Forces and fought in various fronts around the world.*[47]

4.3.10 Netherlands

Main article: Netherlands in World War II

The Netherlands became an Allied member after being invaded on 10 May 1940 by Germany. During the ensuing campaign, the Netherlands were defeated and occupied by Germany. The Netherlands was liberated by Canadian, British, American and other allied forces during the campaigns of 1944 and 1945. The **Princess Irene Brigade**, formed from escapees from the German invasion, took part in several actions in 1944 in Arromanches and in 1945 in the Netherlands. Navy vessels saw action in the British Channel, the North Sea and the Mediterranean, generally as part of Royal Navy units. Dutch airmen flying British aircraft participated in the air war over Germany.

Colonies and dependencies

The Dutch East Indies (modern-day Indonesia) was the principal Dutch colony in Asia, and was attacked by Japan in 1942. During the **Dutch East Indies Campaign**, the Netherlands played a significant role in the Allied effort to halt the Japanese advance as part of the **American-British-Dutch-Australian (ABDA) Command**. The ABDA fleet finally encountered the Japanese surface fleet at the **Battle of Java Sea**, at which Doorman gave the order to engage. During the ensuing battle the ABDA fleet suffered heavy losses, and was mostly destroyed after several naval battles around Java; the ABDA Command was later dissolved. The Japanese finally occupied the Dutch East Indies in February–March 1942. Dutch troops, aircraft and escaped ships continued to fight on the Allied side and also mounted a guerrilla campaign in Timor.

4.3.11 New Zealand

Further information: Military history of New Zealand during World War II

New Zealand was a sovereign Dominion under the **New Zealand monarchy**, as per the Statute of Westminster 1931. It quickly entered World War II, officially declaring war on Germany on 3 September 1939, just hours after Britain.*[48] Unlike Australia, which had felt obligated to declare war, as it also had not ratified the Statute of Westminster, New Zealand did so as a sign of allegiance to Britain, and in recognition of Britain's abandonment of its former **appeasement** policy, which New Zealand had long opposed. This led to then Prime Minister Michael Joseph Savage declaring two days later:

With gratitude for the past and confidence in the future we range ourselves without fear

beside Britain. Where she goes, we go; where she stands, we stand. We are only a small and young nation, but we march with a union of hearts and souls to a common destiny.[49]*

4.3.12 Norway



Norwegian soldiers on the Narvik front, May 1940.

Because of its strategic location for control of the sea lanes in the **North Sea** and the Atlantic, both the Allies and Germany worried about the other side gaining control of the neutral country. Germany ultimately struck first with **operation Weserübung** on 9 April 1940, resulting in the two-month-long **Norwegian Campaign**, which ended in a German victory and their war-long occupation of Norway.

Units of the Norwegian Armed Forces evacuated from Norway or raised abroad continued participating in the war from exile.

The Norwegian merchant fleet, then the fourth largest in the world, was organized into **Nortraship** to support the Allied cause. Nortraship was the world's largest shipping company, and at its height operated more than 1000 ships.

4.3.13 Poland

Further information: Polish contribution to World War II, Polish resistance movement in World War II, Polish Armed Forces in the West, and Polish Armed Forces in the East

The invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939, started the war in Europe, and the United Kingdom and France declared war on Germany on 3 September. Poland fielded the third biggest army*[50] among the European Allies, after the Soviet Union and United Kingdom, but before France. The country never officially surrendered to the **Third Reich**, nor to the **Soviet Union**, primarily because neither of the totalitarian powers requested an official surrender, and continued the war effort under the **Polish government in exile**. However, the Soviet Union unilaterally considered the flight to Romania of **President Ignacy Mościcki** and **Marshal Edward Rydz-Śmigły** on 17 September as an evidence of **debellatio** causing the extinction of Polish State, and consequently declared itself



Pilots of the No. 303 "Kościuszko" Polish Fighter Squadron during the Battle of Britain.

allowed to invade (according to Soviet position: “to protect”) Eastern Poland starting from the same day.* [51] It must be noted that the Red Army had invaded the Second Polish Republic several hours before Polish president fled to Romania. The Soviets invaded on 17 September at 3 a.m.,^I [52] while president Mościcki crossed the Polish-Romanian border at 21:45 on the same day.* [53] The Polish military continued to fight, and the last major battle of the war, the battle of Kock, ended at 1 a.m. on 6 October 1939 with the Independent Operational Group “Polesie,” a field army, surrendering due to lack of ammunition.



Polish Home Army resistance fighters from the “Kiliński” Battalion during the Warsaw Uprising.

Polish soldiers fought under their own flag but under the

command of the British military. They were major contributors to the allies in the theatre of war west of Germany and in the theatre of war east of Germany, with the Soviet Union. The Polish armed forces in the West created after the fall of Poland played minor roles in the Battle of France, and important ones in the Italian and North African Campaigns.*[54] The Polish People's Army took part in the Battle of Berlin, the closing battle of the European theater of war. They occupied the city alongside the Soviet Red Army.

Home Army, the largest underground force in Europe, and other resistance organizations in occupied Poland provided intelligence that enabled successful operations later in the war and led to uncovering of Nazi war crimes (i.e., death camps) to the Western Allies. Notable Polish units fought in every campaign in North Africa and Europe (outside the Balkans). The Soviet Union recognized the London-based government at first. But it broke diplomatic relations after the Katyn massacre of Polish nationals was revealed. In 1943, the Soviet Union organized the Polish People's Army under Zygmunt Berling, around which it constructed the post-war successor state People's Republic of Poland.

4.3.14 South Africa

Further information: [Military history of South Africa during World War II](#)

South Africa was a sovereign Dominion under the South African monarchy, as per the Statue of Westminster 1931. South Africa held authority over the mandate of South-West Africa.

4.3.15 Yugoslavia

Main article: [World War II in Yugoslavia](#)

Yugoslavia entered the war on the Allied side after the



The Partisans and the Chetniks carried captured Germans through Užice, autumn 1941.

invasion of Axis powers on 6 April 1941. Royal Yugoslav

Army was thoroughly defeated in less than two weeks and the country was occupied. The Italian-backed Croatian fascist leader Ante Pavelić declared the Independent State of Croatia before the invasion was over. King Peter II and much of the Yugoslavian government had left the country. In the United Kingdom, they joined numerous other governments in exile from Nazi-occupied Europe. Beginning with the uprising in Herzegovina in June 1941, there was continuous anti-Axis resistance in Yugoslavia until the end of the war.

Resistance Factions



Partisan leader Marshal Josip Broz Tito with Winston Churchill in 1944.

Before the end of 1941, the anti-Axis resistance movement split between the royalist Chetniks and the communist Yugoslav Partisans of Josip Broz Tito who fought both against each other during the war and against the occupying forces. The Yugoslav Partisans managed to put up considerable resistance to the Axis occupation, forming various liberated territories during the war. In August 1943, there were over 30 Axis divisions on the territory of Yugoslavia, not including the forces of the Croatian puppet state and other quisling formations.*[55] In 1944, the leading Allied powers persuaded Tito's Yugoslav Partisans and the royalist Yugoslav government led by Prime Minister Ivan Šubašić to sign the Treaty of Vis that created Democratic Federal Yugoslavia.

Partisans The Partisans were a major Yugoslav resistance movement against the Axis occupation and partition of Yugoslavia. Initially the Partisans were in rivalry with the Chetniks over control of the resistance movement. However, the Partisans were recognized by both the Eastern and Western Allies as the primary resistance movement in 1943. After that, their strength increased rapidly, from 100,000 at the beginning of 1943 to over 648,000 in September 1944. In 1945 they were transformed into Yugoslav army, organized in 4 field armies with 800,000* [56] fighters.



Chetniks leader General Mihailovic with the members of the US military mission, Operation Halyard 1944.

Chetniks The Chetniks, the short name given to the movement titled the *Yugoslav Army of the Fatherland*, were initially a major Allied Yugoslav resistance movement. However, due to their royalist and anti-communist views, Chetniks were considered to have begun collaborating with the Axis as a tactical move to focus on destroying their Partisan rivals. The Chetniks presented themselves as a Yugoslav movement, but were primarily a Serb movement. They reached their peak in 1943 with 93,000 fighters.*[57] Their major contribution was Operation Halyard in 1944. In collaboration with the OSS, 413 Allied airmen shot down over Yugoslavia were rescued and evacuated.

4.4 Client states

4.4.1 British

Egypt

The Kingdom of Egypt was nominally an independent state since 1922 but effectively remained in a British sphere of influence with the British Mediterranean fleet being stationed in Alexandria and British army forces being stationed in the Suez Canal zone. Egypt faced an Axis campaign led by Italian and German forces during the war. Frustration by the UK over Egypt's King Farouk's

rule resulted in the [Abdeen Palace Incident of 1942](#) where British army forces surrounded the Abdeen palace, a residence of King Farouk, demanding a new government be established, that nearly forced the abdication of Farouk until he submitted to British demands.

British Raj (India)

Further information: [India in World War II](#)

At the outbreak of World War II, the Indian army numbered 205,000 men. Later during World War II the Indian Army became the largest all-volunteer force in history, rising to over 2.5 million men in size.^[10] These forces included tank, artillery and airborne forces. Indian soldiers earned 30 Victoria Crosses during the Second World War. It suffered 1,500,000 civilian casualties (more than the United Kingdom), mainly from the [Bengal famine of 1943](#) caused by the fall of Burma to the Japanese^[10] and the transfer of food to the war effort, and 87,000 military casualties (more than any Crown colony but fewer than the United Kingdom). The UK suffered 382,000 military casualties.

Iraq

Main article: [Anglo-Iraqi War](#)

Iran

Main article: [Anglo-Soviet invasion of Iran](#)

4.4.2 Soviet

Bulgaria

Main article: [Military history of Bulgaria during World War II](#)

After a period of neutrality, [Bulgaria](#) joined the Axis powers from 1941 to 1944. The Orthodox church and others convinced King Boris to not allow the Bulgarian Jews to be exported to concentration camps. The king died shortly afterwards, suspected of being poisoned after a visit to Germany. Bulgaria abandoned the Axis and joined the Allies when the Soviet Union invaded, offering no resistance to the incoming forces. In the 1947 peace treaties, Bulgaria gained a small area near the Black Sea from Romania, making it the only former German ally to gain territory from WWII.

Mongolia

Mongolia fought against Japan during [Battles of Khalkhin Gol](#) in 1939 and the [Soviet–Japanese War](#) in August 1945 to protect its independence and to liberate [Southern Mongolia](#) from Japan and China. Mongolia had been a Soviet sphere of influence since the 1920s.

Poland (Gomułka regime)

Main article: [Polish Armed Forces in the East](#)

By 1944, Poland entered the Soviet sphere of influence with [Władysław Gomułka](#) forming a communist government. Polish forces fought alongside Soviet forces against Germany.

Romania

Romania had initially been a member of the Axis powers but switched allegiance upon facing invasion by the Soviet Union. In a radio broadcast to the Romanian people and army on the night of 23 August 1944 King Michael issued a cease-fire,^{*}[\[58\]](#) proclaimed Romania's loyalty to the Allies, announced the acceptance of an armistice (to be signed on 12 September)^{*}[\[59\]](#) offered by Great Britain, the [United States](#), and the [USSR](#), and declared war on Germany.^{*}[\[60\]](#) The coup accelerated the Red Army's advance into Romania, but did not avert a rapid Soviet occupation and capture of about 130,000 Romanian soldiers, who were transported to the Soviet Union where many perished in prison camps. The armistice was signed three weeks later on 12 September 1944, on terms virtually dictated by the Soviet Union.^{*}[\[58\]](#) Under the terms of the armistice, Romania announced its unconditional surrender^{*}[\[61\]](#) to the USSR and was placed under occupation of the Allied forces with the Soviet Union as their representative, in control of media, communication, post, and civil administration behind the front.^{*}[\[58\]](#)

Tannu Tuva

[Tannu Tuva](#) was a partially recognized state founded from the former Tuvan protectorate of Imperial Russia. It was a client state of the Soviet Union and was annexed into the Soviet Union in 1944.

4.5 Co-belligerent state combatants

4.5.1 Italy

Further information: [Italian Civil War](#), [Italian Co-Belligerent Army](#), and [Italian resistance movement](#)

Italy initially had been a leading member of the Axis



The dead bodies of Benito Mussolini, his mistress Clara Petacci, and several Fascist leaders, hanging for public display after they were executed by Italian partisans in 1945.

powers, however after facing multiple military losses including the loss of all of Italy's colonies to advancing Allied forces, *Duce* Benito Mussolini was deposed and arrested in July 1943 by order of King Victor Emmanuel III of Italy in co-operation with members of the Grand Council of Fascism who viewed Mussolini as having led Italy to ruin by allying with Germany in the war. Victor Emmanuel III dismantled the remaining apparatus of the Fascist regime and appointed Field Marshal Pietro Badoglio as Prime Minister of Italy. On 8 September 1943, Italy signed the Armistice of Cassibile with the Allies, ending Italy's war with the Allies and ending Italy's participation with the Axis powers. Expecting immediate German retaliation, Victor Emmanuel III and the Italian government relocated to southern Italy under Allied control. Germany viewed the Italian government's actions as an act of betrayal, and German forces immediately occupied all Italian territories outside of Allied control,*[62] in some cases even massacring Italian troops.

Italy became a co-belligerent of the Allies, and the Italian Co-Belligerent Army was created to fight against the German occupation of Northern Italy, where German paratroopers rescued Mussolini from arrest and he was placed in charge of a German puppet state known as the Italian Social Republic (RSI). Italy descended into civil war until the end of hostilities after his deposition and arrest, with Fascists loyal to him allying with German forces and helping them against the Italian armistice government and partisans.*[63]

4.6 Associated power

4.6.1 Albania

Albania was recognized as an "Associated Power" at the 1946 Paris conference *[64] and officially signed the treaty ending WWII between the "Allied and As-

sociated Powers" and Italy in Paris, on 10 February 1947.*[65]*[66]

4.7 United Nations

4.7.1 Declaration by United Nations



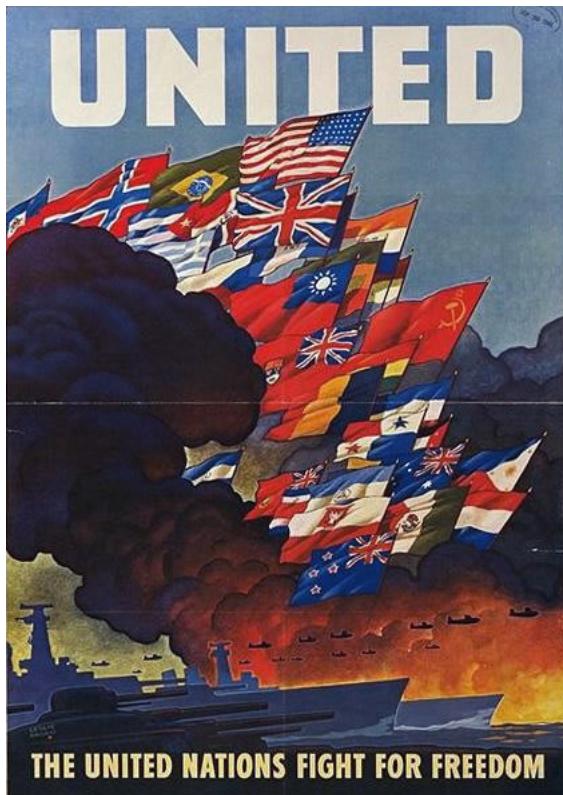
Wartime poster for the United Nations, created in 1941 by the US Office of War Information

The alliance was formalised in the *Declaration by United Nations* on 1 January 1942. There were 26 signatories:

- Australia
- Belgium
- Canada
- China
- Costa Rica
- Cuba
- Czechoslovakia
- Dominican Republic
- El Salvador
- Greece
- Guatemala
- Haiti

-  Honduras
-  India
-  Luxembourg
-  Netherlands
-  New Zealand
-  Nicaragua
-  Norway
-  Panama
-  Poland
-  Soviet Union
-  South Africa
-  United Kingdom
-  United States of America
-  Yugoslavia

4.7.2 Alliance growing



Wartime poster for the United Nations, created in 1943 by the US Office of War Information

The United Nations began growing immediately after their formation. In 1942, Mexico, the Philippines and

Ethiopia adhered to the declaration. The African nation had been restored in its independence by British forces after the Italian defeat on Amba Alagi in 1941, while the Philippines, still dependent on Washington but granted international diplomatic recognition, was allowed to join on 10 June despite their occupation by Japan.

During 1943, the Declaration was signed by Iraq, Iran, Brazil, Bolivia and Colombia. A Tripartite Treaty of Alliance with Britain and USSR formalised Iran's assistance to the Allies.* [67] In Rio de Janeiro, Brazilian dictator Getúlio Vargas was considered near to fascist ideas, but realistically joined the United Nations after their evident successes.

In 1944, Liberia and France signed. The French situation was very confused. Free French forces were recognized only by Britain, while the United States considered Vichy France to be the legal government of the country until Operation Overlord, while also preparing US occupation frances. Winston Churchill urged Roosevelt to restore France to its status of a major Power after the liberation of Paris in August 1944; the Prime Minister feared that after the war, Britain could remain the sole great Power in Europe facing the Communist threat, as it was in 1940 and 1941 against Nazism.

During the early part of 1945, Peru, Chile, Paraguay, Venezuela, Uruguay, Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Syria (these latter two French colonies had been declared independent nations by British occupation troops, despite big protests by Pétain before, and De Gaulle after) and Ecuador became signatories. Ukraine and Belarus, which were not independent nations but parts of the Soviet Union, were accepted as members of the United Nations as way to provide greater influence to Stalin, who had only Yugoslavia as a communist partner in the alliance.

4.7.3 Charter of the United Nations

Main article: [Charter of the United Nations](#)
The Charter of the United Nations was agreed to dur-



The first version of the flag of the United Nations, introduced in April 1945

ing the war at the United Nations Conference on International Organization, held between April and July 1945. The Charter was signed by 50 nations on 26 June (Poland had its place reserved and later became the 51st “original” signatory), and was formally ratified shortly after the war on 24 October 1945. In 1944, the United Nations was formulated and negotiated among the delegations from the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, the United States and China at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference *[68]*[69] where the formation and the permanent seats (for the “Big Five”, China, France, the UK, USA and USSR) of the United Nations Security Council were decided. The Security Council met for the first time in the immediate aftermath of war on 17 January 1946.*[70]

These are the original 51 signatories (UNSC permanent members are asterisked):

4.8 Timeline of nations entering war on the Axis Powers

Main article: Declarations of war during World War II

The following list denotes dates on which nations declared war on Axis powers, or on which an Axis power declared war on them. Nepal was formally independent. Indian Empire had a status less independent than the Dominions.*[71]



A British poster from 1941, promoting the greater alliance against Germany.

4.8.1 1939

- Poland: 1 September 1939*[72]
- France: 3 September 1939*[73] —Philippe Pétain's government formally capitulated on 22 June 1940 and the Vichy regime was later an Axis supporter. The Provisional Government of the French Republic was officially recognized by the Allies as the legitimate government of France on 23 October 1944.*[74] Pétain's demand of surrender in 1940

was also legally nullified, as was the Vichy regime as a whole.*[75]

- United Kingdom: 3 September 1939*[73]
 - India: 3 September 1939*[76]*[77]
- Australia: 3 September 1939*[76]*[78]
- New Zealand: 3 September 1939*[76]*[79]
- Union of South Africa: 6 September 1939*[80]
- Canada: 10 September 1939*[80]
- Nepal: 4 September 1939*[81] sixteen battalions of the Royal Nepalese Army fought Japan on the Burmese front. In addition, many Nepali citizens fought from British Indian army as Gurkha regiment.

4.8.2 1940

- Norway: 8 April 1940*[80]
- Belgium: 10 May 1940
- Luxembourg: 10 May 1940
- Netherlands: 10 May 1940
- Greece: 28 October 1940

4.8.3 1941

- Yugoslavia: 6 April 1941 —Formally member of Axis from 25 March to 6 April 1941.
- Soviet Union: 22 June 1941; Despite membership of the Soviet Union, Ukraine and Belarus were recognized as separate fighting States by the United Kingdom and the United States at the end of the war.
- Vietnam: 7 December 1941. Vietnam
- Mongolia: 8 December 1941. Mongolia declared war on Germany.
- United States of America: 8 December 1941*[82]
 - Commonwealth of the Philippines: 8 December 1941*[83]
- Panama: 7 December 1941
- Costa Rica: 8 December 1941*[80]
- Dominican Republic: 8 December 1941*[80]
- El Salvador: 8 December 1941*[80]

- Haiti: 8 December 1941*[80]
- Honduras: 8 December 1941*[80]
- Nicaragua: 8 December 1941*[80]
- China: 9 December 1941*[80] (At war with the Empire of Japan since 1937)
- Cuba: 9 December 1941*[80]
- Guatemala: 9 December 1941*[80]
- Korea(government in exile): 11 December 1941*[84]
- Czechoslovakia (government-in-exile): 16 December 1941*[80]*[85]

4.8.4 1942

- Mexico: 22 May 1942*[80]
- Brazil: 22 August 1942*[80]
- Ethiopia: 14 December 1942*[80]

4.8.5 1943

- Iraq: 16 January 1943*[80]
- Bolivia: 7 April 1943
- Colombia: 26 July 1943
- Iran: 9 September 1943*[80]

4.8.6 1944

- Liberia: 27 January 1944*[80]
- Peru: 12 February 1944
- Romania: 25 August 1944*[80] —former Axis power.
- Bulgaria: 8 September 1944*[86] —former Axis power.

4.8.7 1945

- Hungary: 20 January 1945*[80] —former Axis power.
- Ecuador: 2 February 1945
- Paraguay: 7 February 1945*[80]
- Uruguay: 15 February 1945

- Venezuela: 15 February 1945
- Turkey: 23 February 1945*[80]
- Egypt: 24 February 1945*[80]
- Syria: 26 February 1945*[80]
- Lebanon: 27 February 1945*[80]
- Saudi Arabia: 1 March 1945*[80]
- Finland: 3 March 1945*[80] —former co-belligerent of Germany in the Continuation War. On 3 March 1945, Finland retroactively declared war on Germany from 15 September 1944.
- Argentina: 27 March 1945 *[87]
- Chile: 11 April 1945 (only declared war on Japan)*[80]

4.9 See also

- Allies of World War I
- Diplomatic history of World War II
- Free World (World War II)
- Military production during World War II
- Neutral powers during World War II
- Participants in World War II

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4.12 External links

- The Atlantic Conference: Resolution of 24 September 1941

Chapter 5

Nazi Germany

“Dritte Reich” redirects here. For the 1923 book, see [Das Dritte Reich](#).

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Nazi Germany is the common English name for the period in German history from 1933 to 1945, when the country was governed by a dictatorship under the control of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party (NSDAP). Under Hitler's rule, Germany was transformed into a fascist state in which the Nazi Party took totalitarian control over nearly all aspects of life. The official name of the state was *Deutsches Reich* from 1933 to 1943 and *Großdeutsches Reich* (“Greater German Reich”) from 1943 to 1945. The period is also known under the names the **Third Reich** (German: *Drittes Reich*) and the **National Socialist Period** (German: *Zeit des Nationalsozialismus*, abbreviated as *NS-Zeit*). The Nazi regime came to an end after the Allied Forces defeated Germany in May 1945, ending World War II in Europe.

Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany by the President of the Weimar Republic Paul von Hindenburg on 30 January 1933. The Nazi Party then began to eliminate all political opposition and consolidate its power. Hindenburg died on 2 August 1934, and Hitler became dictator of Germany by merging the powers and offices of the Chancellery and Presidency. A national referendum held 19 August 1934 confirmed Hitler as sole Führer (leader) of Germany. All power was centralised in Hitler's person, and his word became above all laws. The government was not a coordinated, co-operating body, but a collection of factions struggling for power and Hitler's favour. In the midst of the Great Depression, the Nazis restored economic stability and ended mass unemployment using heavy military spending and a mixed economy. Extensive public works were undertaken, including the construction of *Autobahnen* (motorways). The return to economic stability boosted the regime's popularity.

Racism, especially antisemitism, was a central feature of the regime. The Germanic peoples (the Nordic race)

were considered by the Nazis to be the purest branch of the Aryan race, and were therefore viewed as the master race. Millions of Jews and other peoples deemed undesirable by the state were murdered in the Holocaust. Opposition to Hitler's rule was ruthlessly suppressed. Members of the liberal, socialist, and communist opposition were killed, imprisoned, or exiled. The Christian churches were also oppressed, with many leaders imprisoned. Education focused on racial biology, population policy, and fitness for military service. Career and educational opportunities for women were curtailed. Recreation and tourism were organised via the Strength Through Joy program, and the 1936 Summer Olympics showcased the Third Reich on the international stage. Propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels made effective use of film, mass rallies, and Hitler's hypnotising oratory to control public opinion. The government controlled artistic expression, promoting specific art forms and banning or discouraging others.

Beginning in the late 1930s, Nazi Germany made increasingly aggressive territorial demands, threatening war if they were not met. It seized Austria and Czechoslovakia in 1938 and 1939. Hitler made a pact with Joseph Stalin and invaded Poland in September 1939, launching World War II in Europe. In alliance with Italy and smaller Axis powers, Germany conquered most of Europe by 1940 and threatened Great Britain. *Reichskommissariats* took control of conquered areas, and a German administration was established in what was left of Poland. Jews and others deemed undesirable were imprisoned, murdered in Nazi concentration camps and extermination camps, or shot.

Following the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, the tide gradually turned against the Nazis, who suffered major military defeats in 1943. Large-scale aerial bombing of Germany escalated in 1944, and the Axis powers were pushed back in Eastern and Southern Europe. Following the Allied invasion of France, Germany was conquered by the Soviet Union from the east and the other Allied powers from the west and capitulated within a year. Hitler's refusal to admit defeat led to massive destruction of German infrastructure and additional war-related deaths in the closing months of the war. The victorious Allies initiated a policy of denazification and put many of the surviving Nazi leadership on trial for war

crimes at the Nuremberg trials.

5.1 Name

The official name of the state was *Deutsches Reich* from 1933 to 1943, and *Großdeutsches Reich* from 1943 to 1945.

Common English terms are “Nazi Germany” and “Third Reich”. The latter, adopted by Nazi propaganda, was first used in a 1923 book by Arthur Moeller van den Bruck. The book counted the Holy Roman Empire (962–1806) as the first Reich and the German Empire (1871–1918) as the second.*[2] The Nazis used it to legitimize their regime as a successor state. After they seized power, Nazi propaganda retroactively referred to the Weimar Republic as the *Zwischenreich* (“Interim Reich”).

5.2 Background

Further information: Adolf Hitler's rise to power

The German economy suffered severe setbacks after the end of World War I, partly because of reparations payments required under the 1919 Treaty of Versailles. The government printed money to make the payments and to repay the country's war debt; the resulting hyperinflation led to inflated prices for consumer goods, economic chaos, and food riots.*[3] When the government failed to make the reparations payments in January 1923, French troops occupied German industrial areas along the Ruhr. Widespread civil unrest followed.*[4]

The National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP;*[lower-alpha 4] Nazi Party) was the renamed successor of the German Workers' Party founded in 1919, one of several far-right political parties active in Germany at the time.*[5] The party platform included removal of the Weimar Republic, rejection of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, radical antisemitism, and anti-Bolshevism.*[6] They promised a strong central government, increased *Lebensraum* (living space) for Germanic peoples, formation of a national community based on race, and racial cleansing via the active suppression of Jews, who would be stripped of their citizenship and civil rights.*[7] The Nazis proposed national and cultural renewal based upon the *Völkisch* movement.*[8]

When the stock market in the United States crashed on 24 October 1929, the effect in Germany was dire. Millions were thrown out of work, and several major banks collapsed. Hitler and the NSDAP prepared to take advantage of the emergency to gain support for their party. They promised to strengthen the economy and provide jobs.*[9] Many voters decided the NSDAP was capable of restoring order, quelling civil unrest, and improving Germany's international reputation. After the federal

election of 1932, the Nazis were the largest party in the Reichstag, holding 230 seats with 37.4 percent of the popular vote.*[10]

5.3 History

See also: History of Germany

5.3.1 Nazi seizure of power

Although the Nazis won the greatest share of the popular vote in the two Reichstag general elections of 1932, they did not have a majority, so Hitler led a short-lived coalition government formed by the NSDAP and the German National People's Party.*[11] Under pressure from politicians, industrialists, and the business community, President Paul von Hindenburg appointed Hitler as Chancellor of Germany on 30 January 1933. This event is known as the *Machtergreifung* (seizure of power).*[12] In the following months, the NSDAP used a process termed *Gleichschaltung* (co-ordination) to rapidly bring all aspects of life under control of the party.*[13] All civilian organisations, including agricultural groups, volunteer organisations, and sports clubs, had their leadership replaced with Nazi sympathisers or party members. By June 1933, virtually the only organisations not in the control of the NSDAP were the army and the churches.*[14]

On the night of 27 February 1933, the Reichstag building was set afire; Marinus van der Lubbe, a Dutch communist, was found guilty of starting the blaze. Hitler proclaimed that the arson marked the start of a communist uprising. Violent suppression of communists by the *Sturmabteilung* (SA) was undertaken all over the country, and four thousand members of the Communist Party of Germany were arrested. The Reichstag Fire Decree, imposed on 28 February 1933, rescinded most German civil liberties, including rights of assembly and freedom of the press. The decree also allowed the police to detain people indefinitely without charges or a court order. The legislation was accompanied by a propaganda blitz that led to public support for the measure.*[15]

In March 1933, the Enabling Act, an amendment to the Weimar Constitution, passed in the Reichstag by a vote of 444 to 94.*[16] This amendment allowed Hitler and his cabinet to pass laws—even laws that violated the constitution—without the consent of the president or the Reichstag.*[17] As the bill required a two-thirds majority to pass, the Nazis used the provisions of the Reichstag Fire Decree to keep several Social Democratic deputies from attending; the Communists had already been banned.*[18]*[19] On 10 May the government seized the assets of the Social Democrats; they were banned in June.*[20] The remaining political parties were dissolved, and on 14 July 1933, Germany became a



Hitler became Germany's head of state, with the title of Führer und Reichskanzler, in 1934.

de facto one-party state when the founding of new parties was made illegal.*[21] Further elections in November 1933, 1936, and 1938 were entirely Nazi-controlled and saw only the Nazis and a small number of independents elected.*[22] The regional state parliaments and the *Reichsrat* (federal upper house) were abolished in January 1934.*[23]

The Nazi regime abolished the symbols of the Weimar Republic, including the black, red, and gold tricolour flag, and adopted reworked imperial symbolism. The previous imperial black, white, and red tricolour was restored as one of Germany's two official flags; the second was the swastika flag of the NSDAP, which became the sole national flag in 1935. The NSDAP anthem "Horst-Wessel-Lied" ("Horst Wessel Song") became a second national anthem.*[24]

In this period, Germany was still in a dire economic situation; millions were unemployed and the balance of trade deficit was daunting.*[25] Hitler knew that reviving the economy was vital. In 1934, using deficit spending, public works projects were undertaken. A total of 1.7 million Germans were put to work on the projects in 1934 alone.*[25] Average wages both per hour and per week began to rise.*[26]

The demands of the SA for more political and military power caused anxiety among military, industrial, and political leaders. In response, Hitler purged the entire

SA leadership in the Night of the Long Knives, which took place from 30 June to 2 July 1934.*[27] Hitler targeted Ernst Röhm and other SA leaders who, along with a number of Hitler's political adversaries (such as Gregor Strasser and former chancellor Kurt von Schleicher), were rounded up, arrested, and shot.*[28]

On 2 August 1934, President von Hindenburg died. The previous day, the cabinet had enacted the "Law Concerning the Highest State Office of the Reich", which stated that upon Hindenburg's death, the office of president would be abolished and its powers merged with those of the chancellor.*[29] Hitler thus became head of state as well as head of government. He was formally named as *Führer und Reichskanzler* (leader and chancellor). Germany was now a totalitarian state with Hitler at its head.*[30] As head of state, Hitler became Supreme Commander of the armed forces. The new law altered the traditional loyalty oath of servicemen so that they affirmed loyalty to Hitler personally rather than the office of supreme commander or the state.*[31] On 19 August, the merger of the presidency with the chancellorship was approved by 90 percent of the electorate in a plebiscite.*[32]



Joseph Goebbels, Reich Minister of Propaganda

Most Germans were relieved that the conflicts and street fighting of the Weimar era had ended. They were deluged with propaganda orchestrated by Joseph Goebbels, who promised peace and plenty for all in a united, Marxist-free country without the constraints of the Versailles Treaty.*[33] The first Nazi concentration camp, initially for political prisoners, was opened at Dachau in

1933.* [34] Hundreds of camps of varying size and function were created by the end of the war.* [35] Upon seizing power, the Nazis took repressive measures against their political opposition and rapidly began the comprehensive marginalisation of persons they considered socially undesirable. Under the guise of combating the Communist threat, the National Socialists secured immense power. Above all, their campaign against Jews living in Germany gained momentum.

Beginning in April 1933, scores of measures defining the status of Jews and their rights were instituted at the regional and national level.* [36] Initiatives and legal mandates against the Jews reached their culmination with the establishment of the **Nuremberg Laws** of 1935, stripping them of their basic rights.* [37] The Nazis would take from the Jews their wealth, their right to intermarry with non-Jews, and their right to occupy many fields of labour (such as practising law, medicine, or working as educators). They eventually declared them undesirable to remain among German citizens and society, which over time dehumanised the Jews; arguably, these actions desensitised Germans to the extent that it resulted in the Holocaust. Ethnic Germans who refused to ostracise Jews or who showed any signs of resistance to Nazi propaganda were placed under surveillance by the Gestapo, had their rights removed, or were sent to concentration camps.* [38] Everyone and everything was monitored in Nazi Germany. Inaugurating and legitimising power for the Nazis was thus accomplished by their initial revolutionary activities, then through the improvisation and manipulation of the legal mechanisms available, through the use of police powers by the Nazi Party (which allowed them to include and exclude from society whomever they chose), and finally by the expansion of authority for all state and federal institutions.* [39]

5.3.2 Militaristic foreign policy

See also: Remilitarization of the Rhineland and German involvement in the Spanish Civil War

As early as February 1933, Hitler announced that rearmament must be undertaken, albeit clandestinely at first, as to do so was in violation of the Versailles Treaty. A year later he told his military leaders that 1942 was the target date for going to war in the east.* [40] He pulled Germany out of the **League of Nations** in 1933, claiming its disarmament clauses were unfair, as they applied only to Germany.* [41] The Saarland, which had been placed under League of Nations supervision for 15 years at the end of World War I, voted in January 1935 to become part of Germany.* [42] In March 1935 Hitler announced that the **Reichswehr** would be increased to 550,000 men and that he was creating an air force.* [43] Britain agreed that the Germans would be allowed to build a naval fleet with the signing of the **Anglo-German Naval Agreement** on 18 June 1935.* [44]

When the Italian invasion of Ethiopia led to only mild protests by the British and French governments, on 7 March 1936 Hitler ordered the **Wehrmacht Heer** ground forces to march 3,000 troops into the demilitarised zone in the **Rhineland** in violation of the Versailles Treaty; an additional 30,000 troops were on standby. As the territory was part of Germany, the British and French governments did not feel that attempting to enforce the treaty was worth the risk of war.* [45] In the one-party election held on 29 March, the NSDAP received 98.9 percent support.* [45] In 1936 Hitler signed an **Anti-Comintern Pact** with Japan and a non-aggression agreement with the Fascist Italy of Benito Mussolini, who was soon referring to a “Rome-Berlin Axis”.* [46]

Hitler sent air and armoured units to assist General Francisco Franco and his Nationalist forces in the **Spanish Civil War**, which broke out in July 1936. The Soviet Union sent a smaller force to assist the Republican government. Franco's Nationalists were victorious in 1939 and became an informal ally of Nazi Germany.* [47]

5.3.3 Austria and Czechoslovakia

Main articles: **Anschluss** and **German occupation of Czechoslovakia**

Further information: **Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia**

In February 1938, Hitler emphasised to Austrian Chan-



Ethnic Germans in Sazava, Czechoslovakia, greet German soldiers with the Nazi salute, 1938

cellor Kurt Schuschnigg the need for Germany to secure its frontiers. Schuschnigg scheduled a plebiscite regarding Austrian independence for 13 March, but Hitler demanded that it be cancelled. On 11 March, Hitler sent an ultimatum to Schuschnigg demanding that he hand over all power to the Austrian NSDAP or face an invasion. The **Wehrmacht** entered Austria the next day, to be greeted with enthusiasm by the populace.* [48]

The **Republic of Czechoslovakia** was home to a substantial minority of Germans, who lived mostly in the Sudetenland. Under pressure from separatist groups within the **Sudeten German Party**, the Czechoslovak

government offered economic concessions to the region.* [49] Hitler decided to incorporate not just the Sudetenland but the whole of Czechoslovakia into the Reich.* [50] The Nazis undertook a propaganda campaign to try to drum up support for an invasion.* [51] Top leaders of the armed forces were not in favour of the plan, as Germany was not yet ready for war.* [52] The crisis led to war preparations by the British, the Czechoslovaks, and France (Czechoslovakia's ally). Attempting to avoid war, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain arranged a series of meetings, the result of which was the *Munich Agreement*, signed on 29 September 1938. The Czechoslovak government was forced to accept the Sudetenland's annexation into Germany. Chamberlain was greeted with cheers when he landed in London bringing, he said, "peace for our time."* [53] The agreement lasted six months before Hitler seized the rest of Czech territory in March 1939.* [54] A puppet state was created in Slovakia.* [55]

Austrian and Czech foreign exchange reserves were soon seized by the Nazis, as were stockpiles of raw materials such as metals and completed goods such as weaponry and aircraft, which were shipped back to Germany. The *Reichswerke Hermann Göring* industrial conglomerate took control of steel and coal production facilities in both countries.* [56]

5.3.4 Poland

In March 1939, Hitler demanded the return of the Free City of Danzig and the Polish Corridor, a strip of land that separated East Prussia from the rest of Germany. The British announced they would come to the aid of Poland if it was attacked. Hitler, believing the British would not actually take action, ordered an invasion plan should be readied for a target date of September 1939.* [57] On 23 May he described to his generals his overall plan of not only seizing the Polish Corridor but greatly expanding German territory eastward at the expense of Poland. He expected this time they would be met by force.* [58]

The Germans reaffirmed their alliance with Italy and signed non-aggression pacts with Denmark, Estonia, and Latvia. Trade links were formalised with Romania, Norway, and Sweden.* [59] Hitler's foreign minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, arranged in negotiations with the Soviet Union a non-aggression pact, the *Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact*, which was signed in August 1939.* [60] The treaty also contained secret protocols dividing Poland and the Baltic states into German and Soviet spheres of influence.* [61]* [62]

5.3.5 World War II

Foreign policy

Further information: [Diplomatic history of World War II § Germany](#)

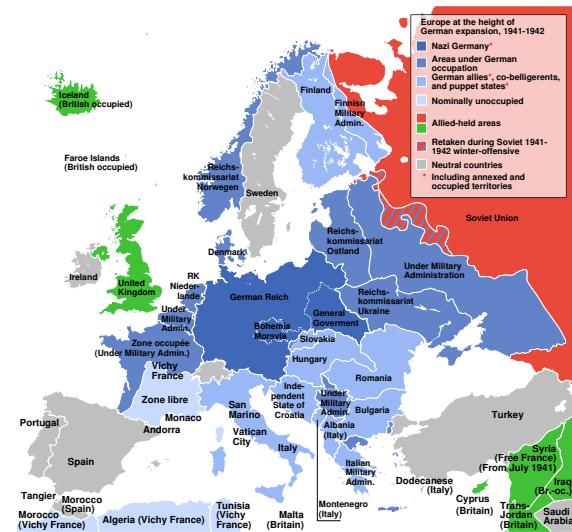
Germany's foreign policy during the war involved the creation of allied governments under direct or indirect control from Berlin. A main goal was obtaining soldiers from the senior allies, such as Italy and Hungary, and millions of workers and ample food supplies from subservient allies such as Vichy France.* [63] By the fall of 1942, there were 24 divisions from Romania on the Eastern Front, 10 from Italy, and 10 from Hungary.* [64] When a country was no longer dependable, Germany assumed full control, as it did with France in 1942, Italy in 1943, and Hungary in 1944. Although Japan was an official powerful ally, the relationship was distant and there was little co-ordination or co-operation. For example, Germany refused to share their formula for synthetic oil from coal until late in the war.* [65]

Outbreak of war



Animated map showing German and Axis allies' conquests in Europe throughout World War II. (Click through to the full-size image to view the animated version.)

Germany invaded Poland on 1 September 1939. Britain and France declared war on Germany two days later. World War II was under way.* [66] Poland fell quickly, as the Soviet Union attacked from the east on 17 September.* [67] Reinhard Heydrich, then head of the Gestapo, ordered on 21 September that Jews should be rounded up and concentrated into cities with good rail links. Initially the intention was to deport the Jews to points further east, or possibly to Madagascar.* [68] Using lists prepared ahead of time, some 65,000 Polish intelligentsia, noblemen, clergy, and teachers were killed by the end



Germany and her allies, at the height of Axis success.

of 1939 in an attempt to destroy Poland's identity as a nation.* [69]* [70] The Soviet forces continued to attack, advancing into Finland in the Winter War, and German forces were involved in action at sea. But little other activity occurred until May, so the period became known as the "Phoney War".* [71]

From the start of the war, a British blockade on shipments to Germany affected the Reich economy. The Germans were particularly dependent on foreign supplies of oil, coal, and grain.* [72] To safeguard Swedish iron ore shipments to Germany, Hitler ordered an attack on Norway, which took place on 9 April 1940. Much of the country was occupied by German troops by the end of April. Also on 9 April, the Germans invaded and occupied Denmark.* [73]* [74]

Conquest of Europe

Against the judgement of many of his senior military officers, Hitler ordered an attack on France and the Low Countries, which began in May 1940.* [75] They quickly conquered Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Belgium, and France surrendered on 22 June.* [76] The unexpectedly swift defeat of France resulted in an upswing in Hitler's popularity and a strong upsurge in war fever.* [77]

In spite of the provisions of the Hague Convention, industrial firms in the Netherlands, France, and Belgium were put to work producing war materiel for the occupying German military. Officials viewed this option as being preferable to their citizens being deported to the Reich as forced labour.* [78]

The Nazis seized from the French thousands of locomotives and rolling stock, stockpiles of weapons, and raw materials such as copper, tin, oil, and nickel.* [79] Financial demands were levied on the governments of the occupied countries as well; payments for occupation costs

were received from France, Belgium, and Norway.* [80] Barriers to trade led to hoarding, black markets, and uncertainty about the future.* [81] Food supplies were precarious; production dropped in most areas of Europe, but not as much as during World War I.* [82] Greece experienced famine in the first year of occupation and the Netherlands in the last year of the war.* [82]

Hitler made peace overtures to the new British leader, Winston Churchill, and upon their rejection he ordered a series of aerial attacks on Royal Air Force airbases and radar stations. However, the German Luftwaffe failed to defeat the Royal Air Force in what became known as the Battle of Britain.* [83] By the end of October, Hitler realised the necessary air superiority for his planned invasion of Britain could not be achieved, and he ordered nightly air raids on British cities, including London, Plymouth, and Coventry.* [84]

In February 1941, the German *Afrika Korps* arrived in Libya to aid the Italians in the North African Campaign and attempt to contain Commonwealth forces stationed in Egypt.* [85] On 6 April, Germany launched the invasion of Yugoslavia and the battle of Greece.* [86] German efforts to secure oil included negotiating a supply from their new ally, Romania, who signed the Tripartite Pact in November 1940.* [87]* [88]



German soldiers march near the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, 14 June 1940

On 22 June 1941, contravening the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, 5.5 million Axis troops attacked the Soviet Union. In addition to Hitler's stated purpose of acquiring *Lebensraum*, this large-scale offensive (codenamed *Operation Barbarossa*) was intended to destroy the Soviet Union and seize its natural resources for subsequent aggression against the Western powers.* [89] The reaction among Germans was one of surprise and trepidation. Many were concerned about how much longer the war would drag on or suspected that Germany could not win a war fought on two fronts.* [90]

The invasion conquered a huge area, including the Baltic republics, Belarus, and West Ukraine. After the successful Battle of Smolensk, Hitler ordered Army Group Centre to halt its advance to Moscow and temporarily divert its Panzer groups to aid in the encirclement of Leningrad



German Panzer IV in Thessaloniki. The banner on the building in the background reads “Bolshevism is the greatest enemy of our civilization”.

and Kiev.*[91] This pause provided the Red Army with an opportunity to mobilise fresh reserves. The Moscow offensive, which resumed in October 1941, ended disastrously in December.*[91] On 7 December 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Four days later, Germany declared war on the United States.*[92]

Food was in short supply in the conquered areas of the Soviet Union and Poland, with rations inadequate to meet nutritional needs. The retreating armies had burned the crops, and much of the remainder was sent back to the Reich.*[93] In Germany itself, food rations had to be cut in 1942. In his role as Plenipotentiary of the Four Year Plan, Hermann Göring demanded increased shipments of grain from France and fish from Norway. The 1942 harvest was a good one, and food supplies remained adequate in Western Europe.*[94]

Reichsleiter Rosenberg Taskforce was an organisation set up to loot artwork and cultural material from Jewish collections, libraries, and museums throughout Europe. Some 26,000 railroad cars full of art treasures, furniture, and other looted items were sent back to Germany from France alone.*[95] In addition, soldiers looted or purchased goods such as produce and clothing—items which were becoming harder to obtain in Germany—for shipment back home.*[96]

Turning point and collapse

Germany, and Europe as a whole, was almost totally dependent on foreign oil imports.*[97] In an attempt to resolve the persistent shortage, Germany launched *Fall Blau* (Case Blue), an offensive against the Caucasian oilfields, in June 1942.*[98] The Red Army launched a counter-offensive on 19 November and encircled the Axis forces, who were trapped in Stalingrad on 23 November.*[99] Göring assured Hitler that the 6th Army could be supplied by air, but this turned out to be infeasible.*[100] Hitler's refusal to allow a retreat led to the deaths of 200,000 German and Romanian soldiers; of the 91,000 men who surrendered in the city on 31 January 1943, only 6,000 sur-



Death and destruction during the Battle of Stalingrad. October 1942.

vivors returned to Germany after the war.*[101] Soviet forces continued to push the invaders westward after the failed German offensive at the Battle of Kursk, and by the end of 1943, the Germans had lost most of their territorial gains in the east.*[102]

In Egypt, Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's *Afrika Korps* were defeated by British forces under Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery in October 1942.*[103] Allied forces landed in Sicily in July 1943, and in Italy in September.*[104] Meanwhile, American and British bomber fleets, based in Britain, began operations against Germany. In an effort to destroy German morale, many sorties were intentionally given civilian targets.*[105] Soon German aircraft production could not keep pace with losses, and without air cover, the Allied bombing campaign became even more devastating. By targeting oil refineries and factories, they crippled the German war effort by late 1944.*[106]

On 6 June 1944, American, British, and Canadian forces established a western front with the D-Day landings in Normandy.*[107] On 20 July 1944, Hitler narrowly survived a bomb attack.*[108] He ordered savage reprisals, resulting in 7,000 arrests and the execution of more than 4,900 people.*[109] The failed Ardennes Offensive (16 December 1944 – 25 January 1945) was the last major German campaign of the war. Soviet forces entered Germany on 27 January.*[110] Hitler's refusal to admit de-

feat and his repeated insistence that the war be fought to the last man led to unnecessary death and destruction in the closing months of the war.*[111] Through his Justice Minister, Otto Georg Thierack, he ordered that anyone who was not prepared to fight should be summarily court-martialed. Thousands of people were put to death.*[112] In many areas, people looked for ways to surrender to the approaching Allies, in spite of exhortations of local leaders to continue the struggle. Hitler also ordered the intentional destruction of transport, bridges, industries, and other infrastructure—a scorched earth decree—but Armaments Minister Albert Speer was able to keep this order from being fully carried out.*[111]



US Air Force film of the destruction in central Berlin in July 1945

During the **Battle of Berlin** (16 April 1945 – 2 May 1945), Hitler and his staff lived in the underground *Führerbunker*, while the Red Army approached.*[113] On 30 April, when Soviet troops were one or two blocks away from the Reich Chancellery, Hitler and Eva Braun committed suicide in the *Führerbunker*.*[114] On 2 May General Helmuth Weidling unconditionally surrendered Berlin to Soviet General Vasily Chuikov.*[115] Hitler was succeeded by Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz as Reich President and Goebbels as Reich Chancellor.*[116] Goebbels and his wife Magda committed suicide the next day, after murdering their six children.*[117] On 4–8 May 1945 most of the remaining German armed forces surrendered unconditionally. The **German Instrument of Surrender** was signed 7 May, marking the end of World War II in Europe.*[118]

Main article: **Mass suicides in 1945 Nazi Germany**

Suicide rates in Germany increased as the war drew to a close, particularly in areas where the Red Army was advancing. More than a thousand people (out of a population of around 16,000) committed suicide in Demmin on and around 1 May 1945 as the 65th Army of 2nd Belarusian Front first broke into a distillery and then rampaged through the town, committing mass rapes, arbitrarily executing civilians, and setting fire to buildings.*[119] High numbers of suicides took place in many other loca-

tions, including Neubrandenburg (600 dead),*[119] Stolp in Pommern (1,000 dead),*[119] and Berlin, where at least 7,057 people committed suicide in 1945.*[120]

German casualties

Further information: **World War II casualties** and **German casualties in World War II**

Estimates of the total German war dead range from 5.5



German refugees in Bedburg, near Kleve. 19 February 1945

to 6.9 million persons.*[121] A study by German historian Rüdiger Overmans puts the number of German military dead and missing at 5.3 million, including 900,000 men conscripted from outside of Germany's 1937 borders, in Austria, and in east-central Europe.*[122] Overy estimated in 2014 that in all about 353,000 civilians were killed by British and American bombing of German cities.*[123] An additional 20,000 died in the land campaign.*[124]*[125] Some 22,000 citizens died during the Battle of Berlin.*[126] Other civilian deaths include 300,000 Germans (including Jews) who were victims of Nazi political, racial, and religious persecution,*[127] and 200,000 who were murdered in the Nazi euthanasia program.*[128] Political courts called *Sondergerichte* sentenced some 12,000 members of the German resistance to death, and civil courts sentenced an additional 40,000 Germans.*[129] Mass rapes of German women also took place.*[130]

At the end of the war, Europe had more than 40 million refugees,*[131] its economy had collapsed, and 70 percent of its industrial infrastructure was destroyed.*[132] Between twelve and fourteen million ethnic Germans fled or were expelled from east-central Europe to Germany.*[133] During the Cold War, the West German government estimated a death toll of 2.2 million civilians due to the flight and expulsion of Germans and through forced labour in the Soviet Union.*[134] This figure re-

mained unchallenged until the 1990s, when some historians put the death toll at 500,000–600,000 confirmed deaths.*[135]*[136]*[137] In 2006 the German government reaffirmed its position that 2.0–2.5 million deaths occurred.*[lower-alpha 5]

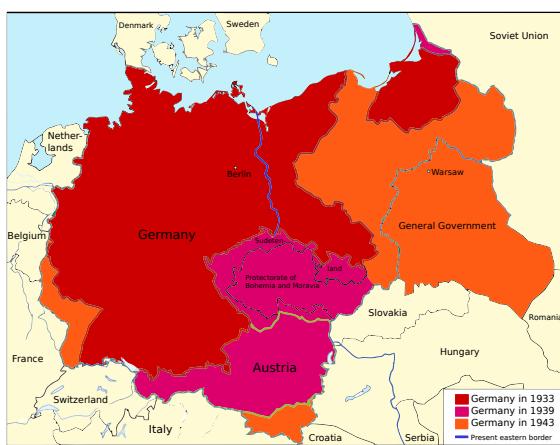


5.4 Geography

5.4.1 Territorial changes

Main article: Territorial evolution of Germany

As a result of their defeat in World War I and the result-



Territorial expansion of Germany from 1933 to 1943. Red: 1933; pink: 1939; orange: 1943

ing Treaty of Versailles, Germany lost Alsace-Lorraine, Northern Schleswig, and Memel. The Saarland temporarily became a protectorate of France, under the condition that its residents would later decide by referendum which country to join. Poland became a separate nation and was given access to the sea by the creation of the Polish Corridor, which separated Prussia from the rest of Germany. Danzig was made a free city.*[138]

Germany regained control of the Saarland via a referendum held in 1935 and annexed Austria in the Anschluss of 1938.*[139] The Munich Agreement of 1938 gave Germany control of the Sudetenland, and they seized the remainder of Czechoslovakia six months later.*[53] Under threat of invasion by sea, Lithuania surrendered the Memel district in March 1939.*[140]

Between 1939 and 1941, German forces invaded Poland, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Belgium, and the Soviet Union.*[76] Trieste, South Tyrol, and Istria were ceded to Germany by Mussolini in 1943.*[141] Two puppet districts were set up in the area, the Operational Zone of the Adriatic Littoral and the Operational Zone of the Alpine Foothills.*[142]

Under the cover of anti-partisan operations, the Germans murdered civilians in 5,295 different localities in occupied Soviet Belarus.[143]*

5.4.2 Occupied territories

Some of the conquered territories were immediately incorporated into Germany as part of Hitler's long-term goal of creating a Greater Germanic Reich. Several areas, such as Alsace-Lorraine, were placed under the authority of an adjacent *Gau* (regional district). Beyond the territories incorporated into Germany were the *Reichskommissariate* (Reich Commissariats), quasi-colonial regimes established in a number of occupied countries. Areas placed under German administration included the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, *Reichskommissariat Ostland* (encompassing the Baltic states and Belarus), and *Reichskommissariat Ukraine*. Conquered areas of Belgium and France were placed under control of the Military Administration in Belgium and Northern France.*[144] Belgian Eupen-Malmedy, which had been part of German until 1919, was annexed directly. Part of Poland was immediately incorporated into the Reich, and the General Government was established in occupied central Poland.*[145] Hitler intended to eventually incorporate many of these areas into the Reich.*[146]

The governments of Denmark, Norway (*Reichskommissariat Norwegen*), and the Netherlands (*Reichskommissariat Niederlande*) were placed under civilian administrations staffed largely by natives.*[144]*[lower-alpha 6]

5.4.3 Post-war changes

With the issuance of the Berlin Declaration on 5 June 1945 and later creation of the Allied Control Council, the four Allied powers temporarily assumed governance of Germany.*[147] At the Potsdam Conference in August 1945, the Allies arranged for the Allied occupation and denazification of the country. Germany was split into four zones, each occupied by one of the Allied powers, who drew reparations from their zone. Since most of the industrial areas were in the western zones, the Soviet

Union was transferred additional reparations.*[148] The Allied Control Council disestablished Prussia on 20 May 1947.*[149] Aid to Germany began arriving from the United States under the **Marshall Plan** in 1948.*[150] The occupation lasted until 1949, when the countries of **East Germany** and **West Germany** were created. Germany finalised her border with Poland by signing the **Treaty of Warsaw (1970)**.*[151] Germany remained divided until 1990, when the Allies renounced all claims to German territory with the **Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany**, under which Germany also renounced claims to territories lost during World War II.*[152]

5.5 Politics



Heinrich Himmler, Hitler, and Viktor Lutze perform the Nazi salute at the Nuremberg Rally, September 1934

5.5.1 Ideology

Further information: **Nazism**

The NSDAP was a far-right political party which came into its own during the social and financial upheavals that occurred with the onset of the Great Depression in 1929.*[153] While in prison after the failed **Beer Hall Putsch** of 1923, Hitler wrote ***Mein Kampf***, which laid out his plan for transforming German society into one

based on race.*[154] The ideology of Nazism brought together elements of antisemitism, racial hygiene, and eugenics, and combined them with pan-Germanism and territorial expansionism with the goal of obtaining more **Lebensraum** for the Germanic people.*[155] The regime attempted to obtain this new territory by attacking Poland and the Soviet Union, intending to deport or kill the Jews and **Slavs** living there, who were viewed as being inferior to the Aryan master race and part of a **Jewish Bolshevik conspiracy**.*[156]*[157] The Nazi regime believed that only Germany could defeat the forces of Bolshevism and save humanity from world domination by International Jewry.*[158] Others deemed life unworthy of life by the Nazis included the mentally and physically disabled, Romani people, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, and social misfits.*[159]*[160]

Influenced by the **Völkisch** movement, the regime was against cultural modernism and supported the development of an extensive military at the expense of intellectualism.*[8]*[161] Creativity and art were stifled, except where they could serve as propaganda media.*[162] The party used symbols such as the **Blood Flag** and rituals such as the **Nazi Party rallies** to foster unity and bolster the regime's popularity.*[163]

5.5.2 Government

See also: **Government of Nazi Germany**

A law promulgated 30 January 1934 abolished the existing **Länder** (constituent states) of Germany and replaced them with new administrative divisions of Nazi Germany, the **Gaue**, headed by NSDAP leaders (**Gauleiters**), who effectively became the governor of their region.*[164] The change was never fully implemented, as the **Länder** were still used as administrative divisions for some government departments such as education. This led to a bureaucratic tangle of overlapping jurisdictions and responsibilities typical of the administrative style of the Nazi regime.*[165]

Jewish civil servants lost their jobs in 1933, except for those who had seen military service in World War I. Members of the NSDAP or party supporters were appointed in their place.*[166] As part of the process of **Gleichschaltung**, the Reich Local Government Law of 1935 abolished local elections. From that point forward, mayors were appointed by the Ministry of the Interior.*[167]

Hitler ruled Germany autocratically by asserting the **Führerprinzip** (leader principle), which called for absolute obedience of all subordinates. He viewed the government structure as a pyramid, with himself—the infallible leader—at the apex. Rank in the party was not determined by elections; positions were filled through appointment by those of higher rank.*[168] The party used propaganda to develop a cult of personality around

Hitler.*[169] Historians such as Kershaw emphasise the psychological impact of Hitler's skill as an orator.*[170] Kressel writes, "Overwhelmingly ... Germans speak with mystification of Hitler's 'hypnotic' appeal".*[171] Roger Gill states, "His moving speeches captured the minds and hearts of a vast number of the German people: he virtually hypnotized his audiences." *[172]

Top officials reported to Hitler and followed his policies, but they had considerable autonomy.*[173] Officials were expected to "work towards the Führer" – to take the initiative in promoting policies and actions in line with his wishes and the goals of the NSDAP, without Hitler having to be involved in the day-to-day running of the country.*[174] The government was not a coordinated, co-operating body, but rather a disorganised collection of factions led by members of the party elite who struggled to amass power and gain the Führer's favour.*[175] Hitler's leadership style was to give contradictory orders to his subordinates and to place them in positions where their duties and responsibilities overlapped.*[176] In this way he fostered distrust, competition, and infighting among his subordinates to consolidate and maximise his own power.*[177]

5.5.3 Law

Further information: [Law of Germany](#)

On 20 August 1934, civil servants were required to swear



Chart showing the pseudo-scientific racial divisions used in the racial policies of Nazi Germany

an oath of unconditional obedience to Hitler; a similar oath had been required of members of the military several weeks prior. This law became the basis of the *Führerprinzip*, the concept that Hitler's word overrode all existing laws.*[178] Any acts that were sanctioned by Hitler—even murder—thus became legal.*[179] All legislation proposed by cabinet ministers had to be approved by the office of **Deputy Führer Rudolf Hess**, who also had a veto over top civil service appointments.*[180]

Most of the judicial system and legal codes of the Weimar Republic remained in use during and after the Nazi era

to deal with non-political crimes.*[181] The courts issued and carried out far more death sentences than before the Nazis took power.*[181] People who were convicted of three or more offences—even petty ones—could be deemed habitual offenders and jailed indefinitely.*[182] People such as prostitutes and pickpockets were judged to be inherently criminal and a threat to the racial community. Thousands were arrested and confined indefinitely without trial.*[183]

Although the regular courts handled political cases and even issued death sentences for these cases, a new type of court, the *Volksgerichtshof* (People's Court), was established in 1934 to deal with politically important matters.*[184] This court handed out over 5,000 death sentences until its dissolution in 1945.*[185] The death penalty could be issued for offences such as being a communist, printing seditious leaflets, or even making jokes about Hitler or other top party officials.*[186] Nazi Germany employed three types of capital punishment; hanging, decapitation, and death by shooting.*[187] The Gestapo was in charge of investigative policing to enforce National Socialist ideology. They located and confined political offenders, Jews, and others deemed undesirable.*[188] Political offenders who were released from prison were often immediately re-arrested by the Gestapo and confined in a concentration camp.*[189]

In September 1935 the Nuremberg Laws were enacted. These laws initially prohibited sexual relations and marriages between Aryans and Jews and were later extended to include "Gypsies, Negroes or their bastard offspring".*[190] The law also forbade the employment of German women under the age of 45 as domestic servants in Jewish households.*[191] The Reich Citizenship Law stated that only those of "German or related blood" were eligible for citizenship.*[192] At the same time the Nazis used propaganda to promulgate the concept of *Rassenschande* (race defilement) to justify the need for a restrictive law.*[193] Thus Jews and other non-Aryans were stripped of their German citizenship. The wording of the law also potentially allowed the Nazis to deny citizenship to anyone who was not supportive enough of the regime.*[192] A supplementary decree issued in November defined as Jewish anyone with three Jewish grandparents, or two grandparents if the Jewish faith was followed.*[194]

5.5.4 Military and paramilitary

Further information: [German Army \(Wehrmacht\)](#)

Wehrmacht

The unified armed forces of Germany from 1935 to 1945 were called the *Wehrmacht*. This included the *Heer* (army), *Kriegsmarine* (navy), and the *Luftwaffe* (air force). From 2 August 1934, members of the armed



A column of tanks and other armoured vehicles of the Panzerwaffe near Stalingrad, 1942

forces were required to pledge an oath of unconditional obedience to Hitler personally. In contrast to the previous oath, which required allegiance to the constitution of the country and its lawful establishments, this new oath required members of the military to obey Hitler even if they were being ordered to do something illegal.*[195] Hitler decreed that the army would have to tolerate and even offer logistical support to the *Einsatzgruppen*—the mobile death squads responsible for millions of deaths in Eastern Europe—when it was tactically possible to do so.*[196] Members of the *Wehrmacht* also participated directly in the Holocaust by shooting civilians or undertaking genocide under the guise of anti-partisan operations.*[197] The party line was that the Jews were the instigators of the partisan struggle, and therefore needed to be eliminated.*[198] On 8 July 1941, Heydrich announced that all Jews were to be regarded as partisans, and gave the order for all male Jews between the ages of 15 and 45 to be shot.*[199]

In spite of efforts to prepare the country militarily, the economy could not sustain a lengthy war of attrition such as had occurred in World War I. A strategy was developed based on the tactic of *Blitzkrieg* (lightning war), which involved using quick coordinated assaults that avoided enemy strong points. Attacks began with artillery bombardment, followed by bombing and strafing runs. Next the tanks would attack and finally the infantry would move in to secure any ground that had been taken.*[200] Victories continued through mid-1940, but the failure to defeat Britain was the first major turning point in the war. The decision to attack the Soviet Union and the decisive defeat at Stalingrad led to the retreat of the German armies and the eventual loss of the war.*[201] The total number of soldiers who served in the *Wehrmacht* from 1935 to 1945 was around 18.2 million, of whom 5.3 million died.*[202]

The SA and SS

The *Sturmabteilung* (SA; Storm Detachment; Brownshirts), founded in 1921, was the first paramilitary wing

of the Nazi Party. Their initial assignment was to protect Nazi leaders at rallies and assemblies.*[202] They also took part in street battles against the forces of rival political parties and violent actions against Jews and others.*[203] By 1934, under Ernst Röhm's leadership, the SA had grown to over half a million members—4.5 million including reserves—at a time when the regular army was still limited to 100,000 men by the Versailles Treaty.*[204]

Röhm hoped to assume command of the army and absorb it into the ranks of the SA.*[205] Hindenburg and Defence Minister Werner von Blomberg threatened to impose martial law if the alarming activities of the SA were not curtailed.*[206] Hitler also suspected that Röhm was plotting to depose him, so he ordered the deaths of Röhm and other political enemies. Up to 200 people were killed from 30 June to 2 July 1934 in an event that became known as the *Night of the Long Knives*.*[207] After this purge the SA was no longer a major force.*[208]



Members of the SA enforce the boycott of Jewish stores. 1 April 1933

Initially a force of a dozen men under the auspices of the SA, the *Schutzstaffel* (SS) grew to become one of the largest and most powerful groups in Nazi Germany.*[209] Led by *Reichsführer-SS* Heinrich Himmler from 1929, the SS had over a quarter million members by 1938 and continued to grow.*[210] Himmler envisioned the SS as being an elite group of guards, Hitler's last line of defence.*[211] The *Waffen-SS*, the military branch of the SS, became a de facto fourth branch of the Wehrmacht.*[212]

In 1931 Himmler organised an SS intelligence service which became known as the *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD; Security Service) under his deputy, *SS-Obergruppenführer* Reinhard Heydrich.*[213] This organisation was tasked with locating and arresting communists and other political opponents. Himmler hoped it would eventually totally replace the existing police system.*[214]*[215] Himmler also established the beginnings of a parallel economy un-

der the auspices of the SS Economy and Administration Head Office. This holding company owned housing corporations, factories, and publishing houses.*[216]*[217]

From 1935 forward the SS was heavily involved in the persecution of Jews, who were rounded up into ghettos and concentration camps.*[218] With the outbreak of World War II, SS units called *Einsatzgruppen* followed the army into Poland and the Soviet Union, where from 1941 to 1945 they killed more than two million people, including 1.3 million Jews.*[219]*[220] The *SS-Totenkopfverbände* (death's head units) were in charge of the concentration camps and *extermination camps*, where millions more were killed.*[221]*[222]



IG Farben synthetic oil plant under construction at Buna Werke (1941). This plant was part of the complex at Auschwitz concentration camp.

5.6 Economy

Main article: Economy of Nazi Germany

5.6.1 Reich economics

The most pressing economic matter the Nazis initially faced was the 30 percent national unemployment rate.*[223] Economist Dr. Hjalmar Schacht, President of the *Reichsbank* and Minister of Economics, created in May 1933 a scheme for deficit financing. Capital projects were paid for with the issuance of promissory notes called *Mefo bills*. When the notes were presented for payment, the *Reichsbank* printed money to do so. While the national debt soared, Hitler and his economic team expected that the upcoming territorial expansion would provide the means of repaying the debt.*[224] Schacht's administration achieved a rapid decline in the unemployment rate, the largest of any country during the Great Depression.*[223]

On 17 October 1933, aviation pioneer Hugo Junkers, owner of the *Junkers Aircraft Works*, was arrested. Within a few days his company was expropriated by the regime. In concert with other aircraft manufacturers and under the direction of Aviation Minister Göring, production was immediately ramped up industry-wide. From a workforce of 3,200 people producing 100 units per year in 1932, the industry grew to employ a quarter of a million workers manufacturing over 10,000 technically advanced aircraft per year less than ten years later.*[225]

An elaborate bureaucracy was created to regulate German imports of raw materials and finished goods with the intention of eliminating foreign competition in the German marketplace and improving the nation's *balance of payments*. The Nazis encouraged the development of synthetic replacements for materials such as oil and textiles.*[226] As the market was experiencing a glut and prices for petroleum were low, in 1933 the Nazi government made a profit-sharing agreement with *IG Farben*, guaranteeing them a 5 percent return on capital invested

in their synthetic oil plant at Leuna. Any profits in excess of that amount would be turned over to the Reich. By 1936, Farben regretted making the deal, as the excess profits by then being generated had to be given to the government.*[227]

Major public works projects financed with deficit spending included the construction of a network of *Autobahns* and providing funding for programmes initiated by the previous government for housing and agricultural improvements.*[228] To stimulate the construction industry, credit was offered to private businesses and subsidies were made available for home purchases and repairs.*[229] On the condition that the wife would leave the workforce, a loan of up to 1,000 Reichsmarks could be accessed by young couples of Aryan descent who intended to marry. The amount that had to be repaid was reduced by 25 percent for each child born.*[230] The caveat that the woman had to remain unemployed was dropped by 1937 due to a shortage of skilled labourers.*[231]



Autobahn, late 1930s

Hitler envisioned widespread car ownership as part of the new Germany. He arranged for designer Ferdinand Porsche to draw up plans for the *KdF-wagen* (Strength Through Joy car), intended to be an automobile that every German citizen could afford. A prototype was displayed

at the International Motor Show in Berlin on 17 February 1939. With the outbreak of World War II, the factory was converted to produce military vehicles. No production models were sold until after the war, when the vehicle was renamed the **Volkswagen** (people's car).^{*[232]}

Six million people were unemployed when the Nazis took power in 1933, and by 1937 there were fewer than a million.^{*[233]} This was in part due to the removal of women from the workforce.^{*[234]} Real wages dropped by 25 percent between 1933 and 1938.^{*[223]} Trade unions were abolished in May 1933 with the seizure of the funds and arrest of the leadership of the Social Democratic trade unions. A new organisation, the **German Labour Front**, was created and placed under NSDAP functionary **Robert Ley**.^{*[235]} The average German worked 43 hours a week in 1933, and by 1939 this increased to 47 hours a week.^{*[236]}

By early 1934 the focus shifted away from funding work creation schemes and toward rearmament. By 1935, military expenditures accounted for 73 percent of the government's purchases of goods and services.^{*[237]} On 18 October 1936 Hitler named Göring as Plenipotentiary of the Four Year Plan, intended to speed up the rearmament programme.^{*[238]} In addition to calling for the rapid construction of steel mills, synthetic rubber plants, and other factories, Göring instituted wage and price controls and restricted the issuance of stock dividends.^{*[223]} Large expenditures were made on rearmament, in spite of growing deficits.^{*[239]} With the introduction of compulsory military service in 1935, the *Reichswehr*, which had been limited to 100,000 by the terms of the Versailles Treaty, expanded to 750,000 on active service at the start of World War II, with a million more in the reserve.^{*[240]} By January 1939, unemployment was down to 301,800, and it dropped to only 77,500 by September.^{*[241]}

5.6.2 Wartime economy and forced labour

Further information: **Forced labour under German rule during World War II**

The Nazi war economy was a mixed economy that



Woman with OST-Arbeiter badge at the IG Farben plant in Auschwitz concentration camp

combined a free market with central planning; historian **Richard Overy** described it as being somewhere in between the command economy of the Soviet Union and the capitalist system of the United States.^{*[242]}

In 1942, after the death of Armaments Minister **Fritz Todt**, Hitler appointed Albert Speer as his replacement.^{*[243]} Speer improved production via streamlined organisation, the use of single-purpose machines operated by unskilled workers, rationalisation of production methods, and better co-ordination between the many different firms that made tens of thousands of components. Factories were relocated away from rail yards, which were bombing targets.^{*[244]*[245]} By 1944, the war was consuming 75 percent of Germany's gross domestic product, compared to 60 percent in the Soviet Union and 55 percent in Britain.^{*[246]}

The wartime economy relied heavily upon the large-scale employment of forced labourers. Germany imported and enslaved some 12 million people from 20 European countries to work in factories and on farms; approximately 75 percent were Eastern European.^{*[247]} Many were casualties of Allied bombing, as they received poor air raid protection. Poor living conditions led to high rates of sickness, injury, and death, as well as sabotage and criminal activity.^{*[248]}

Foreign workers brought into Germany were put into four different classifications; guest workers, military internees, civilian workers, and Eastern workers. Different regulations were placed upon the worker depending on their classification. To separate Germans and foreign workers, the Nazis issued a ban on sexual relations between Germans and foreign workers.^{*[249]*[250]}

Women played an increasingly large role. By 1944 over a half million served as auxiliaries in the German armed forces, especially in anti-aircraft units of the Luftwaffe; a half million worked in civil aerial defence; and 400,000 were volunteer nurses. They also replaced men in the wartime economy, especially on farms and in small family-owned shops.^{*[251]}

Very heavy strategic bombing by the Allies targeted refineries producing synthetic oil and gasoline as well as the German transportation system, especially rail yards and canals.^{*[252]} The armaments industry began to break down by September 1944. By November fuel coal was no longer reaching its destinations, and the production of new armaments was no longer possible.^{*[253]} Overy argues that the bombing strained the German war economy and forced it to divert up to one-fourth of its manpower and industry into anti-aircraft resources, which very likely shortened the war.^{*[254]}

5.7 Racial policy

Main articles: **Nazism and race** and **Racial policy of Nazi Germany**

Racism and antisemitism were basic tenets of the NSDAP and the Nazi regime. Nazi Germany's racial policy was based on their belief in the existence of a superior master race. The Nazis postulated the existence of a racial conflict between the Aryan master race and inferior races, particularly Jews, who were viewed as a mixed race that had infiltrated society and were responsible for the exploitation and repression of the Aryan race.*[255]

5.7.1 Persecution of Jews

Further information: [Anti-Jewish legislation in prewar Nazi Germany](#)

Discrimination against Jews began immediately after the seizure of power; following a month-long series of attacks by members of the SA on Jewish businesses, synagogues, and members of the legal profession, on 1 April 1933 Hitler declared a national boycott of Jewish businesses.*[256] The Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service, passed on 7 April, forced all non-Aryan civil servants to retire from the legal profession and civil service.*[257] Similar legislation soon deprived Jewish members of other professions of their right to practise. On 11 April a decree was promulgated that stated anyone who had even one Jewish parent or grandparent was considered non-Aryan. As part of the drive to remove Jewish influence from cultural life, members of the National Socialist Student League removed from libraries any books considered un-German, and a nationwide book burning was held on 10 May.*[258]

Violence and economic pressure were used by the regime to encourage Jews to voluntarily leave the country.*[259] Jewish businesses were denied access to markets, forbidden to advertise in newspapers, and deprived of access to government contracts. Citizens were harassed and subjected to violent attacks.*[260] Many towns posted signs forbidding entry to Jews.*[261]



Damage caused during Kristallnacht. 9 November 1938

In November 1938, a young Jewish man requested an

interview with the German ambassador in Paris. He met with a legation secretary, whom he shot and killed to protest his family's treatment in Germany. This incident provided the pretext for a pogrom the NSDAP incited against the Jews on 9 November 1938. Members of the SA damaged or destroyed synagogues and Jewish property throughout Germany. At least 91 German Jews were killed during this pogrom, later called *Kristallnacht*, the Night of Broken Glass.*[262]*[263] Further restrictions were imposed on Jews in the coming months – they were forbidden to own businesses or work in retail shops, drive cars, go to the cinema, visit the library, or own weapons. Jewish pupils were removed from schools. The Jewish community was fined one billion marks to pay for the damage caused by *Kristallnacht* and told that any money received via insurance claims would be confiscated.*[264] By 1939 around 250,000 of Germany's 437,000 Jews emigrated to the United States, Argentina, Great Britain, Palestine, and other countries.*[265]*[266] Many chose to stay in continental Europe. Emigrants to Palestine were allowed to transfer property there under the terms of the Haavara Agreement, but those moving to other countries had to leave virtually all their property behind, and it was seized by the government.*[266]

5.7.2 Persecution of Roma and other groups

Further information: [Porajmos and Nazi eugenics](#)

Like the Jews, the Romani people were subjected to persecution from the early days of the regime. As a non-Aryan race, they were forbidden to marry people of German extraction. Romani were shipped to concentration camps starting in 1935 and were killed in large numbers.*[159]*[160] Action T4 was a programme of systematic murder of the physically and mentally handicapped and patients in psychiatric hospitals that mainly took place from 1939 to 1941 and continued until the end of the war. Initially the victims were shot by the *Einsatzgruppen* and others; in addition gas chambers and gas vans using carbon monoxide were used by early 1940.*[267]*[268] Under the provisions of a law promulgated 14 July 1933, the Nazi regime carried out the compulsory sterilisation of over 400,000 individuals labelled as having hereditary defects.*[269] More than half the people sterilised were those considered mentally deficient, which included not only people who scored poorly on intelligence tests, but those who deviated from expected standards of behaviour regarding thrift, sexual behaviour, and cleanliness. Mentally and physically ill people were also targeted. The majority of the victims came from disadvantaged groups such as prostitutes, the poor, the homeless, and criminals.*[270] Other groups persecuted and killed included Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, social misfits, and members of the political and re-

ligious opposition.* [160]* [271]

5.7.3 The Holocaust

Main article: The Holocaust

Germany's war in the East was based on Hitler's long-standing view that Jews were the great enemy of the German people and that *Lebensraum* was needed for Germany's expansion. Hitler focused his attention on Eastern Europe, aiming to defeat Poland, the Soviet Union and remove or kill the resident Jews and Slavs in the process.* [156]* [157] After the occupation of Poland, all Jews living in the General Government were confined to ghettos, and those who were physically fit were required to perform compulsory labour.* [272] In 1941 Hitler decided to destroy the Polish nation completely. He planned that within 10 to 20 years the section of Poland under German occupation would be cleared of ethnic Poles and resettled by German colonists.* [273] About 3.8 to 4 million Poles would remain as slaves,* [274] part of a slave labour force of 14 million the Nazis intended to create us-ing citizens of conquered nations in the East.* [157]* [275]



Crematorium at Auschwitz I

The *Generalplan Ost* (General Plan for the East) called for deporting the population of occupied Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union to Siberia, for use as slave labour or to be murdered.* [276] To determine who should be killed, Himmler created the *Volksliste*, a system of classification of people deemed to be of German blood.* [277] He ordered that those of Germanic descent who refused to be classified as ethnic Germans should be deported to concentration camps, have their children taken away, or be assigned to forced labour.* [278]* [279] The plan also included the kidnapping of children deemed to have Aryan-Nordic traits, who were presumed to be of German descent.* [280] The goal was to implement *Generalplan Ost* after the conquest of the Soviet Union, but when the invasion failed, Hitler had to consider other options.* [276]* [281] One suggestion was a mass forced deportation of Jews to Poland, Palestine, or Madagascar.* [272]

Somewhere around the time of the failed offensive against

Moscow in December 1941, Hitler resolved that the Jews of Europe were to be exterminated immediately.* [282] Plans for the total eradication of the Jewish population of Europe—eleven million people—were formalised at the Wannsee Conference on 20 January 1942. Some would be worked to death and the rest would be killed in the implementation of *Die Endlösung der Judenfrage* (the Final Solution of the Jewish question).* [283] Initially the victims were killed with gas vans or by *Einsatzgruppen* firing squads, but these methods proved impracticable for an operation of this scale.* [284] By 1941, killing centres at Auschwitz concentration camp, Sobibor, Treblinka, and other Nazi extermination camps replaced *Einsatzgruppen* as the primary method of mass killing.* [285] The total number of Jews murdered during the war is estimated at 5.5 to six million people,* [222] including over a million children.* [286] Twelve million people were put into forced labour.* [247]

German citizens (despite much of the later denial) had access to information about what was happening, as soldiers returning from the occupied territories would report on what they had seen and done.* [287] Evans states that most German citizens disapproved of the genocide.* [288]* [lower-alpha 7] Some Polish citizens tried to rescue or hide the remaining Jews, and members of the Polish underground got word to their government in exile in London as to what was happening.* [289]

In addition to eliminating Jews, the Nazis also planned to reduce the population of the conquered territories by 30 million people through starvation in an action called the *Hunger Plan*. Food supplies would be diverted to the German army and German civilians. Cities would be razed and the land allowed to return to forest or resettled by German colonists.* [290] Together, the Hunger Plan and *Generalplan Ost* would have led to the starvation of 80 million people in the Soviet Union.* [291] These partially fulfilled plans resulted in the democidal deaths of an estimated 19.3 million civilians and prisoners of war.* [292]

5.7.4 Oppression of ethnic Poles

Further information: Nazi crimes against ethnic Poles
During the German occupation of Poland, 2.7 million ethnic Poles were killed by the Axis powers.* [293] Polish civilians were subject to forced labour in German industry, internment, wholesale expulsions to make way for German colonists and mass executions. The German authorities engaged in a systematic effort to destroy Polish culture and national identity. During operation AB-Aktion, many university professors and members of the Polish intelligentsia were arrested and executed, or transported to concentration camps. During the war, Poland lost an estimated 39 to 45 percent of its physicians and dentists, 26 to 57 percent of its lawyers, 15 to 30 percent of its teachers, 30 to 40 percent of its scientists and university professors, and 18 to 28 percent of its clergy.* [294] Further, 43 percent of Poland's educational



Execution of Polish citizens in Bochnia, during the German occupation of Poland, 18 December 1939



A Nazi book burning on 10 May 1933 in Berlin. Books by Jewish and leftist authors were burned. [300]*

and research institutions and 14 percent of its museums had been destroyed.*[295]

5.7.5 Mistreatment of Soviet POWs

Further information: Nazi crimes against Soviet POWs and [Generalplan Ost](#)

During the war between June 1941 and January 1942,



Naked Soviet prisoners of war in Mauthausen-Gusen concentration camp

the Axis powers killed an estimated 2.8 million Soviet prisoners of war.*[296] Many starved to death while being held in open-air pens at Auschwitz and elsewhere.*[297] The Soviet Union lost 27 million people during the war; less than nine million of these were combat deaths.*[298] One in four of the population were killed or wounded.*[299]

5.8 Society

5.8.1 Education

Further information: [University education in Nazi Germany](#)

Antisemitic legislation passed in 1933 led to the removal all of Jewish teachers, professors, and officials from the

education system. Most teachers were required to belong to the *Nationalsozialistischer Lehrerbund* (National Socialist Teachers League; NSLB), and university professors were required to join the National Socialist German Lecturers.*[301]*[302] Teachers had to take an oath of loyalty and obedience to Hitler, and those who failed to show sufficient conformity to party ideals were often reported by students or fellow teachers and dismissed.*[303]*[304] Lack of funding for salaries led to many teachers leaving the profession. The average class size increased from 37 in 1927 to 43 in 1938 due to the resulting teacher shortage.*[305]

Frequent and often contradictory directives were issued by Reich Minister of the Interior Wilhelm Frick, Bernhard Rust of the *Reichserziehungsministerium* (Ministry of Education), and various other agencies regarding content of lessons and acceptable textbooks for use in primary and secondary schools.*[306] Books deemed unacceptable to the regime were removed from school libraries.*[307] Indoctrination in National Socialist thought was made compulsory in January 1934.*[307] Students selected as future members of the party elite were indoctrinated from the age of 12 at Adolf Hitler Schools for primary education and [National Political Institutes of Education](#) for secondary education. Detailed National Socialist indoctrination of future holders of elite military rank was undertaken at Order Castles.*[308]

Primary and secondary education focused on racial biology, population policy, culture, geography, and especially physical fitness.*[309] The curriculum in most subjects, including biology, geography, and even arithmetic, was altered to change the focus to race.*[310] Military education became the central component of physical education, and education in physics was oriented toward subjects with military applications, such as ballistics and aerodynamics.*[311]*[312] Students were required to watch all films prepared by the school division of the [Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda](#).*[307]



The Nazi salute in school (1934). Children were indoctrinated at an early age.

At universities, appointments to top posts were the subject of power struggles between the education ministry, the university boards, and the National Socialist German Students' League.^{*[313]} In spite of pressure from the League and various government ministries, most university professors did not make changes to their lectures or syllabus during the Nazi period.^{*[314]} This was especially true of universities located in predominantly Catholic regions.^{*[315]} Enrolment at German universities declined from 104,000 students in 1931 to 41,000 in 1939. But enrolment in medical schools rose sharply; Jewish doctors had been forced to leave the profession, so medical graduates had good job prospects.^{*[316]} From 1934, university students were required to attend frequent and time-consuming military training sessions run by the SA.^{*[317]} First-year students also had to serve six months in a labour camp for the *Reichsarbeitsdienst* (National Labour Service); an additional ten weeks service were required of second-year students.^{*[318]}

5.8.2 Oppression of churches

Main article: Kirchenkampf

See also: Religion in Nazi Germany

67 percent of the population of Germany was Protestant, 33 percent was Roman Catholic, while Jews made up less than 1 percent when the Nazis seized power in 1933.^{*[319]*[320]} According to 1939 census, 54 percent considered themselves Protestant, 40 percent Roman Catholic, 3.5 percent *Gottgläubig* (God-believing), and 1.5 percent nonreligious.^{*[321]}

Under the *Gleichschaltung* process, Hitler attempted to create a unified Protestant Reich Church from Germany's 28 existing Protestant state churches,^{*[322]} with the ultimate goal of eradication of the churches in Germany.^{*[323]} Ludwig Müller, a pro-Nazi, was installed as Reich Bishop, and the German Christians, a pro-Nazi pressure group, gained control of the new church.^{*[324]} They objected to the Old Testament be-

cause of its Jewish origins, and demanded that converted Jews be barred from their church.^{*[325]} Pastor Martin Niemöller responded with the formation of the Confessing Church, from which some clergymen opposed the Nazi regime.^{*[326]} When in 1935 the Confessing Church synod protested the Nazi policy on religion, 700 of their pastors were arrested.^{*[327]} Müller resigned and Hitler appointed Hanns Kerrl as Minister for Church Affairs, to continue efforts to control Protestantism.^{*[328]} In 1936, a Confessing Church envoy protested to Hitler against the religious persecutions and human rights abuses.^{*[327]} Hundreds more pastors were arrested.^{*[328]} The church continued to resist, and by early 1937 Hitler abandoned his hope of uniting the Protestant churches.^{*[327]} The Confessing Church was banned on 1 July 1937. Niemöller was arrested and confined, first in Sachsenhausen concentration camp and then at Dachau.^{*[329]} Theological universities were closed and more pastors and theologians were arrested.^{*[327]}



Prisoner barracks at Dachau Concentration Camp, where the Nazis established a dedicated clergy barracks for clerical opponents of the regime in 1940^{[330]}*

Persecution of the Catholic Church in Germany followed the Nazi takeover.^{*[331]} Hitler moved quickly to eliminate political Catholicism, rounding up functionaries of the Catholic-aligned Bavarian People's Party and Catholic Centre Party, which, along with all other non-Nazi political parties, ceased to exist by July.^{*[332]} The *Reichskonkordat* (Reich Concordat) treaty with the Vatican was signed in 1933, amid continuing harassment of the church in Germany.^{*[269]} The treaty required the regime to honour the independence of Catholic institutions and prohibited clergy from involvement in politics.^{*[333]} Hitler routinely disregarded the Concordat, closing all Catholic institutions whose functions were not strictly religious.^{*[334]} Clergy, nuns, and lay leaders were targeted, with thousands of arrests over the ensuing years, often on trumped-up charges of currency smuggling or immorality.^{*[335]} Several high-profile Catholic lay leaders were targeted in the 1934 Night of the Long Knives assassinations.^{*[336]*[337]*[338]} Most Catholic youth groups refused to dissolve themselves and Hitler Youth leader Baldur von Schirach encouraged members to attack Catholic boys in the streets.^{*[339]} Propaganda

campaigns claimed the church was corrupt, restrictions were placed on public meetings, and Catholic publications faced censorship. Catholic schools were required to reduce religious instruction and crucifixes were removed from state buildings.*[340]

Pope Pius XI had the "*Mit brennender Sorge*" ("With Burning Concern") Encyclical smuggled into Germany for Passion Sunday 1937 and read from every pulpit. It denounced the systematic hostility of the regime toward the church.*[335]*[341] In response, Goebbels renewed the regime's crackdown and propaganda against Catholics. Enrolment in denominational schools dropped sharply, and by 1939 all such schools were disbanded or converted to public facilities.*[342] Later Catholic protests included the 22 March 1942 pastoral letter by the German bishops on "The Struggle against Christianity and the Church".*[343] About 30 percent of Catholic priests were disciplined by police during the Nazi era.*[344]*[345] A vast security network spied on the activities of clergy, and priests were frequently denounced, arrested, or sent to concentration camps – many to the dedicated **clergy barracks** at Dachau.*[346] In the areas of Poland annexed in 1939, the Nazis instigated a brutal suppression and systematic dismantling of the Catholic Church.*[347]*[348]

5.8.3 Health



Statues representing the ideal body were erected in the streets of Berlin for the 1936 Summer Olympics.

Nazi Germany had a strong anti-tobacco movement. Pioneering research by Franz H. Müller in 1939 demonstrated a causal link between tobacco smoking and lung cancer.*[349] The Reich Health Office took measures to try to limit smoking, including producing lectures and pamphlets.*[350] Smoking was banned in many workplaces, on trains, and among on-duty members of the military.*[351] Government agencies also worked to control other carcinogenic substances such as asbestos and pesticides.*[352] As part of a general public health campaign, water supplies were cleaned up, lead and mercury were removed from consumer products, and women

were urged to undergo regular screenings for breast cancer.*[353]

Government-run health care insurance plans were available, but Jews were denied coverage starting in 1933. That same year, Jewish doctors were forbidden to treat government-insured patients. In 1937 Jewish doctors were forbidden to treat non-Jewish patients, and in 1938 their right to practice medicine was removed entirely.*[354]

Medical experiments, many of them pseudoscientific, were performed on concentration camp inmates beginning in 1941.*[355] The most notorious doctor to perform medical experiments was SS-*Hauptsturmführer* Dr Josef Mengele, camp doctor at Auschwitz.*[356] Many of his victims died or were intentionally killed.*[357] Concentration camp inmates were made available for purchase by pharmaceutical companies for drug testing and other experiments.*[358]

5.8.4 Role of women and family

Further information: Women in Nazi Germany

Women were a cornerstone of Nazi social policy. The Nazis opposed the feminist movement, claiming that it was the creation of Jewish intellectuals, and instead advocated a **patriarchal** society in which the German woman would recognise that her "world is her husband, her family, her children, and her home." *[234] Soon after the seizure of power, feminist groups were shut down or incorporated into the National Socialist Women's League. This organisation coordinated groups throughout the country to promote motherhood and household activities. Courses were offered on childrearing, sewing, and cooking.*[359] The League published the *NS-Frauen-Warte*, the only NSDAP-approved women's magazine in Nazi Germany.*[360] Despite some propaganda aspects, it was predominantly an ordinary woman's magazine.*[361]

Women were encouraged to leave the workforce, and the creation of large families by racially suitable women was promoted through a propaganda campaign. Women received a bronze award—known as the *Ehrenkreuz der Deutschen Mutter* (Cross of Honour of the German Mother)—for giving birth to four children, silver for six, and gold for eight or more.*[359] Large families received subsidies to help with their utilities, school fees, and household expenses. Though the measures led to increases in the birth rate, the number of families having four or more children declined by five percent between 1935 and 1940.*[362] Removing women from the workforce did not have the intended effect of freeing up jobs for men. Women were for the most part employed as domestic servants, weavers, or in the food and drink industries—jobs that were not of interest to men.*[363] Nazi philosophy prevented large numbers of women from

being hired to work in munitions factories in the build-up to the war, so foreign labourers were brought in. After the war started, slave labourers were extensively used.*[364] In January 1943 Hitler signed a decree requiring all women under the age of fifty to report for work assignments to help the war effort.*[365] Thereafter, women were funnelled into agricultural and industrial jobs. By September 1944, 14.9 million women were working in munitions production.*[366]



Young women of the Bund Deutscher Mädel (League of German Girls) practising gymnastics in 1941

The Nazi regime discouraged women from seeking higher education. Nazi leaders held conservative views about women and endorsed the idea that rational and theoretical work was alien to a woman's nature since they were considered inherently emotional and instinctive – as such, engaging in academics and careerism would only “divert them from motherhood.”*[367] The number of women allowed to enrol in universities dropped drastically, as a law passed in April 1933 limited the number of females admitted to university to ten percent of the number of male attendees.*[368] Female enrolment in secondary schools dropped from 437,000 in 1926 to 205,000 in 1937. The number of women enrolled in post-secondary schools dropped from 128,000 in 1933 to 51,000 in 1938. However, with the requirement that men be enlisted into the armed forces during the war, women comprised half of the enrolment in the post-secondary system by 1944.*[369]

Women were expected to be strong, healthy, and vital.*[370] The sturdy peasant woman who worked the land and bore strong children was considered ideal, and athletic women were praised for being tanned from working outdoors.*[371] Organisations were created for the indoctrination of Nazi values. From 25 March 1939, membership in the Hitler Youth became compulsory for all children over the age of ten.*[372] The *Jungmädelbund* (Young Girls League) section of the Hitler Youth was for girls age 10 to 14, and the *Bund Deutscher Mädel* (BDM; League of German Girls) was for young women age 14 to 18. The BDM's activities focused on physical education, with activities such as

running, long jumping, somersaulting, tightrope walking, marching, and swimming.*[373]

The Nazi regime promoted a liberal code of conduct regarding sexual matters, and was sympathetic to women who bore children out of wedlock.*[374] Promiscuity increased as the war progressed, with unmarried soldiers often intimately involved with several women simultaneously. The same was the case for married women, who liaised with soldiers, civilians, or slave labourers. Sex was sometimes used as a commodity to obtain, for example, better work from a foreign labourer.*[374] Pamphlets enjoined German women to avoid sexual relations with foreign workers as a danger to their blood.*[375]

With Hitler's approval, Himmler intended that the new society of the Nazi regime should de-stigmatise illegitimate births, particularly of children fathered by members of the SS, who were vetted for racial purity.*[376] His hope was that each SS family would have between four and six children.*[376] The *Lebensborn* (Fountain of Life) association, founded by Himmler in 1935, created a series of maternity homes where single mothers could be accommodated during their pregnancies.*[377] Both parents were examined for racial suitability before acceptance.*[377] The resulting children were often adopted into SS families.*[377] The homes were also made available to the wives of SS and NSDAP members, who quickly filled over half the available spots.*[378]

Existing laws banning abortion except for medical reasons were strictly enforced by the Nazi regime. The number of abortions declined from 35,000 per year at the start of the 1930s to fewer than 2,000 per year at the end of the decade. In 1935 a law was passed allowing abortions for eugenics reasons.*[379]

5.8.5 Environmentalism

Main article: [Animal welfare in Nazi Germany](#)

Nazi society had elements supportive of animal rights, and many people were fond of zoos and wildlife.*[380] The government took several measures to ensure the protection of animals and the environment. In 1933, the Nazis enacted a stringent animal-protection law that affected what was allowed for medical research.*[381] But the law was only loosely enforced. In spite of a ban on vivisection, the Ministry of the Interior readily handed out permits for experiments on animals.*[382]

The Reich Forestry Office, under Göring, enforced regulations that required foresters to plant a wide variety of trees to ensure suitable habitat for wildlife. A new Reich Animal Protection Act became law in 1933.*[383] The regime enacted the Reich Nature Protection Act in 1935 to protect the natural landscape from excessive economic development. The act allowed for the expropriation of privately owned land to create nature preserves and aided

in long-range planning.*[384] Perfunctory efforts were made to curb air pollution, but little enforcement of existing legislation was undertaken once the war began.*[385]

5.9 Culture

The regime promoted the concept of *Volksgemeinschaft*, a national German ethnic community. The goal was to build a classless society based on racial purity and the perceived need to prepare for warfare, conquest, and a struggle against Marxism.*[386]*[387] The German Labour Front founded the *Kraft durch Freude* (KdF; Strength Through Joy) organisation in 1933. In addition to taking control of tens of thousands of previously privately run recreational clubs, it offered highly regimented holidays and entertainment experiences such as cruises, vacation destinations, and concerts.*[388]*[389]

The *Reichskulturkammer* (Reich Chamber of Culture) was organised under the control of the Propaganda Ministry in September 1933. Sub-chambers were set up to control various aspects of cultural life, such as films, radio, newspapers, fine arts, music, theatre, and literature. All members of these professions were required to join their respective organisation. Jews and people considered politically unreliable were prevented from working in the arts, and many emigrated. Books and scripts had to be approved by the Propaganda Ministry prior to publication. Standards deteriorated as the regime sought to use cultural outlets exclusively as propaganda media.*[390]

Radio became very popular in Germany during the 1930s, with over 70 percent of households owning a receiver by 1939, more than any other country. Radio station staffs were purged of leftists and others deemed undesirable by July 1933.*[391] Propaganda and speeches were typical radio fare immediately after the seizure of power, but as time went on Goebbels insisted that more music be played so that people would not turn to foreign broadcasters for entertainment.*[392]

See also: [List of authors banned in Nazi Germany](#)

As with other media, newspapers were controlled by the state, with the Reich Press Chamber shutting down or buying newspapers and publishing houses. By 1939 over two-thirds of the newspapers and magazines were directly owned by the Propaganda Ministry.*[393] The NSDAP daily newspaper, the *Völkischer Beobachter* (Ethnic Observer), was edited by Alfred Rosenberg, author of *The Myth of the Twentieth Century*, a book of racial theories espousing Nordic superiority.*[394] Goebbels controlled the wire services and insisted that all newspapers in Germany should only publish content favourable to the regime. His propaganda ministry issued two dozen directives every week on exactly what news should be published and what angles to use; the typical newspaper followed the directives very closely.*[395] Newspaper readership plummeted, partly because of the decreased qual-



Plans for Berlin called for the Volkshalle (People's Hall) and a triumphal arch to be built at either end of a wide boulevard.

ity of the content, and partly because of the surge in popularity.*[396]

Authors of books left the country in droves, and some wrote material highly critical of the regime while in exile. Goebbels recommended that the remaining authors should concentrate on books themed on Germanic myths and the concept of **blood and soil**. By the end of 1933 over a thousand books, most of them by Jewish authors or featuring Jewish characters, had been banned by the Nazi regime.*[397]

Main article: [Nazi architecture](#)

Hitler took a personal interest in architecture, and worked closely with state architects Paul Troost and Albert Speer to create public buildings in a neoclassical style based on Roman architecture.*[398]*[399] Speer constructed imposing structures such as the Nazi party rally grounds in Nuremberg and a new Reich Chancellery building in Berlin.*[400] Hitler's plans for rebuilding Berlin included a gigantic dome based on the Pantheon in Rome and a triumphal arch more than double the height of the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. Neither of these structures were ever built.*[401]

Main article: [Nazi art](#)

Hitler felt that abstract, Dadaist, expressionist, and modern art were decadent, an opinion that became the basis for policy.*[402] Many art museum directors lost

their posts in 1933 and were replaced by party members.* [403] Some 6,500 modern works of art were removed from museums and replaced with works chosen by a Nazi jury.* [404] Exhibitions of the rejected pieces, under titles such as “Decadence in Art”, were launched in sixteen different cities by 1935. The **Degenerate Art Exhibition**, organised by Goebbels, ran in Munich from July to November 1937. The exhibition proved wildly popular, attracting over two million visitors.* [405]

Composer Richard Strauss was appointed president of the *Reichsmusikkammer* (Reich Music Chamber) on its founding in November 1933.* [406] As was the case with other art forms, the Nazis ostracised musicians who were not deemed racially acceptable, and for the most part did not approve of music that was too modern or atonal.* [407] Jazz music was singled out as being especially inappropriate, and foreign musicians of this genre left the country or were expelled.* [408] Hitler favoured the music of Richard Wagner, especially pieces based on Germanic myths and heroic stories, and attended the Bayreuth Festival each year from 1933.* [407]

Main article: **Nazism and cinema**

Movies were popular in Germany in the 1930s and



Leni Riefenstahl (behind cameraman) at the 1936 Summer Olympics

1940s, with admissions of over a billion people in 1942, 1943, and 1944.* [409]* [410] By 1934 German regulations restricting currency exports made it impossible for American film makers to take their profits back to America, so the major film studios closed their German branches. Exports of German films plummeted, as their heavily antisemitic content made them impossible to show in other countries. The two largest film companies, **Universum Film AG** and **Tobis**, were purchased by the Propaganda Ministry, which by 1939 was producing most German films. The productions were not always overtly propagandistic, but generally had a political subtext and followed party lines regarding themes and content. Scripts were pre-censored.* [411]

Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* (1935), documenting the 1934 Nuremberg Rally, and *Olympia* (1938), covering the 1936 Summer Olympics, pioneered techniques of camera movement and editing that influenced later

films. New techniques such as telephoto lenses and cameras mounted on tracks were employed. Both films remain controversial, as their aesthetic merit is inseparable from their propagandising of National Socialist ideals.* [412]* [413]

5.10 Legacy

Main article: **Consequences of Nazism**

The Allied powers organised war crimes trials, beginning



Defendants in the dock at the Nuremberg trials

with the **Nuremberg trials**, held from November 1945 to October 1946, of 23 top Nazi officials. They were charged with four counts—conspiracy to commit crimes, crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity—in violation of international laws governing warfare.* [414] All but three of the defendants were found guilty; twelve were sentenced to death.* [415] The victorious Allies outlawed the NSDAP and its subsidiary organisations. The display or use of **Nazi symbolism** such as flags, swastikas, or greetings, is illegal in Germany and Austria,* [416]* [417] and other restrictions, mainly on public display, apply in various countries. See **Swastika § Post-WWII stigmatization** for details.

Nazi ideology and the actions taken by the regime are almost universally regarded as gravely immoral.* [418] Hitler, Nazism, and the Holocaust have become symbols of evil in the modern world.* [419] Interest in Nazi Germany continues in the media and the academic world. Historian Sir **Richard J. Evans** remarks that the era “exerts an almost universal appeal because its murderous racism stands as a warning to the whole of humanity.”* [420]

The Nazi era continues to inform how Germans view themselves and their country. Virtually every family suffered losses during the war or has a story to tell. For many years Germans kept quiet about their experiences and felt a sense of communal guilt, even if they were not directly involved in war crimes. Once study of Nazi Germany was introduced into the school **curriculum** starting

in the 1970s, people began researching the experiences of their family members. Study of the era and a willingness to critically examine its mistakes has led to the development of a strong democracy in today's Germany, but with lingering undercurrents of antisemitism and neo-Nazi thought.*[421]

5.11 See also

- Catholic resistance to Nazi Germany
- Collaboration with the Axis Powers during World War II
- German Resistance to Nazism
- Glossary of German military terms
- Glossary of Nazi Germany
- List of books about Nazi Germany
- List of books by or about Adolf Hitler
- List of German field marshals#Nazi Germany (1933–45)
- List of Nazi Party leaders and officials
- Nazi rule over the Danube River
- Nazi songs
- Orders, decorations, and medals of Nazi Germany
- Reich Chancellery meeting of 12 December 1941
- Sino-German cooperation until 1941
- Third Rome
- *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*

5.12 Notes

[1] Including de facto annexed/incorporated territories.

[2] The office formally became vacant on Hitler's death. His titles were Führer und Reichskanzler from August 1934. See *Gesetz über das Staatsoberhaupt* 1934.

[3] In 1939, before Germany acquired control of the last two regions which had been in its control before the Versailles Treaty—Alsace-Lorraine, Danzig, and the Polish Corridor—its area was 633,786 square kilometres (244,706 sq mi). See *Statistisches Jahrbuch* 2006.

[4] The party's name in German was *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*.

[5] On 29 November 2006 State Secretary in the Federal Ministry of the Interior Christoph Bergner said the reason the statistics do not match is because Haar only includes people who were directly killed. The figure of 2 to 2.5 million also includes people who died of disease, hunger, cold, air raids, and other causes. Koldehoff 2006. The German Red Cross still maintains that the death toll from the expulsions is 2.2 million. Kammerer & Kammerer 2005, p. 12.

[6] More such districts, such as the *Reichskommissariat Moskowien* (Moscow), *Reichskommissariat Kaukasus* (Caucasus), and *Reichskommissariat Turkestan* (Turkestan) were proposed in the event that these areas were brought under German rule.

[7] “Nevertheless, the available evidence suggests that, on the whole, ordinary Germans did not approve. Goebbels' propaganda campaigns carried out in the second half of 1941 and again in 1943 had failed to convert them.” Evans 2008, p. 561.

5.13 References

5.13.1 Citations

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- [5] Evans 2003, pp. 170–171.
- [6] Goldhagen 1996, p. 85.
- [7] Evans 2003, pp. 179–180.
- [8] Kershaw 2008, p. 81.
- [9] Shirer 1960, pp. 136–137.
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5.15 External links

- Wikimedia Atlas of Germany
- Lebendiges Museum Online (German)
- Nazi Propaganda: 1933–1945 (English)

Coordinates: 52°31'N 13°24'E / 52.517°N 13.400°E

5.14 Further reading

- “Introduction to the Holocaust” . United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Retrieved 12 May 2013.

Chapter 6

Invasion of Poland

For other uses, see [Invasion of Poland \(disambiguation\)](#).

The **Invasion of Poland**, also known as the **September Campaign**, or the **1939 Defensive War in Poland** (Polish: *Kampania wrześniowa* or *Wojna obronna 1939 roku*), and alternatively the **Poland Campaign** (German: *Polenfeldzug*) or *Fall Weiss* in Germany (Case White), was a joint invasion of Poland by Nazi Germany, the Free City of Danzig, the Soviet Union, and a small Slovak contingent, that marked the beginning of World War II in Europe. The German invasion began on 1 September 1939, one week after the signing of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, while the Soviet invasion commenced on 17 September following the Molotov–Tōgō agreement that terminated the Russian and Japanese hostilities in the east on 16 September.^{*[15]} The campaign ended on 6 October with Germany and the Soviet Union dividing and annexing the whole of Poland under the terms of the German–Soviet Frontier Treaty.

German forces invaded Poland from the north, south, and west the morning after the Gleiwitz incident. As the Wehrmacht advanced, Polish forces withdrew from their forward bases of operation close to the Polish–German border to more established lines of defence to the east. After the mid-September Polish defeat in the Battle of the Bzura, the Germans gained an undisputed advantage. Polish forces then withdrew to the southeast where they prepared for a long defence of the Romanian Bridgehead and awaited expected support and relief from France and the United Kingdom.^{*[16]} While those two countries had pacts with Poland and had declared war on Germany on 3 September, in the end their aid to Poland was very limited.

The Soviet Red Army's invasion of Eastern Poland on 17 September, in accordance with a secret protocol of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, rendered the Polish plan of defence obsolete.^{*[17]} Facing a second front, the Polish government concluded the defence of the Romanian Bridgehead was no longer feasible and ordered an emergency evacuation of all troops to neutral Romania.^{*[18]} On 6 October, following the Polish defeat at the Battle of Kock, German and Soviet forces gained full control over Poland. The success of the invasion marked the end of the Second Polish Republic, though Poland never for-

mally surrendered.

On 8 October, after an initial period of military administration, Germany directly annexed western Poland and the former Free City of Danzig and placed the remaining block of territory under the administration of the newly established General Government. The Soviet Union incorporated its newly acquired areas into its constituent Belarusian and Ukrainian republics, and immediately started a campaign of sovietization. In the aftermath of the invasion, a collective of underground resistance organizations formed the Polish Underground State within the territory of the former Polish state. Many of the military exiles that managed to escape Poland subsequently joined the Polish Armed Forces in the West, an armed force loyal to the Polish government in exile.

6.1 Prelude

Main article: [Causes of World War II](#)

On 30 January 1933, the Nazi Party, under its leader Adolf Hitler, came to power in Germany.^{*[19]} The Weimar Republic had long sought the return of ethnic German-majority territory in Western Poland, and as early as the autumn of 1933 Hitler envisioned annexing this and similarly ethnic German territories^{*[20]} as Bohemia and Austria to Germany, as well as the creation of satellite or puppet states economically subordinate to Germany.^{*[21]} As part of this long-term policy, Hitler at first pursued a policy of rapprochement with Poland, trying to improve opinion in Germany, culminating in the German–Polish Non-Aggression Pact of 1934.^{*[22]} Earlier, Hitler's foreign policy worked to weaken ties between Poland and France, and attempted to manoeuvre Poland into the Anti-Comintern Pact, forming a cooperative front against the Soviet Union.^{*[22]*[23]} Poland would be granted territory to its northeast in Ukraine and Belarus if it agreed to wage war against the Soviet Union, but the concessions the Poles were expected to make meant that their homeland would become largely dependent on Germany, functioning as little more than a client state. The Poles feared that their independence would eventually be threatened altogether.^{*[23]} The pop-

ulation of the Free City of Danzig was strongly in favour of annexation by Germany, as were many of the ethnic German inhabitants of the Polish territory that separated the German **exclave** of East Prussia from the rest of the Reich.*[24] The so-called **Polish Corridor** constituted land long disputed by Poland and Germany, and inhabited by a **Polish** majority. The Corridor had become a part of Poland after the **Treaty of Versailles**. Many Germans also wanted the city of **Danzig** and its environs (together the Free City of Danzig) to be reincorporated into Germany. Danzig was a port city with a **German** majority.*[25] It had been separated from Germany after Versailles and made into the nominally independent Free City of Danzig. Hitler sought to use this as a reason for war, reverse these territorial losses, and on many occasions made an appeal to German nationalism, promising to “liberate” the **German** minority still in the Corridor, as well as Danzig.*[26]

The invasion was referred to by Germany as the 1939 Defensive War since Hitler proclaimed that Poland had attacked Germany and that “Germans in Poland are persecuted with a bloody terror and are driven from their homes. The series of border violations, which are unbearable to a great power, prove that the Poles no longer are willing to respect the German frontier.”*[27]

Poland participated with Germany in the partition of **Czechoslovakia** that followed the **Munich Agreement**, although they were not part of the agreement. It coerced Czechoslovakia to surrender the region of **Český Těšín** by issuing an ultimatum to that effect on 30 September 1938, which was accepted by Czechoslovakia on 1 October.*[28] This region had a Polish majority and had been disputed between Czechoslovakia and Poland in the aftermath of World War I.*[29]*[30] The Polish annexation of Slovak territory (several villages in the regions of Čadca, Orava and Spiš) later served as the justification for Slovak state to join the German invasion.

By 1937, Germany began to increase its demands for Danzig, while proposing that an extraterritorial roadway, part of the Reichsautobahn system, be built in order to connect East Prussia with Germany proper, running through the Polish Corridor.*[31] Poland rejected this proposal, fearing that after accepting these demands, it would become increasingly subject to the will of Germany and eventually lose its independence as the Czechs had.*[32] Polish leaders also distrusted Hitler.*[32] Furthermore, Germany's collaboration with anti-Polish Ukrainian nationalists from the **Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists**, which was seen as an effort to isolate and weaken Poland, weakened Hitler's credibility from the Polish point of view. The British were also wary of Germany's increasing strength and assertiveness threatening its **balance of power** strategy.*[33] On 31 March 1939, Poland formed a military alliance with the **United Kingdom** and **France**, believing that Polish independence and territorial integrity would be defended with their support if it were to be threatened by Ger-

many.*[34] On the other hand, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and his Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax, still hoped to strike a deal with Hitler regarding Danzig (and possibly the Polish Corridor). Chamberlain and his supporters believed war could be avoided and hoped Germany would agree to leave the rest of Poland alone. German hegemony over Central Europe was also at stake. In private, Hitler said in May that Danzig was not the important issue to him, but pursuit of ***Lebensraum*** for Germany.*[35]

6.1.1 Breakdown of talks

With tensions mounting, Germany turned to aggressive diplomacy. On 28 April 1939, Hitler unilaterally withdrew from both the German-Polish Non-Aggression Pact of 1934 and the **London Naval Agreement** of 1935. Talks over Danzig and the Corridor broke down and months passed without diplomatic interaction between Germany and Poland. During this interim period, the Germans learned that France and Britain had failed to secure an alliance with the Soviet Union against Germany, and that the Soviet Union was interested in an alliance with Germany against Poland. Hitler had already issued orders to prepare for a possible “solution of the Polish problem by military means” through the **Case White** scenario.

In May 1939, in a statement to his generals while they were in the midst of planning the invasion of Poland, Hitler made it clear that the invasion would not come without resistance as it had in Czechoslovakia.*[36]

With minor exceptions German national unification has been achieved. Further successes cannot be achieved without bloodshed. Poland will always be on the side of our adversaries... Danzig is not the objective. It is a matter of expanding our living space in the east, of making our food supply secure, and solving the problem of the Baltic states. To provide sufficient food you must have sparsely settled areas. There is therefore no question of sparing Poland, and the decision remains to attack Poland at the first opportunity. We cannot expect a repetition of Czechoslovakia. There will be fighting.*[36]

On August 22, just over a week before the onset of war, Hitler delivered a speech to his military commanders at the **Obersalzberg**:

The object of the war is …physically to destroy the enemy. That is why I have prepared, for the moment only in the East, my ‘Death’s Head’ formations with orders to kill without pity or mercy all men, women, and children of Polish descent or language. Only in this way can we obtain the living space we need. *[37]



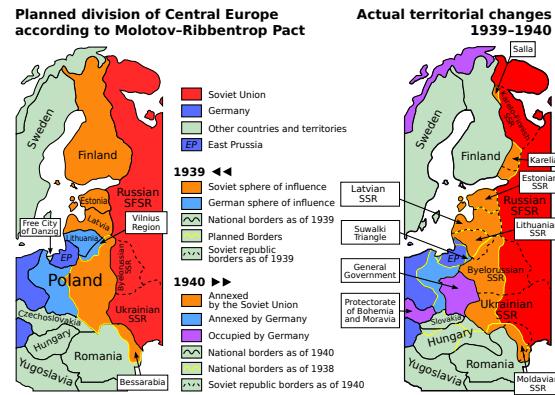
Vyacheslav Molotov signs the *Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact*, a German–Soviet non-aggression pact.

With the surprise signing of the *Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact* on 23 August, the result of secret Nazi-Soviet talks held in Moscow, Germany neutralized the possibility of Soviet opposition to a campaign against Poland and war became imminent. In fact, the Soviets agreed not to aid France or the UK in the event of their going to war with Germany over Poland and, in a secret protocol of the pact, the Germans and the Soviets agreed to divide Eastern Europe, including Poland, into two spheres of influence; the western $\frac{1}{3}$ of the country was to go to Germany and the eastern $\frac{2}{3}$ to the Soviet Union.

The German assault was originally scheduled to begin at 04:00 on 26 August. However, on 25 August, the Polish-British Common Defense Pact was signed as an annex to the Franco-Polish Military Alliance. In this accord, Britain committed itself to the defence of Poland, guaranteeing to preserve Polish independence. At the same time, the British and the Poles were hinting to Berlin that they were willing to resume discussions—not at all how Hitler hoped to frame the conflict. Thus, he wavered and postponed his attack until 1 September, managing to in effect halt the entire invasion “in mid-leap”.

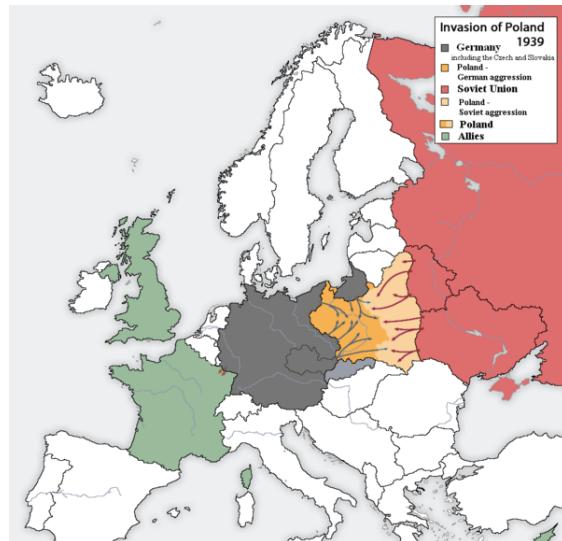
However, there was one exception: on the night of 25–6 August, a German sabotage group which had not heard anything about a delay of the invasion made an attack on the Jablunkov Pass and Mosty railway station in Silesia. On the morning of 26 August, this group was repelled by Polish troops. The German side described all this as an incident “caused by an insane individual” (see *Jabłonków Incident*).

On 26 August, Hitler tried to dissuade the British and the



Planned and actual divisions of Poland, according to the *Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact*, with later adjustments

French from interfering in the upcoming conflict, even pledging that the *Wehrmacht* forces would be made available to Britain's empire in the future.* [38]* [39] The negotiations convinced Hitler that there was little chance the Western Allies would declare war on Germany, and even if they did, because of the lack of “territorial guarantees” to Poland, they would be willing to negotiate a compromise favourable to Germany after its conquest of Poland. Meanwhile, the increased number of overflights by high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft and cross-border troop movements signaled that war was imminent.



The map shows the beginning of World War II in September 1939 in a European context.

On 29 August, prompted by the British, Germany issued one last diplomatic offer, with *Fall Weiss* yet to be rescheduled. That evening, the German government responded in a communication that it aimed not only for the restoration of Danzig but also the Polish Corridor (which had not previously been part of Hitler’s demands) in addition to the safeguarding of the German minority in Poland. It said that they were willing to commence negotiations, but indicated that a Polish representative with

the power to sign an agreement had to arrive in Berlin the next day while in the meantime it would draw up a set of proposals.*[40] The British Cabinet was pleased that negotiations had been agreed to but, mindful of how Emil Hácha had been forced to sign his country away under similar circumstances just months earlier, regarded the requirement for an immediate arrival of a Polish representative with full signing powers as an unacceptable ultimatum.*[41]*[42] On the night of 30/31 August, German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop read a 16-point German proposal to the British ambassador. When the ambassador requested a copy of the proposals for transmission to the Polish government, Ribbentrop refused, on the grounds that the requested Polish representative had failed to arrive by midnight.*[43] When Polish Ambassador Lipski went to see Ribbentrop later on 31 August to indicate that Poland was favorably disposed to negotiations, he announced that he did not have the full power to sign, and Ribbentrop dismissed him. It was then broadcast that Poland had rejected Germany's offer, and negotiations with Poland came to an end. Hitler issued orders for the invasion to commence soon afterwards.

On 30 August, the Polish Navy sent its destroyer flotilla to Britain, executing Operation Peking. On the same day, Marshal of Poland Edward Rydz-Śmigły announced the mobilization of Polish troops. However, he was pressured into revoking the order by the French, who apparently still hoped for a diplomatic settlement, failing to realize that the Germans were fully mobilized and concentrated at the Polish border.*[44] During the night of 31 August, the Gleiwitz incident, a false flag attack on the radio station, was staged near the border city of Gleiwitz in Upper Silesia by German units posing as Polish troops, as part of the wider Operation Himmler.*[45] On 31 August 1939, Hitler ordered hostilities against Poland to start at 4:45 the next morning. Because of the earlier stoppage, Poland managed to mobilize only 70% of its planned forces, and many units were still forming or moving to their designated frontline positions.

6.2 Opposing forces

See also: Opposing forces in the Polish September Campaign, Soviet order of battle for invasion of Poland in 1939, and Slovak invasion of Poland (1939)

6.2.1 Germany

See also: German order of battle for Operation Fall Weiss

Germany had a substantial numeric advantage over Poland and had developed a significant military before the conflict. The *Heer* (army) had some 2,400 tanks organized into six *panzer* divisions, utilizing a new operational

doctrine. It held that these divisions should act in co-ordination with other elements of the military, punching holes in the enemy line and isolating selected units, which would be encircled and destroyed. This would be followed up by less-mobile mechanized infantry and foot soldiers. The *Luftwaffe* (air force) provided both tactical and strategic air power, particularly dive bombers that disrupted lines of supply and communications. Together, the new methods were nicknamed "*Blitzkrieg*" (lightning war). While historian Basil Liddell Hart claimed "Poland was a full demonstration of the *Blitzkrieg* theory",*[46] some other historians disagree.*[47]

Aircraft played a major role in the campaign. Bombers also attacked cities, causing huge losses amongst the civilian population through terror bombing and strafing. The *Luftwaffe* forces consisted of 1,180 fighters, 290 Ju 87 *Stuka* dive bombers, 1,100 conventional bombers (mainly Heinkel He 111s and Dornier Do 17s), and an assortment of 550 transport and 350 reconnaissance aircraft.*[48]*[49] In total, Germany had close to 4,000 aircraft, most of them modern. A force of 2,315 aircraft was assigned to *Weiss*.* [50] Due to its earlier participation in the Spanish Civil War, the *Luftwaffe* was probably the most experienced, best-trained and best-equipped air force in the world in 1939.*[51]

6.2.2 Poland

See also: Polish army order of battle in 1939
Between 1936 and 1939, Poland invested heavily in the



Polish Infantry

Central Industrial Region. Preparations for a defensive war with Germany were ongoing for many years, but most plans assumed fighting would not begin before 1942. To raise funds for industrial development, Poland sold much of the modern equipment it produced.*[52] In 1936, a National Defence Fund was set up to collect funds necessary for strengthening the Polish Armed forces. The Polish Army had approximately a million soldiers, but less than half were mobilized by 1 September. Latecomers sustained significant casualties when public transport became targets of the *Luftwaffe*. The Polish military had fewer armored forces than the Germans, and these units, dispersed within the infantry, were unable to effectively engage the Germans.*[53]

Experiences in the Polish-Soviet War shaped Polish Army organizational and operational doctrine. Unlike the trench warfare of World War I, the Polish-Soviet War was a conflict in which the cavalry's mobility played a decisive role.*[54] Poland acknowledged the benefits of mobility but was unable to invest heavily in many of the expensive, unproven inventions since then. In spite of this, Polish cavalry brigades were used as a mobile mounted infantry and had some successes against both German infantry and cavalry.*[55]



Polish PZL.37 Łoś medium bombers with a four-man crew

The Polish Air Force (*Lotnictwo Wojskowe*) was at a severe disadvantage against the German *Luftwaffe*, although it was not destroyed on the ground early on as is commonly believed. The Polish Air Force lacked modern fighters, but its pilots were among the world's best trained, as proven a year later in the Battle of Britain, in which the Poles played a major part.*[56]

Overall, the Germans enjoyed numerical and qualitative aircraft superiority. Poland had only about 600 aircraft, of which only 37 P-37 Łoś bombers were modern and comparable to its German counterparts. The Polish Air Force had roughly 185 PZL P.11 and some 95 PZL P.7 fighters, 175 PZL.23 Karaś Bs, 35 Karaś As, and by September, over 100 PZL.37s were produced.*[Note 4] However, for the September Campaign, only some 70% of those aircraft were mobilized. Only 36 PZL.37s were deployed. All those aircraft were of indigenous Polish de-

sign, with the bombers being more modern than fighters, according to the Ludomił Rayski air force expansion plan, which relied on a strong bomber force. The Polish Air Force consisted of a 'Bomber Brigade', 'Pursuit Brigade' and aircraft assigned to the various ground armies.*[58] The Polish fighters were older than their German counterparts; the PZL P.11 fighter—produced in the early 1930s—had a top speed of only 365 km/h (227 mph), far less than German bombers. To compensate, the pilots relied on its maneuverability and high diving speed.*[59]



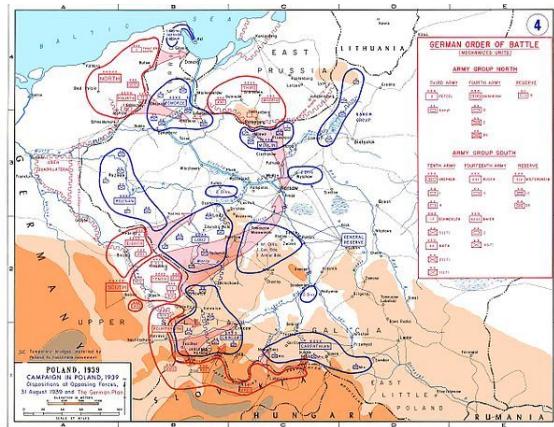
Polish 7TP light tanks in formation during the first days of the invasion

The tank force consisted of two armored brigades, four independent tank battalions and some 30 companies of TKS tankettes attached to infantry divisions and cavalry brigades.*[60] A standard tank of the Polish Army during the invasion of 1939 was the 7TP light tank. It was the first tank in the world to be equipped with a diesel engine and 360° Gundlach periscope.*[61] The 7TP was significantly better armed than its most common opponents, the German Panzer I and II, but only 140 tanks were produced between 1935 and the outbreak of the war. Poland had also a few relatively modern imported designs, such as 50 Renault R35 tanks and 38 Vickers E tanks.

The Polish Navy was a small fleet of destroyers, submarines and smaller support vessels. Most Polish surface units followed Operation Peking, leaving Polish ports on 20 August and escaping by way of the North Sea to join with the British Royal Navy. Submarine forces participated in Operation Worek, with the goal of engaging and damaging German shipping in the Baltic Sea, but they had much less success. In addition, many merchant marine ships joined the British merchant fleet and took part in wartime convoys.

6.3 Details of the campaign

6.3.1 German plan



Dispositions of the opposing forces on 31 August 1939 with the German order of battle overlaid in pink.

The September Campaign was devised by General Franz Halder, chief of the general staff, and directed by General Walther von Brauchitsch, the commander in chief of the upcoming campaign. It called for the start of hostilities before a declaration of war, and pursued a doctrine of mass encirclement and destruction of enemy forces. The infantry—far from completely mechanized but fitted with fast-moving artillery and logistic support—was to be supported by *Panzers* and small numbers of truck-mounted infantry (the *Schützen* regiments, forerunners of the *panzergrenadiers*) to assist the rapid movement of troops and concentrate on localized parts of the enemy front, eventually isolating segments of the enemy, surrounding, and destroying them. The pre-war “armored idea” (which an American journalist in 1939 dubbed *Blitzkrieg*)—which was advocated by some generals, including Heinz Guderian—would have had the armor punching holes in the enemy’s front and ranging deep into rear areas; in actuality, the campaign in Poland would be fought along more traditional lines. This stemmed from conservatism on the part of the German high command, who mainly restricted the role of armor and mechanized forces to supporting the conventional infantry divisions.

Poland's terrain was well suited for mobile operations when the weather cooperated; the country had flat plains with long frontiers totalling almost 5,600 km (3,500 mi), Poland's long border with Germany on the west and north—facing East Prussia—extended 2,000 km (1,200 mi). Those had been lengthened by another 300 km (190 mi) on the southern side in the aftermath of the Munich Agreement of 1938. The German incorporation of Bohemia and Moravia and creation of the German puppet state of Slovakia meant that Poland's southern flank was also exposed.

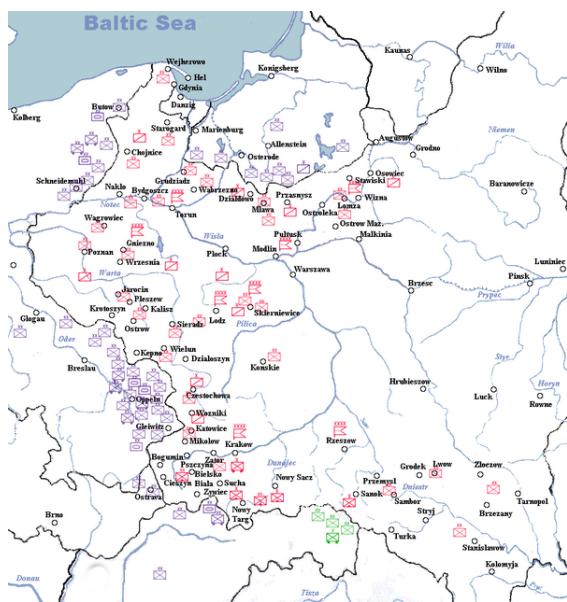


Polish Infantryman, 1939

Hitler demanded that Poland be conquered in six weeks, but German planners thought that it would require three months.* [62] They intended to fully exploit their long border with the great enveloping manoeuvre of *Fall Weiss*. German units were to invade Poland from three directions:

- A main attack over the western Polish border. This was to be carried out by Army Group South commanded by General Gerd von Rundstedt, attacking from German Silesia and from the Moravian and Slovak border: General Johannes Blaskowitz's 8th Army was to drive eastward against Łódź; General Wilhelm List's 14th Army was to push on toward Kraków and to turn the Poles' Carpathian flank; and General Walter von Reichenau's 10th Army, in the centre with Army Group South's armor, was to deliver the decisive blow with a northeastward thrust into the heart of Poland.
- A second route of attack from northern Prussia. General Fedor von Bock commanded Army Group North, comprising General Georg von Küchler's 3rd Army, which was to strike southward from East Prussia, and General Günther von Kluge's 4th Army, which was to attack eastward across the base of the Polish Corridor.
- A tertiary attack by part of Army Group South's allied *Slovak* units from Slovakia.
- From within Poland, the German minority would assist by engaging in diversion and sabotage operations through *Volksdeutscher Selbstschutz* units prepared before the war.

All three assaults were to converge on Warsaw, while the main Polish army was to be encircled and destroyed west of the Vistula. *Fall Weiss* was initiated on 1 September 1939, and was the first operation of Second World War in Europe.



Deployment of German, Polish, and Slovak divisions immediately before the German invasion.

6.3.2 Polish defense plan

The Polish determination to deploy forces directly at the German-Polish border, prompted by the Polish-British Common Defense Pact, shaped the country's defence plan, "Plan West". Poland's most valuable natural resources, industry and population were located along the western border in Eastern Upper Silesia. Polish policy centred on their protection especially since many politicians feared that if Poland were to retreat from the regions disputed by Germany, Britain and France would sign a separate peace treaty with Germany similar to the Munich Agreement of 1938.* [63] The fact that none of Poland's allies had specifically guaranteed Polish borders or territorial integrity didn't help in easing Polish concerns. For these reasons, the Polish government disregarded French advice to deploy the bulk of its forces behind natural barriers such as the Vistula and San rivers, even though some Polish generals supported it as a better strategy. The West Plan did permit the Polish armies to retreat inside the country, but it was supposed to be a slow retreat behind prepared positions and was intended to give the armed forces time to complete its mobilization and execute a general counteroffensive with the support of the Western Allies.* [64]

The Polish General Staff had not begun elaborating the "West" defence plan until 4 March 1939. It was assumed that the Polish Army, fighting in the initial phase of the war alone, would be compelled to defend the western regions of the country. The plan of operations took into account, first of all, the numerical and material superiority of the enemy and, consequently, assumed the defensive character of Polish operations. The Polish intentions were: defence of the western regions judged as indispensable for waging the war, taking advantage of the



A camouflaged Polish P-11 fighter at a combat airfield

propitious conditions for counterattacks by reserve units, and avoidance of being smashed before the beginning of Franco/British operations in Western Europe. The operational plan had not been elaborated in detail and concerned only the first stage of operations.* [65]

The British and French estimated that Poland would be able to defend itself for two to three months, while Poland estimated it could do so for at least six months. While Poland drafted its estimates based upon the expectation that the Western Allies would honor their treaty obligations and quickly start an offensive of their own, the French and British expected the war to develop into trench warfare much like World War I. The Polish government was not notified of this strategy and based all of its defence plans on promises of quick relief by their Western allies.* [66]* [67]

Polish forces were stretched thinly along the Polish-German border and lacked compact defence lines and good defence positions along disadvantageous terrain. This strategy also left supply lines poorly protected. One-third of Poland's forces were massed in or near the Polish Corridor, making them vulnerable to a double envelopment from East Prussia and the west. Another third were concentrated in the north-central part of the country, between the major cities of Łódź and Warsaw.* [68] The forward positioning of Polish forces vastly increased the difficulty of carrying out strategic maneuvers, compounded by inadequate mobility, as Polish units often lacked the ability to retreat from their defensive positions as they were being overrun by more mobile German mechanized formations.* [69]

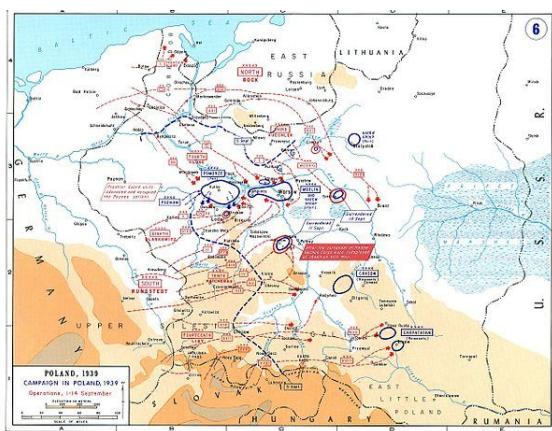


Peking Plan: Polish destroyers evacuate the Baltic Sea en route to the United Kingdom.

As the prospect of conflict increased, the British government pressed Marshal Edward Rydz-Śmigły to evacuate the most modern elements of the Polish Navy from the Baltic Sea.*[70] In the event of war the Polish military leaders realized that the ships which remained in the Baltic were likely to be quickly sunk by the Germans. Furthermore, the Danish straits were well within operating range of the German *Kriegsmarine* and *Luftwaffe*, so there was little chance of an evacuation plan succeeding if implemented after hostilities began. Four days after the signing of the Polish-British Common Defense Pact, three destroyers of the Polish Navy executed the Peking Plan and consequently evacuated to Great Britain.*[70]

Although the Polish military had prepared for conflict, the civilian population remained largely unprepared. Polish pre-war propaganda emphasized that any German invasion would be easily repelled. Consequently, Polish defeats during the German invasion came as a shock to the civilian population.*[69] Lacking training for such a disaster, the civilian population panicked and retreated east, spreading chaos, lowering troop morale and making road transportation for Polish troops very difficult.*[69]

6.3.3 Phase 1: German invasion



Map showing the advances made by the Germans, and the disposition of all troops from 1 to 14 September

Following several German-staged incidents (like the Gleiwitz incident, a part of Operation Himmler), which German propaganda used as a pretext to claim that German forces were acting in self-defence, the first regular act of war took place on 1 September 1939, at 04:40, when the *Luftwaffe* attacked the Polish town of Wieluń, destroying 75% of the city and killing close to 1,200 people, most of them civilians. This invasion subsequently began World War II. Five minutes later, the old German pre-dreadnought battleship *Schleswig-Holstein* opened fire on the Polish military transit depot at Westerplatte in the Free City of Danzig on the Baltic Sea. At 08:00, German troops—still without a formal declaration of war issued—attacked near the Polish village of

Mokra. The Battle of the Border had begun. Later that day, the Germans attacked on Poland's western, southern and northern borders, while German aircraft began raids on Polish cities. The main axis of attack led eastwards from Germany proper through the western Polish border. Supporting attacks came from East Prussia in the north, and a co-operative German-Slovak tertiary attack by units (Field Army "Bernolák") from German-allied Slovakia in the south. All three assaults converged on the Polish capital of Warsaw.



The city of Wieluń destroyed by Luftwaffe bombing

The Allied governments declared war on Germany on 3 September; however, they failed to provide any meaningful support. The German-French border saw only a few minor skirmishes, although the majority of German forces, including 85% of their armoured forces, were engaged in Poland. Despite some Polish successes in minor border battles, German technical, operational and numerical superiority forced the Polish armies to retreat from the borders towards Warsaw and Lwów. The *Luftwaffe* gained air superiority early in the campaign. By destroying communications, the *Luftwaffe* increased the pace of the advance which overran Polish airstrips and early warning sites, causing logistical problems for the Poles. Many Polish Air Force units ran low on supplies, 98 of their number withdrew into then-neutral Romania.*[71] The Polish initial strength of 400 was reduced to just 54 by 14 September and air opposition virtually ceased.*[71]



Hitler watching German soldiers marching into Poland in September 1939.

By 3 September, when Günther von Kluge in the north had reached the Vistula River (some 10 km (6.2 mi) from the German border at that time) and Georg von Küchler was approaching the Narew River, Walther von Reichenau's armor was already beyond the Warta river; two days later, his left wing was well to the rear of Łódź and his right wing at the town of Kielce. On 7 September the defenders of the Polish capital had fallen back to a 48 km (30 mi) line paralleling the Vistula River where they rallied against German tank thrusts. The defensive line ran between Płońsk and Pułtusk, northwest and northeast of Warsaw, respectively. The right wing of the Poles had been hammered back from Ciechanów about 40 km (25 mi) northwest of Pułtusk pivoting on Płońsk. At one stage in the struggle the Poles were driven from Pułtusk and the Germans threatened to turn the Polish flank and thrust on to the Vistula and Warsaw. Pułtusk, however, was regained in the face of withering German fire. A considerable number of German tanks were captured after a German attack had pierced the line but the Polish defenders outflanked them.*[72] By 8 September, one of Reichenau's armored corps—having advanced 225 km (140 mi) in the first week of the campaign—reached the outskirts of Warsaw. Light divisions on Reichenau's right were on the Vistula between Warsaw and the town of Sandomierz by 9 September while List—in the south—was on the San River above and below the town of Przemyśl. At the same time, Guderian led his 3rd Army tanks across the Narew, attacking the line of the Bug River, already encircling Warsaw. All the German armies made progress in fulfilling their parts of the *Fall Weiss* plan. The Polish armies were splitting up into uncoordinated fragments, some of which were retreating while others were launching disjointed attacks on the nearest German columns.



Cheerful German and Slovak soldiers posing with a group of civilians in Komarica, September 1939.

Polish forces abandoned the regions of Pomerelia (the Polish Corridor), Greater Poland and Polish Upper Silesia in the first week. The Polish plan for border defence was proven a dismal failure. The German advance as a whole was not slowed. On 10 September, the Polish

commander-in-chief—Marshal Edward Rydz-Śmigły—ordered a general retreat to the southeast, towards the so-called Romanian Bridgehead.*[73] Meanwhile, the Germans were tightening their encirclement of the Polish forces west of the Vistula (in the Łódź area and, still farther west, around Poznań) and also penetrating deeply into eastern Poland. Warsaw—under heavy aerial bombardment since the first hours of the war—was attacked on 9 September and was put under siege on 13 September. Around that time, advanced German forces also reached the city of Lwów, a major metropolis in eastern Poland. 1,150 German aircraft bombed Warsaw on 24 September.



A bombed Polish Army column during the Battle of the Bzura

The Polish defensive plan called for a strategy of encirclement: they were to allow the Germans to advance in between two Polish Army groups in the line between Berlin and Warsaw-Lodz, at which point Armia Prusy would move in and repulse the German spearhead, trapping them. In order for this to happen, Armia Prusy needed to be fully mobilized by 3 September. However, Polish military planners failed to foresee the speed of the German advance and assumed that Armia Prusy would need to be fully mobilized by 16 September.*[74]

The largest battle during this campaign—the Battle of Bzura—took place near the Bzura river west of Warsaw and lasted 9–19 September. Polish armies Poznań and Pomorze, retreating from the border area of the Polish Corridor, attacked the flank of the advancing German 8th Army, but the counterattack failed after initial success. After the defeat, Poland lost its ability to take the initiative and counterattack on a large scale. German air power

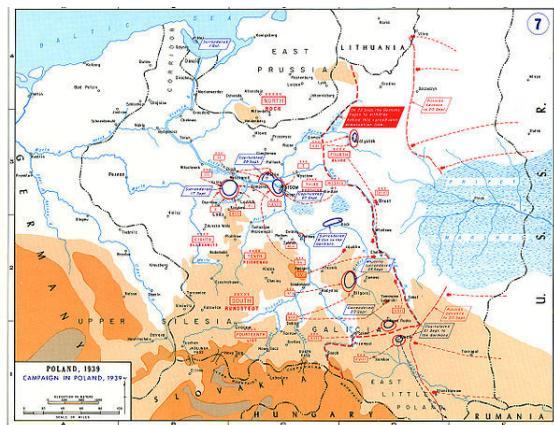
was instrumental during the battle. The *Luftwaffe*'s offensive broke what remained of Polish resistance in an “awesome demonstration of air power”.*[75] The *Luftwaffe* quickly destroyed the bridges across the Bzura River. Afterward, the Polish forces were trapped out in the open, and were attacked by wave after wave of *Stukas*, dropping 50 kg (110 lb) “light bombs” which caused huge numbers of casualties. The Polish anti-aircraft batteries ran out of ammunition and retreated to the forests, but were then “smoked out” by the Heinkel He 111 and Dornier Do 17s dropping 100 kg (220 lb) incendiaries. The *Luftwaffe* left the army with the task of mopping up survivors. The *Stukageschwaders* alone dropped 388 t (428 short tons) of bombs during this battle.*[75]

The Polish government (of President Ignacy Mościcki) and the high command (of Marshal Edward Rydz-Śmigły) left Warsaw in the first days of the campaign and headed southeast, reaching Lublin on 6 September. From there, it moved on 9 September to Kremenez, and on 13 September to Zalesziki on the Romanian border.*[76] Rydz-Śmigły ordered the Polish forces to retreat in the same direction, behind the Vistula and San rivers, beginning the preparations for the defence of the Romanian Bridgehead area.*[73]

6.3.4 Phase 2: after Soviet Union invasion from the east

For more details on this topic, see Soviet invasion of Poland.

From the beginning, the German government repeat-



Disposition of all troops following the Soviet invasion.

edly asked Vyacheslav Molotov whether the Soviet Union would keep to its side of the partition bargain.*[77]*[78] The Soviet forces were holding fast along their designated invasion points pending finalization of the five-month-long undeclared war with Japan in the Far East. On 15 September 1939, the Ambassadors Molotov and Shigenori Tōgō completed their agreement ending the conflict, and the Nomonhan cease-fire went into effect on 16 September 1939. Now cleared of any “second front”

threat from the Japanese, Soviet premier Joseph Stalin ordered his forces into Poland on 17 September.*[15] It was agreed that the USSR would relinquish its interest in the territories between the new border and Warsaw in exchange for inclusion of Lithuania in the Soviet “zone of interest”.

By 17 September, the Polish defence was already broken and the only hope was to retreat and reorganize along the Romanian Bridgehead. However, these plans were rendered obsolete nearly overnight, when the over 800,000-strong Soviet Red Army entered and created the Belarusian and Ukrainian fronts after invading the eastern regions of Poland in violation of the Riga Peace Treaty, the Soviet-Polish Non-Aggression Pact, and other international treaties, both bilateral and multilateral.*[Note 5] Soviet diplomacy had lied that they were “protecting the Ukrainian and Belarusian minorities of eastern Poland since the Polish government had abandoned the country and the Polish state ceased to exist”.*[80]

Polish border defence forces in the east—known as the *Korpus Ochrony Pogranicza*—consisted of about 25 battalions. Edward Rydz-Śmigły ordered them to fall back and not engage the Soviets.*[73] This, however, did not prevent some clashes and small battles, such as the Battle of Grodno, as soldiers and local population attempted to defend the city. The Soviets executed numerous Polish officers, including prisoners of war like General Józef Olszyna-Wilczyński.*[81]*[82] The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists rose against the Poles, and communist partisans organized local revolts, robbing and killing civilians.*[83] Those movements were quickly disciplined by the NKVD. The Soviet invasion was one of the decisive factors that convinced the Polish government that the war in Poland was lost.*[84] Before the Soviet attack from the east, the Polish military's fall-back plan had called for long-term defence against Germany in the south-eastern part of Poland, while awaiting relief from a Western Allies attack on Germany's western border.*[84] However, the Polish government refused to surrender or negotiate a peace with Germany. Instead, it ordered all units to evacuate Poland and reorganize in France.



Red Army enters the provincial capital of Wilno during the Soviet invasion, 19 September 1939

Meanwhile, Polish forces tried to move towards the Ro-

manian Bridgehead area, still actively resisting the German invasion. From 17–20 September, Polish armies *Kraków* and *Lublin* were crippled at the Battle of Tomaszów Lubelski, the second-largest battle of the campaign. The city of Lwów capitulated on 22 September because of Soviet intervention; the city had been attacked by the Germans over a week earlier, and in the middle of the siege, the German troops handed operations over to their Soviet allies.*[85] Despite a series of intensifying German attacks, Warsaw—defended by quickly reorganized retreating units, civilian volunteers and militia—held out until 28 September. The Modlin Fortress north of Warsaw capitulated on 29 September after an intense 16-day battle. Some isolated Polish garrisons managed to hold their positions long after being surrounded by German forces. Westerplatte enclave's tiny garrison capitulated on 7 September and the Oksywie garrison held until 19 September; Hel Fortified Area was defended until 2 October.*[86] In the last week of September, Hitler made a speech in the city of Danzig in which he said:

Meantime, Russia felt moved, on its part, to march in for the protection of the interests of the White Russian and Ukrainian people in Poland. We realize now that in England and France this German and Russian co-operation is considered a terrible crime. An Englishman even wrote that it is perfidious – well, the English ought to know. I believe England thinks this co-operation perfidious because the co-operation of democratic England with bolshevist Russia failed, while National Socialist Germany's attempt with Soviet Russia succeeded.

Poland never will rise again in the form of the Versailles treaty. That is guaranteed not only by Germany, but also guaranteed by Russia. —Adolf Hitler, 19 September 1939
*[87]

Despite a Polish victory at the Battle of Szack, after which the Soviets executed all the officers and NCOs they had captured, the Red Army reached the line of rivers Narew, Bug River, Vistula and San by 28 September, in many cases meeting German units advancing from the other direction. Polish defenders on the Hel peninsula on the shore of the Baltic Sea held out until 2 October. The last operational unit of the Polish Army, General Franciszek Kleeberg's *Samodzielna Grupa Operacyjna "Polesie"*, surrendered after the four-day Battle of Kock near Lublin on 6 October marking the end of the September Campaign.*[88]

6.3.5 Civilian deaths

Hundreds of thousands of Polish civilians were killed during the September invasion of Poland and millions more were killed in the following years of German and So-



A girl cries over the body of her 14-year-old sister who was strafed by the Luftwaffe

viet occupation. The Polish Campaign was the first action by Adolf Hitler in his attempt to create Lebensraum (living space) for Germans. Nazi propaganda was one of the factors behind the German brutality directed at civilians which had worked relentlessly to convince the German people into believing that the Jews and Slavs were *Untermenschen* (subhumans).*[89]*[90]

Starting from the first day of invasion, the German air force (the *Luftwaffe*) attacked civilian targets and columns of refugees along the roads to terrorize the Polish people, disrupt communications, and target Polish morale. The *Luftwaffe* killed 6,000–7,000 Polish civilians during the bombing of Warsaw.*[91]

The German invasion saw atrocities committed against Polish men, women, and children.*[92] The German forces (both SS and the regular *Wehrmacht*) murdered tens of thousands of Polish civilians (e.g. The 1st SS Panzer Division Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler throughout the campaign was notorious for burning villages*[93] and committing atrocities in numerous Polish towns, including massacres in Błonie, Złoczew, Bolesławiec, Torzeniec, Goworowo, Mława, and Włocławek).*[94]

During Operation Tannenberg, an ethnic cleansing campaign organized by multi elements of the German government, Tens of thousands of Polish civilians were shot at 760 mass execution sites by the *Einsatzgruppen*.

Altogether, the civilian losses of Polish population amounted to about 150,000–200,000.*[95] Roughly 1,250 German civilians were also killed during the invasion (and an additional 2,000 died fighting Polish troops as members ethnic German militia such as *Volksdeutscher Selbstschutz* which constituted a fifth column during the invasion).*[96]

6.4 Aftermath

Poland's defeat was the inevitable outcome of the Warsaw government's illusions about the actions its allies would take, as well as of its over-estimation of the Polish Army's ability to offer lengthy resistance.*[97]

Erich von Manstein, Chief of Staff of the German Army Group South

Poland was divided between Germany and the Soviet Union. Slovakia gained back those territories taken by Poland in autumn 1938. Lithuania received the city of Vilnius and its environs on 28 October 1939 from the Soviet Union. On 8 and 13 September 1939, the German military districts of "Posen" (Poznan)—commanded by General Alfred von Vollard-Bockelberg—and "Westpreußen" (West Prussia)—commanded by General Walter Heitz—were established in conquered Greater Poland and Pomerelia, respectively.*[98] Based on laws of 21 May 1935 and 1 June 1938, the German *Wehrmacht* delegated civil administrative powers to "Chiefs of Civil Administration" (*Chefs der Zivilverwaltung, CdZ*).*[99] German dictator Adolf Hitler appointed Arthur Greiser to become the CdZ of the Posen military district, and Danzig's *Gauleiter* Albert Forster to become the CdZ of the West Prussian military district.*[98] On 3 October, the military districts "Łódź" and "Krakau" (Cracow) were set up under command of *Generalobersten* (Colonel-Generals) Gerd von Rundstedt and Wilhelm List, and Hitler appointed Hans Frank and Arthur Seyss-Inquart as civil heads, respectively.*[98] At the same time, Frank was appointed "supreme chief administrator" for all occupied territories.*[98] On 28 September, another secret German-Soviet protocol modified the arrangements of August: all of Lithuania was shifted to the Soviet sphere of influence; in exchange, the dividing line in Poland was moved in Germany's favour, eastwards towards the Bug River. On 8 October, Germany formally annexed the western parts of Poland with Greiser and Forster as *Reichsstatthalter*, while the south-central parts were administered as the *General Government* led by Frank.

Even though water barriers separated most of the spheres of interest, the Soviet and German troops met on numerous occasions. The most remarkable event of this kind occurred at Brest-Litovsk on 22 September. The German 19th Panzer Corps—commanded by General Heinz Guderian—had occupied the city, which lay within the Soviet sphere of interest. When the Soviet 29th Tank Brigade—



German and Soviet troops shaking hands following the invasion

commanded by S. M. Krivoshein—approached, the commanders negotiated that the German troops would withdraw and the Soviet troops would enter the city saluting each other.*[100] At Brest-Litovsk, Soviet and German commanders held a joint *victory parade* before German forces withdrew westward behind a new demarcation line.*[17]*[101] Just three days earlier, however, the parties had a more hostile encounter near Lwow (*Lviv, Lemberg*), when the German 137th *Gebirgsjägerregiment* (mountain infantry regiment) attacked a reconnaissance detachment of the Soviet 24th Tank Brigade; after a few casualties on both sides, the parties turned to negotiations. The German troops left the area, and the Red Army troops entered Lviv on 22 September.

The Molotov–Ribbentrop pact and the invasion of Poland marked the beginning of a period during which the government of the Soviet Union increasingly tried to convince itself that the actions of Germany were reasonable, and were not developments to be worried about, despite evidence to the contrary.*[102] On 7 September 1939, just a few days after France and Britain joined the war against Germany, Stalin explained to a colleague that the war was to the advantage of the Soviet Union, as follows:*

A war is on between two groups of capitalist countries... for the redivision of the world, for the domination of the world! We see nothing wrong in their having a good hard fight and weakening each other... Hitler, without understanding it or desiring it, is shaking and undermining the capitalist system... We can manoeuvre, pit one side against the other to set them fighting with each other as fiercely as possible... The annihilation of Poland would mean one fewer bourgeois fascist state to contend with! What would be the harm if as a result of the rout of Poland we were to extend the socialist system onto new territories and populations?*[103]

About 65,000 Polish troops were killed in the fighting,



Polish troops withdrawn to Hungary in September 1939

with 420,000 others being captured by the Germans and 240,000 more by the Soviets (for a total of 660,000 prisoners). Up to 120,000 Polish troops escaped to neutral Romania (through the Romanian Bridgehead and Hungary), and another 20,000 to Latvia and Lithuania, with the majority eventually making their way to France or Britain. Most of the Polish Navy succeeded in evacuating to Britain as well. German personnel losses were less than their enemies (~16,000 KIA).



German soldiers removing Polish government insignia

None of the parties to the conflict—Germany, the Western Allies or the Soviet Union—expected that the German invasion of Poland would lead to a war that would surpass

World War I in its scale and cost. It would be months before Hitler would see the futility of his peace negotiation attempts with the United Kingdom and France, but the culmination of combined European and Pacific conflicts would result in what was truly a “world war”. Thus, what was not seen by most politicians and generals in 1939 is clear from the historical perspective: The Polish September Campaign marked the beginning of the Second World War in Europe, which combined with the Japanese invasion of China in 1937 and the Pacific War in 1941, formed the cataclysm known as World War II.

The invasion of Poland led Britain and France to declare war on Germany on 3 September. However, they did little to affect the outcome of the September Campaign. No declaration of war was issued by Britain and France against the Soviet Union. This lack of direct help led many Poles to believe that they had been betrayed by their Western allies.

On 23 May 1939, Hitler explained to his officers that the object of the aggression was not Danzig, but the need to obtain German *Lebensraum* and details of this concept would be later formulated in the infamous *Generalplan Ost*.^{*[104]*[105]} The invasion decimated urban residential areas, civilians soon became indistinguishable from combatants, and the forthcoming German occupation (both on the annexed territories and in the General Government) was one of the most brutal episodes of World War II, resulting in between 5.47 million and 5.67 million Polish deaths^{*[106]} (about 20% of the country’s “total” population, and over 90% of its Jewish minority)—including the mass murder of 3 million Polish citizens (mainly Jews as part of the final solution) in extermination camps like Auschwitz, in concentration camps, and in numerous ad hoc massacres, where civilians were rounded up, taken to a nearby forest, machine-gunned, and then buried, whether they were dead or not.

According to the Polish Institute of National Remembrance, Soviet occupation between 1939 and 1941 resulted in the death of 150,000 and deportation of 320,000 of Polish citizens,^{*[106]*[107]} when all who were deemed dangerous to the Soviet regime were subject to sovietization, forced resettlement, imprisonment in labor camps (the Gulags) or murdered, like the Polish officers in the Katyn massacre.^{*[a]}

Since October 1939, the Polish army that could escape imprisonment from the Soviets or Nazis were mainly heading for British and French territories. These places were considered safe, because of the pre-war alliance between Great-Britain, France and Poland. Not only did the government escape, but also the national gold supply was evacuated via Romania and brought to the West, notably London and Ottawa.^{*[108]} The amount of approximately 75,000 kilos of gold was considered sufficient to field an army for the duration of the war.^{*[109]}

6.4.1 Misconceptions



German cavalry and motorized units entering Poland from East Prussia during 1939.

There are several common misconceptions regarding the Polish September Campaign.

- **False:** *The Polish Army fought German tanks with horse-mounted cavalry wielding lances and swords.*

In 1939, only 10% of the Polish army was made up of cavalry units.* [110] Polish cavalry never charged German tanks or entrenched infantry or artillery, but usually acted as mobile infantry (like dragoons) and reconnaissance units and executed cavalry charges only in rare situations against foot soldiers. Other armies (including German and Soviet) also fielded and extensively used elite horse cavalry units at that time. Polish cavalry consisted of eleven brigades, as emphasized by its military doctrine, equipped with anti tank rifles “UR” and light artillery such as the highly effective Bofors 37 mm anti-tank gun. The myth originated from war correspondents' reports similar to that of the **Battle of Krajanty**, where a Polish cavalry brigade was fired upon in **ambush** by hidden armored vehicles, after it had mounted a successful sabre-charge against German infantry. There have also been cases when Polish cavalry dashing between tanks trying to break out of encirclement gave an impression of an attack.* [Note 6]* [111]

- **False:** *The Polish Air Force was destroyed on the ground in the first days of the war.*

The Polish Air Force, though numerically inferior, had been moved from air bases to small camouflaged airfields shortly before the war. Only some trainers and auxiliary aircraft were destroyed on the ground. The Polish Air Force, significantly outnumbered and with its fighters

outmatched by more advanced German fighters, remained active up to the second week of the campaign, inflicting significant damage on the *Luftwaffe*.*[112] The *Luftwaffe* lost, to all operational causes, 285 aircraft, with 279 more damaged, while the Poles lost 333 aircraft.*[113]

- **False:** *Poland offered little resistance and surrendered quickly.*

In the first few days, Germany sustained very heavy losses: Poland cost the Germans an entire armored division, thousands of soldiers, and 25% of its air strength.* [114] As for duration, the September Campaign lasted only about one week less than the **Battle of France** in 1940, even though the Anglo-French forces were much closer to parity with the Germans in numerical strength and equipment.* [Note 7] Furthermore, the Polish Army was preparing the **Romanian Bridgehead**, which would have prolonged Polish defence, but this plan was cancelled due to the Soviet invasion of Poland on 17 September 1939.* [115] Poland also never officially surrendered to the Germans. Under German occupation, several guerilla troops continued to fight e.g. Henryk Dobrzański's one, or organised **Armia Krajowa** and other underground organisations, or forest partisans—**Leśni**. The Polish resistance movement in World War II in German-occupied Poland was one of the largest resistance movements in all of occupied Europe.* [116] Many soldiers travelled to France or UK to fight.



Polish soldiers with anti-aircraft artillery near the Warsaw Central Station during the first days of September, 1939.

- **False:** *Blitzkrieg was first used in Poland.*

It is often assumed that *blitzkrieg* is the strategy that Germany first used in Poland. The ideas of

blitzkrieg and mobile warfare had already been used in Spain, China and Siberia. Many early post-war histories, such as Barrie Pitt's in *The Second World War* (BPC Publishing 1966), attribute German victory to "enormous development in military technique which occurred between 1918 and 1940", citing that "Germany, who translated (British inter-war) theories into action …called the result *Blitzkrieg*." This idea has been repudiated by some authors. Matthew Cooper writes,

Throughout the Polish Campaign, the employment of the mechanized units revealed the idea that they were intended solely to ease the advance and to support the activities of the infantry. …Thus, any strategic exploitation of the armoured idea was still-born. The paralysis of command and the breakdown of morale were not made the ultimate aim of the …German ground and air forces, and were only incidental by-products of the traditional manoeuvres of rapid encirclement and of the supporting activities of the flying artillery of the *Luftwaffe*, both of which had as their purpose the physical destruction of the enemy troops. Such was the *Vernichtungsgedanke* of the Polish campaign.

—Cooper*[117]

Vernichtungsgedanke was a strategy dating back to Frederick the Great, and was applied in the Polish Campaign little changed from the French campaigns in 1870 or 1914. The use of tanks

…left much to be desired. …Fear of enemy action against the flanks of the advance, fear which was to prove so disastrous to German prospects in the west in 1940 and in the Soviet Union in 1941, was present from the beginning of the war.

—Cooper*[47]

John Ellis, writing in *Brute Force*, asserted that

…there is considerable justice in Matthew Cooper's assertion that the *panzer* divisions were not given the kind of *strategic* (emphasis in original) mission that was to characterize authentic armoured *blitzkrieg*, and were almost always closely subordinated to the various mass infantry armies.

—Ellis*[118]

Zaloga and Madej, in *The Polish Campaign 1939*, also address the subject of mythical interpretations of *Blitzkrieg* and the importance of other arms in the campaign. Whilst Western accounts of the September campaign have stressed the shock value of the *panzers* and *Stuka* attacks, they have

…'tended to underestimate the punishing effect of German artillery' (emphasis added) on Polish units. Mobile and available in significant quantity, artillery shattered as many units as any other branch of the *Wehrmacht*.

—Zaloga and Madej*[119]

6.5 See also

- Eastern Front (World War II)
- Polish resistance movement in World War II
- History of Poland (1939–1945)
- Horses in World War II
- List of Polish divisions in World War II
- Occupation of Poland (1939–1945)
- Oder-Neisse line
- Phoney War
- Polish cavalry brigade order of battle in 1939
- Polish contribution to World War II
- Siege of Warsaw (1939)
- Timeline of the Invasion of Poland (1939)
- War crimes of the Wehrmacht
- Western betrayal

6.6 Notes

[1] Various sources contradict each other so the figures quoted above should only be taken as a rough indication of the strength estimate. The most common range differences and their brackets are: German personnel 1,490,900 (official figure of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs) – or 1,800,000. Polish tanks: 100–880, 100 is the number of modern tanks, while the 880 number includes older tanks from the World War I era and *tankettes*.*[6]*[7]

[2] The discrepancy in German casualties can be attributed to the fact that some German statistics still listed soldiers as missing decades after the war. Today the most common and accepted numbers are: 8,082 to 16,343 KIA, 320 to 5,029 MIA, 27,280 to 34,136 WIA.*[8]

- For comparison, in his 1939 speech following the Polish Campaign Adolf Hitler presented these German figures: 10,576 KIA, 30,222 WIA, and 3,400 MIA.^{*[9]} According to early Allied estimates, including those of the Polish government-in-exile, the number of German KIA casualties was 90,000 and WIA casualties was 200,000^{*[9]*[10]} Equipment losses are given as 832 German tanks^{*[11]} of with approximately 236^{*[11]} to 341 as irrecoverable losses and approximately 319 other armored vehicles as irrecoverable losses (including 165 Panzerspähwagen – of them 101 as irrecoverable losses)^{*[11]} 522–561 German planes (including 246–285 destroyed and 276 damaged), 1 German minelayer (M-85) and 1 German torpedo ship (“Tiger”)</ref>
- 16,343 killed,
3,500 missing,^{*[12]}
30,300 wounded
- Slovakia:**
37 killed,
11 missing,
114 wounded^{*[13]}
- Soviet Union:** ^{*[Note 3]}
1,475 killed or missing,
2,383 wounded^{*[4]}
or:
5,327 killed, missing and wounded^{*[14]}
- Total casualties:**
59,000 Poland:<ref group='Note'>Various sources contradict each other so the figures quoted above should only be taken as a rough indication of losses. The most common range brackets for casualties are: Poland: 63,000 to 66,300 KIA, 134,000 WIA.^{*[8]} The often cited figure of 420,000 Polish prisoners of war represents only those captured by the Germans, as Soviets captured about 250,000 Polish POWs themselves, making the total number of Polish POWs about 660,000–690,000. In terms of equipment the Polish Navy lost 1 destroyer (*ORP Wicher*), 1 minelayer (*ORP Gryf*) and several support craft. Equipment loses included 132 Polish tanks and armored cars 327 Polish planes (118 fighters)^{*[11]}
- [3] Soviet official losses – figures provided by Krivosheev – are currently estimated at 1,475 KIA or MIA presumed dead (Ukrainian Front – 972, Belorussian Front – 503), and 2,383 WIA (Ukrainian Front – 1,741, Belorussian Front – 642). The Soviets lost approximately 150 tanks in combat of which 43 as irrecoverable losses, while hundreds more suffered technical failures.^{*[4]} However, Russian historian Igor Bunich estimates Soviet manpower losses at 5,327 KIA or MIA without a trace and WIA.^{*[14]}
- [4] P-11c (+43 reserve), 30 P-7 (+85 reserve), 118 P-23 Karaś light bombers, 36 P-37 Łoś bombers (armed in line, additionally a few of the total number produced were used in combat), 84 reconnaissance RXIII Lublin, RWD14 Czapla (+115 reserve)^{*[57]}
- [5] Other treaties violated by the Soviet Union were: the 1919 Covenant of the League of Nations (to which the USSR adhered in 1934), the Briand-Kellogg Pact of 1928 and the 1933 London Convention on the Definition of Aggression.^{*[79]}
- [6] Snidner takes issue here with this contention on at least one occasion. Seidner, *Marshal Edward Śmigły-Rydz Rydz*
- and the defence of Poland*
- [7] Polish to Germany forces in the September Campaign: 1,000,000 soldiers 4,300 guns, 880 tanks, 435 aircraft (Poland) to 1,800,000 soldiers, 10,000 guns, 2,800 tanks, 3,000 aircraft (Germany). French and participating Allies to German forces in the Battle of France: 2,862,000 soldiers, 13,974 guns, 3,384 tanks, 3,099 aircraft 2 (Allies) to 3,350,000 soldiers, 7,378 guns, 2,445 tanks, 5,446 aircraft (Germany).
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- German invasion of Poland Original reports from The Times
- Detailed outline of campaign, mainly from German documents
- The Campaign in Poland at WorldWar2 Database
- The Campaign in Poland at Achtung! Panzer
- German Statistics including September Campaign losses
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- Radio reports on the German invasion of Poland and Nazi broadcast claiming that Germany's action is an act of defence
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- Halford Mackinder's Necessary War An essay describing the Polish Campaign in a larger strategic context of the war
- Detailed Polish Army organization schemas by Dr. Leo Niehorster
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- Polish Armoured Units 1939
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6.9 Further reading

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- The short film *ADVANCE INTO POLAND (Reel 1 of 4)* is available for free download at the Internet Archive
- The short film *ADVANCE INTO POLAND (Reel 2 of 4)* is available for free download at the Internet Archive
- The short film *ADVANCE INTO POLAND (Reel 3 of 4)* is available for free download at the Internet Archive
- The short film *ADVANCE INTO POLAND (Reel 4 of 4)* is available for free download at the Internet Archive
- The short film *INVASION OF POLAND IN 1939 BY GERMAN ARMY (1943)* is available for free download at the Internet Archive
- The short film *Special Release – Europe at War!, 1939/09/04 (1939)* is available for free download at the Internet Archive

Chapter 7

Operation Barbarossa

Operation Barbarossa (German: *Unternehmen Barbarossa*) was the code name for Nazi Germany's World War II invasion of the Soviet Union, which was launched on 22 June 1941. The operation was driven by Adolf Hitler's ideological desire to destroy the Soviet Union and Communism, as outlined in his 1925 manifesto *Mein Kampf*.

In the two years leading up to the invasion, the two countries signed political and economic pacts for strategic purposes. Nevertheless, the German High Command began planning an invasion of the Soviet Union in July 1940, under the codename Operation Otto. On 18 December 1940, Hitler authorized the invasion, with a planned start date of 15 May 1941. The invasion, however, began on 22 June 1941. Over the course of the operation, about 4 million Axis personnel invaded the western Soviet Union along a 2,900-kilometer (1,800 mi) front, the largest invasion force in the history of warfare. In addition to troops, the Germans employed some 600,000 motor vehicles and between 600,000 and 700,000 horses. The offensive marked the beginning of the escalation of the war, both geographically and in the formation of the Allied coalition.

Operationally, the Germans achieved surprising victories and occupied some of the most important economic areas of the Soviet Union, mainly in Ukraine, and inflicted, as well as sustained, heavy casualties. Despite their successes, the German offensive stalled on the outskirts of Moscow and was subsequently pushed back by a Soviet counteroffensive. The Red Army repelled the Wehrmacht's strongest blows and forced the unprepared Germans into a war of attrition. The Germans would never again mount a simultaneous offensive along the entire strategic Soviet-Axis front. The failure of the operation drove Hitler to demand further operations of increasingly limited scope inside the USSR; all of which eventually failed, such as Case Blue and Operation Citadel.

The failure of Operation Barbarossa was a turning point in the fortunes of the Third Reich. Most importantly, the operation opened up the Eastern Front, to which more forces were committed into than any other theater of war in world history. The Eastern Front became the site of some of the largest battles, most horrific atrocities, and highest casualties for Soviets and Germans alike, all of

which influenced the course of both World War II and the subsequent history of the 20th century. The German armies captured 5,000,000 Soviet prisoners of war who were not granted protections stipulated in the Geneva Conventions. A majority of them never returned alive. The Nazis deliberately starved 3.1 million of the prisoners to death as part of a "Hunger Plan" that aimed to reduce the population of Eastern Europe and then repopulate it with ethnic Germans.*[20] Over a million Soviet Jews were murdered by *Einsatzgruppen* death squads and gassing as part of the Holocaust.*[21]

7.1 Background

7.1.1 Racial policies of Nazi Germany

Main article: Racial policy of Nazi Germany

As early as 1925, Adolf Hitler vaguely declared in his political manifesto and autobiography *Mein Kampf* that he would invade the Soviet Union, asserting that the German people needed to secure *Lebensraum* ("living space") to ensure the survival of Germany for generations to come.*[22] On 10 February 1939, Hitler told his army commanders that the next war would be "purely a war of *Weltanschauungen*... totally a people's war, a racial war." On 23 November, once World War II had already started, Hitler declared that "racial war has broken out and this war shall determine who shall govern Europe, and with it, the world." *[23] Racial policy of Nazi Germany viewed the Soviet Union (and all of Eastern Europe) as populated by non-Aryan *Untermenschen* ("sub-humans"), ruled by Jewish Bolshevik conspirators.*[24] Hitler claimed in *Mein Kampf* that Germany's destiny was to "turn to the East" as it did "six hundred years ago".*[25] Accordingly, it was stated Nazi policy to kill, deport, or enslave the majority of Russian and other Slavic populations and repopulate the land with Germanic peoples, under the Generalplan Ost.*[26] The Germans' belief in their ethnic superiority is discernible in official German records and by pseudoscientific articles in German periodicals at the time, which covered topics such as "how to deal with alien populations".*[27]

While older historiography tended to emphasize the notion of a “clean” Wehrmacht, the historian Jürgen Förster notes that “In fact, the military commanders were caught up in the ideological character of the conflict, and involved in its implementation as willing participants.”*[23] Before and during the invasion of the Soviet Union, German troops were heavily indoctrinated with anti-Bolshevik, anti-Semitic and anti-Slavic ideology via movies, radio, lectures, books and leaflets.*[28] Likening the Soviets to the forces of Genghis Khan, Hitler told Croatian military leader Slavko Kvaternik that the “Mongolian race” threatened Europe.*[29] Following the invasion, Wehrmacht officers told their soldiers to target people who were described as “Jewish Bolshevik sub-humans”, the “Mongol hordes”, the “Asiatic flood” and the “Red beast”.*[30] Nazi propaganda portrayed the war against the Soviet Union as both an ideological war between German National Socialism and Jewish Bolshevism and a racial war between the Germans and the Jewish, Gypsies and Slavic *Untermenschen*.*[31] German army commanders cast the Jews as the major cause behind the “partisan struggle”.*[32] The main guideline policy for German troops was “Where there's a partisan, there's a Jew, and where there's a Jew, there's a partisan,” or “The partisan is where the Jew is.”*[33]*[34] Many German troops viewed the war in Nazi terms and regarded their Soviet enemies as sub-human.*[35]

After the war began, the Nazis issued a ban on sexual relations between Germans and foreign slave workers.*[36] There were regulations enacted against the *Ost-Arbeiter* (“Eastern Workers”) that included the death penalty for sexual relations with a German person.*[37] Heinrich Himmler, in his secret memorandum, *Reflections on the Treatment of Peoples of Alien Races in the East*, (dated 25 May 1940) outlined the future plans for the non-German populations in the East.*[38] Himmler believed the Germanization process in Eastern Europe would be complete when “in the East dwell only men with truly German, Germanic blood”.*[39]

The Nazi secret plan *Generalplan Ost* (“General Plan for the East”), which was prepared in 1941 and confirmed in 1942, called for a “new order of ethnographical relations” in the territories occupied by Nazi Germany in Eastern Europe. The plan envisaged ethnic cleansing, executions and enslavement of the overwhelming majority of the populations of conquered counties with very small differing percentages of the various conquered nations undergoing Germanization, expulsion into the depths of Russia and other fates. The net effect of this plan would be to ensure that the conquered territories would be Germanized. It was divided into two parts: the *Kleine Planung* (“Small Plan”), which covered actions to be taken during the war, and the *Große Planung* (“Large Plan”), which covered actions to be undertaken after the war was won, and to be implemented gradually over a period of 25 to 30 years.*[40]

Evidence from a speech given by General Erich Hoepner



In their plan to create the Greater Germanic Reich the Nazi leadership aimed to conquer Eastern European territories, Germanise those seen as part of the Aryan race, subjugate and exterminate the Soviet populations, and colonise the territory with ethnic German settlers.

indicates the disposition of Operation Barbarossa and the Nazi racial plan, as he informed the 4th Panzer Group that the war against the Soviet Union was “an essential part of the German people's struggle for existence” (*Daseinkampf*), also referring to the imminent battle as the “old struggle of Germans against Slavs” and even stated, “the struggle must aim at the annihilation of today's Russia and must therefore be waged with unparalleled harshness.”*[41] To Hoepner, the imminent conflict would be “the old battle of the Germanic against the Slav peoples... the defense of European culture against Moscovite-Asiatic inundation, and the repulse of Jewish Bolshevism... No adherents of the present Russian-Bolshevik system are to be spared.” Walther von Brauchitsch also told his subordinates that troops should view the war as a “struggle between two different races and [should] act with the necessary severity.”*[42] Racial motivations were central to Nazi ideology and played a key role in planning for Operation Barbarossa since both Jews and communists were considered equivalent enemies of the Nazi state. Nazi imperialist ambitions were exercised without moral consideration for either group in their ultimate struggle for *Lebensraum*.*[43] In the eyes of the Nazis, the war against the Soviet Union would be a *Vernichtungskrieg*, a war of annihilation.*[23]

7.1.2 German-Soviet relations of 1939–40

Main article: [Germany–Soviet Union relations before 1941](#)

In August 1939, Germany and the Soviet Union signed a non-aggression pact in Moscow known as the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact shortly before the German invasion of Poland that triggered the outbreak of World War II in Europe. A secret protocol to the pact outlined an agreement between Germany and the Soviet Union on the division of



The geopolitical disposition of Europe in 1941, immediately before the start of Operation Barbarossa. The grey area represents Nazi Germany, its allies, and countries under its firm control.

the eastern European border states between their respective "spheres of influence": the Soviet Union and Germany would partition Poland in the event of an invasion by Germany, and the Soviets would be allowed to overrun the Baltic states and Finland.* [44]* [45] On 23 August 1939 the rest of the world learned of the pact between the Nazis and the Soviets but were unaware of the provisions to partition Poland.* [46] The conclusion of this pact was followed by a Soviet invasion of Poland that led to the annexation of the eastern part of the country.* [47] The pact stunned the world because of the parties' earlier mutual hostility and their conflicting ideologies.* [48] As a result of the pact, Germany and the Soviet Union maintained reasonably strong diplomatic relations for two years and fostered an important economic relationship. The countries entered a trade pact in 1940 by which the Soviets received German military equipment and trade goods in exchange for raw materials, such as oil and wheat, to help the Nazis circumvent a British blockade of Germany.* [49]

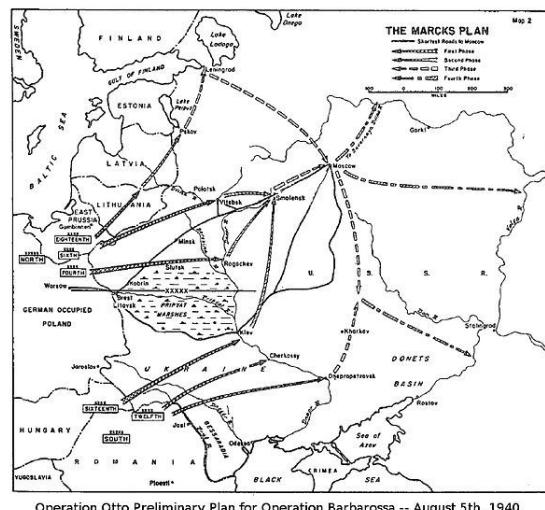
Despite the parties' ostensibly cordial relations, each side was highly suspicious of the other's intentions. For instance, the Soviet invasion of Bukovina in June 1940 went beyond their sphere of influence as agreed with Germany.* [50] After Germany entered the Axis Pact with Japan and Italy, it began negotiations about a potential Soviet entry into the pact.* [51] After two days of negotiations in Berlin from 12 to 14 November 1940, Germany presented a written proposal for a Soviet entry into the Axis. On 25 November 1940, the Soviet Union offered a written counter-proposal to join the Axis if Germany would agree to refrain from interference in the Soviet Union's sphere of influence, but Germany did not respond.* [51] As both sides began colliding with each

other in Eastern Europe, conflict appeared more likely, although they did sign a border and commercial agreement addressing several open issues in January 1941. Historian Robert Service avows that Soviet leader Joseph Stalin was convinced that the overall military strength of the USSR was such that he had nothing to fear and anticipated an easy victory should Germany attack; moreover, Stalin believed that since the Germans were still fighting the British in the west, Hitler would be unlikely to open up a two front war and subsequently delayed the reconstruction of defensive fortifications in the border regions.* [52] When German soldiers swam across the Bug River to warn the Red Army of an impending attack, they were treated like enemy agents and shot.* [53] Some historians believe that Stalin, despite providing an amicable front to Hitler, did not wish to remain allies with Germany. Rather, Stalin might have had intentions to break off from Germany and proceed with his own campaign against Germany to be followed by one against the rest of Europe.* [54]

7.1.3 German invasion plans

See also: A-A line, The Ural mountains in Nazi planning, and Lossberg study

Stalin's reputation as a brutal dictator contributed both



The Marcks Plan (published 5 August 1940) showing the A-A line objective of any invasion of the Soviet Union.

to the Nazis' justification of their assault and their faith in success; many competent and experienced military officers were killed in the Great Purge of the 1930s, leaving the Red Army with a relatively inexperienced leadership compared to that of their German counterparts. The Nazis often emphasized the Soviet regime's brutality when targeting the Slavs with propaganda.* [55] They also claimed that the Red Army was preparing to attack the Germans, and their own invasion was thus presented as a pre-emptive strike.* [55]

In the middle of 1940, following the rising tension between the Soviet Union and Germany over territories in the Balkans, an eventual invasion of the Soviet Union seemed to Hitler to be the only solution.*[56] While no concrete plans were made yet, Hitler told one of his generals in June that the victories in Western Europe finally freed his hands for his important real task: the showdown with Bolshevism.*[57] With the successful end to the campaign in France, General Erich Marcks was assigned to the working group drawing up the initial invasion plans of the Soviet Union. The first battle plans were entitled *Operation Draft East* (but colloquially it was known as the *Marcks Plan*).*[58] His report advocated the **A-A line** to be the operational objective of any invasion of the Soviet Union. This goal would extend from northern city of **Arkhangelsk** on the **Arctic Sea** through **Gorky** and **Rostov** to the port city of **Astrakhan** at the mouth of the **Volga** on the **Caspian Sea**. The report concluded that this military border would reduce the threat to Germany (and the **Third Reich**) from attacks by enemy bombers.*[58]

Although Hitler was warned by his general staff that occupying "**Western Russia**" would create "more of a drain than a relief for Germany's economic situation", he anticipated compensatory benefits, such as the demobilization of entire divisions to relieve the acute labor shortage in German industry; the exploitation of **Ukraine** as a reliable and immense source of agricultural products; the use of forced labor to stimulate Germany's overall economy; and the expansion of territory to improve Germany's efforts to isolate the **United Kingdom**.*[59] Hitler was convinced that Britain would sue for peace once the Germans triumphed in the Soviet Union.*[60]

On 5 December 1940, Hitler received the final military plans for the invasion on which the **German High Command** had been working since July 1940 under the codename "**Operation Otto**". Hitler, however, was dissatisfied with these plans and on 18 December issued **Führer Directive 21**,*[lower-alpha 5] which called for a new battle plan, now code-named "**Operation Barbarossa**".*[61] The operation was named after medieval Emperor **Frederick Barbarossa** of the **Holy Roman Empire**, a leader of the **Third Crusade** in the 12th century.*[62] The invasion was set for 15 May 1941, though it was delayed for about 7 weeks in favor of further time for preparation*[63] because of the war in the Balkans and bad weather.

According to a 1978 essay by German historian **Andreas Hillgruber**, the invasion plans drawn up by the German military elite were coloured by hubris stemming from the rapid defeat of France at the hands of the "invincible" Wehrmacht and by ignorance tempered by traditional German stereotypes of Russia as a primitive, backward "Asiatic" country. Red Army soldiers were considered brave and tough, but the officer corps was held in contempt. The leadership of the Wehrmacht paid little attention to politics, culture and the considerable indus-

trial capacity of the Soviet Union, in favour of a very narrow military view.*[64] Hillgruber argued that because these assumptions were shared by the entire military elite, Hitler was able to push through with a "war of annihilation" that would be waged in the most inhumane fashion possible with the complicity of "several military leaders", even though it was quite clear that this would be in violation of all accepted norms of warfare.*[64]

In autumn 1940, high-ranking German officials drafted a memorandum on the dangers of an invasion of the Soviet Union. They said Ukraine, Belorussia and the Baltic States would end up as only a further economic burden for Germany.*[65] It was argued that the Soviets in their current bureaucratic form were harmless and that the occupation would not benefit Germany.*[65] Hitler disagreed with economists about the risks and told his right-hand man **Hermann Göring**, the chief of the Luftwaffe, that he would no longer listen to misgivings about the economic dangers of a war with Russia.*[66] It is speculated that this was passed on to General **Georg Thomas**, who had produced reports that predicted a net economic drain for Germany in the event of an invasion of the Soviet Union unless its economy was captured intact and the Caucasus oilfields seized in the first blow, and he consequently revised his future report to fit Hitler's wishes.*[66] The **Red Army**'s ineptitude in the **Winter War** against Finland in 1939–40 convinced Hitler of a quick victory within a few months. Neither Hitler nor the General Staff anticipated a long campaign lasting into the winter, and therefore adequate preparations, such as the distribution of warm clothing and **winterization** of vehicles and lubricants, were not made.*[67]

Beginning in March 1941, **Göring's Green Folder** laid out details for the disposal of the Soviet economy after conquest. The **Hunger Plan** outlined how the entire urban population of conquered territories was to be starved to death, thus creating an agricultural surplus to feed Germany and urban space for the German upper class.*[68] Nazi policy aimed to destroy the Soviet Union as a political entity in accordance with the **geopolitical Lebensraum** ideals for the benefit of future generations of the "**Nordic master race**".*[55] In 1941, Nazi ideologue **Alfred Rosenberg**, later appointed Reich Minister of the Occupied Eastern Territories, suggested that conquered Soviet territory should be administered in the following **Reichskommissariate** ("Reich Commissionerships"):

German military planners also researched **Napoleon's failed invasion of Russia**. In their calculations, they concluded that there was little danger of a large-scale retreat of the Red Army into the Russian interior, as it could not afford to give up the Baltic states, Ukraine, or the Moscow and Leningrad regions, all of which were vital to the Red Army for supply reasons and would thus have to be defended.*[71] Hitler and his generals disagreed on where Germany should focus its energy.*[72]*[73] Hitler, in many discussions with his generals, repeated his order of "Leningrad first, the Donbass second, Moscow

third";*[74] but he consistently emphasized the destruction of the Red Army over the achievement of specific terrain objectives.*[75] Hitler believed Moscow to be of “no great importance” in the defeat of the Soviet Union and instead believed victory would come with the destruction of the Red Army west of the capital, especially west of the **Western Dvina** and **Dnieper** rivers, and this pervaded the plan for Barbarossa.*[76]*[77] This belief later led to disputes between Hitler and several German senior officers, including **Heinz Guderian**, **Gerhard Engel**, **Fedor von Bock** and **Franz Halder**, who believed the decisive victory could only be delivered at Moscow.*[78] Hitler had grown overconfident in his own military judgment as a result of the rapid successes in Western Europe.*[79]

7.2 German preparations



German soldiers (Flamethrower team) in the Soviet Union, June 1941

The Germans had begun massing troops near the Soviet border even before the campaign in the Balkans had finished. By the third week of February 1941, 680,000 German soldiers were gathered in assembly areas on the Romanian-Soviet border.*[80] In preparation for the attack, Hitler moved more than 3.2 million German and about 500,000 Axis soldiers to the Soviet border, launched many aerial surveillance missions over Soviet territory, and stockpiled war materiel in the East.

Although the Soviet High Command was alarmed by this, Stalin's belief that the Third Reich was unlikely to attack only two years after signing the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact resulted in a slow Soviet preparation.*[81] This fact aside, the Soviets did not entirely overlook the threat of their German neighbor as well before the German invasion, Marshal Semyon Timoshenko referred to the Germans as the Soviet Union's “most important and strongest enemy” and as early as July 1940, Red Army Army Chief of Staff, Boris Shaposhnikov, produced a preliminary three-pronged plan of attack for what German invasion might look like, remarkably similar to the actual attack.*[82] Since April 1941, the Germans had begun setting up Operation Haifisch and Operation Harpune to substantiate their claims that Britain was the real target. These simulated preparations in Norway and the English Channel coast included activities such as ship concentrations, reconnaissance flights and training exercises.*[83]

We have only to kick in the door and the whole rotten structure will come crashing down.*[84]*[85]

—Adolf Hitler

The postponement of Barbarossa from the initially planned date of 15 May to the actual invasion date of 22 June 1941 (a 38-day delay) occurred for a number of reasons. Most importantly, an unusually wet winter kept rivers at full flood until late spring.*[lower-alpha 6] The full floods could have discouraged an earlier attack, even if it was unlikely to have happened before the end of the Balkans Campaign.*[87]

The importance of the delay is still debated.*[87] William Shirer argued that Hitler's Balkans Campaign had delayed the commencement of Barbarossa by several weeks and thereby jeopardized it. He cited the deputy chief of the German General Staff in 1941 Friedrich Paulus, who claimed the campaign resulted in a delay of “about five weeks.” This figure is corroborated by both the German Naval War Diary and **Gerd von Rundstedt**.*[88] Antony Beevor names a variety of factors that delayed Barbarossa, including the delay in distributing motor transport, problems with fuel distribution, and the difficulty in establishing forward airfields for the Luftwaffe.*[89]

The Germans deployed one independent regiment, one separate motorized training brigade and 153 divisions for Barbarossa, which included 104 infantry, 19 panzer and 15 motorized infantry divisions in three army groups, nine security divisions to operate in conquered territories, four divisions in Finland and two divisions as reserve under the direct control of OKH.*[90] These were equipped with about 3,350 tanks, 7,200 artillery pieces, 2,770 aircraft (that amounted to 65 percent of the Luftwaffe), about 600,000 motor vehicles and 625,000–700,000 horses.*[91]*[92] Finland slated 14 divisions for the invasion, and Romania offered 13 divisions and eight brigades over the course of Barbarossa.*[3] The entire Axis forces, 3.8 million personnel,*[2] deployed across a front extending from the Arctic Ocean southward to the

Black Sea,*[75] were all controlled by the OKH and organized into Army Norway, Army Group North, Army Group Center and Army Group South, alongside three *luftflossen* (air fleets, the air force equivalent of army groups) that supported the army groups: Luftflotte 1 for North, Luftflotte 2 for Center and Luftflotte 4 for South.*[3]

Army Norway was to operate in far northern Scandinavia and bordering Soviet territories.*[3] Army Group North was to march through the Baltic states into northern Russia, either take or destroy the city of Leningrad and link up with Finnish forces.*[93]*[94]*[74] Army Group Center, the army group equipped with the most armour and air power,*[95] was to strike from Poland into Belorussia and the west-central regions of Russia proper, and advance to Smolensk and then Moscow.*[94]*[74] Army Group South was to strike the heavily populated and agricultural heartland of Ukraine, taking Kiev before continuing eastward over the steppes of southern USSR to the Volga with the aim of controlling the oil-rich Caucasus.*[94]*[74] Army Group South was deployed in two sections separated by a 198-mile (319 km) gap. The northern section, which contained the army group's only panzer group, was in southern Poland right next to Army Group Center, and the southern section was in Romania.*[96]

The German forces in the rear (mostly *Waffen-SS* and *Einsatzgruppen* units) were to operate in conquered territories to counter any partisan activity in areas they controlled, as well as to execute captured Soviet political commissars and Jews.*[55] On 17 June, Reich Main Security Office (RSHA) chief Reinhard Heydrich briefed around thirty to fifty *Einsatzgruppen* commanders on “the policy of eliminating Jews in Soviet territories, at least in general terms.”*[97] While the *Einsatzgruppen* were assigned to the Wehrmacht's units, which provided them with supplies such as gasoline and food, they were controlled by the RSHA.*[98] The official plan for Barbarossa assumed that the army groups would be able to advance freely to their primary objectives simultaneously, without spreading thin, once they had won the border battles and destroyed the Red Army's forces in the border area.*[99]

7.3 Soviet preparations

In 1930, Mikhail Tukhachevsky, a prominent military theorist in tank warfare in the interwar period and later Marshal of the Soviet Union, forwarded a memo to the Kremlin that lobbied for colossal investment in the resources required for the mass production of weapons, pressing the case for “40,000 aircraft and 50,000 tanks”.*[100] In the early 1930s, a very modern operational doctrine for the Red Army was developed and promulgated in the 1936 Field Regulations in the form of the Deep Battle Concept. Defense expenditure also grew

rapidly from just 12 percent of the gross national product in 1933 to 18 percent by 1940.*[101]

However, during Stalin's Great Purge in the late 1930s, which was still partially ongoing at the start of the war in June 1941,*[102]*[103] the officer corps of the Red Army was decimated and their replacements, appointed by Stalin for political reasons, often lacked military competence.*[104]*[102]*[103] Of the five Marshals of the Soviet Union appointed in 1935, only two survived Stalin's purge. 15 out of 16 army commanders, 50 out of the 57 corps commanders, 154 out of the 186 divisional commanders and 401 out of 456 colonels were killed, and many other officers were dismissed.*[104] In total, about 30,000 Red Army personnel were executed.*[105] Stalin further underscored his control by reasserting the role of political commissars at the divisional level and below to oversee the political loyalty of the Army to the regime. The commissars held a position equal to that of the commander of the unit they were overseeing.*[104] But in spite of efforts to ensure the political subservience of the armed forces, in the wake of Red Army's poor performance in Poland and in the Winter War, about 80 percent of the officers dismissed during the Great Purge were reinstated by 1941. Also, between January 1939 and May 1941, 161 new divisions were activated.*[106]*[107] Therefore, although about 75 percent of all the officers had been in their position for less than one year at the start of the German invasion of 1941, many of the short tenures can be attributed not only to the purge, but also to the rapid increase in creation of military units.*[107]

In the Soviet Union, speaking to his generals in December 1940, Stalin mentioned Hitler's references to an attack on the Soviet Union in *Mein Kampf* and Hitler's belief that the Red Army would need four years to ready itself. Stalin declared “we must be ready much earlier” and “we will try to delay the war for another two years”.*[108] As early as August 1940, British intelligence had received hints of German plans to attack the Soviets only a week after Hitler informally approved the plans for Barbarossa and warned the Soviet Union accordingly.*[109] But Stalin's distrust of the British led him to ignore their warnings in the belief that they were a trick designed to bring the Soviet Union into the war on their side.*[109] He had an ill-founded confidence in the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and suspected the British of trying to spread false rumours in order to trigger a war between Germany and the USSR.*[110] In early 1941, Stalin's own intelligence services and American intelligence gave regular and repeated warnings of an impending German attack.*[111] Soviet spy Richard Sorge also gave Stalin the exact German launch date, but Sorge and other informers had previously given different invasion dates that passed peacefully before the actual invasion.*[112] Stalin acknowledged the possibility of an attack in general and therefore made significant preparations, but decided not to run the risk of provoking

Hitler.*[113]



Marshal Zhukov speaking at a military conference in Moscow, September 1941

Beginning in July 1940, the Red Army General Staff developed war plans that identified the Wehrmacht as the most dangerous threat to the Soviet Union, and that in the case of a war with Germany, the Wehrmacht's main attack would come through the region north of the Pripyat Marshes into Belorussia,*[114]*[99] which later proved to be correct.*[114] But Stalin disagreed, and in October he authorized the development of new plans that assumed a German attack would focus on the region south of Pripyat Marshes towards the economically vital regions in Ukraine. This became the basis for all subsequent Soviet war plans and the deployment of their armed forces in preparation for the German invasion.*[114]*[115]

In early 1941 Stalin authorized the State Defense Plan 1941 (DP-41), which along with the Mobilization Plan 1941 (MP-41), called for the deployment of 186 divisions, as the first strategic echelon, in the four **military districts***[lower-alpha 7] of the western Soviet Union that faced the Axis territories; and the deployment of another 51 divisions along the Dvina and Dnieper rivers as the second strategic echelon under **Stavka** control, which in the case of a German invasion was tasked to spearhead a Soviet counteroffensive along with the remaining forces of the first echelon.*[115] But on 22 June 1941 the first echelon only contained 171 divisions,*[lower-alpha 8] numbering 2.6–2.9 million;*[2]*[116]*[117] and the second strategic echelon contained 57 divisions that were

still mobilizing, most of which were still seriously understrength.*[118] The second echelon was undetected by German intelligence until days after the invasion commenced, in most cases only when the German ground forces bumped into them.*[118]

At the start of the invasion, the manpower of the Soviet military force that had been mobilized was 5.3–5.5 million,*[2]*[119] and it was still increasing as the Soviet **reserve force** of 14 million, with at least basic military training, continued to mobilize.*[120]*[121] The Red Army was dispersed and still preparing when the invasion commenced. Their units were often separated and lacked adequate transportation.*[122]

The Soviet Union had some 23,000 tanks in service of which about 11,000 were in the western military districts that faced the German invasion force.*[7] Hitler later declared to some of his generals, “If I had known about the Russian tank strength in 1941 I would not have attacked”.*[123] However, maintenance and readiness standards were very poor; ammunition and radios were in short supply, and many armoured units lacked the trucks for supplies.*[124]*[125]*[59] The most advanced Soviet tank models – the KV-1 and T-34 – which were superior to all current German tanks, as well as all designs still in development as of the summer 1941,*[126] were not available in large numbers at the time the invasion commenced.*[127] Furthermore, in the autumn of 1939, the Soviets disbanded their **mechanized corps** and partly dispersed their tanks to **infantry divisions***[128] but following their observation of the German campaign in France, in late 1940 they began to reorganize most of their armored assets back into mechanized corps with a target strength of 1,031 tanks each.*[106] But these large armoured formations were unwieldy, and moreover they were spread out in scattered garrisons, with their subordinate divisions up to 100 kilometres (62 miles) apart.*[106] Furthermore, the reorganization was still in progress and incomplete when Barbarossa commenced.*[129]*[128] Soviet tank units were rarely well equipped, and they lacked training and logistical support. Units were sent into combat with no arrangements in place for refueling, ammunition resupply, or personnel replacement. Often, after a single engagement, units were destroyed or rendered ineffective.*[122] The Soviet numerical advantage in heavy equipment was thoroughly offset by the superior training and organization of the Wehrmacht.*[105]

The Soviet Air Force (VVS) held the numerical advantage with a total of approximately 19,533 aircraft, which made it the largest air force in the world in the summer of 1941.*[130] About 7,133–9,100 of these were deployed in the five western military districts,*[lower-alpha 7]*[130]*[7]*[8] and an additional 1445 were under Naval control.*[131]

Historians have debated whether Stalin was planning an invasion of German territory in the summer of 1941. The

debate began in the late 1980s when Viktor Suvorov published a journal article and later the book *Icebreaker* in which he stated that Stalin had seen the outbreak of war in western Europe as an opportunity to spread communist revolutions throughout the continent, and that the Soviet military was being deployed for an imminent attack at the time of the German invasion.^{*[133]} This view had also been advanced by former German generals following the war.^{*[134]} Suvorov's thesis was fully or partially accepted by some historians, including Valeri Danilov, Joachim Hoffmann, Mikhail Meltyukhov and Vladimir Nevezhin, and attracted public attention in Germany, Israel and Russia.^{*[135]^[136]}

However, it has been strongly rejected by most historians of this period,^{*[137]^[138]}

and *Icebreaker* is generally considered to be an "anti-Soviet tract" in western countries.^{*[139]} David Glantz and Gabriel Gorodetsky wrote books to rebut Suvorov's arguments,^{*[140]} and most historians believe that Stalin was seeking to avoid war in 1941 as he believed that his military was not ready to fight the German forces.^{*[141]}

7.4 Order of battle

Main article: Order of battle for Operation Barbarossa

7.5 Invasion



German troops at the Soviet state border marker, 22 June 1941

At around 1:00 am on 22 June 1941, the Soviet military districts in the border area^{*[lower-alpha 7]} were alerted by NKO Directive No. 1, which was issued late on night of 21 June.^{*[152]} It called on them to "bring all forces to combat readiness," but to "avoid provocative actions of any kind."^{*[153]} It took up to 2 hours for several of the units subordinate to the Fronts to receive the order of the directive,^{*[153]} and the majority did not receive it before the invasion commenced.^{*[152]}

At around 3:15 am on 22 June 1941, the Axis Powers commenced the invasion of the Soviet Union with the bombing of major cities in Soviet-occupied Poland^{*[154]} and an artillery barrage on Red Army defences on the entire front.^{*[152]} The heavy air-raids reached as far as Kronstadt near Leningrad, Ismail in Bessarabia, and Sevastopol in the Crimea. Meanwhile, ground troops crossed the border, accompanied in some locales by Lithuanian and Ukrainian fifth columnists.^{*[155]} Roughly three million soldiers of the Wehrmacht went into action and faced slightly fewer Soviet troops at the border.^{*[154]}

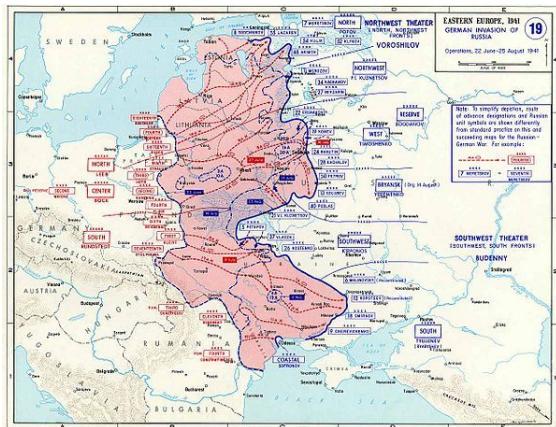
At around noon, the news of the invasion was broadcast to the population by Soviet foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov: "... Without a declaration of war, German forces fell on our country, attacked our frontiers in many places... The Red Army and the whole nation will wage a victorious Patriotic War for our beloved country, for honour, for liberty ... Our cause is just. The enemy will be beaten. Victory will be ours!"^{*[156]^[157]}

By calling upon the population's devotion to their nation rather than the Party, Molotov struck a patriotic chord that helped a stunned people absorb the shattering news.^{*[156]} Within the first few days of the invasion, the Soviet High Command and Red Army were extensively reorganized so as to place them on the necessary war footing.^{*[158]} Stalin did not address the nation about the German invasion until 3 July, when he also called for a "Patriotic War ... of the entire Soviet people".^{*[159]}

In Germany, on the morning of 22 June, Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels announced the invasion to the waking nation in a radio broadcast, "At this moment a march is taking place that, for its extent, compares with the greatest the world has ever seen. I have decided today to place the fate and future of the Reich and our people in the hands of our soldiers. May God aid us, especially in this fight!"^{*[160]} Later the same morning, Hitler proclaimed to his colleagues, "Before three months have passed, we shall witness a collapse of Russia, the like of which has never been seen in history."^{*[160]}

7.6 Phase one

The initial momentum of the German ground and air attack completely destroyed the Soviet organizational command and control within the first few hours, paralyzing every level of command from the infantry platoon to



German advances from June to August 1941

the Soviet High Command in Moscow.*[161] Therefore, Moscow failed to grasp the magnitude of the catastrophe that confronted the Soviet forces in the border area.*[59] At around 7:15 am, Stalin issued NKO Directive No. 2, which announced the invasion to the Soviet Armed Forces, and called on them to attack Axis forces wherever they had violated the borders and launch air strikes into the border regions of German territory.*[162] At around 9:15 pm, Stalin issued NKO Directive No. 3, signed by Marshal Semyon Timoshenko, which now called for a general counteroffensive on the entire front “without any regards for borders” that both men hoped would sweep the enemy from Soviet territory.*[163]*[153] Timoshenko's order was not based on a realistic appraisal of the military situation at hand, and it resulted in devastating casualties.

7.6.1 Air war

Main article: Axis and Soviet air operations during Operation Barbarossa

Luftwaffe reconnaissance units worked frantically to plot Soviet troop concentration, supply dumps, and airfields, and mark them down for destruction.*[59] Additional Luftwaffe attacks were carried out against Soviet command and control centers so as to “turn the Red Army into a disorganized and chaotic mob.”*[164] In contrast, Soviet artillery observers based at the border area had been under the strictest instructions not to open fire on German aircraft prior to the invasion.*[59] One plausible reason given for the Soviet hesitation to return fire was Stalin's initial belief that the assault was launched without Hitler's authorization. Significant amounts of Soviet territory were lost along with Red Army forces as a result; it took several days before Stalin comprehended the magnitude of the calamity.*[165] The Luftwaffe reported to have destroyed 1,489 aircraft on the first day of the invasion* [166] and over 3,100 over the first three days.*[167] Hermann Göring, Minister of Aviation and Commander-in-Chief of the Luftwaffe, distrusted the re-

ports and ordered the figure checked. Luftwaffe staffs surveyed the wreckage on Soviet airfields, and their original figure proved conservative, as over 2,000 Soviet aircraft were estimated to have been destroyed on the first day of the invasion.*[166] In reality, Soviet losses were likely higher; a Soviet archival document recorded the loss of 3,922 Soviet aircraft in the first three days against an estimated loss of 78 German aircraft.*[167]*[168] The Luftwaffe reported the loss of only 35 aircraft on the first day of combat.*[167] A document from the German Federal Archives puts the Luftwaffe's loss at 63 aircraft for the first day.*[169]

By the end of the first week, the Luftwaffe had achieved air supremacy over the battlefields of all the army groups,*[168] but was unable to effect this air dominance over the vast expanse of the western Soviet Union.*[170]*[171] According to the war diaries of the German High Command, the Luftwaffe by 5 July had lost 491 aircraft with 316 more damaged, leaving it with only about 70 percent of the strength it had at the start of the invasion.*[172]

7.6.2 Baltic states

Main article: Baltic Operation

On 22 June, Army Group North attacked the Soviet Northwestern Front and broke through its 8th and 11th Armies.*[173] The Soviets immediately launched a powerful counterattack against the German 4th Panzer Group with the Soviet 3rd and 12th Mechanized Corps, but the Soviet attack was defeated.*[173] On 25 June, the 8th and 11th Armies were ordered to withdraw to the Western Dvina River, where it was planned to meetup with the 21st Mechanized Corps and the 22nd and 27th Armies. However, on 26 June, Erich von Manstein's LVI Panzer Corps reached the river first and secured a bridgehead across it.*[174] The Northwestern Front was forced to abandon the river defenses, and on 29 June Stavka ordered the Front to withdraw to the **Stalin Line** on the approaches to Leningrad.*[174] On 2 July, Army Group North began its attack on the Stalin Line with its 4th Panzer Group, and on 8 July captured Pskov, devastating the defenses of the Stalin Line and reaching Leningrad oblast.*[174] The 4th Panzer Group had advanced about 450 kilometres (280 mi) since the start of the invasion and was now only about 250 kilometres (160 mi) from its primary objective Leningrad. On 9 July it began its attack towards the Soviet defenses along the Luga River in Leningrad oblast.*[175]

7.6.3 Ukraine and Moldavia

See also: Operation München and Battle of Brody (1941)

The northern section of Army Group South faced the Southwestern Front, which had the largest concentration of Soviet forces, and the southern section faced the Southern Front. In addition, the Pripyat Marshes and the Carpathian Mountains posed a serious challenge to the army group's northern and southern sections respectively.^{*[176]} On 22 June, only the northern section of Army Group South attacked, but the terrain impeded their assault, giving the Soviet defenders ample time to react.^{*[176]} The German 1st Panzer Group and 6th Army attacked and broke through the Soviet 5th Army.^{*[177]} Starting on the night of 23 June, the Soviet 22nd and 15th Mechanized Corps attacked the flanks of the 1st Panzer Group from north and south respectively. Although intended to be concerted, Soviet tank units were sent in piecemeal due to poor coordination. The 22nd Mechanized Corp ran into the 1st Panzer Army's III Motorized Corps and was decimated, and its commander killed. The 1st Panzer Group bypassed much of the 15th Mechanized Corps, which engaged the German 6th Army's 297th Infantry Division, where it was defeated by anti-tank fire and Luftwaffe attacks.^{*[178]} On 26 June, the Soviets launched another counterattack on the 1st Panzer Group from north and south simultaneously with the 9th, 19th and 8th Mechanized Corps, which altogether fielded 1649 tanks, and supported by the remnants of the 15th Mechanized Corps. The battle lasted for four days, ending in the defeat of the Soviet tank units.^{*[179]} On 30 June Stavka ordered the remaining forces of the Southwestern Front to withdraw to the Stalin Line, where it would defend the approaches to Kiev.^{*[180]}

On 2 July, the southern section of Army Group South – the Romanian 3rd and 4th Armies, alongside the German 11th Army – invaded Soviet Moldavia, which was defended by the Southern Front.^{*[181]} Counterattacks by the Front's 2nd Mechanized Corps and 9th Army were defeated, but on 9 July the Axis advance stalled along the defenses of the Soviet 18th Army between the Prut and Dniester Rivers.^{*[182]}

7.6.4 Belorussia

Main article: Battle of Białystok–Minsk

In the opening hours of the invasion, the Luftwaffe destroyed the Western Front's air force on the ground, and with the aid of Abwehr and their supporting anti-communist fifth columns operating in the Soviet rear paralyzed the Front's communication lines, which particularly cut off the Soviet 4th Army headquarters from headquarters above and below it.^{*[183]} On the same day, the 2nd Panzer Group crossed the Bug River, broke through the 4th Army, bypassed Brest Fortress, and pressed on towards Minsk, while the 3rd Panzer Group bypassed most of the 3rd Army and pressed on towards Vilnius.^{*[183]} Simultaneously, the German 4th and 9th Armies engaged the Western Front forces in the envi-

rons of Białystok.^{*[184]} On the order of Dmitry Pavlov, the commander of the Western Front, the 6th and 11th Mechanized Corps and the 6th Cavalry Corps launched a strong counterstrike towards Grodno on 24–25 June in hopes of destroying the 3rd Panzer Group. However, the 3rd Panzer Group had already moved on, with its forward units reaching Vilnius on the evening of 23 June, and the Western Front's armoured counterattack instead ran into infantry and antitank fire from the V Army Corps of the German 9th Army, supported by Luftwaffe air attacks.^{*[183]} By the night of 25 June, the Soviet counterattack was defeated, and the commander of the 6th Cavalry Corps was captured. The same night, Pavlov ordered all the remnants of the Western Front to withdraw to Slonim towards Minsk.^{*[183]} Subsequent counterattacks to buy time for the withdrawal were launched against the German forces, but all of them failed.^{*[183]} On 27 June, the 2nd and 3rd Panzer Groups met near Minsk and captured the city the next day, completing the encirclement of almost all of the Western Front in two pockets: one around Białystok and another west of Minsk.^{*[185]} The Germans destroyed the Soviet 3rd and 10th Armies while inflicting serious losses on the 4th, 11th and 13th Armies, and reported to have captured 324,000 Soviet troops, 3,300 tanks, 1,800 artillery pieces.^{*[186]*[187]} On 30 June, Stalin relieved Pavlov of his command, and on 22 July tried and executed him along with many members of his staff on charges of "cowardice" and "criminal incompetence".^{*[188]*[189]}

A Soviet directive was issued on 29 June to combat the mass panic rampant among the civilians and the armed forces personnel. The order stipulated swift, severe measures against anyone inciting panic or displaying cowardice. The NKVD worked with commissars and military commanders to scour possible withdrawal routes of soldiers retreating without military authorization. Field expedient general courts were established to deal with civilians spreading rumours and military deserters.^{*[190]}

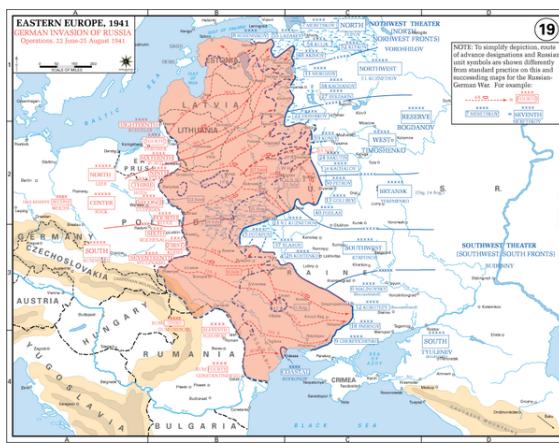
On 29 June, Hitler, through the Commander-in-Chief of the German Army Walther von Brauchitsch, instructed the commander of Army Group Center Fedor von Bock to halt the advance of his panzers until the infantry formations liquidating the pockets catch up.^{*[191]} But the commander of the 2nd Panzer Group Heinz Guderian, with the tacit support of Fedor von Bock and the chief of OKH Franz Halder, ignored the instruction and attacked on eastward towards Bobruisk, albeit reporting the advance as a reconnaissance-in-force. He also personally conducted an aerial inspection of the Minsk-Białystok pocket on 30 June and concluded that his panzer group was not needed to contain it, since Hermann Hoth's 3rd Panzer Group was already involved in the Minsk pocket.^{*[192]} On the same day, some of the infantry corps of the 9th and 4th Armies, having sufficiently liquidated the Białystok pocket, resumed their march eastward to catch up with the panzer groups.^{*[192]} On 1 July, Fedor von Bock ordered the panzer groups to resume their full offensive

eastward on the morning of 3 July. But Brauchitsch, upholding Hitler's instruction, and Halder, unwillingly going along with it, opposed Bock's order. However, Bock insisted on the order by stating that it would be flatly irresponsible to reverse orders already issued. The panzer groups, however, resumed their offensive on 2 July before the infantry formations had sufficiently caught up.*[192]

7.7 Phase two

Further information: [Battle of Smolensk \(1941\)](#) and [Leningrad Operation \(1941\)](#)

On 2 July and through the next six days, a rainstorm typ-



German advances during the opening phases of Operation Barbarossa, August 1941

ical of Belarusian summers slowed the progress of the panzers of Army Group Center, and Soviet defenses stiffened.*[193] The delays gave the Soviets time to organize a massive counterattack against Army Group Center. The army group's ultimate objective was Smolensk, which commanded the road to Moscow. Facing the Germans was an old Soviet defensive line held by six armies. On 6 July, the Soviets launched a massive counter-attack using the V and VII Mechanized Corps of the 20th Army,*[194] which collided with the German 39th and 47th Panzer Corps where the Red Army lost 832 tanks of the 2000 employed in five days of ferocious fighting.*[195] The Germans defeated this counterattack thanks largely to the coincidental presence of the Luftwaffe's only squadron of tank-busting aircraft.*[195] The 2nd Panzer Group crossed the Dnieper River and closed in on Smolensk from the south while the 3rd Panzer Group, after defeating the Soviet counterattack, closed on Smolensk from the north. Trapped between their pincers were three Soviet armies. Guderian's 29th Panzer Division captured Smolensk on 16 July yet a gap remained between Army Group Center.*[196] On 18 July, the Panzer Groups came to within ten kilometres (6.2 mi) of closing the gap, but the trap did not snap shut until 26 July.*[59] When the Panzer Groups finally closed the gap on 5 August, upwards of 300,000 Red Army soldiers had been

captured and 3,205 Soviet tanks were destroyed.*[196] Large numbers of Red Army soldiers escaped however to stand between the Germans and Moscow as resistance continued unabated.*[197]

Four weeks into the campaign, the Germans realized they had grossly underestimated Soviet strength. The German troops had used their initial supplies without attaining the expected strategic freedom of movement.*[59] Operations were now slowed down to allow for resupply; the delay was to be used to adapt strategy to the new situation.*[59] Hitler by now had lost faith in battles of encirclement as large numbers of Soviet soldiers had escaped the pincers.*[59] He now believed he could defeat the Soviets by economic means, depriving them of the industrial capacity to continue the war. That meant seizing the industrial center of Kharkov, the Donbass and the oil fields of the Caucasus in the south and the speedy capture of Leningrad, a major center of military production, in the north.*[59]*[198]

Fedor von Bock, the commander of Army Group Center, and almost all the German generals involved in Operation Barbarossa argued vehemently in favor of continuing the all-out drive toward Moscow. Besides the psychological importance of capturing the enemy's capital, the generals pointed out that Moscow was a major center of arms production, the center of the Soviet communications system and an important transportation hub. More significantly, intelligence reports indicated that the bulk of the Red Army was deployed near Moscow under Semyon Timoshenko for an all-out defense of the capital.*[59] But Hitler was adamant, and he issued a direct order to the panzer commander Heinz Guderian— bypassing Guderian's commanding officer, von Bock—to send Army Group Center's tanks to the north and south, temporarily halting the drive to Moscow.*[198]

7.8 Phase three

Further information: [Battle of Uman](#), [Battle of Kiev \(1941\)](#), and [Siege of Leningrad](#)

By mid-July, the Germans had advanced within a few kilometers of Kiev below the Pripyat Marshes. The 1st Panzer Group then went south while the 17th Army struck east and trapped three Soviet armies near Uman.*[199] As the Germans eliminated the pocket, the tanks turned north and crossed the Dnieper. Meanwhile, the 2nd Panzer Group, diverted from Army Group Center, had crossed the Desna River with 2nd Army on its right flank. The two Panzer armies now trapped four Soviet armies and parts of two others.*[200]

By August, as the serviceability and the quantity of the Luftwaffe's inventory steadily reduced due to combat, while demand for air support only increased as the VVS stubbornly resurged, the Luftwaffe found itself struggling

to maintain local air superiority in the front lines.* [201] Also with the onset of bad weather in October, the Luftwaffe was on several occasions forced to halt nearly all aerial operations. The VVS, although faced with the same weather difficulties, had a clear advantage thanks to the prewar experience with cold-weather flying techniques, and the fact that they were operating from intact airbases and airports.* [202] By December, the VVS had matched the Luftwaffe and was even pressing to achieve air supremacy over the battlefields.* [203]

For its final attack on Leningrad, the 4th Panzer Group was reinforced by tanks from Army Group Center. On 8 August, the Panthers broke through the Soviet defenses. By the end of August, 4th Panzer Group had penetrated to within 48 kilometres (30 miles) of Leningrad. The Finns had pushed southeast on both sides of Lake Ladoga to reach the old Finnish-Soviet frontier.* [198]



General Guderian at a forward command post of a Panzer regiment near Kiev, 1941

The Germans attacked Leningrad in August 1941; in the following three “black months” of 1941, 400,000 residents of the city worked to build the city's fortifications as fighting continued, while 160,000 others joined the ranks of the Red Army. On 7 September, the German 20th Motorized Division seized Shlisselburg, cutting off all land routes to Leningrad. The Germans severed the railroads to Moscow and captured the railroad to Murmansk with Finnish assistance to inaugurate the start of a siege that would last for over two years.* [204]* [205]

At this stage, Hitler ordered the final destruction of Leningrad with no prisoners taken, and on 9 September, Army Group North began the final push. Within ten days it had advanced within 11 kilometres (6.8 miles) of the city.* [198] However, the push over the last 10 km (6.2 mi) proved very slow and casualties mounted. Hitler, now out of patience, ordered that Leningrad should not be stormed, but rather starved into submission.* [198] Deprived of its Panzer forces, Army Group Center remained static and was subjected to numerous Soviet counterattacks, in particular the Yelnya Offensive, in which the Germans suffered their first major tactical defeat since their invasion began. These attacks prompted Hitler to concentrate his attention back to Army Group Center

and its drive on Moscow. The Germans ordered the 3rd and 4th Panzer Armies to break off their Siege of Leningrad and support Army Group Center in its attack on Moscow.* [198]

Before it could begin, operations in Kiev needed to be finished. Half of Army Group Center had swung to the south in the back of the Kiev position, while Army Group South moved to the north from its Dniepr bridgehead.* [206] The encirclement of Soviet forces in Kiev was achieved on 16 September. A savage battle ensued in which the Soviets were hammered with tanks, artillery, and aerial bombardment. After ten days of vicious fighting, the Germans claimed 665,000 Soviet soldiers captured, although the real figure is probably around 220,000 prisoners.* [207] Actual losses were 452,720 men, 3,867 artillery pieces and mortars from 43 divisions of the 5th, 21st, 26th, and 37th Soviet Armies.* [206]

7.9 Phase four

Main article: [Battle of Moscow](#)

After Kiev, the Red Army no longer outnumbered the



Soviet planes flying over German positions near Moscow

Germans and there were no more trained reserves directly available. To defend Moscow, Stalin could field 800,000 men in 83 divisions, but no more than 25 divisions were fully effective. Operation Typhoon, the drive to Moscow, began on 2 October.* [200] In front of Army Group Center was a series of elaborate defense lines, the first centered on Vyazma and the second on Mozhaysk.* [200]

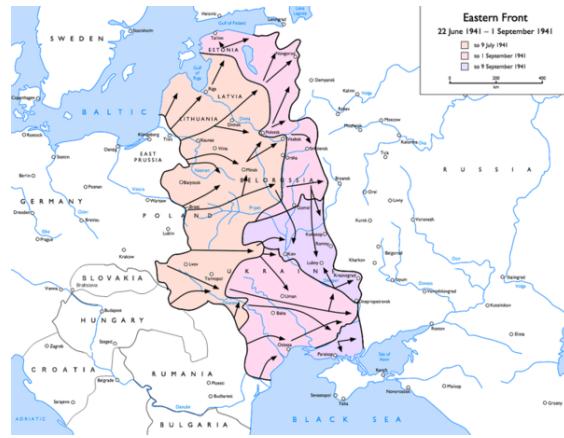
The first blow took the Soviets completely by surprise when the 2nd Panzer Group, returning from the south, took Oryol, just 121 km (75 mi) south of the Soviet first main defense line.* [200] Three days later, the Panthers pushed on to Bryansk, while the 2nd Army attacked from the west.* [200] The Soviet 3rd and 13th Armies were now encircled. To the north, the 3rd and 4th Panzer Armies attacked Vyazma, trapping the 19th, 20th, 24th and 32nd Armies.* [200] Moscow's first line of defense had been shattered. The pocket eventually yielded over 500,000 Soviet prisoners, bringing the tally since the start

of the invasion to three million. The Soviets had now only 90,000 men and 150 tanks left for the defense of Moscow.*[208]

The German government now publicly predicted the imminent capture of Moscow and convinced foreign correspondents of a pending Soviet collapse.*[209] On 13 October, the 3rd Panzer Group penetrated to within 140 km (87 mi) of the capital.*[200] Martial law was declared in Moscow. Almost from the beginning of Operation Typhoon, however, the weather worsened. Temperatures fell while there was a continued rainfall. This turned the unpaved road network into mud and steadily slowed the German advance on Moscow to as little as 3.2 km (2.0 mi) a day.*[198] At the same time, the supply situation for the Germans rapidly deteriorated. On 31 October, the German Army High Command ordered a halt to Operation Typhoon while the armies were reorganized. The pause gave the Soviets, who were in a far better supply situation, time to consolidate their positions and organize formations of newly activated reservists.*[198] In little over a month, the Soviets organized eleven new armies that included 30 divisions of Siberian troops. These had been freed from the Soviet Far East after Soviet intelligence assured Stalin that there was no longer a threat from the Japanese.*[198] Over 1,000 tanks and 1,000 aircraft arrived along with the Siberian forces.*[198]

On 15 November, with the ground hardening due to the cold weather, the Germans once again began the attack on Moscow.*[198] Although the troops themselves were now able to advance again, there had been no delay allowed to improve the supply situation. Facing the Germans were the 5th, 16th, 30th, 43rd, 49th, and 50th Soviet armies. The Germans intended to let the 3rd and 4th Panzer Armies cross the [Moscow Canal](#) and envelop Moscow from the northeast. The 2nd Panzer Group would attack Tula and then close in on Moscow from the south.*[112] As the Soviets reacted to the flanks, the 4th Army would attack the center. In two weeks of desperate fighting, lacking sufficient fuel and ammunition, the Germans slowly crept towards Moscow.*[112] However, in the south, the 2nd Panzer Group was being blocked. On 22 November, Soviet Siberian units, augmented with the 49th and 50th Soviet Armies, attacked the 2nd Panzer Group and inflicted a shocking defeat on the Germans. The 4th Panzer Group pushed the Soviet 16th Army back, however, and succeeded in crossing the Moscow canal to begin the attempted encirclement of Moscow.*[112]

On 2 December, part of the 258th Infantry Division advanced to within 24 km (15 mi) of Moscow and could see the spires of the [Kremlin](#), but by then the first blizzards had already begun.*[210]*[112] A reconnaissance battalion also managed to reach the town of [Khimki](#), only about 8 km (5.0 mi) away from the Soviet capital. It captured the bridge over the Moscow-Volga Canal as well as the railway station, which marked the farthest eastern advance of German forces.*[211] But in spite of the progress made, the Wehrmacht was not equipped for win-



The German position of advances before the start of Operation Typhoon, September 1941

ter warfare, and the bitter cold caused severe problems for their guns and equipment. Furthermore, weather conditions grounded the Luftwaffe from conducting any large-scale operations.*[112] Newly created Soviet units near Moscow now numbered over 500,000 men, and on 5 December, they launched a massive counterattack as part of the [Battle of Moscow](#) that pushed the Germans back over 320 km (200 mi). By late December 1941, the Germans had lost the Battle for Moscow, and the invasion had cost the German army over 830,000 casualties in killed, wounded, captured or missing in action.*[112]

7.10 Aftermath

With the failure of the [Battle of Moscow](#), all German plans for a quick defeat of the Soviet Union had to be revised. The Soviet counteroffensives in December 1941 caused heavy casualties on both sides, but ultimately eliminated the German threat to Moscow.*[112]

In addition to this devastating setback for Germany, the Soviet Union also suffered heavily from the conflict, losing huge tracts of territory, and vast losses in men and material. Despite the rapid relocation of Red Army armaments installations east of the Urals and a dramatic increase of production in 1942, especially of armour, new aircraft types and artillery, the Wehrmacht was able to mount another large-scale offensive in July 1942. Hitler, having realized that Germany's oil supply was "severely depleted,"*[\[212\]](#) aimed to capture the [oil fields of Baku](#) in an offensive, codenamed [Case Blue](#).*[\[213\]](#) Once again, the Germans quickly overran great expanses of Soviet territory, but they failed to achieve their ultimate goals in the wake of their decisive defeat at the [Battle of Stalingrad](#).*[\[198\]](#)

By 1943, Soviet armaments production was fully operational and increasingly outproducing the German war economy.*[\[59\]](#) The Red Army through steadily more ambitious and tactically sophisticated offensives was able

to liberate the areas previously occupied by the German invasion by the summer of 1944. The war ended with the total defeat and occupation of Nazi Germany in May 1945, which was quickly followed by Allied efforts to denazify the German people and military tribunals against the surviving members of the Nazi government.*[214]

7.10.1 War crimes

Main articles: Einsatzgruppen, German mistreatment of Soviet prisoners of war, and The Holocaust in Russia

While the Soviet Union had not signed the Geneva convention, this did not mean their soldiers were entirely exempted from the protection it afforded; Germany had signed the treaty and was thus obligated to offer Soviet POWs treatment according to its provisions (as they generally did with other Allied POWs).*[215]*[216]*[217] According to the Soviets, they had not signed the Geneva Conventions in 1929 due to article 9 which specified that POWs be segregated into different camps based on racial backgrounds; something which they claimed contravened the Soviet constitution.*[218] Article 82 of the convention specified that “In case, in time of war, one of the belligerents is not a party to the Convention, its provisions shall nevertheless remain in force as between the belligerents who are parties thereto.”*[219] Despite this Hitler called for the battle against the Soviet Union to be a “struggle for existence” and accordingly authorized crimes against Soviet prisoners of war. A Nazi memorandum from 16 July 1941, recorded by Martin Bormann, quotes Hitler saying, “The giant [occupied] area must naturally be pacified as quickly as possible; this will happen at best if anyone who just looks funny should be shot”.*[220]*[221] Conveniently for the Nazis, the fact that the Soviets failed to sign the convention played into their hands as they justified their behavior accordingly. Even if the Soviets had signed, it is highly unlikely that this would have stopped the Nazi's genocidal policies towards combatants, civilians, and prisoners-of-war.*[222]

Before the war, Hitler issued the notorious Commissar Order, which called for all Soviet political commissars taken prisoner at the front to be shot immediately without trial.*[223]*[224] German soldiers participated in these mass killings along with members of the SS-Einsatzgruppen, sometimes reluctantly but nevertheless under the auspices of “military necessity.”.*[225]*[226]*[224] On the eve of the invasion, German soldiers were informed that their battle “demands ruthless and vigorous measures against Bolshevik inciters, guerrillas, saboteurs, Jews and the complete elimination of all active and passive resistance.” Collective punishment was authorized against partisan attacks; if a perpetrator could not be quickly identified, then burning villages and mass executions were considered acceptable reprisals.*[227] An estimated two million Soviet prisoners of war died of starvation during Barbarossa alone; nothing was done



Himmler inspecting a prisoner of war camp

for their survival.*[228]*[224] The famished prisoners of war were hardly able to walk by themselves.*[229] By the end of the war, 58 percent of all Soviet prisoners of war died in German captivity.*[230]*[231]

Organized crimes against civilians, including women and children, were also carried out on a huge scale by the German police and military forces, as well as the local collaborators.*[224] Under the command of the Reich Main Security Office, the *Einsatzgruppen* killing squads conducted large-scale massacres of Jews and communists in conquered Soviet territories. Holocaust historian Raul Hilberg puts the number of Jews murdered by “mobile killing operations” at 1,400,000.*[232] The original instructions to kill “Jews in party and state positions” was broadened to include “all male Jews of military age” and was expanded once more to “all male Jews regardless of age.” By the end of July, the Germans were regularly killing women and children.*[229] On 18 December 1941, Himmler and Hitler discussed the “Jewish question”, and Himmler noted the meeting's result in his appointment book: “To be annihilated as partisans.” According to Christopher Browning, this represented the Nazi decision of “annihilating Jews and solving the so-called 'Jewish question' under the cover of killing partisans.”*[233] In accordance with Nazi policies against “inferior” Asian peoples, Turkmens were also persecuted; according to a post-war report by Prince Veli Kajum Khan, they were imprisoned in concentration camps in terrible conditions, where those deemed to have “Mongolian” features were murdered daily. Asians were also targeted by the *Einsatzgruppen* and were the subjects of lethal medical experiments and murder at a “pathological institute” in Kiev.*[234] Hitler received situational activity reports over the mass killings perpetrated by the *Einsatzgruppen* which were first conveyed to the RSHA, where they were aggregated into a summary report by Gestapo Chief Heinrich Müller.*[235]

Burning houses suspected of being partisan meeting

places and poisoning water wells became common practice for soldiers of the German 9th Army. At Kharkov, the fourth largest city in the Soviet Union, food was provided only to the small number of civilians who worked for the Germans, with the rest designated to slowly starve.*[112] Thousands of Soviets were deported to Germany to be used as slave labor.*[224]

The citizens of Leningrad were subjected to heavy bombardment and a siege that would last 872 days and starve more than a million people to death, of whom approximately 400,000 were children below the age of 14.*[236]*[237]*[238] The German-Finnish blockade cut off access to food, fuel and raw materials, and rations reached a low, for the non-working population, of four ounces (five thin slices) of bread and a little watery soup per day.*[239] Starving Soviet civilians began to eat their domestic animals, along with hair tonic and Vaseline. Some desperate citizens resorted to cannibalism; Soviet records list 2,000 people arrested for “the use of human meat as food” during the siege, 886 of them during the first winter of 1941–42.*[238] The Wehrmacht planned to seal off Leningrad, starve out the population, and then demolish the city entirely.*[205]

7.10.2 Historical significance

Operation Barbarossa was the largest military operation in human history—more men, tanks, guns and aircraft were committed than had ever been deployed before in a single offensive.*[112] A total of 75 percent of the entire German military participated.*[59] The invasion opened up the Eastern Front of World War II, the largest theater of war during that conflict, and it witnessed titanic clashes of unprecedented violence and destruction for four years that resulted in the deaths of more than 26 million people.*[240] More people died fighting on the Eastern Front than in all other fighting across the globe during World War II.*[241] Damage to both the economy and landscape was enormous for the Soviets as approximately 1,710 towns and 70,000 villages were completely annihilated.*[242]

More than just ushering-in untold death and devastation, Operation Barbarossa and the subsequent German failure to achieve their objectives changed the political landscape of Europe dividing it into eastern and western blocs.*[243] The gaping political vacuum left in the eastern half of the continent was filled by the USSR when Stalin secured his territorial prizes of 1944–45 and firmly placed his Red Army in Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the eastern half of Germany.*[244] As a consequence, eastern Europe became Communist in political disposition and western Europe fell under the democratic sway of the United States, a nation uncertain about its future policies in Europe.*[245] Instead of profiting the German people, Operation Barbarossa's failure instigated untold suffering when an estimated 1.4 million ethnic Germans died as a result of

their forced flight from the East to the West, whether during the German retreat or later following the surrender.*[246] Another often overlooked consequence of Hitler's massive attack on the Soviet Union, was that it provoked the greatest displacement and migration of German people in human history; by 1950 for example, nearly 7.7 million ethnic Germans migrated from the their former homelands in the East to what was West Germany, while another 4.1 million of them arrived in the former DDR.*[247]*[lower-alpha 9]

7.11 See also

- Black Sea campaigns
- Operation Silver Fox
- Timeline of the Eastern Front of World War II

7.12 References

7.12.1 Informational notes

- [1] Excludes an additional 395,799 who were deemed unfit for service due to non-combat causes, transported out of their Army Group sectors for treatment, and treated in divisional/local medical facilities. 98% of those 395,799 eventually returned to active duty service, usually after relatively short treatment, meaning about 8,000 became permanent losses.
- [2] Mostly from the Siege of Odessa (1941)
- [3] See: Robert Kirchubel. *Operation Barbarossa: The German Invasion of Soviet Russia*. Bloomsbury Publishing. Chapter: “Opposing Armies” .
- [4] See: Ziemke, Earl F. (1960). *The German Northern Theater of Operations, 1940–1945* Washington: Headquarters, Department of the US Army, p. 184.
- [5] The first sentence of Directive 21 read, “The German Wehrmacht must be prepared to crush Soviet Russia in a quick campaign even before the end of the war against England.” See: Hartmann 2013, p. 13
- [6] Flooding was so bad that Guderian wrote: “The Balkans Campaign had been concluded with all the speed desired, and the troops there engaged which were now needed for Russia were withdrawn according to plan and very fast. But all the same there was a definite delay in the opening of our Russian Campaign. Furthermore we had had a very wet spring; the Bug and its tributaries were at flood level until well into May and the nearby ground was swampy and almost impassable.” * [86]
- [7] The four Soviet military districts facing the Axis, the Baltic Military District, the Western Special Military District, the Kiev Special Military District and the Odessa Military District, at the outbreak of the war were renamed the Northwestern Front, the Western Front, the

- Southwestern Front and the Southern Front, respectively. A fifth military district, the Leningrad military district, became the Northern Front.(Glantz 2012, pp. 11, 16, 208).
- [8] 170 divisions and 2 independent brigades, along with 12 airborne brigades. (Glantz 2012, pp. 16, 219).
- [9] There are noteworthy studies on this topic. See for instance: Douglas, R. M. *Orderly and Humane: The Expulsion of the Germans after the Second World War*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012. For a German language scholarly work on this subject, see: Kossert, Andreas. *Kalte Heimat: Die Geschichte der deutschen Vertriebenen nach 1945*. München: Pantheon Verlag, 2009.
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- [4] Glantz 2001, p. 9, 2.68 million.
- [5] Glantz 1998, p. 10–11, 101,293, 2.9 million.
- [6] Taylor 1974, p. 98, 2.6 million.
- [7] Mercatante 2012, p. 64.
- [8] Clark 2012, p. 76.
- [9] Glantz 2010a, p. 28, 7,133 aircraft.
- [10] Mercatante 2012, p. 64, 9,100 aircraft.
- [11] Clark 2012, p. 76, 9,100 aircraft.
- [12] Askey 2014, p. 178.
- [13] “Heeresarzt 10-Day Casualty Reports per Theater of War, 1941” .
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- [16] Askey 2014, p. 185.
- [17] Krivosheev 1997, pp. 95–98.
- [18] “AOK POW Reports” .
- [19] Sharp 2010, p. 89.
- [20] Snyder 2010, pp. 175–186.
- [21] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum 1996, pp. 50–51.
- [22] Stackelberg 2002, p. 188.
- [23] Förster 1988, p. 21.
- [24] Hillgruber 1972, p. 140.
- [25] Shirer 1990, p. 716.
- [26] Stackelberg 2007, p. 271.
- [27] Fahlbusch 1999, pp. 241–264.
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- [32] Kershaw 2001, p. 466.
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7.14 External links

- Media related to Operation Barbarossa at Wikimedia Commons
- Media related to Great Patriotic War at Wikimedia Commons
- Works related to Führer Directive 21 at Wikisource
- Works related to Adolf Hitler's Letter to Benito Mussolini Explaining the Invasion of the Soviet Union at Wikisource
- Works related to The Führer to the German People: 22 June 1941 at Wikisource
- Works related to Adolf Hitler's Order of the Day to the German Troops on the Eastern Front (2 October 1941) at Wikisource
- Works related to Adolf Hitler Explains His Reasons for Invading the Soviet Union at Wikisource
- Marking 70 Years to Operation Barbarossa on the Yad Vashem website
- Operation Barbarossa original reports and pictures from *The Times*
- “Operation Barbarossa”: Video on YouTube, lecture by David Stahel, author of *Operation Barbarossa and Germany's Defeat in the East* (2009); via the official channel of Muskegon Community College

Chapter 8

Operation Downfall

“Invasion of Japan” redirects here. For the failed Mongol invasion attempts, see [Mongol invasions of Japan](#).

Operation Downfall was the codename for the Allied plan for the invasion of Japan near the end of World War II. The proposed operation was abandoned when Japan surrendered following the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Soviet declaration of war.*[13] The operation had two parts: Operations Olympic and Coronet. Set to begin in November 1945, Operation Olympic was intended to capture the southern third of the southernmost main Japanese island, Kyūshū, with the recently captured island of Okinawa to be used as a staging area. Later, in the spring of 1946, Operation Coronet was the planned invasion of the Kantō Plain, near Tokyo, on the Japanese island of Honshu. Airbases on Kyūshū captured in Operation Olympic would allow land-based air support for Operation Coronet. If Downfall had taken place, it would have been the largest amphibious operation in history.*[14]

Japan's geography made this invasion plan quite obvious to the Japanese as well; they were able to predict the Allied invasion plans accurately and thus adjust their defensive plan, Operation *Ketsugō*, accordingly. The Japanese planned an all-out defense of Kyūshū, with little left in reserve for any subsequent defense operations. Casualty predictions varied widely, but were extremely high. Depending on the degree to which Japanese civilians would have resisted the invasion, estimates ran up into the millions for Allied casualties.*[15]

8.1 Planning

Responsibility for planning Operation Downfall fell to American commanders Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz, General of the Army Douglas MacArthur and the Joint Chiefs of Staff—Fleet Admirals Ernest King and William D. Leahy, and Generals of the Army George Marshall and Hap Arnold (the latter being the commander of the US Army Air Forces).*[16] Douglas MacArthur at the time was also being considered for promotion to a special “super rank” of General of the Armies, so as to

be granted operational authority over other five-star officers.*[17] However, the proposal to promote MacArthur was only at the level of informal discussion by the time World War II ended.

At the time, the development of the atomic bomb was a very closely guarded secret (not even then-Vice President Harry Truman knew of its existence until he became President), known only to a few top officials outside the Manhattan Project, and the initial planning for the invasion of Japan did not take its existence into consideration. Once the atomic bomb became available, General Marshall envisioned using it to support the invasion if sufficient numbers could be produced in time.*[18]

Throughout the Pacific War, the Allies were unable to agree on a single Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C). Allied command was divided into regions: by 1945, for example, Chester Nimitz was the Allied C-in-C Pacific Ocean Areas, while Douglas MacArthur was Supreme Allied Commander, South West Pacific Area, and Admiral Louis Mountbatten was the Supreme Allied Commander, South East Asia Command. A unified command was deemed necessary for an invasion of Japan. Interservice rivalry over who it should be (the United States Navy wanted Nimitz, but the United States Army wanted MacArthur) was so serious that it threatened to derail planning. Ultimately, the Navy partially conceded, and MacArthur was to be given total command of all forces, if circumstances made it necessary.*[19]

8.1.1 Considerations

The primary considerations that the planners had to deal with were time and casualties—how they could force Japan's surrender as quickly as possible with as few Allied casualties as possible. Prior to the Quebec Conference, 1943, a joint British-American planning team produced a plan (“Appreciation and Plan for the Defeat of Japan”) which did not call for an invasion of the Japanese home islands until 1947–48.*[20]*[21] The American Joint Chiefs of Staff believed that prolonging the war to such an extent was dangerous for national morale. Instead, at the Quebec conference, the Combined Chiefs of Staff agreed that Japan should be forced to surrender not

more than one year after Germany's surrender.*[22]*[23]

The United States Navy urged the use of a blockade and airpower to bring about Japan's capitulation. They proposed operations to capture airbases in nearby Shanghai, China, and Korea, which would give the United States Army Air Forces a series of forward airbases from which to bombard Japan into submission.*[24] The Army, on the other hand, argued that such a strategy could "prolong the war indefinitely" and expend lives needlessly, and therefore that an invasion was necessary. They supported mounting a large-scale thrust directly against the Japanese homeland, with none of the side operations that the Navy had suggested. Ultimately, the Army's viewpoint prevailed.*[25]

Physically, Japan made an imposing target, distant from other landmasses and with very few beaches geographically suitable for sea-borne invasion. Only Kyūshū (the southernmost island of Japan) and the beaches of the Kantō plain (both southwest and southeast of Tokyo) were realistic invasion zones. The Allies decided to launch a two-stage invasion. Operation Olympic would attack southern Kyūshū. Airbases would be established, which would give cover for Operation Coronet, the attack on Tokyo Bay.

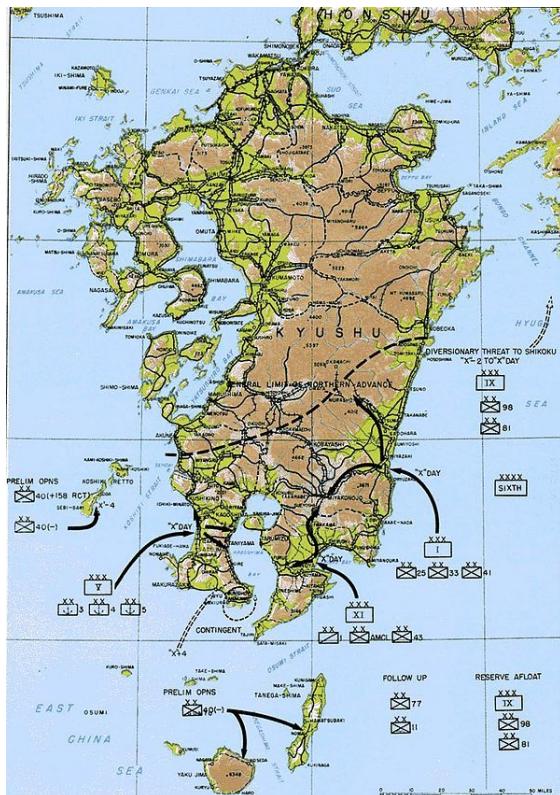
8.1.2 Assumptions

While the geography of Japan was known, the US military planners had to estimate the defending forces that they would face. Based on intelligence available early in 1945, their assumptions included the following.*[26]

- "That operations in this area will be opposed not only by the available organized military forces of the Empire, but also by a fanatically hostile population." *[26]
- "That approximately three (3) hostile divisions will be disposed in Southern KYUSHU and an additional three (3) in Northern KYUSHU at initiation of the OLYMPIC operation." *[26]
- "That total hostile forces committed against KYUSHU operations will not exceed eight (8) to ten (10) divisions and that this level will be speedily attained." *[26]
- "That approximately twenty-one (21) hostile divisions, including depot divisions, will be on HONSHU at initiation of [Coronet] and that fourteen (14) of these divisions may be employed in the KANTO PLAIN area." *[26]
- "That the enemy may withdraw his land-based air forces to the Asiatic Mainland for protection from our neutralizing attacks. That under such circumstances he can possibly amass from 2,000 to 2,500 planes in that area by exercise of rigid economy, and

that this force can operate against KYUSHU landings by staging through homeland fields." *[26]

8.1.3 Olympic

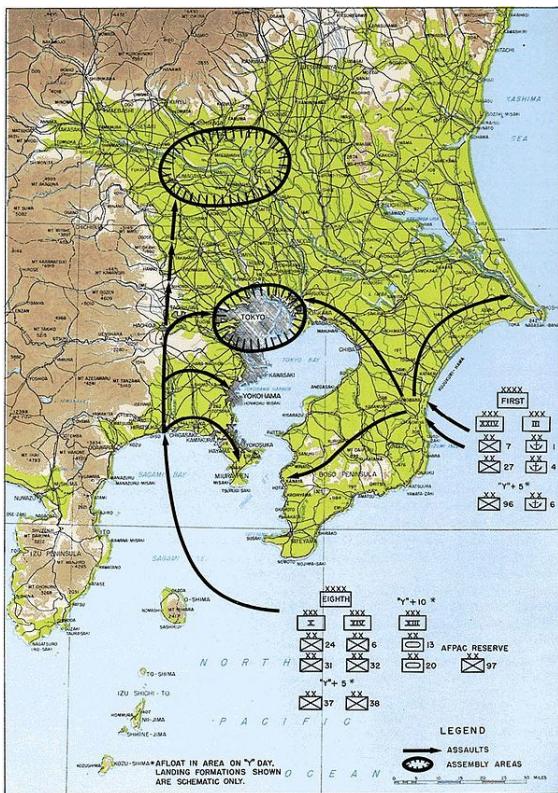


Operation Olympic was to attack southern Japan.

Operation Olympic, the invasion of Kyūshū, was to begin on "X-Day", which was scheduled for 1 November 1945. The combined Allied naval armada would have been the largest ever assembled, including 42 aircraft carriers, 24 battleships, and 400 destroyers and destroyer escorts. Fourteen US "division-equivalents" (13 divisions and two regimental combat teams)*[27] were scheduled to take part in the initial landings. Using Okinawa as a staging base, the objective would have been to seize the southern portion of Kyūshū. This area would then be used as a further staging point to attack Honshu in Operation Coronet.

Olympic was also to include a deception plan, known as Operation Pastel. Pastel was designed to convince the Japanese that the Joint Chiefs had rejected the notion of a direct invasion and instead were going to attempt to encircle and bombard Japan. This would require capturing bases in Formosa, along the Chinese coast, and in the Yellow Sea area.*[28]

Tactical air support was to be the responsibility of the Seventh, Fifth, and Thirteenth Air Forces. These were responsible for attacking Japanese airfields and transportation arteries on Kyushu and Southern Honshu (e.g. the



Operation Coronet was planned to take Tokyo.

Kanmon Tunnel) and for gaining and maintaining air superiority over the beaches. The task of strategic bombing fell on the United States Strategic Air Forces in the Pacific (USASTAF)—a formation which comprised the Eighth and Twentieth air forces, as well as the British Tiger Force. USASTAF and Tiger Force were to remain active through Operation Coronet. The Twentieth Air Force was to have continued its role as the main Allied strategic bomber force used against the Japanese home islands, operating from airfields in the Mariana Islands. Following the end of the war in Europe in May 1945, plans were also made to transfer some of the heavy bomber groups of the veteran Eighth Air Force to airbases on Okinawa to conduct strategic bombing raids in coordination with the Twentieth.* [29] The Eighth was to upgrade their B-17 Flying Fortresses and B-24 Liberators to B-29 Superfortresses (the group received its first B-29 on 8 August 1945).* [29]

Before the main invasion, the offshore islands of Tanegashima, Yakushima, and the Koshikijima Islands were to be taken, starting on X-5.* [30] The invasion of Okinawa had demonstrated the value of establishing secure anchorages close at hand, for ships not needed off the landing beaches and for ships damaged by air attack.

Kyūshū was to be invaded by the Sixth United States Army at three points: Miyazaki, Ariake, and Kushikino. If a clock were drawn on a map of Kyūshū, these points would roughly correspond to 4, 5, and 7 o'clock, respectively. The 35 landing beaches were all named for au-

tomobiles: Austin, Buick, Cadillac, and so on through to Stutz, Winton, and Zephyr.* [31] With one corps assigned to each landing, the invasion planners assumed that the Americans would outnumber the Japanese by roughly three to one. In early 1945, Miyazaki was virtually undefended, while Ariake, with its nearby good harbor, was heavily defended.

The invasion was not intended to conquer the entire island, just the southernmost third of it, as indicated by the dashed line on the map labeled “general limit of northern advance”. Southern Kyūshū would offer a staging ground and a valuable airbase for Operation Coronet.

8.1.4 Coronet

Operation Coronet, the invasion of Honshu at the Kantō Plain south of the capital, was to begin on “Y-Day”, which was tentatively scheduled for 1 March 1946.* [32] Coronet would have been even larger than Olympic, with up to 40 divisions earmarked for both the initial landing and follow-up.* [33] (The Overlord invasion of Normandy, by comparison, deployed 12 divisions in the initial landings.) In the initial stage, the First Army would have invaded at Kujūkuri Beach, on the Bōsō Peninsula, while Eighth Army invaded at Hiratsuka, on Sagami Bay.* [34] Later, a follow-up force of up to 12 additional divisions of the Tenth Army and British Commonwealth Corps would be landed as reinforcements.* [35] The Allied forces would then have driven north and inland, meeting at Tokyo.

8.1.5 Redeployment

See also: Orders of battle for Downfall

Olympic was to be mounted with resources already present in the Pacific, including the British Pacific Fleet, a Commonwealth formation that included at least eighteen aircraft carriers (and providing 25% of the Allied air power) and four battleships.

The Australian First Tactical Air Force took part in the campaign to retake the Philippines. These would likely have augmented US close air support units over Japan.

Tiger Force, a joint Commonwealth long-range heavy bomber unit, was to be transferred from RAF, RAAF, RCAF and RNZAF units and personnel serving with RAF Bomber Command in Europe. In 1944, early planning proposed a force of 500–1,000 aircraft, including units dedicated to aerial refueling. Planning was later scaled back to 22 squadrons and, by the time the war ended, to 10 squadrons: between 120 and 150 Avro Lancasters/Lincolns, operating out of airbases on Okinawa. Tiger Force was to have included the elite, multinational 617 Squadron, also known as “The Dambusters”

Initially, US planners also did not plan to use any non-US

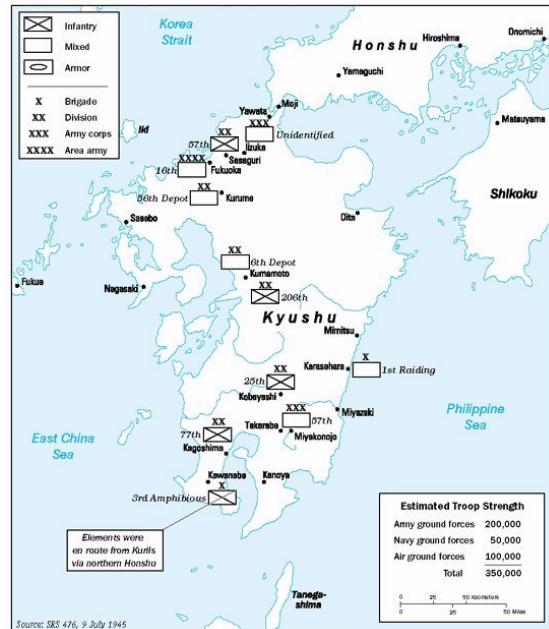
Allied ground forces in *Downfall*. Had reinforcements been needed at an early stage of *Olympic*, they would have been diverted from US forces being assembled for *Coronet* – for which there was to be a massive redeployment of units from the US Army's Southwest Pacific, China-Burma-India and European commands, among others. These would have included spearheads of the war in Europe such as the US First Army (15 divisions) and the Eighth Air Force. These redeployments would have been complicated by the simultaneous demobilization and replacement of highly experienced, time-served personnel, which would have drastically reduced the combat effectiveness of many units. The Australian government had asked at an early stage for the inclusion of an Australian Army infantry division in the first wave (*Olympic*).^{*[36]} This was rejected by US commanders and even the initial plans for *Coronet*, according to US historian John Ray Skates, did not envisage that units from Commonwealth or other Allied armies would be landed on the Kantō Plain in 1946.^{*[37]} The first official “plans indicated that assault, followup, and reserve units would all come from US forces” .^{*[37]}

By mid-1945 – when plans for Coronet were being re-worked – many other Allied countries had, according to Skates, “offered ground forces, and a debate developed” amongst Western Allied political and military leaders, “over the size, mission, equipment, and support of these contingents” .^{*[37]} Following negotiations, it was decided that Coronet would include a joint Commonwealth Corps, made up of infantry divisions from the Australian, British and Canadian armies. Reinforcements would have been available from those countries, as well as other parts of the Commonwealth. However, MacArthur blocked proposals to include an Indian Army division because of differences in language, organization, composition, equipment, training and doctrine.^{*[38]}^{*[39]} He also recommended that the corps be organized along the lines of a US corps, should use only US equipment and logistics, and should train in the US for six months before deployment; these suggestions were accepted.^{*[38]} The British Government suggested that: Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Keightley should command the Commonwealth Corps, a combined Commonwealth fleet should be led by Vice-Admiral Sir William Tennant, and that – as Commonwealth air units would be dominated by the RAAF – the Air Officer Commanding should be Australian.^{*[40]} However, the Australian government questioned the appointment of an officer with no experience in fighting the Japanese, such as Keightley and suggested that Lieutenant General Leslie Morshead, an Australian who had been carrying out the New Guinea and Borneo campaigns, should be appointed.^{*[41]} The war ended before the details of the corps were finalized.

8.1.6 Projected initial commitment

Figures for 'Coronet' exclude values for both the immediate AFPAC reserve of 3 divisions as well as the projected 10-12 additional divisions slated to land as reinforcements.

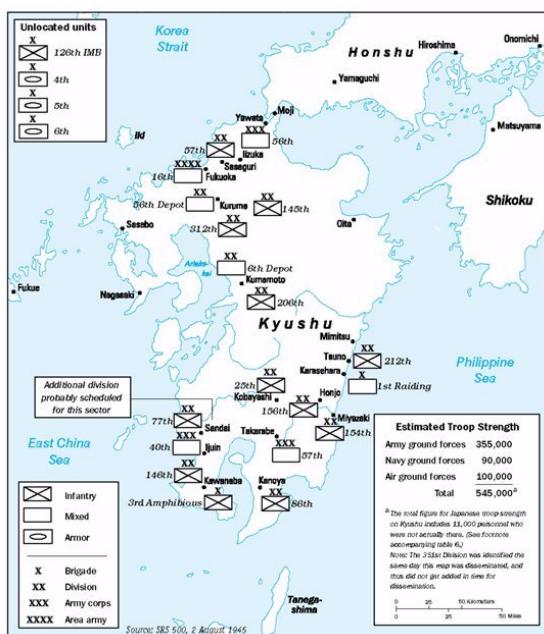
8.2 Operation *Ketsugō*



American estimates of Japanese troop strength on Kyūshū as of 9 July 1945

Meanwhile, the Japanese had their own plans. Initially, they were concerned about an invasion during the summer of 1945. However, the Battle of Okinawa went on for so long that they concluded the Allies would not be able to launch another operation before the typhoon season, during which the weather would be too risky for amphibious operations. Japanese intelligence predicted fairly closely where the invasion would take place: southern Kyūshū at Miyazaki, Ariake Bay, and/or the Satsuma Peninsula.^{*[45]}

While Japan no longer had a realistic prospect of winning the war, Japan's leaders believed they could make the cost of conquering Japan too high for the Allies to accept, which would lead to some sort of armistice rather than total defeat. The Japanese plan for defeating the invasion was called Operation *Ketsugō* (決号作戦 *ketsugō sakusen*) (“Operation Codename Decisive”). The Japanese were secretly constructing an underground headquarters in Matsushiro, Nagano Prefecture, which could be used in the event of Allied invasion to shelter the Emperor and the Imperial General Staff. It is worth noting that in planning for Operation *Ketsugō*, IGHQ vastly overestimated the strength of the Allied forces they would



*American estimates of Japanese troop strength on Kyūshū as of
2 August 1945*

be facing: while the actual Allied invasion plan called for as many as 54 divisions (14 for Olympic and 38-40 for Coronet), the Japanese expected up to 90.* [33]

8.2.1 *Kamikaze*

Admiral Matome Ugaki was recalled to Japan in February 1945 and given command of the Fifth Air Fleet on Kyūshū. The Fifth Air Fleet was assigned the task of *kamikaze* attacks against ships involved in the invasion of Okinawa, Operation *Ten-Go*, and began training pilots and assembling aircraft for the defense of Kyūshū where the Allies were likely to invade next.

The Japanese defense relied heavily on *kamikaze* planes. In addition to fighters and bombers, they reassigned almost all of their trainers for the mission. Their army and navy had more than 10,000 aircraft ready for use in July (and would have had somewhat more by October) and were planning to use almost all that could reach the invasion fleets. Ugaki also oversaw the building of hundreds of small suicide boats to attack any Allied ships that came near the shores of Kyūshū.

Fewer than 2,000 *kamikaze* planes launched attacks during the Battle of Okinawa, achieving approximately one hit per nine attacks. At Kyūshū, because of the more favorable circumstances (such as terrain that would reduce the Allies' radar advantage), they hoped to raise that to one for six by overwhelming the US defenses with large numbers of *kamikaze* attacks within a period of hours. The Japanese estimated that the planes would sink more than 400 ships; since they were training the pilots to target transports rather than carriers and destroyers, the casual-

ties would be disproportionately greater than at Okinawa. One staff study estimated that the *kamikazes* could destroy a third to half of the invasion force before its landings.* [46]

8.2.2 Naval forces

Despite the shattering damage it had absorbed by this stage of the war, the Imperial Navy, by then organized under the “Navy General Command,” was determined to inflict as much damage on the Allies as possible. Remaining major warships at its disposal numbered four battleships (all damaged), five aircraft carriers (all damaged), two cruisers, 23 destroyers, and 46 submarines.* [47] However, due to fuel concerns the IJN did not envision any further sorties by its capital ships, planning instead to use their anti-aircraft firepower to defend naval installations while docked in port.* [47] Despite its inability to conduct large-scale fleet operations, the IJN still maintained a fleet of thousands of warplanes and possessed nearly 2 million personnel in the Home Islands, ensuring it a large role in the coming defensive operation.

Japan also had about 100 *Kōryū*-class midget submarines, 300 smaller *Kairyū*-class midget submarines, 120 *Kaiten* manned torpedoes,^{* [47]} and 2,412 *Shin'yō* suicide boats.^{* [48]} Unlike the larger ships, these, together with the destroyers and fleet submarines, were expected to see extensive action defending the shores. The objective of these units was the destruction of about 60 Allied transports.^{* [49]}

8.2.3 Ground forces

In any amphibious operation, the defender has two options for defensive strategy: strong defense of the beaches or defense in depth. Early in the war (such as at Tarawa), the Japanese employed strong defenses on the beaches with little or no manpower in reserve. This tactic proved to be very vulnerable to pre-invasion shore bombardment. Later in the war, at Peleliu, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa, the Japanese switched strategies and dug in their forces in the most defensible terrain.

For the defense of Kyūshū, the Japanese took an intermediate posture, with the bulk of their defensive forces a few kilometers inland, back far enough to avoid complete exposure to naval gunnery, but close enough that the Americans could not establish a secure foothold before engaging them. The counteroffensive forces were still farther back, prepared to move against whichever landing seemed to be the main effort.

In March 1945, there was only one combat division in Kyūshū. Over the next four months, the Imperial Japanese Army transferred forces from Manchuria, Korea, and northern Japan, while raising other forces in place. By August, they had 14 divisions and various

smaller formations, including three tank brigades, for a total of 900,000 men.* [50] Although the Japanese were able to raise large numbers of new soldiers, equipping them was more difficult. By August, the Japanese Army had the equivalent of 65 divisions in the homeland but only enough equipment for 40 and only enough ammunition for 30.*[51]

The Japanese did not formally decide to stake everything on the outcome of the Battle of Kyūshū, but they concentrated their assets to such a degree that there would be little left in reserve. By one estimate, the forces in Kyūshū had 40% of all the ammunition in the Home Islands.*[52]

In addition, the Japanese had organized the **Patriotic Citizens Fighting Corps**, which included all healthy men aged 15 to 60 and women 17 to 40 for a total of 28 million people, for combat support and, later, combat jobs. Weapons, training and uniforms were generally lacking: some men were armed with nothing better than muzzle-loading **muskets**, **longbows**, or bamboo spears; nevertheless, they were expected to make do with what they had.*[53]*[54] One mobilized high school girl, Yukiko Kasai, found herself issued an **awl** and told, “Even killing one American soldier will do. ... You must aim for the abdomen.” * [55]

8.3 Allied re-evaluation of Olympic

8.3.1 Air threat

US military intelligence initially estimated the number of Japanese aircraft to be around 2,500.*[56] The Okinawa experience was bad for the US—almost two fatalities and a similar number wounded per **soutie**—and Kyūshū was likely to be worse. To attack the ships off Okinawa, Japanese planes had to fly long distances over open water; to attack the ships off Kyūshū, they could fly overland and then short distances out to the landing fleets. Gradually, intelligence learned that the Japanese were devoting all their aircraft to the *kamikaze* mission and taking effective measures to conserve them until the battle. An Army estimate in May was 3,391 planes; in June, 4,862; in August, 5,911. A Navy estimate, abandoning any distinction between training and combat aircraft, in July was 8,750; in August, 10,290.*[57] By the time the war ended, the Japanese actually possessed some 12,700 aircraft in the Home Islands, roughly half of them kamikazes.*[58]

The Allies made counter-*kamikaze* preparations, known as the **Big Blue Blanket**. This involved adding more fighter squadrons to the carriers in place of **torpedo** and **dive bombers**, and converting B-17s into airborne radar pickets in a manner similar to the modern-day **AWACS**. Nimitz came up with a plan for a pre-invasion feint, sending a fleet to the invasion beaches a couple of weeks before the real invasion, to lure out the Japanese on their

one-way flights, who would then find ships loaded with anti-aircraft guns from bow to stern instead of the valuable, vulnerable transports.

The main defense against Japanese air attacks would have come from the massive fighter forces that were being assembled in the **Ryukyu Islands**. The US Army **Fifth** and **Seventh Air Forces** and US Marine air units had moved into the islands immediately after the invasion, and air strength had been increasing in preparation for the all-out assault on Japan. In preparation for the invasion, an air campaign against Japanese airfields and transportation arteries had commenced before the Japanese surrender.

8.3.2 Ground threat

Through April, May, and June, Allied intelligence followed the buildup of Japanese ground forces, including five divisions added to Kyūshū, with great interest, but also some complacency, still projecting that in November the total for Kyūshū would be about 350,000 servicemen. That changed in July, with the discovery of four new divisions and indications of more to come. By August, the count was up to 600,000, and **Magic cryptanalysis** had identified nine divisions in southern Kyūshū—three times the expected number and still a serious underestimate of the actual Japanese strength.

Estimated troop strength in early July was 350,000,*[59] rising to 545,000 in early August.*[60]

The intelligence revelations about Japanese preparations on Kyushu emerging in mid-July transmitted powerful shock waves both in the Pacific and in Washington. On 29 July, [MacArthur's intelligence chief, Major General Charles A.] **Willoughby**... noted first that the April estimate allowed for the Japanese capability to deploy six divisions on Kyushu, with the potential to deploy ten. “These [six] divisions have since made their appearance, as predicted,” he observed, “and the end is not in sight.” If not checked, this threatened “to grow to [the] point where we attack on a ratio of one (1) to one (1) which is not the recipe for victory.” * [61]

By the time of surrender, the Japanese had 916,828 military personnel either in position or in various stages of deployment on Kyushu alone.*[62] The total strength of the Japanese military in the Home Islands amounted to 4,335,500, of whom 2,372,700 were in the Army and 1,962,800 in the Navy.*[63] The buildup of Japanese troops on Kyūshū led American war planners, most importantly General George Marshall, to consider drastic changes to Olympic, or replacing it with a different invasion plan.

8.3.3 Chemical weapons

Because of its predictable wind patterns and several other factors, Japan was particularly vulnerable to **gas attacks**. Such attacks would neutralize the Japanese tendency to fight from caves, which would increase the soldiers' exposure to gas.

Although chemical warfare had been outlawed by the **Geneva Protocol**, neither the US nor Japan were signatories at the time. While the US had promised never to initiate gas warfare, Japan had used gas against the Chinese earlier in the war.* [64]

Fear of Japanese retaliation [to chemical weapon use] lessened because by the end of the war Japan's ability to deliver gas by air or long-range guns had all but disappeared. In 1944 Ultra revealed that the Japanese doubted their ability to retaliate against United States use of gas. 'Every precaution must be taken not to give the enemy cause for a pretext to use gas,' the commanders were warned. So fearful were the Japanese leaders that they planned to ignore isolated tactical use of gas in the home islands by the US forces because they feared escalation.* [65]

—Skates

In addition to use against people, the U.S. military considered chemical attacks to kill crops in an attempt to starve the Japanese into submission. The Army began experimenting with compounds to destroy crops in April 1944, and within one year had narrowed over 1,000 agents to nine promising ones containing **phenoxyacetic acids**. One compound designated LN-8 performed best in tests and went into mass production. Dropping or spraying the herbicide was deemed the most effective employment method; a July 1945 test from an SPD Mark 2 bomb, originally crafted to hold biological weapons like anthrax or ricin, had the shell burst open at a predetermined height to send the chemical agent flying. By the time the war ended, the Army was still trying to determine the optimal dispersal height to cover a wide enough area. Active ingredients in LN-8 and another tested compound would later be used to create **Agent Orange**, used during the Vietnam War.* [66]

8.3.4 Nuclear weapons

On Marshall's orders, Major General John E. Hull looked into the tactical use of nuclear weapons for the invasion of the Japanese home islands, even after the dropping of two strategic atomic bombs on Japan (Marshall did not think that the Japanese would capitulate immediately). Colonel Lyle E. Seeman reported that at least seven Fat Man-type plutonium implosion bombs would be available

by X-Day, which could be dropped on defending forces. Seeman advised that American troops not enter an area hit by a bomb for "at least 48 hours"; the risk of **nuclear fallout** was not well understood, and such a short amount of time after detonation would have resulted in substantial radiation exposure for the American troops.* [67]

Ken Nichols, the District Engineer of the Manhattan Engineer District, wrote that at the beginning of August 1945, "[p]lanning for the invasion of the main Japanese home islands had reached its final stages, and if the landings actually took place, we might supply about fifteen atomic bombs to support the troops." * [68] An air burst 1,800–2,000 ft (550–610 m) above the ground had been chosen for the (Hiroshima) bomb to achieve maximum blast effects, and to minimize residual radiation on the ground as it was hoped that American troops would soon occupy the city.* [69]

8.3.5 Alternative targets

The Joint Staff planners, taking note of the extent to which the Japanese had concentrated on Kyūshū at the expense of the rest of Japan, considered alternate places to invade such as the island of Shikoku, northern Honshu at Sendai, or Ominato. They also considered skipping the preliminary invasion and going directly at Tokyo.* [70] Attacking northern Honshu would have the advantage of a much weaker defense but had the disadvantage of giving up land-based air support (except the B-29s) from Okinawa.

8.3.6 Prospects for Olympic

General Douglas MacArthur dismissed any need to change his plans:

I am certain that the Japanese air potential reported to you as accumulating to counter our OLYMPIC operation is greatly exaggerated. [...] As to the movement of ground forces [...] I do not credit [...] the heavy strengths reported to you in southern Kyushu. [...] In my opinion, there should not be the slightest thought of changing the Olympic operation.* [71]

However, Admiral Ernest King, the Chief of Naval Operations, was prepared to oppose proceeding with the invasion, with Admiral Nimitz's concurrence, which would have set off a major dispute within the US government.

At this juncture, the key interaction would likely have been between Marshall and Truman. There is strong evidence that Marshall remained committed to an invasion as late as 15 August. [...] But tempering Marshall's personal commitment to invasion would have

been his comprehension that civilian sanction in general, and Truman's in particular, was unlikely for a costly invasion that no longer enjoyed consensus support from the armed services.* [72]

8.3.7 Soviet intentions



Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands with the island of Hokkaido, just to the north of Honshu.



The island of Hokkaido

Unknown to the Americans, the Soviets also considered invading a major Japanese island—Hokkaido—by the end of August 1945, which would have put pressure on the Allies to act sooner than November.

In the early years of World War II, the Soviets had planned on building a huge navy in order to catch up with the Western World. However, the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 forced the suspension of this plan: the Soviets had to divert most of their resources to fighting the Germans - primarily on

land - throughout most of the war, leaving their navy relatively poorly equipped.* [73]*[74]*[75] As a result, in Project Hula (1945), the United States transferred about 100 naval vessels (out of 180 planned) to the Soviet Union in preparation for the planned Soviet entry into the war against Japan. The transferred vessels included amphibious assault ships.

At the Yalta Conference (February 1945), the Allies had agreed that the USSR would take the southern part of the island of Sakhalin, which the Russian Empire had ceded to Japan in the Treaty of Portsmouth after the 1904–1905 Russo-Japanese War (the Soviets already controlled the northern part); and the Kuril Islands, which had been assigned to Japan in the 1875 Treaty of St. Petersburg. On the other hand, no agreement envisaged Soviet participation in the invasion of Japan itself.

The Japanese had *kamikaze* aircraft in southern Honshu and Kyushu which would have opposed Operations Olympic and Coronet. It is unknown to what extent they could have opposed Soviet landings in the far north of Japan. For comparative purposes, approximately 1,300 Western Allied ships deployed during the Battle of Okinawa (April–June 1945). In total, 368 ships—including 120 amphibious craft—were badly damaged while another 28—including 15 landing ships and 12 destroyers—were sunk, mostly by *kamikazes*. The Soviets, however, had fewer than 400 ships (most of them not equipped for amphibious assault) by the time they declared war on Japan on 8 August 1945.* [76]

For Operation Downfall, the US military envisaged requiring more than 30 divisions for a successful invasion of the Japanese home islands. In comparison, the Soviet Union had about 11 divisions available, comparable to the 14 divisions the US estimated it would require to invade southern Kyushu. The Soviet invasion of the Kuril Islands (18 August – 1 September 1945) took place after Japan's capitulation on 15 August; despite this, the Japanese forces in these islands resisted quite fiercely (although some of them proved unwilling to fight due to Japan's surrender on 15 August). In the Battle of Shumshu (18–23 August 1945), the Soviets had 8,821 troops unsupported by tanks and without larger warships. The well-established Japanese garrison had 8,500 troops and fielded around 77 tanks. The battle lasted five days, during which the Soviets lost over 516 troops and five of the 16 landing ships (most of these ships ex-U.S. Navy) to Japanese coastal artillery, while the Japanese lost over 256 troops. Soviet casualties during the Battle of Shumshu totalled up to 1,567, while the Japanese suffered 1,018 casualties, making Shumshu the only battle in the 1945 Soviet-Japanese War where Russian losses exceeded those of the Japanese, in stark contrast to overall Soviet-Japanese casualty rates in land-based fighting in Manchuria.

During World War II, the Japanese had a naval base at Paramushiro in the Kuril Islands and several bases

in Hokkaido. Since Japan and the Soviet Union maintained a state of wary neutrality until the Soviet declaration of war on Japan in August 1945, Japanese observers based in Japanese-held territories in Manchuria, Korea, Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands constantly watched the port of Vladivostok and other seaports in the Soviet Union.*[77]

According to Thomas B. Allen and Norman Polmar, the Soviets had carefully drawn up detailed plans for the Far East invasions, except that the landing for Hokkaido “existed in detail” only in Stalin’s mind and that it was “unlikely that Stalin had interests in taking Manchuria and even taking on Hokkaido. Even if he wanted to grab as much territory in Asia as possible, he was too much focused on establishing a beachhead in Europe more so than Asia.” *[78]

8.4 Estimated casualties

Because the U.S. military planners assumed “that operations in this area will be opposed not only by the available organized military forces of the Empire, but also by a fanatically hostile population”, *[26] high casualties were thought to be inevitable, but nobody knew with certainty how high. Several people made estimates, but they varied widely in numbers, assumptions and purposes, which included advocating and opposing the invasion. The estimated casualty figures later became a crucial point in postwar debate over the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

In preparation for Operation Olympic, the invasion of southern Kyushu, various figures and organizations made casualty estimates based on the terrain, strength, and disposition of known Japanese forces. However, as reported Japanese strength in the Home Islands continued to climb and Japanese military performance increased, so too did the casualty estimates.*[4] In April 1945, the Joint Chiefs of Staff formally adopted a planning paper giving a range of possible casualties based on experience in both Europe and the Pacific. Given a troop list of 766,700 men and a 90-day campaign, the US Sixth Army could be expected to suffer between 514,072 casualties (including 134,556 dead and missing) under the “Pacific Experience” (1.95 dead and missing and 7.45 total casualties/1,000 men/day) and 149,046 casualties (including 28,981 dead and missing) under the “European Experience” (0.42 dead and missing and 2.16 total casualties/1,000 men/day).*[79] This assessment included neither casualties suffered *after* the 90-day mark (US planners envisioned switching to the tactical *defensive* by X+120*[80]), nor personnel losses at sea from Japanese air attacks.*[81] In order to sustain the campaign on Kyushu, planners estimated a replacement stream of 100,000 men per month would be necessary, a figure achievable even after the partial demobilization following the defeat of Germany.*[4] As time went on, other

US leaders made estimates of their own:

- In a letter to General Curtis LeMay when LeMay assumed command of the B-29 force on Guam, General Lauris Norstad told LeMay that if an invasion took place, it would cost the US “half a million” dead.*[82]
- In May, Admiral Nimitz’s staff estimated 49,000 U.S casualties in the first 30 days, including 5,000 at sea.*[83]
- A study done by General MacArthur’s staff in June estimated 23,000 US casualties in the first 30 days and 125,000 after 120 days.*[84] When these figures were questioned by General Marshall, MacArthur submitted a revised estimate of 105,000, in part by deducting wounded men able to return to duty.*[85]
- In a conference with President Truman on June 18, Marshall, taking the Battle of Luzon as the best model for Olympic, thought the Americans would suffer 31,000 casualties in the first 30 days (and ultimately 20% of Japanese casualties, which implied a total of 70,000 casualties).*[86] Admiral Leahy, more impressed by the Battle of Okinawa, thought the American forces would suffer a 35% casualty rate (implying an ultimate toll of 268,000).*[87] Admiral King thought that casualties in the first 30 days would fall between Luzon and Okinawa, i.e., between 31,000 and 41,000.*[87] Of these estimates, only Nimitz’s included losses of the forces at sea, though kamikazes had inflicted 1.78 fatalities per kamikaze pilot in the Battle of Okinawa,*[88] and troop transports off Kyūshū would have been much more exposed.
- In July MacArthur’s Intelligence Chief, Maj. Gen. Charles A. Willoughby, warned of between 210,000 and 280,000 battle casualties in the push to the “stop line” one-third of the way up Kyushu. Even when rounded down to a conservative 200,000, this figure implied a total of nearly 500,000 all-causes losses, of whom perhaps 50,000 might return to duty after light to moderate care.*[89]
- The US Sixth Army, the formation tasked with carrying out the major land fighting on Kyushu, estimated a figure of 394,859 casualties serious enough to be permanently removed from unit roll calls during the first 120 days on Kyushu, barely enough to avoid outstripping the planned replacement stream.*[90]
- Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson stated “We shall in my opinion have to go through an even more bitter finish fight than in Germany. We shall incur the losses incident to such a war and we shall leave the Japanese islands even more thoroughly destroyed

than was the case with Germany.” *[91] From D-Day to V-E day, the Western Allies alone suffered some 766,294 casualties*[92]

- In the spring of 1945, the Army Service Forces under Lt. Gen. **Brehon B. Somervell** was working under a figure of “approximately” 720,000 for the projected replacements needed for “dead and evacuated wounded” through December 31, 1946. These figures are for Army and Army Air force personnel only, and do not include replacements needed for the Navy and Marine Corps.*[93]
- A study done for Secretary of War **Henry Stimson's** staff by **William Shockley** estimated that conquering Japan would cost 1.7–4 million American casualties, including 400,000–800,000 fatalities, and five to ten million Japanese fatalities. The key assumption was large-scale participation by civilians in the defense of Japan.*[15]

Outside the government, well-informed civilians were also making guesses. Kyle Palmer, war correspondent for the *Los Angeles Times*, said half a million to a million Americans would die by the end of the war. **Herbert Hoover**, in memorandums submitted to Truman and Stimson, also estimated 500,000 to 1,000,000 fatalities, and those were believed to be conservative estimates; but it is not known if Hoover discussed these specific figures in his meetings with Truman. The chief of the Army Operations division thought them “entirely too high” under “our present plan of campaign.” *[94]

The **Battle of Okinawa** resulted in 72,000 US casualties in 82 days, of whom 12,510 were killed or missing (this is conservative, because it excludes several thousand US soldiers who died after the battle indirectly, from their wounds). The entire island of Okinawa is 464 sq mi (1,200 km²). If the US casualty rate during the invasion of Japan had been only 5% as high per unit area as it was at Okinawa, the US would still have lost 297,000 soldiers (killed or missing).*[4]

In evaluating these estimates, especially those based on projected Japanese troop strength (such as General MacArthur's), it is important to consider what was known about the state of Japanese defenses at the time, as well as the actual condition of those defenses (MacArthur's staff believed Japanese manpower on Kyushu to be roughly 300,000, more than 300 percent below the actual total).*[95] Nearly 500,000 **Purple Heart** medals (awarded for combat casualties) were manufactured in anticipation of the casualties resulting from the invasion of Japan; the number exceeded that of all American military casualties of the 65 years following the end of **World War II**, including the **Korean** and **Vietnam Wars**. In 2003, there were still 120,000 of these Purple Heart medals in stock.*[96] There were so many left that combat units in **Iraq** and **Afghanistan** were able to keep Purple Hearts on hand for immediate award to soldiers wounded in the field.*[96]

8.5 Available equipment for defenders

Following the surrender and demobilization of Japan, vast amounts of war materiel were turned over to the US occupation forces in the Japanese Home Islands and South Korea. While some totals (particularly for items such as swords and small arms) may be inexact owing to problems of collection and the activities of the black market, the amount of military equipment available to the Japanese in and around the Home Islands by August 1945 was roughly as follows:

Captured and surrendered Japanese Army and Navy ordnance and vehicles in Japan and South Korea*[97]

Japanese Army and Navy aircraft by type in the Home Islands and Korea*[97]

Japanese naval units in the Home Islands*[97]*[99]

8.6 See also

- **1945** - Alternate history novel by Robert Conroy depicting Operation Downfall
- **The Burning Mountain** - Alternate history novel by Alfred Coppel depicting the operation in the wake of a failed **Manhattan Project**
- Operation Majestic

8.7 Notes

- [1] Giangreco (2009). X-Day was set for 1 November 1945 while Y-Day was tentatively set for 1 March 1946. Fighting was expected to last into 1947
- [2] “Chapter XIII “Downfall” The Plan For The Invasion Of Japan”. United States Army Center of Military History. Retrieved January 23, 2016.
- [3] *History of World War II*. 2004. p. 169. ISBN 0761474838.
- [4] Giangreco (2009)
- [5] Japanese Monographs 17-20 Retrieved 21 August 2015.
- [6] Giangreco (2009) pp. 62. 14 divisions for Olympic and 28 for Coronet with a follow-up force of between 10 and 12 additional divisions.
- [7] Chapter 13: “Downfall” pp. 422 Retrieved 23 Aug. 2015
- [8] Demobilization and Disarmament of the Japanese Armed Forces pgs. 118, 120. Retrieved 21 August 2015.

- [9] Giangreco (2009) pp. 29. According to Secretary of War Henry Stimson, the number of American military personnel involved in operations to subjugate Japan “was on the order of 5 million men; if all those indirectly concerned are included, it was larger still.”
- [10] Giangreco (2009) pp. 22-23: “As envisioned in the summer of 1945, the ground and air elements, in combination with the full-bore Royal Navy commitment, would ultimately entail that nearly a million British and empire servicemen be gathered for Operation Coronet, the invasion of Honshu near Tokyo.”
- [11] Cook (1992). *Japan at War: an Oral History*. New Press. ISBN 978-1-56584-039-3. pp. 403. Japanese strength is given at 4,335,500 in the Home Islands and 3,527,000 abroad.
- [12] Giangreco (2009) pp. 122: “These militia units received regular combat training with whatever weapons could be scrounged while continuing to perform their agricultural and industrial duties unless directed to other tasks, such as building defensive works, by area commanders. Some 28 million Japanese fell under the provisions of the law in addition to the 1.3 million civilians already working for the Navy and 2.25 million for the Army.”
- [13] Giangreco (2009) pg. xvi
- [14] Mac Arthur, “13” , *Reports*, 1, US: Army.
- [15] Frank, p. 340.
- [16] Skates, p. 18.
- [17] Giangreco, p. .
- [18] Perret, as cited in: Silkett, p. 119
- [19] Skates, pp. 55–57.
- [20] Skates, p. 37.
- [21] Spector, pp. 276–77.
- [22] Defeating Japan: The Joint Chiefs of Staff and Strategy in the Pacific War By Charles F. Brower page 59
- [23] One Hundred Years of Sea Power: The U.S. Navy, 1890–1990 By George W. Baer page 240
- [24] Skates, pp. 44–50.
- [25] Skates, pp. 53–54.
- [26] Sutherland, p. 2.
- [27] Giangreco (2009) pp. 40
- [28] Skates, p. 160.
- [29] USAF Historical Research Agency Document 00219137
- [30] Skates, p. 184.
- [31] Beach Organization for Operation against Kyushu; from COMPHIBSPAC OP PLAN A11-45, August 10, 1945. Skates, pictorial insert.
- [32] Giangreco 2009 pp. 169
- [33] Giangreco 2009 pp. 62
- [34] Giangreco 2009 pp. 168
- [35] Giangreco 2009 pgs. 26, 62
- [36] Day, p. 297.
- [37] Skates, p. 229.
- [38] Day, p. 299.
- [39] Skates, p. 230.
- [40] Gavin Long, *Official Histories. Australia in the War of 1939–1945. Series 1 – Army, Volume VII – The Final Campaigns* (1st edition, 1963), Canberra, Australian War Memorial p. 549.
- [41] Horner, p. .
- [42] Combined Arms Research Laboratory: Downfall pp. 26 Retrieved 3 March 2016
- [43] Hyperwar: Part III, the End of the War pp. 404 Retrieved 3 March 2016
- [44] US Air Force: The Invasion that Didn't Happen Retrieved 3 March 2016
- [45] Skates, p. 102.
- [46] Frank, p. 184–185.
- [47] Japanese Monograph No. 85 pp. 16 Retrieved 23 August 2015.
- [48] Giangreco 2009 pp. 131
- [49] Giangreco 2009 pp. 257
- [50] Frank, p. 203.
- [51] Frank, p. 176.
- [52] Frank, p. 177.
- [53] Frank, pp. 188–89.
- [54] Bauer & Coox.
- [55] Frank, p. 189.
- [56] Frank, p. 206.
- [57] Frank, pp. 209–210.
- [58] Giangreco 2009 pp. xviii
- [59] MacEachin, p. 16 (GIF), Figure 2, Estimated Japanese Dispositions on Kyushu, 9 July 1945.
- [60] MacEachin, p. 18 (GIF), Figure 3, Estimated Japanese Dispositions on Kyushu, 2 August 1945.
- [61] Frank, p. 211, Willoughby's Amendment 1 to “G-2 Estimate of the Enemy Situation with Respect to Kyushu” .
- [62] Giangreco (2009) pg.93

- [63] Ministry of Health and Welfare, 1964. Retrieved 21 July 2015.
- [64] Skates, p. 84.
- [65] Skates, p. 97.
- [66] Trevithick, Joseph (10 June 2016). “America Nearly Attacked Japan With Chemical Weapons in 1945” . *War is Boring.com*. Retrieved 11 June 2016.
- [67] Frank, pp. 312–13.
- [68] Nichols, p. 201.
- [69] Nichols, pp. 175, 198, 223.
- [70] Frank, pp. 273–274.
- [71] Frank, pp. 274–75.
- [72] Frank, p. 357.
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- [76] *Jane's Fighting Ships of World War II*. Random House. pp. 180–185.
- [77] *Code-Name Downfall: The Secret Plan to Invade Japan-And Why Truman Dropped the Bomb*. Simon & Schuster. pp. 115–120.
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- [79] Frank, No Bomb: No End pp. 374–375 Retrieved 23 August 2015
- [80] Giangreco 2009 pp. 157
- [81] Frank, No Bomb: No End pp. 375 Retrieved 23 August 2015
- [82] Coffey, p. 474.
- [83] Frank, p. 137.
- [84] Frank, pp. 137–138.
- [85] Frank, p. 138.
- [86] Frank, pp. 140–141.
- [87] Frank, p. 142.
- [88] Frank, p. 182.
- [89] Giangreco 2009 pp. 47
- [90] Giangreco 2009 pp. 104
- [91] Henry L. Stimson, “The Decision to use the Atomic Bomb” pp. 11 Retrieved 23 August 2015.
- [92] The Last Offensive pp. 478 Retrieved 23 August 2015.
- [93] Giangreco 2009 pp. 53
- [94] Frank, p. 122.
- [95] The Final Months of the War with Japan. Retrieved 23 August 2015
- [96] Giangreco & Moore.
- [97] *Final report: progress of demobilization of the Japanese Armed Forces, 30 December 1946 Part 2*, Supreme Command of the Allied Powers, p. 49, retrieved 26 December 2015
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- [99] Japanese Monograph No. 85 Retrieved 26 Dec. 2015

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Chapter 9

Attack on Pearl Harbor

The **attack on Pearl Harbor**, also known as the **Battle of Pearl Harbor**,^{*[9]} the **Hawaii Operation** or **Operation AI** by the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters,^{*[10]*[11]} and **Operation Z** during planning,^{*[12]} was a surprise military strike by the Imperial Japanese Navy against the United States naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii Territory, on the morning of December 7, 1941. The attack led to the United States' entry into World War II.

Japan intended the attack as a preventive action to keep the U.S. Pacific Fleet from interfering with military actions the Empire of Japan planned in Southeast Asia against overseas territories of the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and the United States. Over the next seven hours there were coordinated Japanese attacks on the U.S.-held Philippines, Guam and Wake Island and on the British Empire in Malaya, Singapore, and Hong Kong.^{*[13]}

The attack commenced at 7:48 a.m. Hawaiian Time.^{*[14]} The base was attacked by 353^{*[15]} Imperial Japanese fighter planes, bombers, and torpedo planes in two waves, launched from six aircraft carriers.^{*[15]} All eight U.S. Navy battleships were damaged, with four sunk. All but the **USS Arizona (BB-39)** were later raised, and six were returned to service and went on to fight in the war. The Japanese also sank or damaged three cruisers, three destroyers, an anti-aircraft training ship,^{*[nb 4]} and one minelayer. 188 U.S. aircraft were destroyed; 2,403 Americans were killed and 1,178 others were wounded.^{*[17]} Important base installations such as the power station, shipyard, maintenance, and fuel and torpedo storage facilities, as well as the submarine piers and headquarters building (also home of the intelligence section) were not attacked. Japanese losses were light: 29 aircraft and five midget submarines lost, and 64 servicemen killed. One Japanese sailor, Kazuo Sakamaki, was captured.

The attack came as a profound shock to the American people and led directly to the American entry into World War II in both the Pacific and European theaters. The following day, December 8, the United States declared war on Japan.^{*[18]} Domestic support for non-interventionism, which had been fading since the Fall of France in 1940,^{*[19]} disappeared. Clandestine support

of the United Kingdom (e.g., the **Neutrality Patrol**) was replaced by active alliance. Subsequent operations by the U.S. prompted **Nazi Germany** and **Fascist Italy** to declare war on the U.S. on December 11, which was reciprocated by the U.S. the same day.

From the 1950s, several writers alleged that parties high in the U.S. and British governments knew of the attack in advance and may have let it happen (or even encouraged it) with the aim of bringing the U.S. into war.^{*[20]*[21]} However, this **advance-knowledge conspiracy theory** is rejected by mainstream historians.^{*[22]*[nb 5]}

There were numerous historical precedents for unannounced military action by Japan. However, the lack of any formal warning, particularly while negotiations were still apparently ongoing, led President Franklin D. Roosevelt to proclaim December 7, 1941, "a date which will live in infamy". Because the attack happened without a declaration of war and without explicit warning, the attack on Pearl Harbor was judged by the Tokyo Trials to be a war crime.^{*[24]*[25]}

9.1 Background to conflict



Pearl Harbor on October 30, 1941, looking southwest

Main article: Events leading to the attack on Pearl Harbor

9.1.1 Diplomatic background

War between Japan and the United States had been a possibility of which each nation had been aware (and developed contingency plans for) since the 1920s, though tensions did not begin to grow seriously until Japan's 1931 invasion of Manchuria. Over the next decade, Japan continued to expand into China, leading to all-out war between those countries in 1937. Japan spent considerable effort trying to isolate China and achieve sufficient resource independence to attain victory on the mainland; the "Southern Operation" was designed to assist these efforts.*[26]

From December 1937, events such as the Japanese attack on *USS Panay*, the *Allison* incident, and the Nanking Massacre (the International Military Tribunal of the Far East concluded that more than 200,000 Chinese non-combatants were killed in indiscriminate massacres, though other estimates have ranged from 40,000 to more than 300,000) swung public opinion in the West sharply against Japan. Fearing Japanese expansion,*[27] the United States, the United Kingdom, and France provided loan assistance for war supply contracts to the Republic of China.

In 1940, Japan invaded French Indochina in an effort to control supplies reaching China. The United States halted shipments of airplanes, parts, machine tools, and aviation gasoline to Japan, which was perceived by Japan as an unfriendly act.*[nb 6] The U.S. did not stop oil exports to Japan at that time in part because prevailing sentiment in Washington was that such an action would be an extreme step that Japan would likely consider a provocation, given Japanese dependence on U.S. oil.*[29]*[30]

Early in 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt moved the Pacific Fleet to Hawaii from its previous base in San Diego and ordered a military buildup in the Philippines in the hope of discouraging Japanese aggression in the Far East. Because the Japanese high command was (mistakenly) certain that any attack on the UK's Southeast Asian colonies would bring the U.S. into war, a devastating preventive strike appeared to be the only way to avoid U.S. naval interference.*[31] An invasion of the Philippines was also considered necessary by Japanese war planners. The U.S. War Plan Orange had envisioned defending the Philippines with a 40,000-man elite force. This was opposed by Douglas MacArthur, who felt that he would need a force ten times that size, and was never implemented.*[32] By 1941, U.S. planners anticipated abandonment of the Philippines at the outbreak of war and orders to that effect were given in late 1941 to Admiral Thomas Hart, commander of the Asiatic Fleet.*[33]

The U.S. ceased oil exports to Japan in July 1941, following Japanese expansion into French Indochina after the fall of France, in part because of new American restrictions on domestic oil consumption.*[34] This in turn caused the Japanese to proceed with plans to take the

Dutch East Indies, an oil-rich territory.*[nb 7] On August 17, Roosevelt warned Japan that the U.S. was prepared to take steps against Japan if it attacked "neighboring countries".*[36] The Japanese were faced with the option of either withdrawing from China and losing face or seizing and securing new sources of raw materials in the resource-rich, European-controlled colonies of Southeast Asia.

Japan and the U.S. engaged in negotiations during the course of 1941 in an effort to improve relations. During these negotiations, Japan offered to withdraw from most of China and Indochina when peace was made with the Nationalist government, adopt an independent interpretation of the Tripartite Pact, and not to discriminate in trade provided all other countries reciprocated. Washington rejected these proposals. Japanese Prime Minister Konoye then offered to personally meet with Roosevelt, but Roosevelt insisted on coming to an agreement before any meeting.*[37] The U.S. ambassador to Japan repeatedly urged Roosevelt to accept the meeting, warning that it was the only way to preserve the conciliatory Konoye government and peace in the Pacific.*[38] His recommendation was not acted upon. The Konoye government collapsed the following month when the Japanese military refused to agree to the withdrawal of all troops from China.*[39]

Japan's final proposal, on November 20, offered to withdraw their forces from southern Indochina and not to launch any attacks in Southeast Asia provided that the U.S., the UK, and the Netherlands ceased aiding China and lifted their sanctions against Japan.*[39] The American counter-proposal of November 26 (November 27 in Japan) (the Hull note) required Japan to evacuate all of China without conditions and conclude non-aggression pacts with Pacific powers. However the day before the Hull Note was delivered, on November 26 in Japan, the main Japanese attack fleet left port for Pearl Harbor.

9.1.2 Military planning

Preliminary planning for an attack on Pearl Harbor to protect the move into the "Southern Resource Area" (the Japanese term for the Dutch East Indies and Southeast Asia generally) had begun very early in 1941 under the auspices of Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, then commanding Japan's Combined Fleet.*[40] He won assent to formal planning and training for an attack from the Imperial Japanese Navy General Staff only after much contention with Naval Headquarters, including a threat to resign his command.*[41] Full-scale planning was underway by early spring 1941, primarily by Rear Admiral Ryunosuke Kusaka, with assistance from Captain Minoru Genda and Yamamoto's Deputy Chief of Staff, Captain Kameto Kuroshima.*[42] The planners studied the 1940 British air attack on the Italian fleet at Taranto intensively.*[nb 8]*[nb 9]

Over the next several months, pilots trained, equipment was adapted, and intelligence collected. Despite these preparations, Emperor Hirohito did not approve the attack plan until November 5, after the third of four Imperial Conferences called to consider the matter.*[45] Final authorization was not given by the emperor until December 1, after a majority of Japanese leaders advised him the "Hull Note" would "destroy the fruits of the China incident, endanger Manchukuo and undermine Japanese control of Korea." * [46]

By late 1941, many observers believed that hostilities between the U.S. and Japan were imminent. A Gallup poll just before the attack on Pearl Harbor found that 52% of Americans expected war with Japan, 27% did not, and 21% had no opinion.*[47] While U.S. Pacific bases and facilities had been placed on alert on many occasions, U.S. officials doubted Pearl Harbor would be the first target; instead, they expected the Philippines would be attacked first. This presumption was due to the threat that the air bases throughout the country and the naval base at Manila posed to sea lanes, as well as to the shipment of supplies to Japan from territory to the south.*[48] They also incorrectly believed that Japan was not capable of mounting more than one major naval operation at a time.*[49]

Ever since the Japanese attack, there has been debate as to how and why the United States had been caught unaware, and how much and when American officials knew of Japanese plans and related topics. Military officers including Gen. **Billy Mitchell** had pointed out the vulnerability of Pearl to air attack. At least two Naval War games, one in 1932 and another in 1936 proved that Pearl was vulnerable to such an attack. Adm. **James Richardson** was removed from command shortly after protesting President Roosevelt's decision to move the bulk of the Pacific fleet to Pearl Harbor.*[50] The decisions of military and political leadership to ignore these warnings has contributed to conspiracy theories. Several writers, including journalist Robert Stinnett and former United States rear admiral Robert Alfred Theobald, have argued that various parties high in the U.S. and British governments knew of the attack in advance and may even have let it happen or encouraged it in order to force the U.S. into war via the so-called "back door". However, this **Pearl Harbor advance-knowledge conspiracy theory** is rejected by mainstream historians.*[51]*[52]*[53]

9.1.3 Objectives

The Japanese attack had several major aims. First, it intended to destroy important American fleet units, thereby preventing the Pacific Fleet from interfering with Japanese conquest of the Dutch East Indies and Malaya and to enable Japan to conquer Southeast Asia without interference. Second, it was hoped to buy time for Japan to consolidate its position and increase its naval strength before shipbuilding authorized by the 1940 Vinson-Walsh

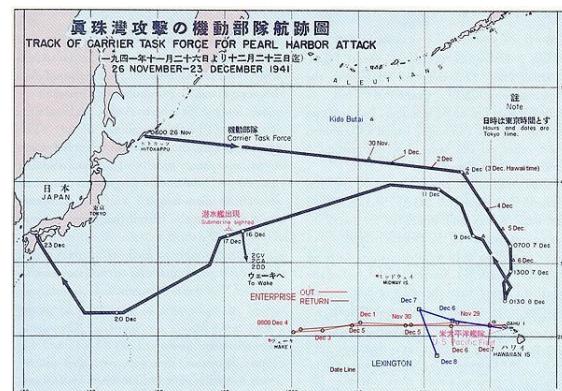
Act erased any chance of victory.*[54]*[55] Third, to deliver a blow to America's ability to mobilize its forces in the Pacific, battleships were chosen as the main targets, since they were the prestige ships of any navy at the time.*[54] Finally, it was hoped that the attack would undermine American morale such that the U.S. government would drop its demands contrary to Japanese interests, and would seek a compromise peace with Japan.*[56]*[57]

Striking the Pacific Fleet at anchor in Pearl Harbor carried two distinct disadvantages: the targeted ships would be in very shallow water, so it would be relatively easy to salvage and possibly repair them; and most of the crews would survive the attack, since many would be on shore leave or would be rescued from the harbor. A further important disadvantage—this of timing, and known to the Japanese—was the absence from Pearl Harbor of all three of the U.S. Pacific Fleet's aircraft carriers (*Enterprise*, *Lexington*, and *Saratoga*). IJN top command was so imbued with **Admiral Mahan's** "decisive battle" doctrine—especially that of destroying the maximum number of battleships—that, despite these concerns, Yamamoto decided to press ahead.*[58]

Japanese confidence in their ability to achieve a short, victorious war also meant other targets in the harbor, especially the navy yard, oil tank farms, and submarine base, were ignored, since—by their thinking—the war would be over before the influence of these facilities would be felt.*[59]

9.2 Approach and attack

See also: Order of battle of the Attack on Pearl Harbor



Route followed by the Japanese fleet to Pearl Harbor and back.

On November 26, 1941, a Japanese task force (the Striking Force) of six aircraft carriers—*Akagi*, *Kaga*, *Sōryū*, *Hiryū*, *Shōkaku*, and *Zuikaku*—departed northern Japan *en route* to a position northwest of Hawaii, intending to launch its 408 aircraft to attack Pearl Harbor: 360



An Imperial Japanese Navy Mitsubishi A6M Zero fighter on the aircraft carrier Akagi.

for the two attack waves and 48 on defensive combat air patrol (CAP), including nine fighters from the first wave.

The first wave was to be the primary attack, while the second wave was to attack carriers as its first objective and cruisers as its second, with battleships as the third target.* [60] The first wave carried most of the weapons to attack capital ships, mainly specially adapted Type 91 aerial torpedoes which were designed with an anti-roll mechanism and a rudder extension that let them operate in shallow water.* [61] The aircrews were ordered to select the highest value targets (battleships and aircraft carriers) or, if these were not present, any other high value ships (cruisers and destroyers). First wave dive bombers were to attack ground targets. Fighters were ordered to strafe and destroy as many parked aircraft as possible to ensure they did not get into the air to intercept the bombers, especially in the first wave. When the fighters' fuel got low they were to refuel at the aircraft carriers and return to combat. Fighters were to serve CAP duties where needed, especially over U.S. airfields.

Before the attack commenced, two reconnaissance aircraft launched from cruisers *Chikuma* and *Tone* were sent to scout over Oahu and Maui and report on U.S. fleet composition and location. Reconnaissance aircraft flights risked alerting the U.S.,* [62] and were not necessary. U.S. fleet composition and preparedness information in Pearl Harbor was already known due to the reports of the Japanese spy Takeo Yoshikawa. A report of the absence of the U.S. fleet in Lahaina anchorage off Maui was received from the fleet submarine *I-72*.* [63] Another four scout planes patrolled the area between the Japanese carrier force (the Kido Butai) and *Niihau*, to detect any counterattack.* [64]

9.2.1 Submarines

Fleet submarines *I-16*, *I-18*, *I-20*, *I-22*, and *I-24* each embarked a Type A midget submarine for transport to

the waters off Oahu.* [65] The five I-boats left Kure Naval District on November 25, 1941.* [66] On December 6, they came to within 10 nautical miles (19 km; 12 mi) of the mouth of Pearl Harbor* [67] and launched their midget subs at about 01:00 on December 7.* [68] At 03:42* [69] Hawaiian Time, the minesweeper *Condor* spotted a midget submarine periscope southwest of the Pearl Harbor entrance buoy and alerted the destroyer *Ward*.* [70] The midget may have entered Pearl Harbor. However, *Ward* sank another midget submarine at 06:37* [70]* [nb 10] in the first American shots in the Pacific Theater. A midget submarine on the north side of Ford Island missed the seaplane tender *Curtiss* with her first torpedo and missed the attacking destroyer *Monaghan* with her other one before being sunk by *Monaghan* at 08:43.* [70]

A third midget submarine, *Ha-19*, grounded twice, once outside the harbor entrance and again on the east side of Oahu, where it was captured on December 8.* [72] Ensign Kazuo Sakamaki swam ashore and was captured by Hawaii National Guard Corporal David Akui, becoming the first Japanese prisoner of war.* [nb 11] A fourth had been damaged by a depth charge attack and was abandoned by its crew before it could fire its torpedoes.* [73] Japanese forces received a radio message from a midget submarine at 00:41 on December 8 claiming damage to one or more large warships inside Pearl Harbor.* [74]

In 1992, 2000, and 2001, Hawaii Undersea Research Laboratory's submersibles found the wreck of the fifth midget submarine lying in three parts outside Pearl Harbor. The wreck was in the debris field where much surplus U.S. equipment was dumped after the war, including vehicles and landing craft. Both of its torpedoes were missing. This correlates with reports of two torpedoes fired at the light cruiser *St. Louis* at 10:04 at the entrance of Pearl Harbor, and a possible torpedo fired at destroyer *Helm* at 08:21.* [75]

9.2.2 Japanese declaration of war

See also: Japanese war crimes

The attack took place before any formal declaration of war was made by Japan, but this was not Admiral Yamamoto's intention. He originally stipulated that the attack should not commence until thirty minutes after Japan had informed the United States that peace negotiations were at an end. However, the attack began before the notice could be delivered. Tokyo transmitted the 5000-word notification (commonly called the "14-Part Message") in two blocks to the Japanese Embassy in Washington, but transcribing the message took too long for the Japanese ambassador to deliver it in time. (In fact, U.S. code breakers had already deciphered and translated most of the message hours before he was scheduled to deliver it.)* [76] The final part of the "14 Part Message" is

sometimes described as a declaration of war. While it was viewed by a number of senior U.S government and military officials as a very strong indicator that negotiations were likely to be terminated*[77] and that war might break out at any moment,*[78] it neither declared war nor severed diplomatic relations. A declaration of war was printed on the front page of Japan's newspapers in the evening edition of December 8,*[79] but not delivered to the U.S. government until the day after the attack.

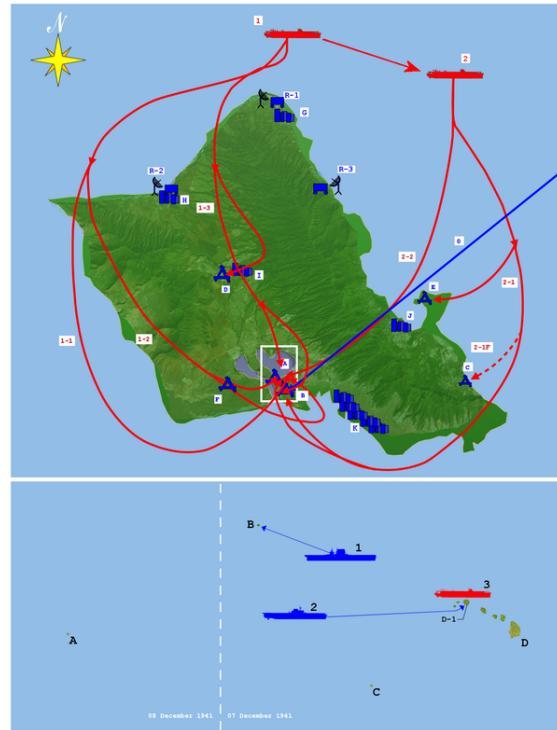
For decades, conventional wisdom held that Japan attacked without any official warning of a break in relations only because of accidents and bumbling that delayed the delivery of a document hinting at war to Washington. In 1999, however, Takeo Iguchi, a professor of law and international relations at International Christian University in Tokyo, discovered documents that pointed to a vigorous debate inside the government over how, and indeed whether, to notify Washington of Japan's intention to break off negotiations and start a war, including a December 7 entry in the war diary saying, "our deceptive diplomacy is steadily proceeding toward success." Of this, Iguchi said, "The diary shows that the army and navy did not want to give any proper declaration of war, or indeed prior notice even of the termination of negotiations ... and they clearly prevailed." *[80]*[81]

9.2.3 First wave composition

The first attack wave of 183 planes was launched north of Oahu, led by Commander Mitsuo Fuchida.*[82] Six planes failed to launch due to technical difficulties.*[64] It included:*[nb 12]

- **1st Group** (targets: battleships and aircraft carriers)*[84]
 - 49 Nakajima B5N *Kate* bombers armed with 800 kg (1760 lb) armor-piercing bombs, organized in four sections (1 failed to launch)
 - 40 B5N bombers armed with Type 91 torpedoes, also in four sections
- **2nd Group** – (targets: Ford Island and Wheeler Field)
 - 51 Aichi D3A *Val* dive bombers armed with 550 lb (249 kg) general-purpose bombs (3 failed to launch)
- **3rd Group** – (targets: aircraft at Ford Island, Hickam Field, Wheeler Field, Barber's Point, Kaneohe)
 - 43 Mitsubishi A6M "Zero" fighters for air control and strafing*[83] (2 failed to launch)

As the first wave approached Oahu, it was detected by the U.S. Army SCR-270 radar at Opana Point near the



The Japanese attacked in two waves. The first wave was detected by U.S. Army radar at 136 nautical miles (252 km), but was misidentified as USAAF bombers arriving from the American mainland

Top:

A. Ford Island NAS B. Hickam Field C. Bellows Field D. Wheeler Field
E. Kaneohe NAS F. Ewa MCAS R-1. Opana Radar Station R-2.
Kawaiola RS R-3. Kaaawa RS
G. Haleiwa H. Kahuku I. Wahiawa J. Kaneohe K. Honolulu
O. B-17s from mainland I. First strike group 1-1. Level bombers
1-2. Torpedo bombers 1-3. Dive bombers 2. Second strike group
2-1. Level bombers 2-1F. Fighters 2-2. Dive bombers

Bottom:

A. Wake Island B. Midway Islands C. Johnston Island D. Hawaii
D-1. Oahu 1. USS Lexington 2. USS Enterprise 3. First Air Fleet

island's northern tip. This post had been in training mode for months, but was not yet operational.*[85] The operators, Privates George Elliot Jr. and Joseph Lockard, reported a target.*[86] But Lieutenant Kermit A. Tyler, a newly assigned officer at the thinly manned Intercept Center, presumed it was the scheduled arrival of six B-17 bombers from California. The Japanese planes were approaching from a direction very close (only a few degrees difference) to the bombers,*[87] and while the operators had never seen a formation as large on radar, they neglected to tell Tyler of its size.*[88] Tyler, for security reasons, could not tell the operators of the six B-17s that were due (even though it was widely known).*[88]

As the first wave planes approached Oahu, they encountered and shot down several U.S. aircraft. At least one of these radioed a somewhat incoherent warning. Other



<21 feet (6.4 m)
22–23 feet (6.7–7.0 m)
29 feet (8.8 m)
30–32 feet (9.1–9.8 m)
33–34 feet (10.1–10.4 m)
34–35 feet (10.4–10.7 m)
36–37 feet (11.0–11.3 m)
38–39 feet (11.6–11.9 m)
40–41 feet (12.2–12.5 m)
42–48 feet (12.8–14.6 m)
>49 feet (14.9 m)

City
Army base
Navy base

Attacked targets:
1: *USS California*
2: *USS Maryland*
3: *USS Oklahoma*
4: *USS Tennessee*
5: *USS West Virginia*
6: *USS Arizona*
7: *USS Nevada*
8: *USS Pennsylvania*
9: *Ford Island NAS*
10: *Hickam field*

Ignored infrastructure targets:
A: *Oil storage tanks*
B: *CINCPAC headquarters building*
C: *Submarine base*
D: *Navy Yard*

warnings from ships off the harbor entrance were still being processed or awaiting confirmation when the attacking planes began bombing and strafing. Nevertheless, it is not clear any warnings would have had much ef-

fect even if they had been interpreted correctly and much more promptly. The results the Japanese achieved in the Philippines were essentially the same as at Pearl Harbor, though MacArthur had almost nine hours warning that the Japanese had already attacked Pearl Harbor.

The air portion of the attack began at 7:48 a.m. Hawaiian Time* [14] (3:18 a.m. December 8 Japanese Standard Time, as kept by ships of the *Kido Butai*),* [89]* [nb 13] with the attack on Kaneohe. A total of 353* [15] Japanese planes in two waves reached Oahu. Slow, vulnerable torpedo bombers led the first wave, exploiting the first moments of surprise to attack the most important ships present (the battleships), while dive bombers attacked U.S. air bases across Oahu, starting with **Hickam Field**, the largest, and **Wheeler Field**, the main U.S. Army Air Forces fighter base. The 171 planes in the second wave attacked the Army Air Forces' **Bellows Field** near Kaneohe on the windward side of the island, and **Ford Island**. The only aerial opposition came from a handful of P-36 Hawks, P-40 Warhawks, and some **SBD Dauntless** dive bombers from the carrier *Enterprise*.* [nb 14]



A destroyed *Vindicator* at Ewa field, the victim of one of the smaller attacks on the approach to Pearl Harbor.

In the first wave attack, about eight of the forty-nine 800 kg (1760 lb) armor-piercing bombs dropped hit their intended battleship targets. At least two of those bombs broke up on impact, another detonated before penetrating an unarmored deck, and one was a dud. Thirteen of the forty torpedoes hit battleships, and four torpedoes hit other ships.* [90] Men aboard U.S. ships awoke to the sounds of alarms, bombs exploding, and gunfire, prompting bleary-eyed men to dress as they ran to **General Quarters** stations. (The famous message, “Air raid Pearl Harbor. This is not drill.”,* [nb 15] was sent from the headquarters of Patrol Wing Two, the first senior Hawaiian command to respond.) The defenders were very unprepared. Ammunition lockers were locked, aircraft parked wingtip to wingtip in the open to prevent sabotage,* [91] guns unmanned (none of the Navy's 5"/38s, only a quarter of its machine guns, and only four of 31 Army batteries got in action).* [91] Despite this low alert status, many American military personnel responded effectively during the attack.* [nb 16] Ensign Joe Taussig Jr., aboard *Nevada*, commanded the ship's antiaircraft

guns and was severely wounded, but continued to be on post. Lt. Commander F. J. Thomas commanded *Nevada* in the captain's absence and got her under way until the ship was grounded at 9:10 a.m.* [92] One of the destroyers, *Aylwin*, got underway with only four officers aboard, all ensigns, none with more than a year's sea duty; she operated at sea for 36 hours before her commanding officer managed to get back aboard.* [93] Captain Mervyn Bennington, commanding *West Virginia*, led his men until he was cut down by fragments from a bomb which hit *Tennessee*, moored alongside.

9.2.4 Second wave composition

The second planned wave consisted of 171 planes: 54 B5Ns, 81 D3As, and 36 A6Ms, commanded by Lieutenant-Commander Shigekazu Shimazaki.* [83] Four planes failed to launch because of technical difficulties.* [64] This wave and its targets comprised:*

- **1st Group** – 54 B5Ns armed with 550 lb (249 kg) and 132 lb (60 kg) general-purpose bombs* [84]
 - 27 B5Ns – aircraft and hangars on Kaneohe, Ford Island, and Barbers Point
 - 27 B5Ns – hangars and aircraft on Hickam Field
- **2nd Group** (targets: aircraft carriers and cruisers)
 - 78 D3As armed with 550 lb (249 kg) general-purpose bombs, in four sections (3 aborted)
- **3rd Group** – (targets: aircraft at Ford Island, Hickam Field, Wheeler Field, Barber's Point, Kaneohe)
 - 35 A6Ms for defense and strafing (1 aborted)

The second wave was divided into three groups. One was tasked to attack Kāne'ohe, the rest Pearl Harbor proper. The separate sections arrived at the attack point almost simultaneously from several directions.

9.2.5 American casualties and damages

Ninety minutes after it began, the attack was over. 2,008 sailors were killed and 710 others wounded; 218 soldiers and airmen (who were part of the Army until the independent U.S. Air Force was formed in 1947) were killed and 364 wounded; 109 marines were killed and 69 wounded; and 68 civilians were killed and 35 wounded. In total, 2,403 Americans died and 1,178 were wounded.* [94] Eighteen ships were sunk or run aground, including five battleships.* [4]* [5] All of the Americans killed or wounded during the attack were non-combatants, given the fact there was no state of war when the attack occurred.* [24]* [25]* [95]



Arizona during the attack.

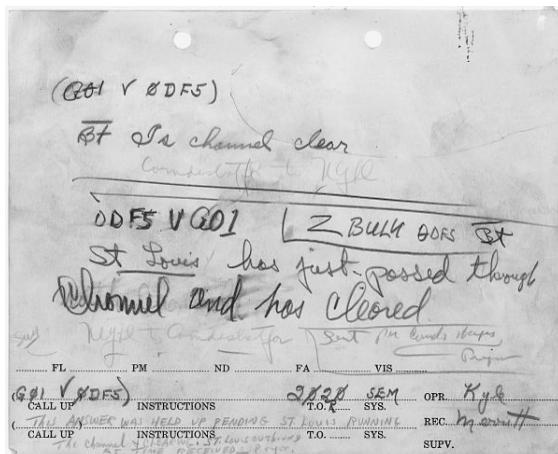
Of the American fatalities, nearly half were due to the explosion of *Arizona*'s forward magazine after it was hit by a modified 40-centimetre (16 in) shell.* [nb 17]

Already damaged by a torpedo and on fire amidships, *Nevada* attempted to exit the harbor. She was targeted by many Japanese bombers as she got under way and sustained more hits from 250 lb (113 kg) bombs, which started further fires. She was deliberately beached to avoid blocking the harbor entrance.

California was hit by two bombs and two torpedoes. The crew might have kept her afloat, but were ordered to abandon ship just as they were raising power for the pumps. Burning oil from *Arizona* and *West Virginia* drifted down on her, and probably made the situation look worse than it was. The disarmed target ship *Utah* was holed twice by torpedoes. *West Virginia* was hit by seven torpedoes, the seventh tearing away her rudder. *Oklahoma* was hit by four torpedoes, the last two above her belt armor, which caused her to capsize. *Maryland* was hit by two of the converted 40 cm shells, but neither caused serious damage.

Although the Japanese concentrated on battleships (the largest vessels present), they did not ignore other targets. The light cruiser *Helena* was torpedoed, and the concussion from the blast capsized the neighboring minelayer *Oglala*. Two destroyers in dry dock, *Cassin* and *Downes* were destroyed when bombs penetrated their fuel bunkers. The leaking fuel caught fire; flooding the dry dock in an effort to fight fire made the burning oil rise, and both were burned out. *Cassin* slipped from her keel blocks and rolled against *Downes*. The light cruiser *Raleigh* was holed by a torpedo. The light cruiser *Honolulu* was damaged, but remained in service. The repair vessel *Vestal*, moored alongside *Arizona*, was heavily damaged and beached. The seaplane tender *Curtiss* was also damaged. The destroyer *Shaw* was badly damaged when two bombs penetrated her forward magazine.* [96]

Of the 402* [15] American aircraft in Hawaii, 188 were destroyed and 159 damaged,* [15] 155 of them on the



This message denotes the first U.S. ship, St. Louis to clear Pearl Harbor. (National Archives and Records Administration) (Note that this is in answer to question "Is channel clear?" and faint writing at bottom concerning the answer being held until St. Louis had successfully cleared.)

ground. Almost none were actually ready to take off to defend the base. Eight Army Air Forces pilots managed to get airborne during the attack* [97] and six were credited with downing at least one Japanese aircraft during the attack: 1st Lt. Lewis M. Sanders, 2nd Lt. Philip M. Rasmussen, 2nd Lt. Kenneth M. Taylor, 2nd Lt. George S. Welch, 2nd Lt. Harry W. Brown, and 2nd Lt. Gordon H. Sterling Jr. Sterling was shot down by Lt. Fujita over Kaneohe Bay and is listed as Body Not Recovered (not Missing In Action). Lt. John L. Dains was killed by friendly fire returning from a victory over Kaawa.* [98]* [99] Of 33 PBYs in Hawaii, 24 were destroyed, and six others damaged beyond repair. (The three on patrol returned undamaged.) Friendly fire brought down some U.S. planes on top of that, including five from an inbound flight from *Enterprise*. Japanese attacks on barracks killed additional personnel.

At the time of the attack, nine civilian aircraft were flying in the vicinity of Pearl Harbor. Of these, three were shot down.* [94]

9.2.6 Japanese losses

Fifty-five Japanese airmen and nine submariners were killed in the attack, and one was captured. Of Japan's 414* [83] available planes, 29 were lost during the battle (nine in the first attack wave, 20 in the second),* [100]* [nb 18] with another 74 damaged by antiaircraft fire from the ground.

9.2.7 Possible third wave

Several Japanese junior officers including Fuchida and Genda urged Nagumo to carry out a third strike in order to destroy as much of Pearl Harbor's fuel and torpedo* [nb

19] storage, maintenance, and dry dock facilities as possible.* [101] Genda, who had unsuccessfully advocated for invading Hawaii after the air attack, believed that without an invasion multiple strikes were necessary to disable the base as much as possible.* [102] The captains of the other five carriers in the task force reported they were willing and ready to carry out a third strike.* [103] Military historians have suggested the destruction of these shore facilities would have hampered the U.S. Pacific Fleet far more seriously than the loss of its battleships.* [104] If they had been wiped out, "serious [American] operations in the Pacific would have been postponed for more than a year";* [105] according to Admiral Chester Nimitz, later Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet, "it would have prolonged the war another two years."* [106] Nagumo, however, decided to withdraw for several reasons:

- American anti-aircraft performance had improved considerably during the second strike, and two thirds of Japan's losses were incurred during the second wave.* [107] Nagumo felt if he launched a third strike, he would be risking three quarters of the Combined Fleet's strength to wipe out the remaining targets (which included the facilities) while suffering higher aircraft losses.* [107]
- The location of the American carriers remained unknown. In addition, the admiral was concerned his force was now within range of American land-based bombers.* [107] Nagumo was uncertain whether the U.S. had enough surviving planes remaining on Hawaii to launch an attack against his carriers.* [108]
- A third wave would have required substantial preparation and turnaround time, and would have meant returning planes would have had to land at night. At the time, only the (British) Royal Navy had developed night carrier techniques, so this was a substantial risk.* [109]
- Weather had deteriorated notably since the first and second wave launching, and rough seas complicated takeoff and landing for a third wave attack.
- The task force's fuel situation did not permit him to remain in waters north of Pearl Harbor much longer, since he was at the very limit of logistical support. To do so risked running unacceptably low on fuel, perhaps even having to abandon destroyers en route home.* [110]
- He believed the second strike had essentially satisfied the main objective of his mission—the neutralization of the Pacific Fleet—and did not wish to risk further losses.* [111] Moreover, it was Japanese Navy practice to prefer the conservation of strength over the total destruction of the enemy.* [112]

At a conference aboard *Yamato* the following morning, Yamamoto initially supported Nagumo.^{*} [111] In retrospect, sparing the vital dockyards, maintenance shops, and oil depots meant the U.S. could respond relatively quickly to Japanese activities in the Pacific. Yamamoto later regretted Nagumo's decision to withdraw and categorically stated it had been a great mistake not to order a third strike.^{*} [113]

9.3 Ships lost or damaged

9.3.1 Battleships

- *Arizona* (RADM Kidd's flagship of Battleship Division One): hit by four armor-piercing bombs, exploded; total loss. 1,177 dead.
- *Oklahoma*: hit by five torpedoes, capsized; total loss. 429 dead.
- *West Virginia*: hit by two bombs, seven torpedoes, sunk; returned to service July 1944. 106 dead.
- *California*: hit by two bombs, two torpedoes, sunk; returned to service January 1944. 100 dead.
- *Nevada*: hit by six bombs, one torpedo, beached; returned to service October 1942. 60 dead.
- *Pennsylvania* (ADM Kimmel's flagship of the United States Pacific Fleet):^{*} [114] in drydock with *Cassin* and *Downes*, hit by one bomb and debris from USS *Cassin*; remained in service. 9 dead.
- *Tennessee*: hit by two bombs; returned to service February 1942. 5 dead.
- *Maryland*: hit by two bombs; returned to service February 1942. 4 dead (including floatplane pilot shot down).

9.3.2 Ex-battleship (target/AA training ship)

- *Utah*: hit by two torpedoes, capsized; total loss. 64 dead.

9.3.3 Cruisers

- *Helena*: hit by one torpedo; returned to service January 1942. 20 dead.
- *Raleigh*: hit by one torpedo; returned to service February 1942.
- *Honolulu*: Near miss, light damage; remained in service.

9.3.4 Destroyers

- *Cassin*: in drydock with *Downes* and *Pennsylvania*, hit by one bomb, burned; returned to service February 1944.
- *Downes*: in drydock with *Cassin* and *Pennsylvania*, caught fire from *Cassin*, burned; returned to service November 1943.
- *Shaw*: hit by three bombs; returned to service June 1942.

9.3.5 Auxiliaries

- *Oglala* (minelayer): Damaged by torpedo hit on *Helena*, capsized; returned to service (as engine-repair ship) February 1944.
- *Vestal* (repair ship): hit by two bombs, blast and fire from *Arizona*, beached; returned to service by August 1942.
- *Curtiss* (seaplane tender): hit by one bomb, one crashed Japanese aircraft; returned to service January 1942. 19 dead.

9.4 Salvage



Captain Homer N. Wallin (center) supervises salvage operations aboard USS California, early 1942

After a systematic search for survivors, formal salvage operations began. Captain Homer N. Wallin, Material Officer for Commander, Battle Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, was immediately ordered to lead salvage operations. "Within a short time I was relieved of all other duties and ordered to full time work as Fleet Salvage Officer".^{*} [115]^{*[nb 20]}

Around Pearl Harbor, divers from the Navy (shore and tenders), the Naval Shipyard, and civilian contractors (Pacific Bridge and others) began work on the ships that

could be refloated. They patched holes, cleared debris, and pumped water out of ships. Navy divers worked inside the damaged ships. Within six months, five battleships and two cruisers were patched or refloated so they could be sent to shipyards in Pearl Harbor and on the mainland for extensive repair.

Intensive salvage operations continued for another year, a total of some 20,000 man-hours under water.*[117] *Oklahoma*, while successfully raised, was never repaired, and capsized while under tow to the mainland in 1947. *Arizona* and the target ship *Utah* were too heavily damaged for salvage, though much of their armament and equipment was removed and put to use aboard other vessels. Today, the two hulks remain where they were sunk,*[118] with *Arizona* becoming a war memorial.

9.5 Aftermath

Main article: Consequences of the attack on Pearl Harbor

In the wake of the attack, 15 Medals of Honor, 51



Pennsylvania, behind the wreckage of Downes and Cassin.

Navy Crosses, 53 Silver Stars, four Navy and Marine Corps Medals, one Distinguished Flying Cross, four Distinguished Service Crosses, one Distinguished Service Medal, and three Bronze Star Medals were awarded to the American servicemen who distinguished themselves in combat at Pearl Harbor.*[119] Additionally, a special military award, the Pearl Harbor Commemorative Medal, was later authorized for all military veterans of the attack.

The day after the attack, Roosevelt delivered his famous Infamy Speech to a Joint Session of Congress, calling

for a formal declaration of war on the Empire of Japan. Congress obliged his request less than an hour later. On December 11, Germany and Italy, honoring their commitments under the Tripartite Pact, declared war on the United States. The pact was an earlier agreement between Germany, Italy and Japan which had the principal objective of limiting U.S. intervention in any conflicts involving the three nations.*[120] Congress issued a declaration of war against Germany and Italy later that same day. The UK actually declared war on Japan nine hours before the U.S. did, partially due to Japanese attacks on Malaya, Singapore and Hong Kong, and partially due to Winston Churchill's promise to declare war "within the hour" of a Japanese attack on the United States.*[121]

The attack was an initial shock to all the Allies in the Pacific Theater. Further losses compounded the alarming setback. Japan attacked the Philippines hours later (because of the time difference, it was December 8 in the Philippines). Only three days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the battleships *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* were sunk off the coast of Malaya, causing British Prime Minister Winston Churchill later to recollect "In all the war I never received a more direct shock. As I turned and twisted in bed the full horror of the news sank in upon me. There were no British or American capital ships in the Indian Ocean or the Pacific except the American survivors of Pearl Harbor who were hastening back to California. Over this vast expanse of waters Japan was supreme and we everywhere were weak and naked".*[122]

Throughout the war, Pearl Harbor was frequently used in American propaganda.*[123]

One further consequence of the attack on Pearl Harbor and its aftermath (notably the Niihau Incident) was that Japanese American residents and citizens were relocated to nearby Japanese-American internment camps. Within hours of the attack, hundreds of Japanese American leaders were rounded up and brought to high-security camps such as Sand Island at the mouth of Honolulu harbor and Kilauea Military Camp on the island of Hawaii.*[124]*[125] Later, over 110,000 Japanese Americans, including United States citizens, were removed from their homes and transferred to internment camps in California, Idaho, Utah, Arizona, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arkansas, and Texas.*[126]*[127]*[128]

The attack also had international consequences. The Canadian province of British Columbia, bordering the Pacific Ocean, had long had a large population of Japanese immigrants. Pre-war tensions were exacerbated by the Pearl Harbor attack, leading to a reaction from the Government of Canada. On February 24, 1942, Order-in-Council P.C. no. 1486 was passed under the War Measures Act allowing for the forced removal of any and all Canadians of Japanese descent from British Columbia, as well as the prohibiting from them returning to the province. The Japanese-Canadians were given a choice:

either be moved into internment camps or be deported back to Japan.* [129]

9.5.1 Niihau Incident



Petty Officer Shigenori Nishikaichi's aircraft shown ten days after it crashed

Main article: Niihau Incident

The Japanese planners had determined that some means was required for rescuing fliers whose aircraft were too badly damaged to return to the carriers. The island of Niihau, only 30 minutes flying time from Pearl Harbor, was designated as the rescue point.

The Zero flown by Petty Officer Shigenori Nishikaichi of *Hiryu* was damaged in the attack on Wheeler, so he flew to the rescue point on Niihau. The aircraft was further damaged on landing. Nishikaichi was helped from the wreckage by one of the native Hawaiians, who, aware of the tension between the United States and Japan, took the pilot's maps and other documents. The island's residents had no telephones or radio and were completely unaware of the attack on Pearl Harbor. Nishikaichi enlisted the support of three Japanese-American residents in an attempt to recover the documents. During the ensuing struggles, Nishikaichi was killed and a Hawaiian civilian was wounded; one collaborator committed suicide, and his wife and the third collaborator were sent to prison.

The ease with which the local ethnic Japanese residents had apparently gone to the assistance of Nishikaichi was a source of concern for many, and tended to support those who believed that local Japanese could not be trusted.* [130]

9.5.2 Strategic implications

Admiral Hara Tadaichi summed up the Japanese result by saying, "We won a great tactical victory at Pearl Harbor and thereby lost the war." *[131] While the attack accomplished its intended objective, it turned out to be

largely unnecessary. Unbeknownst to Yamamoto, who conceived the original plan, the U.S. Navy had decided as far back as 1935 to abandon 'charging' across the Pacific towards the Philippines in response to an outbreak of war (in keeping with the evolution of *Plan Orange*).*[31] The U.S. instead adopted "*Plan Dog*" in 1940, which emphasized keeping the IJN out of the eastern Pacific and away from the shipping lanes to Australia, while the U.S. concentrated on defeating Nazi Germany.*[132]

Fortunately for the United States, the American aircraft carriers were untouched by the Japanese attack; otherwise the Pacific Fleet's ability to conduct offensive operations would have been crippled for a year or more (given no diversions from the Atlantic Fleet). As it was, the elimination of the battleships left the U.S. Navy with no choice but to rely on its aircraft carriers and submarines —the very weapons with which the U.S. Navy halted and eventually reversed the Japanese advance. While six of the eight battleships were repaired and returned to service, their relatively low speed and high fuel consumption limited their deployment, and they served mainly in shore bombardment roles (their only major action being the *Battle of Surigao Strait*). A major flaw of Japanese strategic thinking was a belief that the ultimate Pacific battle would be fought by battleships, in keeping with the doctrine of Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan. As a result, Yamamoto (and his successors) hoarded battleships for a "decisive battle" that never happened.*[133]

The Japanese confidence in their ability to achieve a short, victorious war meant that they neglected Pearl Harbor's navy repair yards, oil tank farms, submarine base, and old headquarters building.*[59] All of these targets were omitted from Genda's list, yet they proved more important than any battleship to the American war efforts in the Pacific. The survival of the repair shops and fuel depots allowed Pearl Harbor to maintain logistical support to the U.S. Navy's operations,*[134]*[135] such as the Battles of *Coral Sea* and *Midway*. It was submarines that immobilized the Imperial Japanese Navy's heavy ships and brought Japan's economy to a virtual standstill by crippling the transportation of oil and raw materials: by the end of 1942, import of raw materials was cut to half of what it had been, "to a disastrous ten million tons", while oil import "was almost completely stopped".*[nb 21] Lastly, the basement of the Old Administration Building was the home of the *cryptanalytic unit* which contributed significantly to the Midway ambush and the Submarine Force's success.*[136]

9.5.3 Present day

Today, the *USS Arizona Memorial* on the island of Oahu honors the dead. Visitors to the memorial reach it via boats from the naval base at Pearl Harbor. The memorial was designed by Alfred Preis, and has a sagging center but strong and vigorous ends, expressing "initial defeat and ultimate victory". It commemorates all lives



Photo from USS Missouri, looking towards the USS Arizona memorial

lost on December 7, 1941.*[137] Although December 7 is known as Pearl Harbor Day, it is not a federal holiday in the United States. The nation does however pay homage remembering the thousands injured and killed when attacked by the Japanese in 1941. Ceremonies are held annually at Pearl Harbor itself, attended each year by some of the ever-dwindling number of elderly veterans who were there on the morning of the attack. Schools and other establishments in some places around the country lower the American flag to half-staff out of respect.*[138] The naval vessel where the war ended on September 2, 1945—the last U.S. Navy battleship ever built, USS *Missouri*—is now a museum ship moored in Pearl Harbor, with its bow barely 1,000 feet (300 meters) southwest of the *Arizona* memorial.



Pearl Harbor survivor Bill Johnson reads the list of names inscribed in the USS Arizona Memorial.

9.6 Media

Films set at or around the bombing of Pearl Harbor include:

- *Remember Pearl Harbor* (1942) A Republic Pictures

B-movie, starring Don “Red” Barry, one of the first motion pictures to respond to the events.*[139]

- *Air Force*, a 1943 propaganda film depicting the fate of the crew of the *Mary-Ann*, one of the B-17 Flying Fortress bombers that fly into Hickam Field during the attack.
- *December 7th*, directed by John Ford for the U.S. Navy in 1943, is a film that recreates the attacks of the Japanese forces. Footage from this Hollywood recreation has been mistakenly used as “actual attack footage”, first by two different documentaries released in 1991 to mark the 50th anniversary of the attack, and again by television network CNN during an entertainment news report in 2001.*[140]*[141]
- *From Here to Eternity* (1953), an adaptation of the James Jones novel set in Hawaii on the eve of the attack.
- *In Harm’s Way* (1965), director Otto Preminger’s adaptation of the James Bassett novel, which opens on December 6, 1941, in Hawaii, and depicts the attack from the point of view of the men of a ship able to leave the harbor.
- *Storm Over the Pacific*, also known as *Hawai Midouei daikaikusen: Taiheiyo no arashi* (Hawaii-Midway Battle of the Sea and Sky: Storm in the Pacific Ocean) and *I Bombed Pearl Harbor* (1961), produced by the Japanese studio Toho Company and starring Toshiro Mifune, tells the story of Japanese airmen who served in the Pearl Harbor Raid and the Battle of Midway. An edited version dubbed into English as *I Bombed Pearl Harbor* was given U.S. release in 1961.*[139]
- *The Time Tunnel*, TV series; Season 1, Episode 4: *The Day the Sky Fell In* (1966).*[142]
- *Tora! Tora! Tora!* (1970), a Japan-U.S. coproduction about the attack is “meticulous” *[143] in its approach to dissecting the situation leading up to the bombing. It depicts the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor from both American and Japanese points of view, with scrupulous attention to historical fact, including the U.S. use of *Magic* cryptanalysis.
- *Pearl* (1978), a TV miniseries, written by Stirling Silliphant, about events leading up to the attack.
- *1941* (1979), director Steven Spielberg comedy about a panicked Los Angeles immediately after the attack.
- *The Winds of War*, a novel by American writer Herman Wouk, was written between 1963 and 1971. The novel finishes in December 1941 with the aftermath of the attack. The TV miniseries based on the book was produced by Dan Curtis, airing in 1984. It starred Robert Mitchum and Ali MacGraw, with Ralph Bellamy as President Roosevelt.

- *Pearl Harbor* (2001), directed by Michael Bay, a love story set amidst the lead up to the attack and its aftermath.

9.6.1 Non-fiction/historical

- *The Attack on Pearl Harbor: An Illustrated History* by Larry Kimmett and Margaret Regis is a careful recreation of the “Day of Infamy” using maps, photos, unique illustrations, and an animated CD. From the early stages of Japanese planning, through the attack on **Battleship Row**, to the salvage of the U.S. Pacific fleet, this book provides a detailed overview of the attack.
- *At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor* by Gordon W. Prange is an extremely comprehensive account of the events leading up to the Pearl Harbor attack and is considered by most scholars to be the best single work about the raid. It is a balanced account that gives both the Japanese and American perspectives. Prange spent 37 years researching the book by studying documents about Pearl Harbor and interviewing surviving participants to attempt the most exhaustive account of what happened: the Japanese planning and execution, why U.S. intelligence failed to warn of it, and why a peace agreement was not attained. The book is the first in the so-called “Prange Trilogy” of Pearl Harbor books co-written with Donald Goldstein and Katherine Dillon, the other two being:
 - *Pearl Harbor: The Verdict of History* – a dissection of the various revisionist theories surrounding the attack.
 - *December 7, 1941: The Day The Japanese Attacked Pearl Harbor* – a recollection of the attack as narrated by eyewitnesses.
- *Day of Infamy* by Walter Lord was one of the most popular nonfiction accounts of the attack on Pearl Harbor.*[144]
- *Pearl Harbor: Final Judgment* by Henry C. Clausen and Bruce Lee tells of Clausen's top-secret investigation of the events leading up to the Pearl Harbor attack. Much of the information in this book was still classified when previous books were published.
- *Pearl Harbor Countdown: Admiral James O. Richardson* by Skipper Steely is an insightful and detailed account of the events leading up to the attack. Through his comprehensive treatment of the life and times of Admiral James O. Richardson, Steely explores four decades of American foreign policy, traditional military practice, U.S. intelligence, and the administrative side of the military, exposing the largely untold story of the events leading up to the Japanese attack.
- *Pearl Harbor Papers: Inside the Japanese Plans*, released by Goldstein and Dillon in 1993, used materials from Prange's library to further flesh out the Japanese perspective of the attack, including diaries from some officers and ship logs.
- *Pearl Harbor: The Seeds and Fruits of Infamy* by Percy L. Greaves, Jr. The first part provides a detailed history of pre-war U.S.-Japan relations, documenting the sources of rising tension. The second part suggests that the attack on Pearl Harbor was neither unexpected nor unprovoked.
- *The Last Zero Fighter*, released in 2012, uses interviews conducted in Japanese, in Japan, with five Japanese aviators, three of whom participated in the Pearl Harbor strike: Kaname Harada, Haruo Yoshino and Takeshi Maeda. The aviators share their personal experiences (translated into English) in regards to their personal experiences training for and executing the raid on Pearl Harbor.*[145]

9.6.2 Alternate history

- *The Final Countdown* is a 1980 feature film in which the nuclear aircraft carrier **USS Nimitz** travels through time, arriving one day before the attack.
- The 1993 opening episode of the OVA series *Konpeki no Kantai* has (actual) IJN Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto thrown back in time from 1943 to 1905. Using his knowledge, Japan builds a large fleet with 1943 technology, successfully destroys the entire US Pacific Fleet and lands amphibious forces in Hawaii - all in the space of December 7 and 8, 1941.
- William Sanders wrote the alternate history story “Billy Mitchell's Overt Act” in 1998.*[146] In the variant history, **Billy Mitchell** managed to avoid the 1925 court-martial which ended his military career, convinced the military to invest in aircraft carriers instead of battleships (as the real Mitchell had tried to do), did not die in 1936 and was still an active service general in 1941, correctly guessing Japanese intentions.
- *Days of Infamy* is a 2004 novel by Harry Turtledove in which the Japanese attack on Hawaii is a full-scale invasion. This borrows from a concept actually suggested by one of the key planners of the attack, Commander **Minoru Genda**, but turned down by senior IJN officers who realized it was impossible.*[147]

9.7 See also

- Battle of Taranto

- Operation K
- Air warfare of World War II
- Attack on Howland Island
- List of United States Navy ships present at Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941
- List of Medal of Honor recipients for the Attack on Pearl Harbor
- Nagai Kita
- Edwin T. Layton
- National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
- Pearl Harbor Survivors Association
- Pearl Harbor advance-knowledge conspiracy theory
- Winds Code

9.8 Notes

- [1] USCGC *Taney* (WHEC-37)
- [2] *Utah* and *Oglala*
- [3] Unless otherwise stated, all vessels listed were salvageable.* [2]
- [4] USS *Utah* (AG-16, formerly BB-31); *Utah* was moored in the space intended to have been occupied by the aircraft carrier *Enterprise* which, returning with a task force, had been expected to enter the channel at 0730 on December 7. Strong headwinds delayed the refueling of the destroyers, and the task force did not reach Pearl Harbor until dusk the following day.* [16]
- [5] Gordon Prange specifically addresses some revisionist works, including Charles A. Beard. *President Roosevelt and the Coming War 1941*; William Henry Chamberlin, *America's Second Crusade*; John T. Flynn, *The Roosevelt Myth*; George Morgenstern, *Pearl Harbor*; Frederic R. Sanborn, *Design for War*; Robert Alfred Theobald, *The Final Secret of Pearl Harbor*; Harry E. Barnes, ed., *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace* and *The Court Historians versus Revisionism*; Husband E. Kimmel, *Admiral Kimmel's Story*.* [23]
- [6] After it was announced in September iron and steel scrap export would also be prohibited, Japanese Ambassador Horinouchi protested to Secretary Hull on October 8, 1940 warning this might be considered an “unfriendly act”.* [28]
- [7] This was mainly a Japanese Navy preference; the Japanese Army would have chosen to attack the Soviet Union.* [35]
- [8] “The Dorn report did not state with certainty that Kimmel and Short knew about Taranto. There is, however, no doubt that they did know, as did the Japanese. Lt. Cdr. Takeshi Naito, the assistant naval attaché to Berlin, flew to Taranto to investigate the attack first hand, and Naito subsequently had a lengthy conversation with Cdr. Mitsuo Fuchida about his observations. Fuchida led the Japanese attack on December 7, 1941.”* [43]
- [9] “A torpedo bomber needed a long, level flight, and when released, its conventional torpedo would plunge nearly a hundred feet deep before swerving upward to strike a hull. Pearl Harbor deep averages 42 feet. But the Japanese borrowed an idea from the British carrier-based torpedo raid on the Italian naval base of Taranto. They fashioned auxiliary wooden tail fins to keep the torpedoes horizontal, so they would dive to only 35 feet, and they added a break-away “nosecone” of soft wood to cushion the impact with the surface of the water.”* [44]
- [10] She was located by a University of Hawaii research submersible on August 28, 2002 in 400 m (1,300 ft) of water, 6 nmi (11 km) outside the harbor.* [71]
- [11] While the nine sailors who died in the attack were quickly lionized by the Japanese government as *Kyūgunshin* (“The Nine War Heroes”), the news of Sakamaki’s capture, which had been publicized in U.S. news broadcasts, was kept secret. Even after the war, however, he received re-crminating correspondence from those who despised him for not sacrificing his own life.
- [12] The Japanese Attack on Pearl Harbor, Planning and Execution. First wave: 189 planes, 50 Kates w/bombs, 40 Kates with torpedoes, 54 Vals, 45 Zekes Second wave: 171 planes, 54 Kates w/bombs, 81 Vals, 36 Zekes. The Combat Air Patrol over the carriers alternated 18 plane shifts every two hours, with 18 more ready for takeoff on the flight decks and an additional 18 ready on hangar decks.* [83]
- [13] In 1941, Hawaii was a half-hour different from the majority of other time zones. See UTC-10:30.
- [14] In the twenty-five sorties flown, USAF Historical Study No.85 credits six pilots with ten planes destroyed: 1st Lt Lewis M. Sanders (P-36) and 2nd Lts Philip M Rasmussen (P-36), Gordon H. Sterling Jr. (P-36, killed in action), Harry W. Brown (P-36), Kenneth M. Taylor (P-40, 2), and George S. Welch (P-40, 4). Three of the P-36 kills were not verified by the Japanese and may have been shot down by naval anti-aircraft fire.
- [15] Odd though it may sound, “not” is correct, in keeping with standard Navy telegraphic practice. This was confirmed by Beloit and Beloit after years of research and debate.
- [16] The gunners that did get in action scored most of the victories against Japanese aircraft that morning, including the first of the attack by *Tautog*, and Dorie Miller’s Navy Cross-worthy effort. Miller was an African-American cook aboard *West Virginia* who took over an unattended anti-aircraft gun on which he had no training. He was the first African-American sailor to be awarded the Navy Cross.
- [17] The wreck has become a memorial to those lost that day, most of whom remain within the ship. She continues to leak small amounts of fuel oil, over 70 years after the attack.

- [18] USAAF pilots of the 46th and 47th Pursuit Squadrons, 15th Pursuit Group, claim to have destroyed 10.
- [19] In the event, loss of these might have been a net benefit to the U.S. Blair, *passim*.
- [20] Commander Edward Ellsberg was ordered to Massawa as his replacement, to assist the British in clearing scuttled Italian and German ships. This arguably delayed by several months British hopes for a useful port on the Red Sea. Commander Edward Ellsberg, O.B.E.* [116]
- [21] In less than eleven months, most of Japan's elite naval aviators who had been at Pearl Harbor were lost in subsequent battles. Lack of fuel and an inflexible training policy meant that they could not be replaced.*[35]

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Coordinates: 21°22'N 157°57'W / 21.367°N
157.950°W

Chapter 10

Western Allied invasion of Germany

The Western Allied invasion of Germany was coordinated by the Western Allies during the final months of hostilities in the European theatre of World War II. The Allied invasion of Germany started with the Western Allies crossing the River Rhine in March 1945 before fanning out and overrunning all of western Germany from the Baltic in the north to Austria in the south before the Germans surrendered on 8 May 1945. This is known as the "Central Europe Campaign" in United States military histories. This is often considered the end of the second World War in Europe.

By early 1945, events favored the Allied forces in Europe. On the Western Front the Allies had been fighting in Germany since the Battle of Aachen in October 1944 and by January had pushed the Germans back to their starting points during the Battle of the Bulge. The failure of this offensive exhausted Germany's strategic reserve, leaving it ill-prepared to resist the final Allied campaigns in Europe. Additional losses in the Rhineland further weakened the German Army, leaving shattered remnants of units to defend the east bank of the Rhine. On 7 March, the Allies seized the last remaining intact bridge across the Rhine at Remagen, and had established a large bridgehead on the river's east bank. During Operation Lumberjack and Operation Plunder in February–March 1945, German casualties are estimated at 400,000 men, including 280,000 men captured as prisoners of war.*[15]

On the Eastern Front, the Soviet Red Army (including the Polish Armed Forces in the East under Soviet command) had liberated most of Poland and were within striking distance of Berlin. The Soviets also pushed deep into Hungary and eastern Czechoslovakia, and temporarily halted at what is now the modern German border on the Oder–Neisse line. These rapid advances on the Eastern Front destroyed additional veteran German combat units and severely limited German Führer Adolf Hitler's ability to reinforce his Rhine defenses. As such, with the Western Allies making final preparations for their powerful offensive into the German heartland, victory was imminent.

10.1 Order of battle

10.1.1 Allied forces

At the very beginning of 1945, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force on the Western Front, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, had 73 divisions under his command in North-western Europe, of which 49 were infantry divisions, 20 armored divisions and four airborne divisions. Forty-nine of these divisions were American, 12 British, eight French, three Canadian and one Polish. Another seven American divisions arrived during February,*[16] along with the British 5th Infantry Division and I Canadian Corps, both of which had arrived from the fighting on the Italian Front. As the invasion of Germany commenced, General Eisenhower had a total of 90 full-strength divisions under his command, with the number of armored divisions now reaching 25. The Allied front along the Rhine stretched 450 miles (720 km) from the river's mouth at the North Sea in the Netherlands to the Swiss border in the south.*[17]

The Allied forces along this line were organized into three army groups. In the north, from the North Sea to a point about 10 miles (16 km) north of Cologne, was the 21st Army Group commanded by Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery. Within 21st Army Group the Canadian 1st Army (under Harry Crerar) held the left flank of the Allied line, with the British 2nd Army (Miles C. Dempsey) in the center and the U.S. 9th Army (William Hood Simpson) to the south. Holding the middle of the Allied line from the 9th Army's right flank to a point about 15 miles (24 km) south of Mainz was the 12th Army Group under the command of Lieutenant General Omar Bradley. Bradley had two American armies, the U.S. 1st Army (Courtney Hodges) on the left (north) and the U.S. 3rd Army (George S. Patton) on the right (south). Completing the Allied line to the Swiss border was the 6th Army Group commanded by Lieutenant General Jacob L. Devers, with the U.S. 7th Army (Alexander Patch) in the north and the French 1st Army (Jean de Lattre de Tassigny) on the Allied right, and southernmost, flank.*[18]

As these three army groups cleared out the *Wehrmacht* west of the Rhine, Eisenhower began to rethink his plans for the final drive across the Rhine and into the heart of Germany. Originally, General Eisenhower had planned to draw all his forces up to the west bank of the Rhine,

using the river as a natural barrier to help cover the inactive sections of his line. The main thrust beyond the river was to be made in the north by Montgomery's 21 Army Group, elements of which were to proceed east to a juncture with the U.S. 1st Army as it made a secondary advance northeast from below the Ruhr River. If successful, this pincer movement would envelop the industrial Ruhr area, neutralizing the largest concentration of German industrial capacity left.*[19]

10.1.2 German forces

Facing the Allies was *Oberbefehlshaber West* ("Army Command West") commanded by Generalfeldmarschall Albert Kesselring, who had taken over from Generalfeldmarschall Gerd von Rundstedt on 10 March. Although Kesselring brought an outstanding track record as a defensive strategist with him from the Italian Campaign, he did not have the resources to make a coherent defense. During the fighting west of the Rhine up to March 1945, the German Army on the Western Front had been reduced to a strength of only 26 divisions, organized into three army groups (*H*, *B* and *G*). Little or no reinforcement was forthcoming as the *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* continued to concentrate most forces against the Soviets; it was estimated that the Germans had 214 divisions on the Eastern Front in April.*[20]

On 21 March, Army Group H headquarters became *Oberbefehlshaber Nordwest* ("Army Command Northwest") commanded by Ernst Busch leaving the former Army Group H commander—Johannes Blaskowitz—to lead "Army Command Netherlands" (25th Army) cut off in the Netherlands. Busch—whose main unit was the German 1st Parachute Army —was to form the right wing of the German defenses. In the center of the front, defending the Ruhr, Kesselring had Field Marshal Walther Model commanding Army Group B (15th Army and 5th Panzer Army) and in the south Paul Hausser's Army Group G (7th Army, 1st Army and 19th Army).*[20]*[21]

10.2 Eisenhower's plans

After capturing the Ruhr, General Eisenhower planned to have the 21st Army Group continue its drive east across the plains of northern Germany to Berlin. The 12th and 6th Army Groups were to mount a subsidiary offensive to keep the Germans off balance and diminish their ability to stop the northern thrust. This secondary drive would also give Eisenhower a degree of flexibility in case the northern attack ran into difficulties.*[19]

For several reasons, Eisenhower began to readjust these plans toward the end of March. First, his headquarters received reports that Soviet forces held a bridgehead over the Oder River, 30 miles (48 km) from Berlin. Since the

Allied armies on the Rhine were more than 300 miles (480 km) from Berlin, with the Elbe River, 200 miles (320 km) ahead, still to be crossed it seemed clear that the Soviets would capture Berlin long before the Western Allies could reach it. Eisenhower thus turned his attention to other objectives, most notably a rapid meet-up with the Soviets to cut the German Army in two and prevent any possibility of a unified defense. Once this was accomplished the remaining German forces could be defeated in detail.*[19]

In addition, there was the matter of the Ruhr. Although the Ruhr area still contained a significant number of Axis troops and enough industry to retain its importance as a major objective, Allied intelligence reported that much of the region's armament industry was moving southeast, deeper into Germany. This increased the importance of the southern offensives across the Rhine.*[19]

Also focusing Eisenhower's attention on the southern drive was concern over the "National redoubt." According to rumor, Hitler's most fanatically loyal troops were preparing to make a lengthy, last-ditch stand in the natural fortresses formed by the rugged alpine mountains of southern Germany and western Austria. If they held out for a year or more, dissension between the Soviet Union and the Western Allies might give them political leverage for some kind of favorable peace settlement. In reality, by the time of the Allied Rhine crossings the *Wehrmacht* had suffered such severe defeats on both the Eastern and Western Fronts that it could barely manage to mount effective delaying actions, much less muster enough troops to establish a well-organized alpine resistance force. Still, Allied intelligence could not entirely discount the possibility that remnants of the German Army would attempt a suicidal last stand in the Alps. Denying this opportunity became another argument for rethinking the role of the southern drive through Germany.*[22]

Perhaps the most compelling reason for increasing the emphasis on this southern drive had more to do with the actions of Americans than those of Germans. While Montgomery was carefully and cautiously planning for the main thrust in the north, complete with massive artillery preparation and an airborne assault, American forces in the south were displaying the kind of basic aggressiveness that Eisenhower wanted to see. On 7 March, Lieutenant General Courtney Hodges's U.S. 1st Army captured the last intact bridge over the Rhine at Remagen and steadily expanded the bridgehead.*[22]

To the south in the Saar-Palatinate region, Lieutenant General George S. Patton's U.S. 3rd Army had dealt a devastating blow to the German 7th Army and, in conjunction with the U.S. 7th Army, had nearly destroyed the German 1st Army. In five days of battle, from 18–22 March, Patton's forces captured over 68,000 Germans. These bold actions eliminated the last German positions west of the Rhine. Although Montgomery's drive was still planned as the main effort, Eisenhower believed that the

momentum of the American forces to the south should not be squandered by having them merely hold the line at the Rhine or make only limited diversionary attacks beyond it. By the end of March, the Supreme Commander thus leaned toward a decision to place more responsibility on his southern forces. The events of the first few days of the final campaign would be enough to convince him that this was the proper course of action.*[22]

10.3 Occupation process

When Allied soldiers arrived in a town, its leaders and remaining residents typically used white flags, bedsheets, and tablecloths to signal surrender. The officer in charge of the unit capturing the area, typically a company or battalion, accepted responsibility over the town. Soldiers posted copies of General Eisenhower's *Proclamation No. 1*, which began with "We come as conquerors, not as oppressors." The proclamation demanded compliance with all orders by the commanding officer, instituted a strict curfew and limited travel, and confiscated all communications equipment and weapons. After a day or two, specialized *Office of Military Government, United States* (OMGUS) units took over. Soldiers requisitioned housing and office space as needed from residents. At first this was done informally with occupants evicted immediately and taking with them few personal possessions, but the process became standardized, with three hours' notice and OMGUS personnel providing receipts for buildings' contents. The displaced residents nonetheless had to find housing on their own.*[23]

10.4 Operations

On 19 March, Eisenhower told Bradley to prepare the 1st Army for a breakout from the Remagen bridgehead anytime after 22 March. The same day, in response to the 3rd Army's robust showing in the Saar-Palatinate region, and to have another strong force on the Rhine's east bank guarding the 1st Army's flank, Bradley gave Patton the go-ahead for an assault crossing of the Rhine as soon as possible.*[24]

These were exactly the orders Patton had hoped for. The American general felt that if a sufficiently strong force could be thrown across the river and significant gains made, then Eisenhower might transfer responsibility for the main drive through Germany from Montgomery's 21st Army Group to Bradley's 12th. Patton also appreciated the opportunity he now had to beat Montgomery across the river and win for the 3rd Army the coveted distinction of making the first assault crossing of the Rhine in modern history. To accomplish this, he had to move quickly.*[24]

On 21 March, Patton ordered his *XII Corps* to prepare for

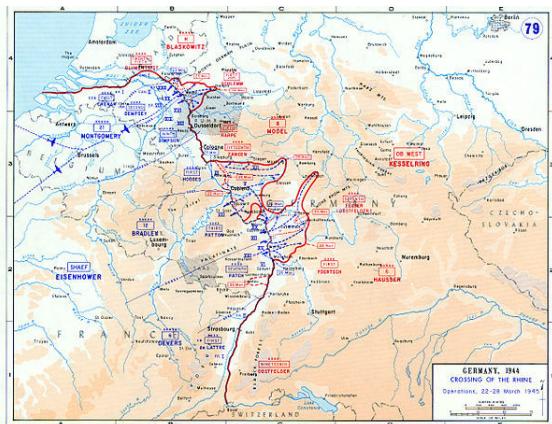
an assault over the Rhine on the following night, one day before Montgomery's scheduled crossing. While this was certainly short notice, it did not catch the XII Corps completely unaware. As soon as Patton had received the orders on the 19th to make a crossing, he had begun sending assault boats, bridging equipment, and other supplies forward from depots in *Lorraine* where they had been stockpiled since autumn in the expectation of just such an opportunity. Seeing this equipment moving up, his frontline soldiers did not need any orders from higher headquarters to tell them what it meant.*[25]

The location of the river-crossing assault was critical. Patton knew that the most obvious place to jump the river was at Mainz or just downstream, north of the city. The choice was obvious because the *Main River*, flowing northward 30 miles (48 km) east of and parallel to the Rhine, turns west and empties into the Rhine at Mainz and an advance south of the city would involve crossing two rivers rather than one. However, Patton also realized that the Germans were aware of this difficulty and would expect his attack north of Mainz. Thus, he decided to feint at Mainz while making his real effort at *Nierstein* and *Oppenheim*, 9–10 mi (14–16 km) south of the city. Following this primary assault, which XII Corps would undertake, *VIII Corps* would execute supporting crossings at *Boppard* and *St. Goar*, 25–30 miles (40–48 km) northwest of Mainz.*[25]

The terrain in the vicinity of Nierstein and Oppenheim was conducive to artillery support, with high ground on the west bank overlooking relatively flat land to the east. However, the same flat east bank meant that the bridgehead would have to be rapidly and powerfully reinforced and expanded beyond the river since there was no high ground for a bridgehead defense. The importance of quickly obtaining a deep bridgehead was increased by the fact that the first access to a decent road network was over 6 miles (9.7 km) inland at the town of Grossgerau.*[25]

10.4.1 U.S. 12th Army Group crosses the Rhine (22 March)

On 22 March, with a bright moon lighting the late-night sky, elements of U.S. XII Corps' *5th Infantry Division* began the 3rd Army's Rhine crossing. At Nierstein assault troops did not meet any resistance. As the first boats reached the east bank, seven startled Germans surrendered and then paddled themselves unescorted to the west bank to be placed in custody. Upstream at Oppenheim, however, the effort did not proceed so casually. The first wave of boats was halfway across when the Germans began pouring machine-gun fire into their midst. An intense exchange of fire lasted for about thirty minutes as assault boats kept pushing across the river and those men who had already made it across mounted attacks against the scattered defensive strongpoints. Finally the Germans surrendered, and by midnight units moved out laterally to



The crossing of the Rhine between 22 and 28 March 1945.

consolidate the crossing sites and to attack the first villages beyond the river. German resistance everywhere was sporadic, and the hastily mounted counterattacks invariably burned out quickly, causing few casualties. The Germans lacked both the manpower and the heavy equipment to make a more determined defense.* [26]

By midafternoon on 23 March, all three regiments of the 5th Infantry Division were in the bridgehead, and an attached regiment from the 90th Infantry Division was crossing. Tanks and tank destroyers had been ferried across all morning, and by evening a treadway bridge was open to traffic. By midnight, infantry units had pushed the boundary of the bridgehead more than 5 miles (8.0 km) inland, ensuring the unqualified success of the first modern assault crossing of the Rhine.* [27]

Two more 3rd Army crossings—both by VIII Corps—quickly followed. In the early morning hours of 25 March, elements of the 87th Infantry Division crossed the Rhine to the north at Boppard, and then some 24 hours later elements of the 89th Infantry Division crossed 8 miles (13 km) south of Boppard at St. Goar. Although the defense of these sites was somewhat more determined than that XII Corps had faced, the difficulties of the Boppard and St. Goar crossings were compounded more by terrain than by German resistance. VIII Corps crossing sites were located along the Rhine Gorge, where the river had carved a deep chasm between two mountain ranges, creating precipitous canyon walls over 300 feet (91 m) high on both sides. In addition, the river flowed quickly and with unpredictable currents along this part of its course. Still, despite the terrain and German machine-gun and 20 millimetres (0.79 in) anti-aircraft cannon fire, VIII Corps troops managed to gain control of the east bank's heights, and by dark on 26 March, with German resistance crumbling all along the Rhine, they were preparing to continue the drive the next morning.* [28]

10.4.2 U.S. 6th Army Group crosses the Rhine (26 March)

Adding to the Germans' woes, the 6th Army Group made an assault across the Rhine on 26 March. At Worms, about 25 miles (40 km) south of Mainz, the 7th Army's XV Corps established a bridgehead, which it consolidated with the southern shoulder of the 3rd Army's bridgehead early the next day. After overcoming stiff initial resistance, XV Corps also advanced beyond the Rhine, opposed primarily by small German strongpoints sited in roadside villages.* [28]

10.4.3 British 21st Army Group plans *Operation Plunder*

On the night of 23/24 March, after the XII Corps' assault of the Rhine, Bradley had announced his success. The 12th Army Group commander said that American troops could cross the Rhine anywhere, without aerial bombardment or airborne troops, a direct jab at Montgomery whose troops were at that very moment preparing to launch their own Rhine assault following an intense and elaborate aerial and artillery preparation and with the assistance of two airborne divisions, one American, the 17th, one British, the 6th.* [28]

Field Marshal Montgomery was exhibiting his now legendary meticulous and circumspect approach to such enterprises, a lesson he had learned early in the North African Campaign against Rommel and one he could not easily forget. Thus, as his forces had approached the east bank of the river, Montgomery proceeded with one of the most intensive buildups of material and manpower of the war. His detailed plans, code-named *Operation Plunder*, were comparable to the Normandy invasion in terms of numbers of men and extent of equipment, supplies, and ammunition to be used. The 21st Army Group had 30 full-strength divisions, 11 each in the British 2nd and U.S. 9th Armies and eight in the Canadian 1st Army, providing Montgomery with more than 1,250,000 men.* [28]

Plunder called for the 2nd Army to cross at three locations along the 21st Army Group front—at Rees, Xanten, and Rheinberg. The crossings would be preceded by several weeks of aerial bombing and a final massive artillery preparation. A heavy bombing campaign by USAAF and RAF forces, known as the “Interdiction of Northwest Germany”, designed primarily to destroy the lines of communication and supply connecting the Ruhr to the rest of Germany had been underway since February.* [29] The intention was to create a line from Bremen south to Neowied. The main targets were rail yards, bridges, and communication centers, with a secondary focus on fuel-processing and storage facilities and other important industrial sites. During the three days leading up to Montgomery's attack, targets in front of the 21st Army Group zone and in the Ruhr area to the southeast were pum-

meled by about 11,000 sorties, effectively sealing off the Ruhr while easing the burden on Montgomery's assault forces.* [30]

Montgomery had originally planned to attach one corps of the U.S. 9th Army to the British 2nd Army, which would use only two of the corps' divisions for the initial assault. The rest of the 9th Army would remain in reserve until the bridgehead was ready for exploitation. The 9th Army's commander—Lieutenant General William Hood Simpson—and the 2nd Army's Lieutenant-General Miles C. Dempsey took exception to this approach. Both believed that the plan squandered the great strength in men and equipment that the 9th Army had assembled and ignored the many logistical problems of placing the 9th Army's crossing sites within the 2nd Army's zone.* [30]

Montgomery responded to these concerns by making a few small adjustments to the plan. Although he declined to increase the size of the American crossing force beyond two divisions, he agreed to keep it under 9th Army rather than 2nd Army control. To increase Simpson's ability to bring his army's strength to bear for exploitation, Montgomery also agreed to turn the bridges at Wesel, just north of the inter-army boundary, over to the 9th Army once the bridgehead had been secured.* [30]

In the southernmost sector of the 21st Army Group's attack, the 9th Army's assault divisions were to cross the Rhine along an 11 miles (18 km) section of the front, south of Wesel and the Lippe River. This force would block any German counterattack from the Ruhr. Because of the poor road network on the east bank of this part of the Rhine, a second 9th Army corps was to cross over the promised Wesel bridges through the British zone north of the Lippe River, which had an abundance of good roads. After driving east nearly 100 miles (160 km), this corps was to meet elements of the 1st Army near Paderborn, completing the encirclement of the Ruhr.* [30]

Another important aspect of Montgomery's plan was Operation Varsity, in which two divisions of Major General Matthew Ridgway's XVIII Airborne Corps were to make an airborne assault over the Rhine. In a departure from standard airborne doctrine, which called for a jump deep behind enemy lines several hours prior to an amphibious assault, Varsity's drop zones were close behind the German front, within Allied artillery range. Additionally, to avoid being caught in the artillery preparation, the paratroopers would jump only after the amphibious troops had reached the Rhine's east bank. The wisdom of putting lightly-armed paratroopers so close to the main battlefield was debated, and the plan for amphibious forces to cross the Rhine prior to the parachute drop raised questions as to the utility of making an airborne assault at all. However, Montgomery believed that the paratroopers would quickly link up with the advancing river assault forces, placing the strongest force within the bridgehead as rapidly as possible. Once the bridgehead was secured the British 6th Airborne Division would be

transferred to 2nd Army control, while the U.S. 17th Airborne Division would revert to 9th Army control.* [31]

10.4.4 Montgomery launches *Operation Plunder* (23 March)

Main article: [Operation Plunder](#)

Plunder began on the evening of 23 March with the assault elements of the British 2nd Army massed against three main crossing sites: Rees in the north, Xanten in the center, and Wesel in the south. The two 9th Army divisions tasked for the assault concentrated in the Rheinberg area south of Wesel. At the northern crossing site, elements of **British XXX Corps** began the assault (Operation TurnscREW) about 21:00, attempting to distract the Germans from the main crossings at Xanten in the center and Rheinberg to the south. The initial assault waves crossed the river quickly, meeting only light opposition. Meanwhile, Operation Widgeon began 2 miles (3.2 km) north of Wesel as the 2nd Army's 1st Commando Brigade slipped across the river and waited within a mile of the city while it was demolished by one thousand tons of bombs delivered by **RAF Bomber Command**. Entering in the night, the commandos secured the city late on the morning of 24 March, although scattered resistance continued until dawn on the 25th. The 2nd Army's **XII Corps** and the 9th Army's **XVI Corps** began the main effort about 02:00 on 24 March, following a massive artillery and air bombardment.* [31]

For the American crossing, the 9th Army commander—Lieutenant General Simpson—had chosen the veteran **30th** and **79th Infantry Divisions** of the XVI Corps. The 30th was to cross between Wesel and Rheinberg while the 79th assaulted south of Rheinberg. In reserve were the XVI Corps' **8th Armored Division**, and **35th** and **75th Infantry Divisions**, as well as the 9th Army's **XIII** and **XIX Corps**, each with three divisions. Simpson planned to commit the XIX Corps as soon as possible after the bridgehead had been secured, using the XIII Corps to hold the Rhine south of the crossing sites.* [31]

After an hour of extremely intense artillery preparation, which **General Eisenhower** himself viewed from the front, the 30th Infantry Division began its assault. The artillery fire had been so effective and so perfectly timed that the assault battalions merely motored their storm boats across the river and claimed the east bank against almost no resistance. As subsequent waves of troops crossed, units fanned out to take the first villages beyond the river to only the weakest of opposition. An hour later, at 03:00, the 79th Infantry Division began its crossing upriver, achieving much the same results. As heavier equipment was ferried across the Rhine, both divisions began pushing east, penetrating 3–6 miles (4.8–9.7 km) into the German defensive line that day.* [32]

To the north, the British crossings had also gone well, with



Douglas C-47 transport aircraft drop hundreds of paratroopers on 24 March as part of Operation Varsity.

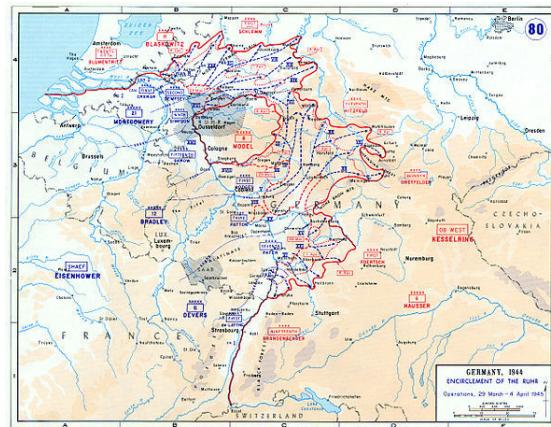
the ground and airborne troops linking up by nightfall. By then, the paratroopers had taken all their first day's objectives in addition to 3,500 prisoners.* [32]

To the south, the discovery of a defensive gap in front of the 30th Infantry Division fostered the hope that a full-scale breakout would be possible on 25 March. When limited objective attacks provoked little response on the morning of the 25th, the division commander—Major General Leland S. Hobbs—formed two mobile task forces to make deeper thrusts with an eye toward punching through the defense altogether and breaking deep into the German rear. However, Hobbs had not fully taken into account the nearly nonexistent road network in front of the XVI Corps bridgehead. Faced with trying to make rapid advances through dense forest on rutted dirt roads and muddy trails, which could be strongly defended by a few determined soldiers and well placed roadblocks, the task forces advanced only about 2 miles (3.2 km) on the 25th. The next day they gained some more ground, and one even seized its objective, having slogged a total of 6 miles (9.7 km), but the limited progress forced Hobbs to abandon the hope for a quick breakout.* [32]

In addition to the poor roads, the 30th Division's breakout attempts were also hampered by the German 116th Panzer Division. The only potent unit left for commitment against the Allied Rhine crossings in the north, the 116th began moving south from the Dutch-German border on 25 March against what the Germans considered their most dangerous threat, the U.S. 9th Army. The enemy armored unit began making its presence felt almost immediately, and by the end of 26 March the combination of the *panzer* division and the rough terrain had conspired to sharply limit the 30th Division's forward progress. With the 79th Infantry Division meeting fierce resistance to the south, General Simpson's only recourse was to commit some of his forces waiting on the west bank of the Rhine. Late on 26 March, the 8th Armored Division began moving into the bridgehead.* [32]

Although the armored division bolstered his offensive capacity within the bridgehead, Simpson was more interested in sending the XIX Corps across the Wesel bridges, as Montgomery had agreed, and using the better roads north of the Lippe to outflank the enemy in front of the 30th Division. Unfortunately, because of pressure from the Germans in the northern part of the 2nd Army bridgehead, the British were having trouble completing their bridges at Xanten and were therefore bringing most of their traffic across the river at Wesel. With Montgomery allowing use of the Wesel bridges to the 9th Army for only five out of every 24 hours, and with the road network north of the Lippe under 2nd Army control, General Simpson was unable to commit or maneuver sufficient forces to make a rapid flanking drive.* [33]

10.4.5 German Army Group B surrounded in the Ruhr pocket (1 April)



Encirclement of the Ruhr and other Allied operations between 29 March and 4 April 1945

By 28 March, the 8th Armored Division had expanded the bridgehead by only about 3 mi (4.8 km) and still had not reached Dorsten, a town about 15 mi (24 km) east of the Rhine, whose road junction promised to expand the XVI Corps' offensive options. On the same day, however, Montgomery announced that the east bound roads out of Wesel would be turned over to the 9th Army on 30 March with the Rhine bridges leading into that city changing hands a day later. Also on 28 March, elements of the U.S. 17th Airborne Division—operating north of the Lippe River in conjunction with British armored forces—dashed to a point some 30 mi (48 km) east of Wesel, opening a corridor for the XIX Corps and handily outflanking Dorsten and the enemy to the south. General Simpson now had both the opportunity and the means to unleash the power of the 9th Army and begin in earnest the northern drive to surround the Ruhr.* [33]

Simpson began by moving elements of the XIX Corps' 2nd Armored Division into the XVI Corps bridgehead on

28 March with orders to cross the Lippe east of Wesel, thereby avoiding that city's traffic jams. After passing north of the Lippe on 29 March, the 2nd Armored Division broke out late that night from the forward position that the XVIII Airborne Corps had established around Haltern, 12 mi (19 km) northeast of Dorsten. On the 30th and 31st, the 2nd Armored made an uninterrupted 40 mi (64 km) drive east to Beckum, cutting two of the Ruhr's three remaining rail lines and severing the autobahn to Berlin. As the rest of the XIX Corps flowed into the wake of this spectacular drive, the 1st Army was completing its equally remarkable thrust around the southern and eastern edges of the Ruhr.* [33]

The 1st Army's drive from the Remagen bridgehead began with a breakout before dawn on 25 March. German Field Marshal Walter Model—whose *Army Group B* was charged with the defense of the Ruhr—had deployed his troops heavily along the east-west Sieg River south of Cologne, thinking that the Americans would attack directly north from the Remagen bridgehead. Instead, the 1st Army struck eastward, heading for Giessen and the Lahn River, 65 mi (105 km) beyond Remagen, before turning north toward Paderborn and a linkup with the 9th Army. All three corps of the 1st Army participated in the breakout, which on the first day employed five infantry and two armored divisions. The U.S. VII Corps, on the left, had the hardest going due to the German concentration north of the bridgehead, yet its armored columns managed to advance 12 mi (19 km) beyond their line of departure. The U.S. III Corps, in the center, did not commit its armor on the first day of the breakout, but still made a gain of 4 mi (6.4 km). The U.S. V Corps on the right advanced 5–8 mi (8.0–12.9 km), incurring minimal casualties.* [34]

Beginning the next day, 26 March, the armored divisions of all three corps turned these initial gains into a complete breakout, shattering all opposition and roaming at will throughout the enemy's rear areas. By the end of 28 March, General Hodges' 1st Army had crossed the Lahn, having driven at least 50 mi (80 km) beyond the original line of departure and capturing thousands of German soldiers in the process. Nowhere, it seemed, were the Germans able to resist in strength. On 29 March, the 1st Army turned toward Paderborn, about 80 mi (130 km) north of Giessen, its right flank covered by the 3rd Army, which had broken out of its own bridgeheads and was headed northeast toward Kassel.* [34]

A task force of the VII Corps' 3rd Armored Division, which included some of the new M26 Pershing heavy tanks, spearheaded the drive for Paderborn on 29 March. By attaching an infantry regiment of the 104th Infantry Division to the armored division and following the drive closely with the rest of the 104th Division, the VII Corps was well prepared to hold any territory gained. Rolling northward 45 mi (72 km) without casualties, the mobile force stopped for the night 15 mi (24 km) from its objective. Taking up the advance again the next day, it

immediately ran into stiff opposition from students of an SS *panzer* replacement training center located near Paderborn. Equipped with about 60 tanks, the students put up a fanatical resistance, stalling the American armor all day. When the task force failed to advance on 31 March, Maj. Gen. J. Lawton Collins—commander of the VII Corps—asked General Simpson if his 9th Army—driving eastward north of the Ruhr—could provide assistance. Simpson, in turn, ordered a combat command of the 2nd Armored Division—which had just reached Beckum—to make a 15 mi (24 km) advance southeast to Lippstadt, midway between Beckum and the stalled 3rd Armored Division spearhead. Early in the afternoon of 1 April elements of the 2nd and 3rd Armored Divisions met at Lippstadt, linking the 9th and 1st Armies and sealing the prized Ruhr industrial complex—along with Model's *Army Group B*—within American lines.* [34]

As March turned to April the offensive east of the Rhine was progressing in close accordance with Allied plans. All the armies assigned to cross the Rhine had elements east of the river, including the Canadian 1st Army in the north, which sent a division through the British bridgehead at Rees, and the French 1st Army in the south, which on 31 March established its own bridgehead by assault crossings at Germersheim and Speyer, about 50 mi (80 km) south of Mainz. With spectacular thrusts being made beyond the Rhine nearly every day and the enemy's capacity to resist fading at an ever-accelerating rate, the campaign to finish Germany was transitioning into a general pursuit.* [35]

In the center of the Allied line, Eisenhower inserted a new army—the 15th Army, under U.S. 12th Army Group control—to hold the western edge of the Ruhr Pocket along the Rhine while the 9th and 1st Armies squeezed the remaining German defenders there from the north, east, and south. Following the reduction of the Ruhr, the 15th Army was to take over occupation duties in the region as the 9th,* [36] 1st, and 3rd Armies pushed farther into Germany.* [35]

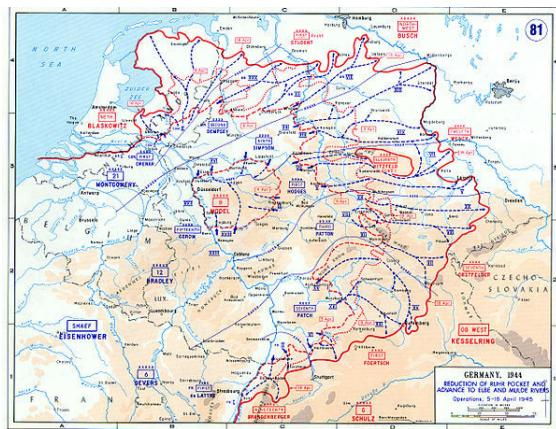
10.4.6 Eisenhower switches his main thrust to U.S. 12th Army Group front (28 March)

On 28 March, as these developments unfolded, Eisenhower announced his decision to adjust his plans governing the future course of the offensive. Once the Ruhr was surrounded, he wanted the 9th Army transferred from the British 21st Army Group to the U.S. 12th Army Group. After the reduction of the Ruhr Pocket, the main thrust east would be made by Bradley's 12th Army Group in the center, rather than by Montgomery's 21st Army Group in the north as originally planned. Montgomery's forces were to secure Bradley's northern flank while Devers' 6th U.S. Army Group covered Bradley's southern shoulder. Furthermore, the main objective was no longer Berlin,

but Leipzig where a juncture with the Soviet Army would split the remaining German forces in two. Once this was done, the 21st Army Group would take Lübeck and Wismar on the Baltic Sea, cutting off the Germans remaining in the Jutland peninsula of Denmark, while the 6th U.S. Army Group and the 3rd Army drove south into Austria.*[35]

The British Prime Minister and Chiefs of Staff strongly opposed the new plan. Despite the Russian proximity to Berlin, they argued that the city was still a critical political, if not military, objective. Eisenhower—supported by the American Chiefs of Staff—disagreed. His overriding objective was the swiftest military victory possible. Should the U.S. political leadership direct him to take Berlin, or if a situation arose in which it became militarily advisable to seize the German capital, Eisenhower would do so. Otherwise, he would pursue those objectives that would end the war soonest. In addition, since Berlin and the rest of Germany had already been divided into occupation zones by representatives of the Allied governments at the Yalta Conference, Eisenhower saw no political advantage in a race for Berlin. Any ground the western Allies gained in the future Soviet zone would merely be relinquished to the Soviets after the war. In the end the campaign proceeded as Eisenhower had planned it.*[37]

10.4.7 Ruhr pocket cleared (18 April)



The reduction of the Ruhr Pocket and advance to Elbe and Mulde rivers between 5 and 18 April 1945

The first step in realizing Eisenhower's plan was the eradication of the Ruhr Pocket. Even before the encirclement had been completed, the Germans in the Ruhr had begun making attempts at a breakout to the east. All had been unceremoniously repulsed by the vastly superior Allied forces. Meanwhile, the 9th and 1st Armies began preparing converging attacks using the east-west Ruhr River as a boundary line. The 9th Army's XVI Corps—which had taken up position north of the Ruhr area after crossing the Rhine—would be assisted in its southward drive by two divisions of the XIX Corps, the rest of which would continue to press eastward along with the XIII Corps. South

of the Ruhr River, the 1st Army's northward attack was to be executed by the XVIII Airborne Corps, which had been transferred to Hodges after Operation Varsity, and the III Corps, with the 1st Army's V and VII Corps continuing the offensive east. The 9th Army's sector of the Ruhr Pocket—although only about 1/3 the size of the 1st Army's sector south of the river—contained the majority of the densely urbanized industrial area within the encirclement. The 1st Army's area, on the other hand, was composed of rough, heavily forested terrain with a poor road network.*[38]

By 1 April, when the trap closed around the Germans in the Ruhr, their fate was sealed. In a matter of days they would all be killed or captured. On 4 April, the day it shifted to Bradley's control, the 9th Army began its attack south toward the Ruhr River. In the south, the 1st Army's III Corps launched its strike on the 5th, and the XVIII Airborne Corps joined in on the 6th, both pushing generally northward. German resistance, initially rather determined, dwindled rapidly. By 13 April, the 9th Army had cleared the northern part of the pocket, while elements of the XVIII Airborne Corps' 8th Infantry Division reached the southern bank of the Ruhr, splitting the southern section of the pocket in two. Thousands of prisoners were being taken every day; from 16–18 April, when all opposition ended and the remnants of German *Army Group B* formally surrendered, German troops had been surrendering in droves throughout the region. Army Group B commander Walther Model committed suicide on 21 April.*[39]

The final tally of prisoners taken in the Ruhr reached 325,000, far beyond anything the Americans had anticipated. Tactical commanders hastily enclosed huge open fields with barbed wire creating makeshift prisoner of war camps, where the inmates awaited the end of the war and their chance to return home. Also looking forward to going home, tens of thousands of freed forced laborers and Allied prisoners of war further strained the American logistical system.*[39]

10.4.8 U.S. 12th Army Group prepares its final thrust

Meanwhile, the remaining Allied forces north, south, and east of the Ruhr had been adjusting their lines in preparation for the final advance through Germany. Under the new concept, Bradley's 12th U.S. Army Group would make the main effort, with Hodges' 1st Army in the center heading east for about 130 mi (210 km) toward the city of Leipzig and the Elbe River. To the north, the 9th Army's XIX and XIII Corps would also drive for the Elbe, toward Magdeburg, about 65 mi (105 km) north of Leipzig, although the army commander, General Simpson, hoped he would be allowed to go all the way to Berlin. To the south, Patton's 3rd Army was to drive east to Chemnitz, about 40 mi (64 km) southeast of Leipzig,

but well short of the Elbe, and then turn southeast into Austria. At the same time, General Devers' 6th U.S. Army Group would move south through Bavaria and the Black Forest to Austria and the Alps, ending the threat of any Nazi last-ditch stand there.*[40]

On 4 April, as it paused to allow the rest of the 12th U.S. Army Group to catch up, the 3rd Army made two notable discoveries. Near the town of Merkers, elements of the 90th Infantry Division found a sealed salt mine containing a large portion of the German national treasure. The hoard included vast quantities of German paper currency, stacks of priceless paintings, piles of looted gold and silver jewelry and household objects, and an estimated \$250,000,000 worth of gold bars and coins of various nations. But the other discovery made by the 3rd Army on 4 April horrified and angered those who saw it. When the 4th Armored Division and elements of the 89th Infantry Division captured the small town of Ohrdruf, a few miles south of Gotha, they found the first concentration camp taken by the western Allies.*[41]

10.4.9 U.S. 12th Army Group advances to the Elbe (9 April)

The 4 April pause in the 3rd Army advance allowed the other armies under Bradley's command to reach the Leine River, about 50 mi (80 km) east of Paderborn. Thus all three armies of the 12th U.S. Army Group were in a fairly even north-south line, enabling them to advance abreast of each other to the Elbe. By 9 April, both the 9th and 1st Armies had seized bridgeheads over the Leine, prompting Bradley to order an unrestricted eastward advance. On the morning of 10 April, the 12th U.S. Army Group's drive to the Elbe began in earnest.*[41]

The Elbe River was the official eastward objective, but many American commanders still eyed Berlin. By the evening of 11 April, elements of the 9th Army's 2nd Armored Division—seemingly intent on demonstrating how easily their army could take that coveted prize—had dashed 73 mi (117 km) to reach the Elbe southeast of Magdeburg, just 50 mi (80 km) short of the German capital. On 12 April, additional 9th Army elements attained the Elbe and by the next day were on the opposite bank hopefully awaiting permission to drive on to Berlin. But two days later, on 15 April, they had to abandon these hopes. Eisenhower sent Bradley his final word on the matter: the 9th Army was to stay put—there would be no effort to take Berlin. Simpson subsequently turned his troops' attention to mopping up pockets of local resistance.*[41]

In the center of the 12th U.S. Army Group, Hodges' 1st Army faced somewhat stiffer opposition, though it hardly slowed the pace. As its forces approached Leipzig, about 60 mi (97 km) south of Magdeburg and 15 mi (24 km) short of the Mulde River, the 1st Army ran into one of the few remaining centers of organized resistance. Here the



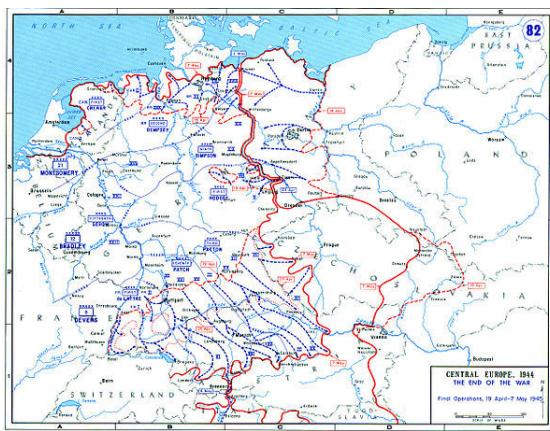
American tanks in Coburg on 25 April

Germans turned a thick defense belt of antiaircraft guns against the American ground troops with devastating effects. Through a combination of flanking movements and night attacks, First Army troops were able to destroy or bypass the guns, moving finally into Leipzig, which formally surrendered on the morning of 20 April. By the end of the day, the units that had taken Leipzig joined the rest of the 1st Army on the Mulde, where it had been ordered to halt.*[42]

Meanwhile, on the 12th U.S. Army Group's southern flank, the 3rd Army had advanced apace, moving 30 mi (48 km) eastward to take Erfurt and Weimar, and then, by 12 April, another 30 mi (48 km) through the old 1806 Jena Napoleonic battlefield area. On that day, Eisenhower instructed Patton to halt the 3rd Army at the Mulde River, about 10 mi (16 km) short of its original objective, Chemnitz. The change resulted from an agreement between the American and Soviet military leadership based on the need to establish a readily identifiable geographical line to avoid accidental clashes between the converging Allied forces. However, as the 3rd Army began pulling up to the Mulde on 13 April, the XII Corps—Patton's southernmost force—continued moving southeast alongside the 6th U.S. Army Group to clear southern Germany and move into Austria. After taking Coburg, about 50 mi (80 km) south of Erfurt, on 11 April, XII Corps troops captured Bayreuth, 35 mi (56 km) farther southeast, on 14 April.*[43]

As was the case throughout the campaign, the German ability to fight was sporadic and unpredictable during the drive to the Elbe-Mulde line. Some areas were stoutly defended while in others the enemy surrendered after little more than token resistance. By sending armored spearheads around hotly contested areas, isolating them for reduction by subsequent waves of infantry, Eisenhower's forces maintained their eastward momentum. A German holdout force of 70,000 in the Harz Mountains—40 mi (64 km) north of Erfurt, Jena, and Leipzig.*[43]

10.4.10 U.S. First Army makes first contact with the advancing Russians (25 April)



The final operations of the Western Allied armies between 19 April and 7 May 1945 and the change in the Soviet front line over this period.

Every unit along the Elbe-Mulde line was anxious to be the first to meet the Red Army. By the last week of April, it was well known that the Soviets were close, and dozens of American patrols were probing beyond the east bank of the Mulde, hoping to meet them. Elements of the 1st Army's V Corps made first contact. At 11:30 on 25 April, a small patrol from the 69th Infantry Division met a lone Russian horseman in the village of Leckwitz. Several other patrols from the 69th had similar encounters later that day, and on 26 April the division commander, Maj. Gen. Emil F. Reinhardt, met Maj. Gen. Vladimir Rusakov of the Russian 58th Guards Infantry Division at Torgau in the first official link-up ceremony.* [43]

25 April is known as Elbe Day.

10.4.11 U.S. 6th Army Group heads for Austria

While the 12th U.S. Army Group made its eastward thrust, General Devers' 6th U.S. Army Group to the south had the dual mission of protecting the 12th U.S. Army Group's right flank and eliminating any German attempt to make a last stand in the Alps of southern Germany and western Austria. To accomplish both objectives, Lt. Gen. Alexander Patch's 7th Army on Devers' left was to make a great arc, first driving northeastward alongside Bradley's flank, then turning south with the 3rd Army to take Nuremberg and Munich, ultimately continuing into Austria. The French 1st Army—under General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny—was to attack to the south and southeast, taking Stuttgart before moving to the Swiss border and into Austria.* [44]

Initially, the opposition in the 6th U.S. Army Group's sector was stiffer than that facing the 12th U.S. Army

Group. The German forces there were simply in less disarray than those to the north. Nevertheless, the 7th Army broke out of its Rhine bridgehead, just south of Frankfurt, on 28 March, employing elements of three corps—the XV Corps to the north, the XXI Corps in the center, and the VI Corps to the south. The XV Corps' 45th Infantry Division fought for six days before taking the city of Aschaffenburg, 35 mi (56 km) east of the Rhine, on 3 April. To the south, elements of the VI Corps met unexpectedly fierce resistance at Heilbronn, 40 mi (64 km) into the German rear. Despite a wide armored thrust to envelop the enemy defenses, it took nine days of intense fighting to bring Heilbronn fully under American control. Still, by 11 April 7th Army had penetrated the German defenses in depth, especially in the north, and was ready to begin its wheeling movement southeast and south. Thus, on 15 April when Eisenhower ordered Patton's entire 3rd Army to drive southeast down the Danube River valley to Linz, and south to Salzburg and central Austria, he also instructed the 6th U.S. Army Group to make a similar turn into southern Germany and western Austria.* [45]



Soldiers of the US 3rd Infantry Division in Nuremberg on 20 April

Advancing along this new axis the Seventh Army's left rapidly overran Bamberg, over 100 mi (160 km) east of the Rhine, on its way to Nuremberg, about 30 mi (48 km) to the south. As its forces reached Nuremberg on 16 April, the Seventh Army ran into the same type of anti-aircraft gun defense that the 1st Army was facing at Leipzig. Only on 20 April, after breaching the ring of anti-aircraft guns and fighting house-to-house for the city, did its forces take Nuremberg.* [46]

Following the capture of Nuremberg, the 7th Army discovered little resistance as the XXI Corps' 12th Armored Division dashed 50 mi (80 km) to the Danube, crossing it on 22 April, followed several days later by the rest of the corps and the XV Corps as well.* [46]

Meanwhile, on the 7th Army's right the VI Corps had moved southeast alongside the French 1st Army. In a double envelopment, the French captured Stuttgart on 21 April, and by the next day both the French and the VI

Corps had elements on the Danube. Similarly, the 3rd Army on the 6th U.S. Army Group's left flank had advanced rapidly against very little resistance, its lead elements reaching the river on 24 April.* [46]

As the 6th U.S. Army Group and the 3rd Army finished clearing southern Germany and approached Austria, it was clear to most observers, Allied and German alike, that the war was nearly over. Many towns flew white flags of surrender to spare themselves the otherwise inevitable destruction suffered by those that resisted, while German troops surrendered by the tens of thousands, sometimes as entire units.* [46]

10.4.12 Link-up of U.S. forces in Germany and Italy (4 May)

On 30 April, elements of 7th Army's XV and XXI Corps captured Munich, 30 miles (48 km) south of the Danube, while the first elements of its VI Corps had already entered Austria two days earlier. On 4 May, the 3rd Army's V Corps and XII Corps advanced into Czechoslovakia, and units of the VI Corps met elements of Lieutenant General Lucian Truscott's U.S. 5th Army on the Italian frontier, linking the European and Mediterranean Theaters. Also on 4 May, after a shift in inter-army boundaries that placed Salzburg in the 7th Army sector, that city surrendered to elements of the XV Corps. The XV Corps also captured *Berchtesgaden*, the town that would have been Hitler's command post in the National Redoubt. With all passes to the Alps now sealed, however, there would be no final redoubt in Austria or anywhere else. In a few days the war in Europe would be over.* [47]

10.4.13 British 21st Army Group crosses the Elbe (29 April)

While the Allied armies in the south marched to the Alps, the 21st Army Group drove north and northeast. The right wing of the British 2nd Army reached the Elbe southeast of Hamburg on 19 April. Its left fought for a week to capture Bremen, which fell on 26 April. On 29 April, the British made an assault crossing of the Elbe, supported on the following day by the recently reattached XVIII Airborne Corps. The bridgehead expanded rapidly, and by 2 May Lübeck and Wismar, 40–50 miles (64–80 km) beyond the river, were in Allied hands, sealing off the Germans in the Jutland Peninsula.* [48]

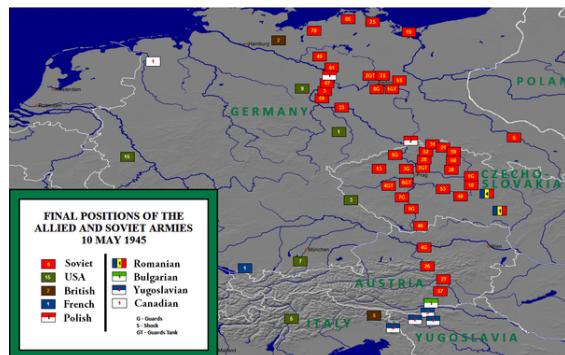
On the 21st Army Group's left, one corps of the Canadian 1st Army reached the North Sea near the Dutch-German border on 16 April, while another drove through the central Netherlands, trapping the German forces remaining in that country. However, concerned that the bypassed Germans would flood much of the nation and cause complete famine among a Dutch population already near starvation, General Eisenhower approved an agreement with



A British tank in Hamburg on 4 May.

the local enemy commanders to allow the Allies to airdrop food into the country in return for a local ceasefire on the battlefield. The ensuing airdrops, which began on 29 April,* [49] marked the beginning of what was to become a colossal effort to put war-torn Europe back together again.* [50]

10.4.14 German surrender (8 May)



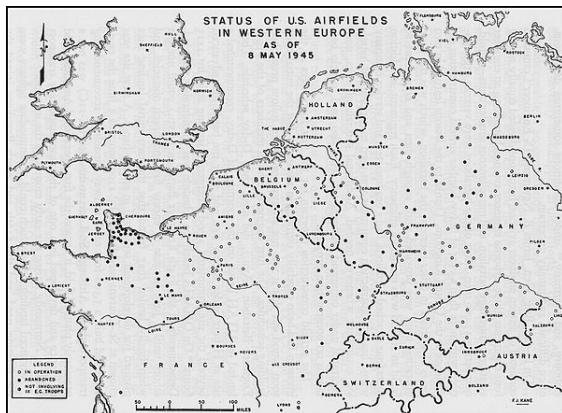
Final positions of the Allied and Soviet armies, May 1945.

Main article: End of World War II in Europe

By the end of April, the Third Reich was in tatters. Of the land still under Nazi control almost none was actually in Germany. With his escape route to the south severed by the 12th Army Group's eastward drive and Berlin surrounded by the Soviets, Adolf Hitler committed suicide on 30 April, leaving to his successor, Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz, the task of capitulation. After attempting to strike a deal whereby he would surrender only to the Western Allies—a proposal that was summarily rejected—on 7 May Dönitz granted his representative,

Alfred Jodl, permission to effect a complete surrender on all fronts. The appropriate documents were signed on the same day and became effective on 8 May. Despite scattered resistance from a few isolated units, the war in Europe was over.*[51]

10.5 Analysis



U.S Airfields in Europe as of 8 May 1945.

By the beginning of the Central Europe Campaign, Allied victory in Europe was inevitable. Having gambled his future ability to defend Germany on the Ardennes offensive and lost, Hitler had no real strength left to stop the powerful Allied armies. The Western Allies still had to fight, often bitterly, for victory. Even when the hopelessness of the German situation became obvious to his most loyal subordinates, Hitler refused to admit defeat. Only when Soviet artillery was falling around his Berlin headquarters bunker did he begin to perceive the final outcome.*[51]

The crossing of the Rhine, the encirclement and reduction of the Ruhr, and the sweep to the Elbe-Mulde line and the Alps all established the final campaign on the Western Front as a showcase for Allied superiority in maneuver warfare. Drawing on the experience gained during the campaign in Normandy and the Allied advance from Paris to the Rhine, the Western Allies demonstrated in Central Europe their capability of absorbing the lessons of the past. By attaching mechanized infantry units to armored divisions, they created a hybrid of strength and mobility that served them well in the pursuit warfare through Germany. Key to the effort was the logistical support that kept these forces fueled, and the determination to maintain the forward momentum at all costs. These mobile forces made great thrusts to isolate pockets of German troops, which were mopped up by additional infantry following close behind. The Allies rapidly eroded any remaining ability to resist.*[52]

For their part, captured German soldiers often claimed to be most impressed not by American armor or infantry but by the artillery. They frequently remarked on its accuracy and the swiftness of its target acquisition—and es-

pecially the prodigious amount of artillery ammunition expended.*[53]

In retrospect, very few questionable decisions were made concerning the execution of the campaign. For example, General Patton, the U.S. Third Army commander, potentially could have made his initial Rhine crossing north of Mainz and avoided the losses incurred crossing the Main, while the airborne operation in support of the 21st Army Group's crossing of the Rhine was probably not worth the risk. But these decisions were made in good faith and had little bearing on the ultimate outcome of the campaign. On the whole, Allied plans were excellent as demonstrated by how rapidly they met their objectives.*[53]

10.6 Footnotes

- [1] Szélinger & Tóth 2010, p. 94.
- [2] MacDonald 2005, p. 322.
- [3] Includes 25 armored divisions and 5 airborne divisions. Includes 61 American divisions, 13 British divisions, 11 French divisions, 5 Canadian divisions, and 1 Polish division, as well as several independent brigades. One of the British divisions arrived from Italy after the start of the campaign.
- [4] “Tanks and AFV News”, January 27, 2015. Zaloga gives the number of American tanks and tank destroyers as 11,000. The Americans comprised 2/3 of the Allied forces, and other Allied forces were generally equipped to the same standard.
- [5] MacDonald 2005, p. 478.
- [6] S. L. A. Marshall. ["ON HEAVY thi ARTILLERY: AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IN FOUR WARS"]. Journal of the US Army War College. Page 10. “The ETO”, a term generally only used to refer to American forces in the Western European Theater, fielded 42,000 pieces of artillery; American forces comprised approximately 2/3 of all Allied forces during the campaign.
- [7] Glantz 1995, p. 304.
- [8] Zimmerman 2008, p. 277.
- [9] “Tanks and AFV News”, January 27, 2015. Quoting an estimate given in an interview with Steven Zaloga.
- [10] Alfred Price. Luftwaffe Data Book. Greenhill Books. 1997. Total given for serviceable Luftwaffe strength by April 9 1945 is 3,331 aircraft. See: Luftwaffe serviceable aircraft strengths (1940–45).
- [11] Dept of the Army 1953, p. 92.
- [12] Stacey & Bond 1960, p. 611.
- [13] Rüdiger Overmans (Deutsche militärische Verluste im Zweiten Weltkrieg, Oldenbourg 2000, pp.265-272) estimates that the German armed forces suffered about

- 1,230,000 deaths in the “Final Battles” from January to May 1945 and that about 2/3 of these deaths occurred on the Eastern Front. This would leave 410,000 deaths attributable to the Western Allied invasion. However, 410,000 dead on the Western Front in the “Final Battles” of 1945 seems much too high considering that a) German military fatalities in the West in 1944 numbered 244,891 according to Overmans (Table 53, p. 266) and b) in the war's final months most German troops in the West offered but token resistance and surrendered en masse. So either the figure of 1,230,000 deaths in the 1945 Final Battles is wrong, or the proportion corresponding to the Eastern Front was somewhat higher than 2/3. Note that Overmans' estimates for the Western Front, which add up to ca. 655,000 killed in 1944/45, far exceed German fatalities on the Western Front in 1944/45 estimated by the US military (263,000 killed according to George C Marshall, Biennial reports of the Chief of Staff of the United States Army to the Secretary of War : 1 July 1939–30 June 1945. Washington, DC : Center of Military History, 1996. Page 202).
- [14] Rüdiger Overmans, *Soldaten hinter Stacheldraht. Deutsche Kriegsgefangene des Zweiten Weltkrieges*. Ullstein Taschenbuchvlg., 2002. German POWs in Allied hands in the west are listed as numbering 920,000 in the first quarter of 1945. German POWs in the west numbered 4,209,840 by the time Germany surrendered (see *Disarmed Enemy Forces*). This would mean ~3.3 million German soldiers were captured from late March to early May.
- [15] Zaloga & Dennis 2006, p. 88.
- [16] Hastings 2005, p. 465.
- [17] Bedessem 1996, p. 3.
- [18] Bedessem 1996, pp. 3–6.
- [19] Bedessem 1996, p. 6.
- [20] Keegan 1989, p. 182.
- [21] Wendel, Marcus. “Heer”. *Axis History Factbook*.
- [22] Bedessem 1996, p. 7.
- [23] Baker 2004, pp. 38–39.
- [24] Bedessem 1996, p. 8.
- [25] Bedessem 1996, p. 9.
- [26] Bedessem 1996, pp. 9–10.
- [27] Bedessem 1996, p. 10.
- [28] Bedessem 1996, p. 11.
- [29] Chapter 21: From the Rhine to the Elbe
- [30] Bedessem 1996, p. 12.
- [31] Bedessem 1996, p. 13.
- [32] Bedessem 1996, p. 16.
- [33] Bedessem 1996, p. 17.
- [34] Bedessem 1996, p. 20.
- [35] Bedessem 1996, p. 21.
- [36] Universal Newsreel staff 1945.
- [37] Bedessem 1996, p. 22.
- [38] Bedessem 1996, pp. 22–23.
- [39] Bedessem 1996, p. 23.
- [40] Bedessem 1996, pp. 23,26.
- [41] Bedessem 1996, p. 26.
- [42] Bedessem 1996, p. 27.
- [43] Bedessem 1996, p. 30.
- [44] Bedessem 1996, p. 31.
- [45] Bedessem 1996, pp. 31–32.
- [46] Bedessem 1996, p. 32.
- [47] Bedessem 1996, pp. 32–33.
- [48] Bedessem 1996, p. 33.
- [49] RAF staff 2005, April 1945.
- [50] Bedessem 1996, pp. 33–34.
- [51] Bedessem 1996, p. 34.
- [52] Bedessem 1996, pp. 34–35.
- [53] Bedessem 1996, p. 35.

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10.8 External links

Chapter 11

Atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

The United States, with the consent of the United Kingdom as laid down in the [Quebec Agreement](#), dropped nuclear weapons on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9, 1945, respectively, during the final stage of [World War II](#). The two bombings, which killed at least 129,000 people, remain the only use of nuclear weapons for warfare in history.

In the final year of the war, the Allies prepared for what was anticipated to be a very costly [invasion of the Japanese mainland](#). This was preceded by a U.S. firebombing campaign that destroyed 67 Japanese cities. The war in Europe had concluded when [Nazi Germany](#) signed its instrument of surrender on May 8, 1945. The Japanese, facing the same fate, refused to accept the Allies' demands for [unconditional surrender](#) and the [Pacific War](#) continued. Together with the United Kingdom and China, the United States called for the unconditional surrender of the Japanese armed forces in the [Potsdam Declaration](#) on July 26, 1945—the alternative being “prompt and utter destruction”. The Japanese response to this ultimatum was to ignore it.

On July 16, 1945, the Allied [Manhattan Project](#) successfully detonated an atomic bomb in the [New Mexico](#) desert and by August had produced atomic weapons based on two alternate designs. The 509th Composite Group of the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) was equipped with the specialized Silverplate version of the Boeing B-29 Superfortress, that could deliver them from Tinian in the Mariana Islands.

On August 6, the U.S. dropped a uranium gun-type atomic bomb ([Little Boy](#)) on Hiroshima. American President [Harry S. Truman](#) called for Japan's surrender 16 hours later, warning them to “expect a rain of ruin from the air, the like of which has never been seen on this earth.” Three days later, on August 9, the U.S. dropped a plutonium implosion-type bomb ([Fat Man](#)) on Nagasaki. Within the first two to four months of the bombings, the acute effects of the atomic bombings killed 90,000–146,000 people in Hiroshima and 39,000–80,000 in Nagasaki; roughly half of the deaths in each city occurred on the first day. During the following months, large num-

bers died from the effect of burns, [radiation sickness](#), and other injuries, compounded by illness and malnutrition. In both cities, most of the dead were civilians, although Hiroshima had a sizable military garrison.

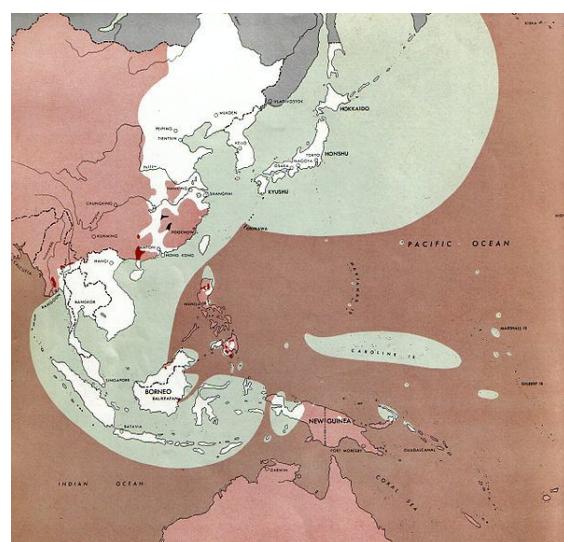
On August 15, six days after the bombing of Nagasaki and the [Soviet Union's declaration of war](#), Japan announced its surrender to the Allies. On September 2, it signed the [instrument of surrender](#), effectively ending World War II. The bombings' role in Japan's surrender and their ethical justification are still debated.

11.1 Background

11.1.1 Pacific War

Main article: [Pacific War](#)

In 1945, the [Pacific War](#) between the Empire of Japan



Situation of Pacific War by August 1, 1945. Japan still had control of all of [Manchuria](#), [Korea](#), [Taiwan](#) and [Indochina](#), a large part of [China](#), including most of the main Chinese cities, and much of the [Dutch East Indies](#).

and the Allies entered its fourth year. The Japanese fought fiercely, ensuring that U.S. victory would come at an enormous cost. Of the 1.25 million battle casualties incurred by the United States in World War II, including both military personnel killed in action and wounded in action, nearly one million occurred in the twelve-month period from June 1944 to June 1945. December 1944 saw American battle casualties hit an all-time monthly high of 88,000 as a result of the German Ardennes Offensive.^{*[1]} In the Pacific, the Allies returned to the Philippines,^{*[2]} recaptured Burma,^{*[3]} and invaded Borneo.^{*[4]} Offensives were undertaken to reduce the Japanese forces remaining in Bougainville, New Guinea and the Philippines.^{*[5]} In April 1945, American forces landed on Okinawa, where heavy fighting continued until June. Along the way, the ratio of Japanese to American casualties dropped from 5:1 in the Philippines to 2:1 on Okinawa.^{*[1]}

As the Allied advance moved inexorably towards Japan, conditions became steadily worse for the Japanese people. Japan's merchant fleet declined from 5,250,000 gross tons in 1941 to 1,560,000 tons in March 1945, and 557,000 tons in August 1945. Lack of raw materials forced the Japanese war economy into a steep decline after the middle of 1944. The civilian economy, which had slowly deteriorated throughout the war, reached disastrous levels by the middle of 1945. The loss of shipping also affected the fishing fleet, and the 1945 catch was only 22% of that in 1941. The 1945 rice harvest was the worst since 1909, and hunger and malnutrition became widespread. U.S. industrial production was overwhelmingly superior to Japan's. By 1943, the U.S. produced almost 100,000 aircraft a year, compared to Japan's production of 70,000 for the entire war. By the summer of 1944, the U.S. had almost a hundred aircraft carriers in the Pacific, far more than Japan's twenty-five for the entire war. In February 1945, Prince Fumimaro Konoe advised the Emperor Hirohito that defeat was inevitable, and urged him to abdicate.^{*[6]}

11.1.2 Preparations to invade Japan

Main article: Operation Downfall

Even before the surrender of Nazi Germany on May 8, 1945, plans were underway for the largest operation of the Pacific War, Operation Downfall, the invasion of Japan.^{*[7]} The operation had two parts: Operation Olympic and Operation Coronet. Set to begin in October 1945, Olympic involved a series of landings by the U.S. Sixth Army intended to capture the southern third of the southernmost main Japanese island, Kyūshū.^{*[8]} Operation Olympic was to be followed in March 1946 by Operation Coronet, the capture of the Kantō Plain, near Tokyo on the main Japanese island of Honshū by the U.S. First, Eighth and Tenth Armies, as well as a Commonwealth Corps made up of Australian, British and Canadian divi-

sions. The target date was chosen to allow for Olympic to complete its objectives, for troops to be redeployed from Europe, and the Japanese winter to pass.^{*[9]}



U.S. Army poster prepares the public for the invasion of Japan after ending war on Germany and Italy

Japan's geography made this invasion plan obvious to the Japanese; they were able to predict the Allied invasion plans accurately and thus adjust their defensive plan, Operation Ketsugō, accordingly. The Japanese planned an all-out defense of Kyūshū, with little left in reserve for any subsequent defense operations.^{*[10]} Four veteran divisions were withdrawn from the Kwantung Army in Manchuria in March 1945 to strengthen the forces in Japan,^{*[11]} and 45 new divisions were activated between February and May 1945. Most were immobile formations for coastal defense, but 16 were high quality mobile divisions.^{*[12]} In all, there were 2.3 million Japanese Army troops prepared to defend the home islands, backed by a civilian militia of 28 million men and women. Casualty predictions varied widely, but were extremely high. The Vice Chief of the Imperial Japanese Navy General Staff, Vice Admiral Takijirō Ōnishi, predicted up to 20 million Japanese deaths.^{*[13]}

A study from June 15, 1945, by the Joint War Plans Committee,^{*[14]} who provided planning information to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, estimated that Olympic would result in between 130,000 and 220,000 U.S. casualties, of which U.S. dead would be in the range from 25,000 to 46,000. Delivered on June 15, 1945, after insight gained from the Battle of Okinawa, the study noted Japan's inad-

equate defenses due to the very effective sea blockade and the American firebombing campaign. The Chief of Staff of the United States Army, General of the Army George Marshall, and the Army Commander in Chief in the Pacific, General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, signed documents agreeing with the Joint War Plans Committee estimate.*[15]

The Americans were alarmed by the Japanese buildup, which was accurately tracked through Ultra intelligence.*[16] Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson was sufficiently concerned about high American estimates of probable casualties to commission his own study by Quincy Wright and William Shockley. Wright and Shockley spoke with Colonels James McCormack and Dean Rusk, and examined casualty forecasts by Michael E. DeBakey and Gilbert Beebe. Wright and Shockley estimated the invading Allies would suffer between 1.7 and 4 million casualties in such a scenario, of whom between 400,000 and 800,000 would be dead, while Japanese fatalities would have been around 5 to 10 million.*[17]*[18]

Marshall began contemplating the use of a weapon which was “readily available and which assuredly can decrease the cost in American lives”.*[19] poison gas. Quantities of phosgene, mustard gas, tear gas and cyanogen chloride were moved to Luzon from stockpiles in Australia and New Guinea in preparation for Operation Olympic, and MacArthur ensured that Chemical Warfare Service units were trained in their use.*[19] Consideration was also given to using biological weapons against Japan.*[20]

11.1.3 Air raids on Japan

Main article: Air raids on Japan

While the United States had developed plans for an air



A B-29 over Osaka on June 1, 1945

campaign against Japan prior to the Pacific War, the capture of Allied bases in the western Pacific in the first weeks of the conflict meant that this offensive did not begin until mid-1944 when the long-ranged Boeing B-

29 Superfortress became ready for use in combat.*[21] Operation Matterhorn involved India-based B-29s staging through bases around Chengdu in China to make a series of raids on strategic targets in Japan.*[22] This effort failed to achieve the strategic objectives that its planners had intended, largely because of logistical problems, the bomber's mechanical difficulties, the vulnerability of Chinese staging bases, and the extreme range required to reach key Japanese cities.*[23]

United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) Brigadier General Haywood S. Hansell determined that Guam, Tinian, and Saipan in the Mariana Islands would better serve as B-29 bases, but they were in Japanese hands.*[24] Strategies were shifted to accommodate the air war,*[25] and the islands were captured between June and August 1944. Air bases were developed,*[26] and B-29 operations commenced from the Marianas in October 1944.*[27] These bases were easily resupplied by cargo ships.*[28] The XXI Bomber Command began missions against Japan on November 18, 1944.*[29]

The early attempts to bomb Japan from the Marianas proved just as ineffective as the China-based B-29s had been. Hansell continued the practice of conducting so-called high-altitude precision bombing, aimed at key industries and transportation networks, even after these tactics had not produced acceptable results.*[30] These efforts proved unsuccessful due to logistical difficulties with the remote location, technical problems with the new and advanced aircraft, unfavorable weather conditions, and enemy action.*[31]*[32]



The Operation Meetinghouse firebombing of Tokyo on the night of March 9–10, 1945, was the single deadliest air raid in history;[33] with a greater area of fire damage and loss of life than the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima or Nagasaki as single events.*[34]*[35]*

Hansell's successor, Major General Curtis LeMay, assumed command in January 1945 and initially continued to use the same precision bombing tactics, with equally unsatisfactory results. The attacks initially targeted key industrial facilities but much of the Japanese manufacturing process was carried out in small workshops and private homes.*[36] Under pressure from USAAF head-

quarters in Washington, LeMay changed tactics and decided that low-level incendiary raids against Japanese cities were the only way to destroy their production capabilities, shifting from precision bombing to area bombardment with incendiaries.*[37]

Like most strategic bombing during World War II, the aim of the USAAF offensive against Japan was to destroy the enemy's war industries, kill or disable civilian employees of these industries, and undermine civilian morale. Civilians who took part in the war effort through such activities as building fortifications and manufacturing munitions and other war materials in factories and workshops were considered combatants in a legal sense and therefore liable to be attacked.*[38]*[39]

Over the next six months, the XXI Bomber Command under LeMay firebombed 67 Japanese cities. The firebombing of Tokyo, codenamed *Operation Meetinghouse*, on March 9–10 killed an estimated 100,000 people and destroyed 16 square miles (41 km^2) of the city and 267,000 buildings in a single night. It was the deadliest bombing raid of the war, at a cost of 20 B-29s shot down by flak and fighters.*[40] By May, 75% of bombs dropped were incendiaries designed to burn down Japan's "paper cities". By mid-June, Japan's six largest cities had been devastated.*[41] The end of the fighting on Okinawa that month provided airfields even closer to the Japanese mainland, allowing the bombing campaign to be further escalated. Aircraft flying from Allied aircraft carriers and the Ryukyu Islands also regularly struck targets in Japan during 1945 in preparation for Operation Downfall.*[42] Firebombing switched to smaller cities, with populations ranging from 60,000 to 350,000. According to Yuki Tanaka, the U.S. fire-bombed over a hundred Japanese towns and cities.*[43] These raids were also devastating.*[44]

The Japanese military was unable to stop the Allied attacks and the country's civil defense preparations proved inadequate. Japanese fighters and antiaircraft guns had difficulty engaging bombers flying at high altitude.*[45] From April 1945, the Japanese interceptors also had to face American fighter escorts based on Iwo Jima and Okinawa.*[46] That month, the Imperial Japanese Army Air Service and Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service stopped attempting to intercept the air raids in order to preserve fighter aircraft to counter the expected invasion.*[47] By mid-1945 the Japanese only occasionally scrambled aircraft to intercept individual B-29s conducting reconnaissance sorties over the country, in order to conserve supplies of fuel.*[48] By July 1945, the Japanese had stockpiled 1,156,000 US barrels (137,800,000 l; 36,400,000 US gal; 30,300,000 imp gal) of avgas for the invasion of Japan.*[49] While the Japanese military decided to resume attacks on Allied bombers from late June, by this time there were too few operational fighters available for this change of tactics to hinder the Allied air raids.*[50]

11.1.4 Atomic bomb development

Main article: [Manhattan Project](#)

The discovery of nuclear fission by German chemists Otto Hahn and Fritz Strassmann in 1938, and its theoretical explanation by Lise Meitner and Otto Frisch, made the development of an atomic bomb a theoretical possibility.*[51] Fears that a German atomic bomb project would develop atomic weapons first, especially among scientists who were refugees from Nazi Germany and other fascist countries, were expressed in the Einstein-Szilard letter. This prompted preliminary research in the United States in late 1939.*[52] Progress was slow until the arrival of the British MAUD Committee report in late 1941, which indicated that only 5–10 kilograms of isotopically enriched uranium-235 was needed for a bomb instead of tons of un-enriched uranium and a neutron moderator (e.g. heavy water).*[53]

Working in collaboration with the United Kingdom and Canada, with their respective projects Tube Alloys and Chalk River Laboratories,*[54]*[55] the Manhattan Project, under the direction of Major General Leslie R. Groves, Jr., of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, designed and built the first atomic bombs.*[56] Groves appointed J. Robert Oppenheimer to organize and head the project's Los Alamos Laboratory in New Mexico, where bomb design work was carried out.*[57] Two types of bombs were eventually developed. Little Boy was a gun-type fission weapon that used uranium-235, a rare isotope of uranium separated at the Clinton Engineer Works at Oak Ridge, Tennessee.*[58] The other, known as Fat Man, was a more powerful and efficient, but more complicated, implosion-type nuclear weapon that used plutonium created in nuclear reactors at Hanford, Washington. A test implosion weapon, the gadget, was detonated at Trinity Site, on July 16, 1945, near Alamogordo, New Mexico.*[59]

There was a Japanese nuclear weapon program, but it lacked the human, mineral and financial resources of the Manhattan Project, and never made much progress towards developing an atomic bomb.*[60]

11.2 Preparations

11.2.1 Organization and training

The 509th Composite Group was constituted on December 9, 1944, and activated on December 17, 1944, at Wendover Army Air Field, Utah, commanded by Colonel Paul Tibbets.*[61] Tibbets was assigned to organize and command a combat group to develop the means of delivering an atomic weapon against targets in Germany and Japan. Because the flying squadrons of the group consisted of both bomber and transport aircraft, the group



Aircraft of the 509th Composite Group that took part in the Hiroshima bombing. Left to right: Big Stink, The Great Artiste, Enola Gay

was designated as a “composite” rather than a “bombardment” unit.*[62]

Working with the Manhattan Project at Los Alamos, Tibbets selected Wendover for his training base over Great Bend, Kansas, and Mountain Home, Idaho, because of its remoteness.*[63] Each bombardier completed at least 50 practice drops of inert or conventional explosive pumpkin bombs and Tibbets declared his group combat-ready.*[64]



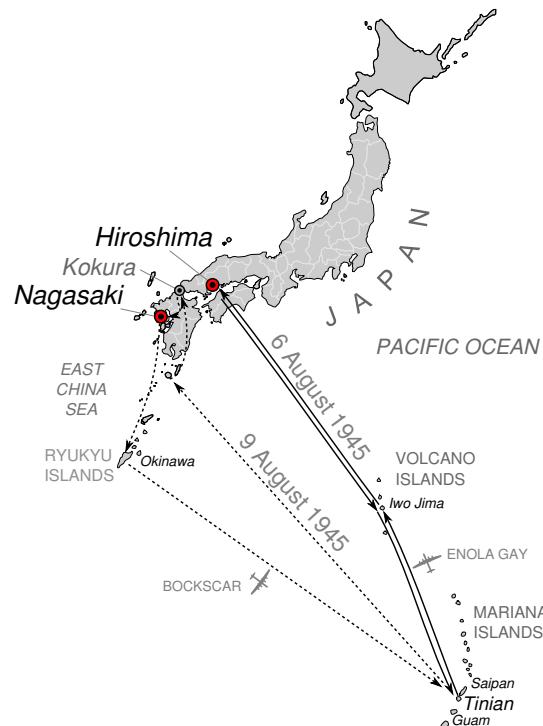
The “Tinian Joint Chiefs”: Captain William S. Parsons (left), Rear Admiral William R. Purnell (center), and Brigadier General Thomas F. Farrell (right)

The 509th Composite Group had an authorized strength of 225 officers and 1,542 enlisted men, almost all of whom eventually deployed to Tinian. In addition to its authorized strength, the 509th had attached to it on Tinian 51 civilian and military personnel from Project Alberta,*[65] known as the 1st Technical Detachment.*[66] The 509th Composite Group's 393d Bombardment Squadron was equipped with 15 Silverplate B-29s. These aircraft were specially adapted to carry nuclear weapons, and were equipped with fuel-injected engines, Curtiss Electric reversible-pitch propellers, pneumatic actuators for rapid opening and closing of bomb bay doors and other improvements.*[67]

The ground support echelon of the 509th Composite Group moved by rail on April 26, 1945, to its port of embarkation at Seattle, Washington. On May 6 the support elements sailed on the SS *Cape Victory* for the Marianas, while group materiel was shipped on the SS *Emile Berliner*. The *Cape Victory* made brief port calls at Honolulu and Eniwetok but the passengers were not permitted to leave the dock area. An advance party of the air echelon, consisting of 29 officers and 61 enlisted men flew by C-54 to North Field on Tinian, between May 15 and May 22.*[68]

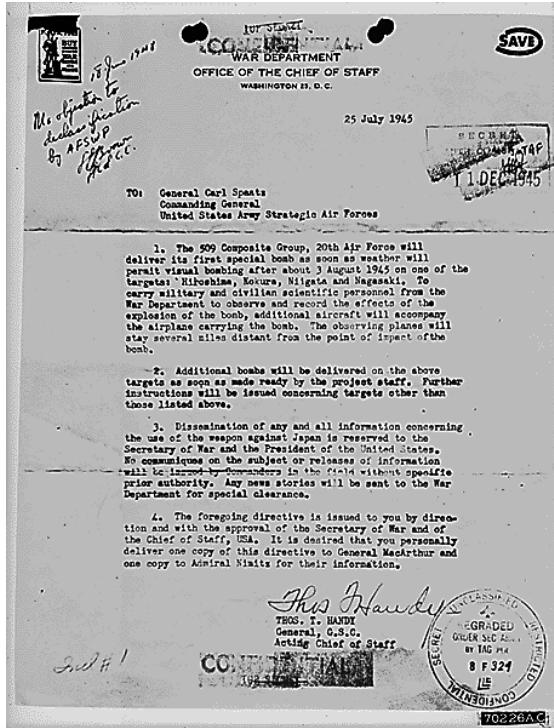
There were also two representatives from Washington, D.C., Brigadier General Thomas Farrell, the deputy commander of the Manhattan Project, and Rear Admiral William R. Purnell of the Military Policy Committee,*[69] who were on hand to decide higher policy matters on the spot. Along with Captain William S. Parsons, the commander of Project Alberta, they became known as the “Tinian Joint Chiefs”.*[70]

11.2.2 Choice of targets



The mission runs of August 6 and 9, with Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Kokura (the original target for August 9) displayed.

In April 1945, Marshall asked Groves to nominate specific targets for bombing for final approval by himself and Stimson. Groves formed a Target Committee, chaired by himself, that included Farrell, Major John A. Derry, Colonel William P. Fisher, Joyce C. Stearns and David M. Dennison from the USAAF; and scientists John von Neumann, Robert R. Wilson and William Penney from the Manhattan Project. The Target Committee met in Wash-



General Thomas Handy's order to General Carl Spaatz authorizing the dropping of the atomic bombs

ington on April 27; at Los Alamos on May 10, where it was able to talk to the scientists and technicians there; and finally in Washington on May 28, where it was briefed by Tibbets and Commander Frederick Ashworth from Project Alberta, and the Manhattan Project's scientific advisor, Richard C. Tolman.*[71]

The Target Committee nominated five targets: Kokura, the site of one of Japan's largest munitions plants; Hiroshima, an embarkation port and industrial center that was the site of a major military headquarters; Yokohama, an urban center for aircraft manufacture, machine tools, docks, electrical equipment and oil refineries; Niigata, a port with industrial facilities including steel and aluminum plants and an oil refinery; and Kyoto, a major industrial center. The target selection was subject to the following criteria:

- The target was larger than 3 mi (4.8 km) in diameter and was an important target in a large urban area.
- The blast would create effective damage.
- The target was unlikely to be attacked by August 1945.*[72]

These cities were largely untouched during the nightly bombing raids and the Army Air Forces agreed to leave them off the target list so accurate assessment of the weapon could be made. Hiroshima was described as "an important army depot and port of embarkation in the middle of an urban industrial area. It is a good radar target and it is such a size that a large part of the city could

be extensively damaged. There are adjacent hills which are likely to produce a focusing effect which would considerably increase the blast damage. Due to rivers it is not a good incendiary target." * [72]

The Target Committee stated that "It was agreed that psychological factors in the target selection were of great importance. Two aspects of this are (1) obtaining the greatest psychological effect against Japan and (2) making the initial use sufficiently spectacular for the importance of the weapon to be internationally recognized when publicity on it is released. Kyoto had the advantage of being an important center for military industry, as well an intellectual center and hence a population better able to appreciate the significance of the weapon. The Emperor's palace in Tokyo has a greater fame than any other target but is of least strategic value." * [72]

Edwin O. Reischauer, a Japan expert for the U.S. Army Intelligence Service, was incorrectly said to have prevented the bombing of Kyoto.*[72] In his autobiography, Reischauer specifically refuted this claim:

... the only person deserving credit for saving Kyoto from destruction is Henry L. Stimson, the Secretary of War at the time, who had known and admired Kyoto ever since his honeymoon there several decades earlier.*[73]
*[74]

On May 30, Stimson asked Groves to remove Kyoto from the target list due to its historical, religious and cultural significance, but Groves pointed to its military and industrial significance.*[75] Stimson then approached President Harry S. Truman about the matter. Truman agreed with Stimson, and Kyoto was temporarily removed from the target list.*[76] Groves attempted to restore Kyoto to the target list in July, but Stimson remained adamant.*[77]*[78] On July 25, Nagasaki was put on the target list in place of Kyoto.*[78]

Orders for the attack were issued to General Carl Spaatz on July 25 under the signature of General Thomas T. Handy, the acting Chief of Staff, since Marshall was at the Potsdam Conference with Truman.*[79] That day, Truman noted in his diary that:

This weapon is to be used against Japan between now and August 10th. I have told the Sec. of War, Mr. Stimson, to use it so that military objectives and soldiers and sailors are the target and not women and children. Even if the Japs are savages, ruthless, merciless and fanatic, we as the leader of the world for the common welfare cannot drop that terrible bomb on the old capital [Kyoto] or the new [Tokyo]. He and I are in accord. The target will be a purely military one.*[80]

11.2.3 Proposed demonstration

In early May 1945, the Interim Committee was created by Stimson at the urging of leaders of the Manhattan Project and with the approval of Truman to advise on matters pertaining to nuclear energy.*[81] During the meetings on May 31 and June 1, scientist Ernest Lawrence had suggested giving the Japanese a non-combat demonstration.*[82] Arthur Compton later recalled that:

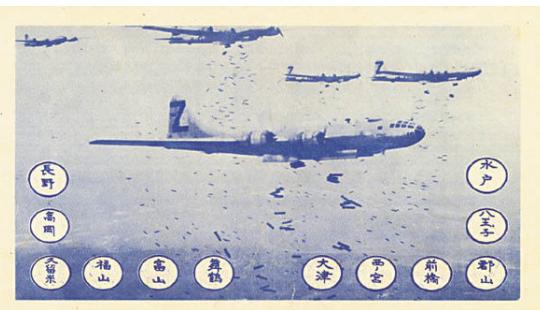
It was evident that everyone would suspect trickery. If a bomb were exploded in Japan with previous notice, the Japanese air power was still adequate to give serious interference. An atomic bomb was an intricate device, still in the developmental stage. Its operation would be far from routine. If during the final adjustments of the bomb the Japanese defenders should attack, a faulty move might easily result in some kind of failure. Such an end to an advertised demonstration of power would be much worse than if the attempt had not been made. It was now evident that when the time came for the bombs to be used we should have only one of them available, followed afterwards by others at all-too-long intervals. We could not afford the chance that one of them might be a dud. If the test were made on some neutral territory, it was hard to believe that Japan's determined and fanatical military men would be impressed. If such an open test were made first and failed to bring surrender, the chance would be gone to give the shock of surprise that proved so effective. On the contrary, it would make the Japanese ready to interfere with an atomic attack if they could. Though the possibility of a demonstration that would not destroy human lives was attractive, no one could suggest a way in which it could be made so convincing that it would be likely to stop the war.*[83]

The possibility of a demonstration was raised again in the Franck Report issued by physicist James Franck on June 11 and the Scientific Advisory Panel rejected his report on June 16, saying that “we can propose no technical demonstration likely to bring an end to the war; we see no acceptable alternative to direct military use.” Franck then took the report to Washington, D.C., where the Interim Committee met on June 21 to re-examine its earlier conclusions; but it reaffirmed that there was no alternative to the use of the bomb on a military target.*[84]

Like Compton, many U.S. officials and scientists argued that a demonstration would sacrifice the shock value of the atomic attack, and the Japanese could deny the atomic bomb was lethal, making the mission less likely to produce surrender. Allied prisoners of war might be moved to the demonstration site and be killed by the bomb. They

also worried that the bomb might be a dud since the Trinity test was of a stationary device, not an air-dropped bomb. In addition, only two bombs would be available at the start of August, although more were in production, and they cost billions of dollars, so using one for a demonstration would be expensive.*[85]*[86]

11.2.4 Leaflets



This type of leaflet was dropped on Japan, showing the names of 12 Japanese cities targeted for destruction by firebombing. The other side contained text saying “we cannot promise that only these cities will be among those attacked ...”

For several months, the U.S. had dropped more than 63 million leaflets across Japan warning civilians of air raids. Many Japanese cities suffered terrible damage from aerial bombings; some were as much as 97% destroyed. LeMay thought that leaflets would increase the psychological impact of bombing, and reduce the international stigma of area-bombing cities. Even with the warnings, Japanese opposition to the war remained ineffective. In general, the Japanese regarded the leaflet messages as truthful, but anyone who was caught in possession of one was arrested.*[87]*[88] Leaflet texts were prepared by recent Japanese prisoners of war because they were thought to be the best choice “to appeal to their compatriots”.*[89]

In preparation for dropping an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, U.S. military leaders decided against a demonstration bomb, and against a special leaflet warning, in both cases because of the uncertainty of a successful detonation, and the wish to maximize psychological shock.*[90] No warning was given to Hiroshima that a new and much more destructive bomb was going to be dropped.*[91] Various sources give conflicting information about when the last leaflets were dropped on Hiroshima prior to the atomic bomb. Robert Jay Lifton writes that it was July 27,*[91] and Theodore H. McNelly that it was July 3.*[90] The USAAF history notes eleven cities were targeted with leaflets on July 27, but Hiroshima was not one of them, and there were no leaflet sorties on July 30.*[88] Leaflet sorties were undertaken on August 1 and August 4. It is very likely that Hiroshima was leafleted in late July or early August, as survivor accounts talk about a delivery of leaflets a few days before the atomic bomb was dropped.*[91] One

such leaflet lists twelve cities targeted for firebombing: Otaru, Akita, Hachinohe, Fukushima, Urawa, Takayama, Iwakuni, Tottori, Imabari, Yawata, Miyakonojo, and Saga. Hiroshima was not listed.*[92]*[93]*[94]*[95]

11.2.5 Potsdam Declaration

Truman delayed the start of the summit by two weeks in the hope that the bomb could be tested before the start of negotiations with Stalin. The successful **Trinity** Test of July 16 exceeded expectations. On July 26, Allied leaders issued the **Potsdam Declaration** outlining terms of surrender for Japan. It was presented as an **ultimatum** and stated that without a surrender, the Allies would attack Japan, resulting in “the inevitable and complete destruction of the Japanese armed forces and just as inevitably the utter devastation of the Japanese homeland”. The atomic bomb was not mentioned in the communiqué. On July 28, Japanese papers reported that the declaration had been rejected by the Japanese government. That afternoon, Prime Minister Suzuki Kantarō declared at a press conference that the Potsdam Declaration was no more than a rehash (*yakinaoshi*) of the **Cairo Declaration** and that the government intended to ignore it (*mokusatsu*, “kill by silence”).*[96] The statement was taken by both Japanese and foreign papers as a clear rejection of the declaration. Emperor Hirohito, who was waiting for a Soviet reply to non-committal Japanese peace feelers, made no move to change the government position.*[97] Japan's willingness to surrender remained conditional on the preservation of the imperial institution; that Japan not be occupied; that the Japanese armed forces be disbanded voluntarily; and that war criminals be prosecuted by Japanese courts.*[98]

Under the 1943 **Quebec Agreement** with the United Kingdom, the United States had agreed that nuclear weapons would not be used against another country without mutual consent. In June 1945 the head of the British Joint Staff Mission, Field Marshal Sir Henry Maitland Wilson, agreed that the use of nuclear weapons against Japan would be officially recorded as a decision of the **Combined Policy Committee**.*[99] At Potsdam, Truman agreed to a request from Winston Churchill that Britain be represented when the atomic bomb was dropped. William Penney and Group Captain Leonard Cheshire were sent to Tinian, but found that LeMay would not let them accompany the mission. All they could do was send a strongly worded signal back to Wilson.*[100]

11.2.6 Bombs

The Little Boy bomb, except for the uranium payload, was ready at the beginning of May 1945.*[101] The uranium-235 projectile was completed on June 15, and the target on July 24.*[102] The target and bomb pre-assemblies (partly assembled bombs without the fissile components) left Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, Califor-

nia, on July 16 aboard the **cruiser USS Indianapolis**, arriving July 26.*[103] The target inserts followed by air on July 30.*[102]

The first plutonium core, along with its polonium-beryllium urchin initiator, was transported in the custody of Project Alberta courier **Raemer Schreiber** in a magnesium field carrying case designed for the purpose by **Philip Morrison**. Magnesium was chosen because it does not act as a tamper.*[104] The core departed from **Kirtland Army Air Field** on a C-54 transport aircraft of the 509th Composite Group's 320th Troop Carrier Squadron on July 26, and arrived at North Field July 28. Three Fat Man high-explosive pre-assemblies, designated F31, F32, and F33, were picked up at Kirtland on July 28 by three B-29s, from the 393d Bombardment Squadron, plus one from the 216th Army Air Force Base Unit, and transported to North Field, arriving on August 2.*[105]

11.3 Hiroshima

11.3.1 Hiroshima during World War II



The Enola Gay dropped the "Little Boy" atomic bomb on Hiroshima. In this photograph are five of the aircraft's ground crew with mission commander Paul Tibbets in the center.

At the time of its bombing, Hiroshima was a city of both industrial and military significance. A number of military units were located nearby, the most important of which was the headquarters of **Field Marshal Shunroku Hata's Second General Army**, which commanded the defense of all of southern Japan,*[106] and was located in **Hiroshima Castle**. Hata's command consisted of some 400,000 men, most of whom were on Kyushu where an Allied invasion was correctly anticipated.*[107] Also present in Hiroshima were the headquarters of the **59th Army**, the **5th Division** and the **224th Division**, a recently formed mobile unit.*[108] The city was defended by five batteries of 7-cm and 8-cm (2.8 and 3.1 inch) anti-aircraft guns of the 3rd Anti-Aircraft Division, including units from the 121st and 122nd Anti-Aircraft Regiments and the 22nd and 45th Separate Anti-Aircraft Battalions. In

total, an estimated 40,000 Japanese military personnel were stationed in the city.*[109]

Hiroshima was a minor supply and logistics base for the Japanese military, but it also had large stockpiles of military supplies.*[110] The city was also a communications center, a key port for shipping and an assembly area for troops.*[75] It was a beehive of war industry, manufacturing parts for planes and boats, for bombs, rifles, and handguns; children were shown how to construct and hurl gasoline bombs and the wheelchair-bound and bedridden were assembling booby traps to be planted in the beaches of Kyushu. A new slogan appeared on the walls of Hiroshima: "FORGET SELF! ALL OUT FOR YOUR COUNTRY!"*[111] It was also the second largest city in Japan after Kyoto that was still undamaged by air raids,*[112] due to the fact that it lacked the aircraft manufacturing industry that was the XXI Bomber Command's priority target. On July 3, the Joint Chiefs of Staff placed it off limits to bombers, along with Kokura, Niigata and Kyoto.*[113]

The center of the city contained several reinforced concrete buildings and lighter structures. Outside the center, the area was congested by a dense collection of small timber-made workshops set among Japanese houses. A few larger industrial plants lay near the outskirts of the city. The houses were constructed of timber with tile roofs, and many of the industrial buildings were also built around timber frames. The city as a whole was highly susceptible to fire damage.*[114]

The population of Hiroshima had reached a peak of over 381,000 earlier in the war but prior to the atomic bombing, the population had steadily decreased because of a systematic evacuation ordered by the Japanese government. At the time of the attack, the population was approximately 340,000–350,000.*[115] Residents wondered why Hiroshima had been spared destruction by firebombing.*[116] Some speculated that the city was to be saved for U.S. occupation headquarters, others thought perhaps their relatives in Hawaii and California had petitioned the U.S. government to avoid bombing Hiroshima.*[117] More realistic city officials had ordered buildings torn down to create long, straight firebreaks, beginning in 1944.*[118] Firebreaks continued to be expanded and extended up to the morning of August 6, 1945.*[119]

11.3.2 Bombing of Hiroshima

Hiroshima was the primary target of the first nuclear bombing mission on August 6, with Kokura and Nagasaki as alternative targets. Having been fully briefed under the terms of Operations Order No. 35, the 393d Bombardment Squadron B-29 *Enola Gay*, piloted by Tibbets, took off from North Field, Tinian, about six hours' flight time from Japan. The *Enola Gay* (named after Tibbets' mother) was accompanied by two other B-29s. *The Great*

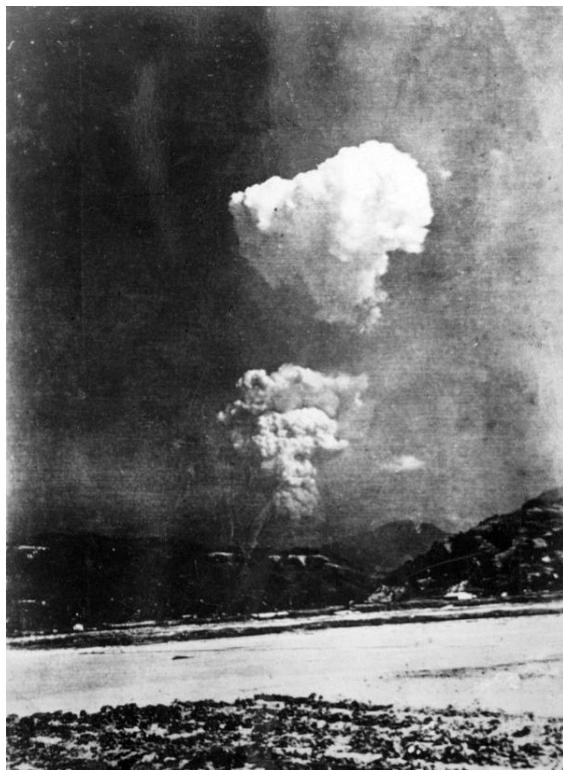
Artiste, commanded by Major Charles Sweeney, carried instrumentation, and a then-nameless aircraft later called *Necessary Evil*, commanded by Captain George Marquardt, served as the photography aircraft.*[120]



Seizo Yamada's ground level photo taken approximately 7 km (4.3 mi) northeast of Hiroshima

After leaving Tinian the aircraft made their way separately to Iwo Jima to rendezvous with Sweeney and Marquardt at 05:55 at 9,200 feet (2,800 m),*[122] and set course for Japan. The aircraft arrived over the target in clear visibility at 31,060 feet (9,470 m).*[123] Parsons, who was in command of the mission, armed the bomb during the flight to minimize the risks during takeoff. He had witnessed four B-29s crash and burn at takeoff, and feared that a nuclear explosion would occur if a B-29 crashed with an armed Little Boy on board.*[124] His assistant, Second Lieutenant Morris R. Jeppson, removed the safety devices 30 minutes before reaching the target area.*[125]

During the night of August 5–6, Japanese early warning radar detected the approach of numerous American aircraft headed for the southern part of Japan. Radar detected 65 bombers headed for Saga, 102 bound for Maebashi, 261 en route to Nishinomiya, 111 headed for Ube and 66 bound for Imabari. An alert was given and radio broadcasting stopped in many cities, among them Hiroshima. The all-clear was sounded in Hiroshima at 00:05.*[126] About an hour before the bombing, the air raid alert was sounded again, as *Straight Flush* flew over the city. It broadcast a short message which was picked up by *Enola Gay*. It read: "Cloud cover less than 3/10th at all altitudes. Advice: bomb primary."*[127] The all-



Picture found in Honkawa Elementary School in 2013 of the Hiroshima atom bomb cloud, believed to have been taken about 30 minutes after detonation from about 10 km (6.2 mi) east of the hypocenter

clear was sounded over Hiroshima again at 07:09.*[128]

At 08:09, Tibbets started his bomb run and handed control over to his bombardier, Major Thomas Ferebee.*[129] The release at 08:15 (Hiroshima time) went as planned, and the Little Boy containing about 64 kg (141 lb) of uranium-235 took 44.4 seconds to fall from the aircraft flying at about 31,000 feet (9,400 m) to a detonation height of about 1,900 feet (580 m) above the city.*[130]*[131]*[132] *Enola Gay* traveled 11.5 mi (18.5 km) before it felt the shock waves from the blast.*[133]

Due to crosswind, the bomb missed the aiming point, the Aioi Bridge, by approximately 800 ft (240 m) and detonated directly over Shima Surgical Clinic*[134] at 34°23'41"N 132°27'17"E / 34.39468°N 132.45462°E. It created a blast equivalent to 16 kilotons of TNT (67 TJ), ± 2 kt.*[131] The weapon was considered very inefficient, with only 1.7% of its material fissioning.*[135] The radius of total destruction was about 1 mile (1.6 km), with resulting fires across 4.4 square miles (11 km²).*[136]

People on the ground reported seeing a *pika* or brilliant flash of light followed by a *don*, a loud booming sound.*[137] Some 70,000–80,000 people, of whom 20,000 were Japanese soldiers and 20,000 Korean slave laborers, or around 30% of the population of Hiroshima, were killed by the blast and re-

sultant firestorm,*[138]*[139] and another 70,000 injured.*[140]

Enola Gay stayed over the target area for two minutes and was ten miles away when the bomb detonated. Only Tibbets, Parsons, and Ferebee knew of the nature of the weapon; the others on the bomber were only told to expect a blinding flash and given black goggles. “It was hard to believe what we saw”, Tibbets told reporters, while Parsons said “the whole thing was tremendous and awe-inspiring ... the men aboard with me gasped ‘My God’”. He and Tibbets compared the shockwave to “a close burst of ack-ack fire” .*[141]

11.3.3 Events on the ground

Some of the reinforced concrete buildings in Hiroshima had been very strongly constructed because of the earthquake danger in Japan, and their framework did not collapse even though they were fairly close to the blast center. Since the bomb detonated in the air, the blast was directed more downward than sideways, which was largely responsible for the survival of the *Prefectural Industrial Promotional Hall*, now commonly known as the *Genbaku* (A-bomb) dome. This building was designed and built by the Czech architect Jan Letzel, and was only 150 m (490 ft) from ground zero. The ruin was named *Hiroshima Peace Memorial* and was made a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1996 over the objections of the United States and China, which expressed reservations on the grounds that other Asian nations were the ones who suffered the greatest loss of life and property, and a focus on Japan lacked historical perspective.*[142]

The Americans estimated that 4.7 square miles (12 km²) of the city were destroyed. Japanese officials determined that 69% of Hiroshima's buildings were destroyed and another 6–7% damaged.*[143] The bombing started fires that spread rapidly through timber and paper homes. As in other Japanese cities, the firebreaks proved ineffective.*[144]

Eizō Nomura was the closest known survivor, who was in the basement of a reinforced concrete building (it remained as the *Rest House* after the war) only 170 metres (560 ft) from ground zero (the hypocenter) at the time of the attack.*[145]*[146] He lived into his 80s.*[147]*[148] Akiko Takakura was among the closest survivors to the hypocenter of the blast. She had been in the solidly built Bank of Hiroshima only 300 meters (980 ft) from ground-zero at the time of the attack.*[149]

Over 90% of the doctors and 93% of the nurses in Hiroshima were killed or injured—most had been in the downtown area which received the greatest damage.*[150] The hospitals were destroyed or heavily damaged. Only one doctor, Terufumi Sasaki, remained on duty at the Red Cross Hospital.*[144] Nonetheless, by early afternoon, the police and volunteers had established evacuation centres at hospitals, schools and tram stations,

and a morgue was established in the Asano library.*[151]

Most elements of the Japanese Second General Army headquarters were at physical training on the grounds of Hiroshima Castle, barely 900 yards (820 m) from the hypocenter. The attack killed 3,243 troops on the parade ground.*[152] The communications room of Chugoku Military District Headquarters that was responsible for issuing and lifting air raid warnings was in a semi-basement in the castle. Yoshie Oka, a Hijiyama Girls High School student who had been mobilized to serve as a communications officer had just sent a message that the alarm had been issued for Hiroshima and Yamaguchi when the bomb exploded. She used a special phone to inform Fukuyama Headquarters that “Hiroshima has been attacked by a new type of bomb. The city is in a state of near-total destruction.”*[153]

Since Mayor Senkichi Awaya had been killed while eating breakfast with his son and granddaughter at the mayoral residence, Field Marshal Hata, who was only slightly wounded, took over the administration of the city, and co-ordinated relief efforts. Many of his staff had been killed or fatally wounded, including a Korean prince of the Joseon Dynasty, Yi Wu, who was serving as a lieutenant colonel in the Japanese Army.*[154]*[155] Hata's senior surviving staff officer was the wounded Colonel Kumao Imoto, who acted as his chief of staff. Soldiers from the undamaged Hiroshima Ujina Harbor used suicide boats, intended to repel the American invasion, to collect the wounded and take them down the rivers to the military hospital at Ujina.*[156] Trucks and trains brought in relief supplies and evacuated survivors from the city.*[157]

Twelve American airmen were imprisoned at the Chugoku Military Police Headquarters located about 1,300 feet (400 m) from the hypocenter of the blast.*[158] Most died instantly, although two were reported to have been executed by their captors, and two prisoners badly injured by the bombing were left next to the Aioi Bridge by the *Kempei Tai*, where they were stoned to death.*[159] Later reports indicated that 8 US prisoners of war held in Hiroshima Castle and executed as part of a medical experiments program prior to the bombing were reported by Japanese authorities as having been killed in the atomic blast.*[160]

11.3.4 Japanese realization of the bombing

The Tokyo control operator of the Japan Broadcasting Corporation noticed that the Hiroshima station had gone off the air. He tried to re-establish his program by using another telephone line, but it too had failed.*[161] About 20 minutes later the Tokyo railroad telegraph center realized that the main line telegraph had stopped working just north of Hiroshima. From some small railway stops within 16 km (10 mi) of the city came unofficial and confused reports of a terrible explosion in Hiroshima. All

these reports were transmitted to the headquarters of the Imperial Japanese Army General Staff.*[162]

Military bases repeatedly tried to call the Army Control Station in Hiroshima. The complete silence from that city puzzled the General Staff; they knew that no large enemy raid had occurred and that no sizable store of explosives was in Hiroshima at that time. A young officer was instructed to fly immediately to Hiroshima, to land, survey the damage, and return to Tokyo with reliable information for the staff. It was felt that nothing serious had taken place and that the explosion was just a rumor.*[162]

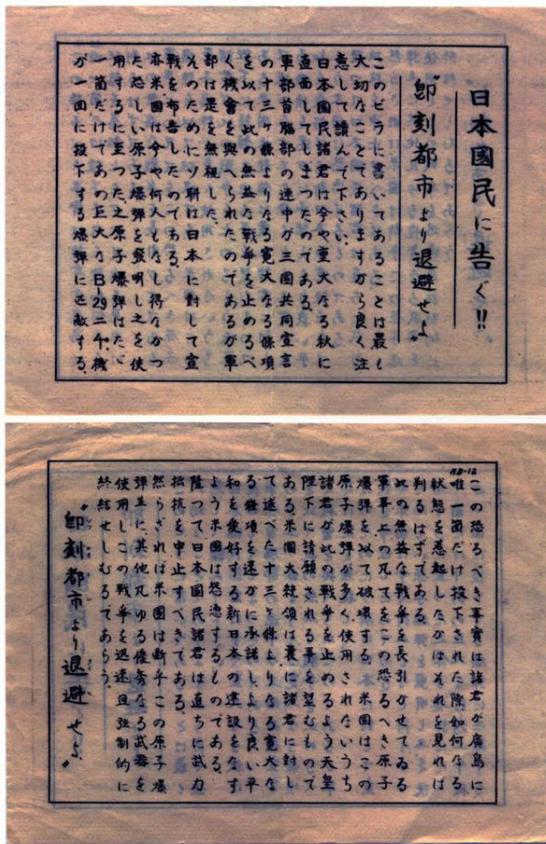
The staff officer went to the airport and took off for the southwest. After flying for about three hours, while still nearly 160 km (100 mi) from Hiroshima, he and his pilot saw a great cloud of smoke from the bomb. After circling the city in order to survey the damage they landed south of the city, where the staff officer, after reporting to Tokyo, began to organize relief measures. Tokyo's first indication that the city had been destroyed by a new type of bomb came from President Truman's announcement of the strike, sixteen hours later.*[162]

11.4 Events of August 7–9

After the Hiroshima bombing, Truman issued a statement announcing the use of the new weapon. He stated, “We may be grateful to Providence” that the German atomic bomb project had failed, and that the United States and its allies had “spent two billion dollars on the greatest scientific gamble in history—and won”. Truman then warned Japan: “If they do not now accept our terms, they may expect a rain of ruin from the air, the like of which has never been seen on this earth. Behind this air attack will follow sea and land forces in such numbers and power as they have not yet seen and with the fighting skill of which they are already well aware.”*[165]

The Japanese government did not react. Emperor Hirohito, the government, and the war council considered four conditions for surrender: the preservation of the *kokutai* (Imperial institution and national polity), assumption by the Imperial Headquarters of responsibility for disarmament and demobilization, no occupation of the Japanese Home Islands, Korea, or Formosa, and delegation of the punishment of war criminals to the Japanese government.*[166]

Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov informed Tokyo of the Soviet Union's unilateral abrogation of the Soviet–Japanese Neutrality Pact on August 5. At two minutes past midnight on August 9, Tokyo time, Soviet infantry, armor, and air forces had launched the Manchurian Strategic Offensive Operation.*[167] Four hours later, word reached Tokyo of the Soviet Union's official declaration of war. The senior leadership of the Japanese Army began preparations to impose martial law on the nation, with the support of Minister of War



Leaflet AB12, [163] with information on the Hiroshima bomb and a warning to civilians to petition the Emperor to surrender was dropped over Japan beginning on August 9, [163] by the 509th Composite Group on the bombing mission. Although it is not identified by them, an AB11 is in the possession of the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum. [164]

Korechika Anami, in order to stop anyone attempting to make peace. [168]

On August 7, a day after Hiroshima was destroyed, Dr. Yoshio Nishina and other atomic physicists arrived at the city, and carefully examined the damage. They then went back to Tokyo and told the cabinet that Hiroshima was indeed destroyed by an atomic bomb. Admiral Soemu Toyoda, the Chief of the Naval General Staff, estimated that no more than one or two additional bombs could be readied, so they decided to endure the remaining attacks, acknowledging “there would be more destruction but the war would go on”. [169] American Magic codebreakers intercepted the cabinet’s messages. [170]

Purnell, Parsons, Tibbets, Spaatz, and LeMay met on Guam that same day to discuss what should be done next. [171] Since there was no indication of Japan surrendering, [170] they decided to proceed with dropping another bomb. Parsons said that Project Alberta would have it ready by August 11, but Tibbets pointed to weather reports indicating poor flying conditions on that day due to a storm, and asked if the bomb could be readied by August 9. Parsons agreed to try to do

so. [172] [171]

11.5 Nagasaki

I realize the tragic significance of the atomic bomb ... It is an awful responsibility which has come to us ... We thank God that it has come to us, instead of to our enemies; and we pray that He may guide us to use it in His ways and for His purposes.

—President Harry S. Truman, August 9, 1945 [173]

11.5.1 Nagasaki during World War II



The Bockscar and its crew, who dropped the Fat Man atomic bomb on Nagasaki

The city of Nagasaki had been one of the largest seaports in southern Japan, and was of great wartime importance because of its wide-ranging industrial activity, including the production of ordnance, ships, military equipment, and other war materials. The four largest companies in the city were Mitsubishi Shipyards, Electrical Shipyards, Arms Plant, and Steel and Arms Works, which employed about 90% of the city's labor force, and accounted for 90% of the city's industry. [174] Although an important industrial city, Nagasaki had been spared from firebombing because its geography made it difficult to locate at night with AN/APQ-13 radar. [113]

Unlike the other target cities, Nagasaki had not been placed off limits to bombers by the Joint Chiefs of Staff's July 3 directive, [113] [175] and was bombed on a small scale five times. During one of these raids on August 1, a number of conventional high-explosive bombs were dropped on the city. A few hit the shipyards and dock areas in the southwest portion of the city, and several hit the Mitsubishi Steel and Arms Works. [174] By early August, the city was defended by the 134th Anti-Aircraft

Regiment of the 4th Anti-Aircraft Division with four batteries of 7 cm (2.8 in) anti-aircraft guns and two searchlight batteries.*[109]

In contrast to Hiroshima, almost all of the buildings were of old-fashioned Japanese construction, consisting of timber or timber-framed buildings with timber walls (with or without plaster) and tile roofs. Many of the smaller industries and business establishments were also situated in buildings of timber or other materials not designed to withstand explosions. Nagasaki had been permitted to grow for many years without conforming to any definite city zoning plan; residences were erected adjacent to factory buildings and to each other almost as closely as possible throughout the entire industrial valley. On the day of the bombing, an estimated 263,000 people were in Nagasaki, including 240,000 Japanese residents, 10,000 Korean residents, 2,500 conscripted Korean workers, 9,000 Japanese soldiers, 600 conscripted Chinese workers, and 400 Allied prisoners of war in a camp to the north of Nagasaki.*[176]*[177]

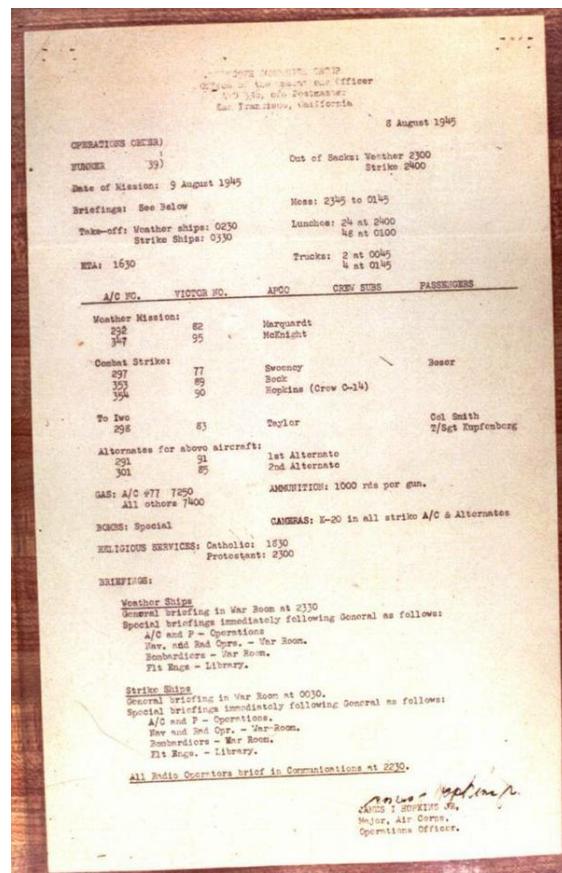
11.5.2 Bombing of Nagasaki

Responsibility for the timing of the second bombing was delegated to Tibbets. Scheduled for August 11 against Kokura, the raid was moved earlier by two days to avoid a five-day period of bad weather forecast to begin on August 10.*[178] Three bomb pre-assemblies had been transported to Tinian, labeled F-31, F-32, and F-33 on their exteriors. On August 8, a dress rehearsal was conducted off Tinian by Sweeney using *Bockscar* as the drop airplane. Assembly F-33 was expended testing the components and F-31 was designated for the August 9 mission.*[179]

At 03:49 on the morning of August 9, 1945, *Bockscar*, flown by Sweeney's crew, carried Fat Man, with Kokura as the primary target and Nagasaki the secondary target. The mission plan for the second attack was nearly identical to that of the Hiroshima mission, with two B-29s flying an hour ahead as weather scouts and two additional B-29s in Sweeney's flight for instrumentation and photographic support of the mission. Sweeney took off with his weapon already armed but with the electrical safety plugs still engaged.*[181]

During pre-flight inspection of *Bockscar*, the flight engineer notified Sweeney that an inoperative fuel transfer pump made it impossible to use 640 US gallons (2,400 l; 530 imp gal) of fuel carried in a reserve tank. This fuel would still have to be carried all the way to Japan and back, consuming still more fuel. Replacing the pump would take hours; moving the Fat Man to another aircraft might take just as long and was dangerous as well, as the bomb was live. Tibbets and Sweeney therefore elected to have *Bockscar* continue the mission.*[182]*[183]

This time Penney and Cheshire were allowed to accompany the mission, flying as observers on the third plane,



Strike order for the Nagasaki bombing as posted August 8, 1945

Big Stink, flown by the group's operations officer, Major James I. Hopkins, Jr. Observers aboard the weather planes reported both targets clear. When Sweeney's aircraft arrived at the assembly point for his flight off the coast of Japan, *Big Stink* failed to make the rendezvous.*[181] According to Cheshire, Hopkins was at varying heights including 9,000 feet (2,700 m) higher than he should have been, and was not flying tight circles over Yakushima as previously agreed with Sweeney and Captain Frederick C. Bock, who was piloting the support B-29 *The Great Artiste*. Instead, Hopkins was flying 40-mile (64 km) dogleg patterns.*[184] Though ordered not to circle longer than fifteen minutes, Sweeney continued to wait for *Big Stink*, at the urging of Ashworth, the plane's weaponeer, who was in command of the mission.*[185]

After exceeding the original departure time limit by a half-hour, *Bockscar*, accompanied by *The Great Artiste*, proceeded to Kokura, thirty minutes away. The delay at the rendezvous had resulted in clouds and drifting smoke over Kokura from fires started by a major firebombing raid by 224 B-29s on nearby Yahata the previous day. Additionally, the Yawata Steel Works intentionally burned coal tar, to produce black smoke.*[186] The clouds and smoke resulted in 70% of the area over Kokura being covered, obscuring the aiming point. Three bomb runs were made over the next 50 minutes, burning fuel and exposing the aircraft repeatedly to the heavy defenses of Yawata,



Atomic cloud over Nagasaki

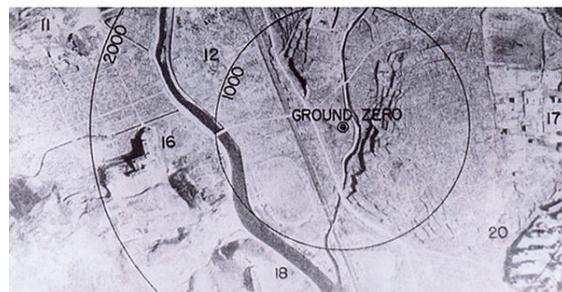
but the bombardier was unable to drop visually. By the time of the third bomb run, Japanese antiaircraft fire was getting close, and Second Lieutenant Jacob Beser, who was monitoring Japanese communications, reported activity on the Japanese fighter direction radio bands.*[187]

After three runs over the city, and with fuel running low because of the failed fuel pump, they headed for their secondary target, Nagasaki.*[181] Fuel consumption calculations made en route indicated that *Bockscar* had insufficient fuel to reach Iwo Jima and would be forced to divert to Okinawa, which had become entirely Allied-occupied territory only six weeks earlier. After initially deciding that if Nagasaki were obscured on their arrival the crew would carry the bomb to Okinawa and dispose of it in the ocean if necessary, Ashworth ruled that a radar approach would be used if the target was obscured.*[188]

At about 07:50 Japanese time, an air raid alert was sounded in Nagasaki, but the “all clear” signal was given at 08:30. When only two B-29 Superfortresses were sighted at 10:53, the Japanese apparently assumed that the planes were only on reconnaissance and no further alarm was given.*[189]

A few minutes later at 11:00, *The Great Artiste* dropped instruments attached to three parachutes. These instruments also contained an unsigned letter to Professor Ryōichi Sagane, a physicist at the University of Tokyo who studied with three of the scientists responsible for the atomic bomb at the University of California, Berkeley, urging him to tell the public about the danger involved with these weapons of mass destruction. The messages were found by military authorities but not turned over to Sagane until a month later.*[190] In 1949, one of the authors of the letter, Luis Alvarez, met with Sagane and signed the document.*[191]

At 11:01, a last-minute break in the clouds over Nagasaki allowed *Bockscar*'s bombardier, Captain Kermit Beahan, to visually sight the target as ordered. The Fat Man weapon, containing a core of about 6.4 kg (14 lb) of plutonium, was dropped over the city's industrial valley at



Nagasaki before and after bombing

32°46'25"N 129°51'48"E / 32.77372°N 129.86325°E. It exploded 47 seconds later at $1,650 \pm 33$ ft (503 ± 10 m), above a tennis court* [192] halfway between the Mitsubishi Steel and Arms Works in the south and the Nagasaki Arsenal in the north. This was nearly 3 km (1.9 mi) northwest of the planned hypocenter; the blast was confined to the Urakami Valley and a major portion of the city was protected by the intervening hills.* [193] The resulting explosion had a blast yield equivalent to 21 ± 2 kt (87.9 ± 8.4 TJ).* [131] The explosion generated temperatures inside the fireball estimated at 3,900 °C (7,050 °F) and winds that were estimated at over 1,000 km/h (620 mph).* [194]* [195]

Big Stink spotted the explosion from a hundred miles away, and flew over to observe.* [196] Because of the delays in the mission and the inoperative fuel transfer pump, *Bockscar* did not have sufficient fuel to reach the emergency landing field at Iwo Jima, so Sweeney and Bock flew to Okinawa. Arriving there, Sweeney circled for 20 minutes trying to contact the control tower for landing clearance, finally concluding that his radio was faulty. Critically low on fuel, *Bockscar* barely made it to the runway on Okinawa's Yontan Airfield. With enough fuel for only one landing attempt, Sweeney and Albury brought *Bockscar* in at 150 miles per hour (240 km/h) instead of the normal 120 miles per hour (190 km/h), firing distress flares to alert the field of the uncleared landing. The number two engine died from fuel starvation as *Bockscar* began its final approach. Touching the runway hard, the heavy B-29 slewed left and towards a row of parked B-24 bombers before the pilots managed to regain control. The B-29's reversible propellers were insufficient to slow the aircraft adequately, and with both pilots standing on the brakes, *Bockscar* made a swerving 90-degree turn at the end of the runway to avoid running off the runway. A

second engine died from fuel exhaustion by the time the plane came to a stop. The flight engineer later measured fuel in the tanks and concluded that less than five minutes total remained.*[197]

Following the mission, there was confusion over the identification of the plane. The first eyewitness account by war correspondent William L. Laurence of *The New York Times*, who accompanied the mission aboard the aircraft piloted by Bock, reported that Sweeney was leading the mission in *The Great Artiste*. He also noted its “Victor” number as 77, which was that of *Bockscar*, writing that several personnel commented that 77 was also the jersey number of the football player Red Grange.*[198] Laurence had interviewed Sweeney and his crew, and was aware that they referred to their airplane as *The Great Artiste*. Except for *Enola Gay*, none of the 393d's B-29s had yet had names painted on the noses, a fact which Laurence himself noted in his account. Unaware of the switch in aircraft, Laurence assumed Victor 77 was *The Great Artiste*,*[199] which was in fact, Victor 89.*[200]

11.5.3 Events on the ground



A photograph of Sumiteru Taniguchi's back injuries taken in January 1946 by a U.S. Marine photographer

Although the bomb was more powerful than the one used on Hiroshima, the effect was confined by hillsides to the narrow Urakami Valley.*[201] Of 7,500 Japanese employees who worked inside the Mitsubishi Munitions plant, including mobilized students and regular workers, 6,200 were killed. Some 17,000–22,000 others who worked in other war plants and factories in the city died as well.*[202] Casualty estimates for immediate deaths vary widely, ranging from 22,000 to 75,000.*[202] At least 35,000–40,000 people were killed and 60,000 others injured.*[203]*[204]*[205]*[206] In the days and months following the explosion, more people died from bomb effects. Because of the presence of undocumented foreign workers, and a number of military personnel in transit, there are great discrepancies in the estimates of total deaths by the end of 1945; a range of 39,000 to 80,000 can be found in various studies.*[115]*[206]

Unlike Hiroshima's military death toll, only 150 Japanese soldiers were killed instantly, including thirty-six from

the 134th AAA Regiment of the 4th AAA Division.*[109]*[207] At least eight known POWs died from the bombing and as many as 13 may have died, including a British citizen, Royal Air Force Corporal Ronald Shaw,*[208] and seven Dutch POWs.*[209] One American POW, Joe Kieyoomia, was in Nagasaki at the time of the bombing but survived, reportedly having been shielded from the effects of the bomb by the concrete walls of his cell.*[210] There were 24 Australian POWs in Nagasaki, all of whom survived.*[211]

The radius of total destruction was about 1 mi (1.6 km), followed by fires across the northern portion of the city to 2 mi (3.2 km) south of the bomb.*[136]*[212] About 58% of the Mitsubishi Arms Plant was damaged, and about 78% of the Mitsubishi Steel Works. The Mitsubishi Electric Works suffered only 10% structural damage as it was on the border of the main destruction zone. The Nagasaki Arsenal was destroyed in the blast.*[213]

11.6 Plans for more atomic attacks on Japan



A Japanese report on the bombing characterized Nagasaki as “like a graveyard with not a tombstone standing”

Groves expected to have another atomic bomb ready for use on August 19, with three more in September and a further three in October.*[86] On August 10, he sent a memorandum to Marshall in which he wrote that “the next bomb ... should be ready for delivery on the first suitable weather after 17 or 18 August.” On the same day, Marshall endorsed the memo with the comment, “It is not to be released over Japan without express authority from the President.”*[86] Truman had secretly requested this on August 10. This modified the previous order that the target cities were to be attacked with atomic bombs “as made ready”.*[214]

There was already discussion in the War Department about conserving the bombs then in production for Operation Downfall. “The problem now [August 13] is

whether or not, assuming the Japanese do not capitulate, to continue dropping them every time one is made and shipped out there or whether to hold them ... and then pour them all on in a reasonably short time. Not all in one day, but over a short period. And that also takes into consideration the target that we are after. In other words, should we not concentrate on targets that will be of the greatest assistance to an invasion rather than industry, morale, psychology, and the like? Nearer the tactical use rather than other use.” *[86]

Two more Fat Man assemblies were readied, and scheduled to leave Kirtland Field for Tinian on August 11 and August 14,*[215] and Tibbets was ordered by LeMay to return to Albuquerque, New Mexico, to collect them.*[216] At Los Alamos, technicians worked 24 hours straight to cast another plutonium core.*[217] Although cast, it still needed to be pressed and coated, which would take until August 16.*[218] Therefore, it could have been ready for use on August 19. However, unable to reach Marshall, Groves ordered on his own authority on August 13 that the core should not be shipped.*[214]

11.7 Surrender of Japan and subsequent occupation

Main articles: Surrender of Japan and Occupation of Japan

Until August 9, Japan's war council still insisted on its four conditions for surrender. On that day Hirohito ordered Kōichi Kido to “quickly control the situation ... because the Soviet Union has declared war against us.” He then held an Imperial conference during which he authorized minister Shigenori Tōgō to notify the Allies that Japan would accept their terms on one condition, that the declaration “does not comprise any demand which prejudices the prerogatives of His Majesty as a Sovereign ruler.” *[219]

On August 12, the Emperor informed the imperial family of his decision to surrender. One of his uncles, Prince Asaka, then asked whether the war would be continued if the *kokutai* could not be preserved. Hirohito simply replied, “Of course.” *[220] As the Allied terms seemed to leave intact the principle of the preservation of the Throne, Hirohito recorded on August 14 his *capitulation announcement* which was broadcast to the Japanese nation the next day despite a short *rebellion* by militarists opposed to the surrender.*[221]

In his declaration, Hirohito referred to the atomic bombings:

Moreover, the enemy now possesses a new and terrible weapon with the power to destroy many innocent lives and do incalculable damage. Should we continue to fight, not only

would it result in an ultimate collapse and obliteration of the Japanese nation, but also it would lead to the total extinction of human civilization.

Such being the case, how are We to save the millions of Our subjects, or to atone Ourselves before the hallowed spirits of Our Imperial Ancestors? This is the reason why We have ordered the acceptance of the provisions of the Joint Declaration of the Powers.*[222]

In his “Rescript to the Soldiers and Sailors” delivered on August 17, he stressed the impact of the Soviet invasion on his decision to surrender, omitting any mention of the bombs.*[223] Hirohito met with General MacArthur on September 27, saying to him that “[t]he peace party did not prevail until the bombing of Hiroshima created a situation which could be dramatized”. Furthermore, the “Rescript to the Soldiers and Sailors” speech he told MacArthur about was just personal, not political, and never stated that the Soviet intervention in Manchuria was the main reason for surrender. In fact, a day after the bombing of Nagasaki and the Soviet invasion of Manchuria, Hirohito ordered his advisers, primarily Chief Cabinet Secretary Hisatsune Sakomizu, Kawada Mizuho, and Masahiro Yasuoka, to write up a surrender speech. In Hirohito's speech, days before announcing it on radio on August 15, he gave three major reasons for surrender: Tokyo's defenses would not be complete before the American invasion of Japan, Ise Shrine would be lost to the Americans, and atomic weapons deployed by the Americans would lead to the death of the entire Japanese race. Despite the Soviet intervention, Hirohito did not mention the Soviets as the main factor for surrender.*[224]

11.8 Depiction, public response, and censorship

During the war “annihilationist and exterminationist rhetoric” was tolerated at all levels of U.S. society; according to the British embassy in Washington the Americans regarded the Japanese as “a nameless mass of vermin”.*[225] Caricatures depicting Japanese as less than human, e.g. monkeys, were common.*[225] A 1944 opinion poll that asked what should be done with Japan found that 13% of the U.S. public were in favor of “killing off” all Japanese men, women, and children.*[226]*[227]

After the Hiroshima bomb detonated successfully, Robert Oppenheimer addressed an assembly at Los Alamos “clasping his hands together like a prize-winning boxer”.*[228] The bombing amazed Otto Hahn and other German atomic scientists the British held at Farm Hall in Operation Epsilon. Hahn stated that he had not believed an atomic weapon “would be possible for another twenty



Life among the rubble in Hiroshima in March and April 1946.
Film footage taken by Lieutenant Daniel A. McGovern (director) and Harry Mimura (cameraman) for a *United States Strategic Bombing Survey* project.

years"; Werner Heisenberg did not believe the news at first. Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker said "I think it's dreadful of the Americans to have done it. I think it is madness on their part", but Heisenberg replied, "One could equally well say 'That's the quickest way of ending the war'". Hahn was grateful that the German project had not succeeded in developing "such an inhumane weapon"; Karl Wirtz observed that even if it had, "we would have obliterated London but would still not have conquered the world, and then they would have dropped them on us".*[229]

Hahn told the others, "Once I wanted to suggest that all uranium should be sunk to the bottom of the ocean".*[229] The Vatican agreed; *L'Osservatore Romano* expressed regret that the bomb's inventors did not destroy the weapon for the benefit of humanity.*[230] Rev. Cuthbert Thicknesse, the Dean of St Albans, prohibited using St Albans Abbey for a thanksgiving service for the war's end, calling the use of atomic weapons "an act of wholesale, indiscriminate massacre".*[231] Nonetheless, news of the atomic bombing was greeted enthusiastically in the U.S.; a poll in *Fortune* magazine in late 1945 showed a significant minority of Americans (22.7%) wishing that more atomic bombs could have been dropped on Japan.*[232]*[233] The initial positive response was supported by the imagery presented to the public (mainly the powerful images of the mushroom cloud) and the censorship of photographs that showed corpses and maimed survivors.*[232]

Wilfred Burchett was the first journalist to visit Hiroshima after the atom bomb was dropped, arriving alone by train from Tokyo on September 2, the day of the formal surrender aboard the *USS Missouri*. His Morse code dispatch was printed by the *Daily Express* newspaper in London on September 5, 1945, entitled "The Atomic Plague", the first public report to mention the effects of radiation and nuclear fallout.*[234] Burchett's reporting was unpopular with the U.S. military. The

U.S. censors suppressed a supporting story submitted by George Weller of the *Chicago Daily News*, and accused Burchett of being under the sway of Japanese propaganda. Laurence dismissed the reports on radiation sickness as Japanese efforts to undermine American morale, ignoring his own account of Hiroshima's radiation sickness published one week earlier.*[235]



The Hiroshima ruins in March and April 1946, by Daniel A. McGovern and Harry Mimura

A member of the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey, Lieutenant Daniel McGovern, used a film crew to document the results in early 1946.*[236] The film crew's work resulted in a three-hour documentary entitled *The Effects of the Atomic Bombs Against Hiroshima and Nagasaki*. The documentary included images from hospitals showing the human effects of the bomb; it showed burned out buildings and cars, and rows of skulls and bones on the ground. It was classified "secret" for the next 22 years.*[237] During this time in America, it was a common practice for editors to keep graphic images of death out of films, magazines, and newspapers.*[238] The total of 90,000 ft (27,000 m) of film shot by McGovern's cameramen had not been fully aired as of 2009. According to Greg Mitchell, with the 2004 documentary film *Original Child Bomb*, a small part of that footage managed to reach part of the American public "in the unflinching and powerful form its creators intended".*[236]

Motion picture company Nippon Eigasha started sending cameramen to Nagasaki and Hiroshima in September 1945. On October 24, 1945, a U.S. military policeman stopped a Nippon Eigasha cameraman from continuing to film in Nagasaki. All Nippon Eigasha's reels were then confiscated by the American authorities. These reels were in turn requested by the Japanese government, declassified, and saved from oblivion. Some black-and-white motion pictures were released and shown for the first time to Japanese and American audiences in the years from 1968 to 1970.*[236] The public release of film footage of the city post attack, and some research about the human effects of the attack, was restricted during the occupation of Japan, and much of this information was censored until the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1951,

restoring control to the Japanese.*[239]

Only the most sensitive and detailed weapons effects information was censored during this period. There was no censorship of the factually written accounts. For example, the book *Hiroshima* written by Pulitzer Prize winner John Hersey, which was originally published in article form in the popular magazine *The New Yorker*,*[240] on August 31, 1946, is reported to have reached Tokyo in English by January 1947, and the translated version was released in Japan in 1949.*[241]*[242]*[243] The book narrates the stories of the lives of six bomb survivors from immediately prior, to months after, the dropping of the Little Boy bomb.*[240]

11.9 Post-attack casualties



Film footage taken in Hiroshima in March 1946 showing victims with severe burns

In the spring of 1948, the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission (ABCC) was established in accordance with a presidential directive from Truman to the National Academy of Sciences – National Research Council to conduct investigations of the late effects of radiation among the survivors in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.*[244] One of the early studies conducted by the ABCC was on the outcome of pregnancies occurring in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and in a control city, Kure, located 18 mi (29 km) south of Hiroshima, in order to discern the conditions and outcomes related to radiation exposure.*[245] Dr. James V. Neel led the study which found that the number of birth defects was not significantly higher among the children of survivors who were pregnant at the time of the bombings.*[246] The National Academy of Sciences questioned Neel's procedure which did not filter the Kure population for possible radiation exposure.*[247] Among the observed birth defects there was a higher incidence of brain malformation in Nagasaki and Hiroshima, including microencephaly and anencephaly, about 2.75 times the rate seen in Kure.*[248]*[249]

In 1985, Johns Hopkins University human geneticist James F. Crow examined Neel's research and confirmed

that the number of birth defects was not significantly higher in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.*[250] Many members of the ABCC and its successor Radiation Effects Research Foundation (RERF) were still looking for possible birth defects or other causes among the survivors decades later, but found no evidence that they were common among the survivors.*[251]*[252] Despite the insignificance of birth defects found in Neel's study, historian Ronald E. Powaski wrote that Hiroshima experienced “an increase in stillbirths, birth defects, and infant mortality” following the atomic bomb.*[253] Neel also studied the longevity of the children who survived the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, reporting that between 90 and 95 percent were still living 50 years later.*[251]

Around 1,900 cancer deaths can be attributed to the after-effects of the bombs. An epidemiology study by the RERF states that from 1950 to 2000, 46% of leukemia deaths and 11% of solid cancer deaths among the bomb survivors were due to radiation from the bombs, the statistical excess being estimated at 200 leukemia and 1,700 solid cancers.*[254]

11.10 Hibakusha

Main article: [Hibakusha](#)

See also: [Hibakujumoku](#)



view of the monument marking the hypocenter, or ground zero, of the atomic bomb explosion over Nagasaki

The victims of the bombings are called *hibakusha* (被爆者, Japanese pronunciation: [çibaku^βç̃a]), a Japanese word that literally translates to “explosion-affected people”. The Japanese government has recognized about 650,000 people as *hibakusha*. As of March 31, 2016, 174,080 are still alive, mostly in Japan.*[255] The government of Japan recognizes about 1% of these as having illnesses caused by radiation.*[256] The memorials in Hiroshima and Nagasaki contain lists of the names of the *hibakusha* who are known to have died since

bombings. Updated annually on the anniversaries of the bombings, as of August 2016 the memorials record the names of more than 475,000 *hibakusha*; 303,195 in Hiroshima* [257] and 172,230 in Nagasaki.* [258]

Hibakusha and their children were (and still are) victims of severe discrimination in Japan due to public ignorance about the consequences of radiation sickness, with much of the public believing it to be hereditary or even contagious.* [259] This is despite the fact that no statistically demonstrable increase of birth defects or congenital malformations was found among the later conceived children born to survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.* [260] A study of the long-term psychological effects of the bombings on the survivors found that even 17–20 years after the bombings had occurred survivors showed a higher prevalence of anxiety and somatization symptoms.* [261]

11.10.1 Double survivors

On March 24, 2009, the Japanese government officially recognized Tsutomu Yamaguchi as a double *hibakusha*. He was confirmed to be 3 km (1.9 mi) from ground zero in Hiroshima on a business trip when Little Boy was detonated. He was seriously burnt on his left side and spent the night in Hiroshima. He arrived at his home city of Nagasaki on August 8, the day before Fat Man was dropped, and he was exposed to residual radiation while searching for his relatives. He was the first officially recognized survivor of both bombings.* [262] He died on January 4, 2010, at the age of 93, after a battle with stomach cancer.* [263]

The 2006 documentary *Twice Survived: The Doubly Atomic Bombed of Hiroshima and Nagasaki* documented 165 *nijū hibakusha* (lit. double explosion-affected people), and was screened at the United Nations.* [264]

11.10.2 Korean survivors

During the war, Japan brought as many as 670,000 Korean conscripts to Japan to work as forced labor.* [265] About 20,000 Koreans were killed in Hiroshima and another 2,000 died in Nagasaki. Perhaps one in seven of the Hiroshima victims were of Korean ancestry. For many years, Koreans had a difficult time fighting for recognition as atomic bomb victims and were denied health benefits. Most issues have been addressed in recent years through lawsuits.* [266]

11.11 Debate over bombings

Main article: Debate over the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

The role of the bombings in Japan's surrender and the U.S.'s ethical justification for them has been the subject



Citizens of Hiroshima walk by the Hiroshima Peace Memorial, the closest building to have survived the city's atomic bombing

of scholarly and popular debate for decades. J. Samuel Walker wrote in an April 2005 overview of recent historiography on the issue, “the controversy over the use of the bomb seems certain to continue.” He wrote that “The fundamental issue that has divided scholars over a period of nearly four decades is whether the use of the bomb was necessary to achieve victory in the war in the Pacific on terms satisfactory to the United States.”* [267]

Supporters of the bombings generally assert that they caused the Japanese surrender, preventing casualties on both sides during Operation Downfall. One figure of speech, “One hundred million [subjects of the Japanese Empire] will die for the Emperor and Nation”,* [268] served as a unifying slogan, although that phrase was intended as a figure of speech along the lines of the “ten thousand years” phrase.* [269] In Truman’s 1955 *Memories*, “he states that the atomic bomb probably saved half a million U.S. lives—anticipated casualties in an Allied invasion of Japan planned for November. Stimson subsequently talked of saving one million U.S. casualties, and Churchill of saving one million American and half that number of British lives.”* [270] Scholars have pointed out various alternatives that could have ended the war without an invasion, but these alternatives could have resulted in the deaths of many more Japanese.* [271] Supporters also point to an order given by the Japanese War Ministry on August 1, 1944, ordering the execution of Allied prisoners of war when the POW camp was in the combat zone.* [272]

Those who oppose the bombings cite a number of reasons for their view, among them: a belief that atomic bombing is fundamentally immoral, that the bombings counted as war crimes, that they were militarily unnecessary, that they constituted state terrorism,* [273] and that they involved racism against and the dehumanization of the Japanese people. Another popular view among critics of the bombings, originating with Gar Alperovitz in 1965 and becoming the default position in Japanese school history textbooks, is the idea of atomic diplomacy: that the United States used nuclear weapons in order to intimidate the Soviet Union in the early stages of the Cold

War.* [274] The bombings were part of an already fierce conventional bombing campaign. This, together with the sea blockade and the collapse of Germany (with its implications regarding redeployment), could also have led to a Japanese surrender. At the time the United States dropped its atomic bomb on Nagasaki on August 9, 1945, the Soviet Union launched a surprise attack with 1.6 million troops against the Kwantung Army in Manchuria. “The Soviet entry into the war”, argued Japanese historian Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, “played a much greater role than the atomic bombs in inducing Japan to surrender because it dashed any hope that Japan could terminate the war through Moscow's mediation”.*[275]

11.12 Notes

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- [3] Williams 1960, p. 532.
- [4] Williams 1960, p. 527.
- [5] Long 1963, pp. 48–49.
- [6] Coox 1969, pp. 2540–2544.
- [7] Giangreco 2009, pp. 32–34.
- [8] Giangreco 2009, pp. 125–130.
- [9] Giangreco 2009, pp. 169–171.
- [10] Giangreco 2009, pp. 45–48.
- [11] Giangreco 2009, p. 21.
- [12] Giangreco 2009, pp. 70–72.
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- [20] Schaffer 1985, pp. 164–165.
- [21] Craven & Cate 1953, p. 4.
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- [40] Craven & Cate 1953, pp. 614–617.
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- [44] Craven & Cate 1953, pp. 653–658.
- [45] Coox 1994, pp. 412–414.
- [46] Coox 1994, p. 422.
- [47] Zaloga & Noon 2010, p. 54.
- [48] Zaloga & Noon 2010, pp. 58–59.
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11.15 External links

Present day

- Are Nagasaki and Hiroshima still radioactive? – No. Includes explanation.

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- Video footage of the bombing of Nagasaki (silent)
on YouTube
- *The Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima & Nagasaki*
public domain audiobook at LibriVox

Archives

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Commemoration

- An Unrecognized Loss – Message From Hiroshima (film)
- Hiroshima National Peace Memorial Hall For The Atomic Bomb Victims
- Nagasaki National Peace Memorial Hall For The Atomic Bomb Victims
- Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum
- Hiroshima and Nagasaki: A Look Back at the US Atomic Bombing 64 Years Later – video by Democracy Now!
- Hiroshima & Nagasaki Remembered 2005 website commemorating 60th anniversary

Chapter 12

Surrender of Japan



Japanese foreign affairs minister Mamoru Shigemitsu signs the Japanese Instrument of Surrender on board USS Missouri as General Richard K. Sutherland watches, September 2, 1945



Representatives of the Empire of Japan stand aboard USS Missouri prior to signing of the Instrument of Surrender.

The **surrender of Japan** was announced by Imperial Japan on August 15 and formally signed on September 2, 1945, bringing the hostilities of World War II to a close. By the end of July 1945, the Imperial Japanese Navy was incapable of conducting major operations and an Allied invasion of Japan was imminent. Together with the United Kingdom and China, the United States called for the unconditional surrender of the Japanese armed

forces in the Potsdam Declaration on July 26, 1945—the alternative being “prompt and utter destruction”. While publicly stating their intent to fight on to the bitter end, Japan's leaders (the Supreme Council for the Direction of the War, also known as the “Big Six”) were privately making entreaties to the still-neutral Soviet Union to mediate peace on terms more favorable to the Japanese. Meanwhile, the Soviets were preparing to attack Japanese forces in Manchuria and Korea (in addition to southern Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands) in fulfillment of promises they had secretly made to the United States and the United Kingdom at the Tehran and Yalta Conferences.

On August 6, 1945, at 8:15 AM local time, the United States detonated an atomic bomb over the Japanese city of Hiroshima. Sixteen hours later, American President Harry S. Truman called again for Japan's surrender, warning them to “expect a rain of ruin from the air, the like of which has never been seen on this earth.” Late in the evening of August 8, 1945, in accordance with the Yalta agreements, but in violation of the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact, the Soviet Union declared war on Japan, and soon after midnight on August 9, 1945, the Soviet Union invaded the Imperial Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo. Later in the day, the United States dropped a second atomic bomb, this time on the Japanese city of Nagasaki. Following these events, Emperor Hirohito intervened and ordered the Supreme Council for the Direction of the War to accept the terms the Allies had set down in the Potsdam Declaration for ending the war. After several more days of behind-the-scenes negotiations and a failed coup d'état, Emperor Hirohito gave a recorded radio address across the Empire on August 15. In the radio address, called the Jewel Voice Broadcast (玉音放送 *Gyokuon-hōsō*), he announced the surrender of Japan to the Allies.

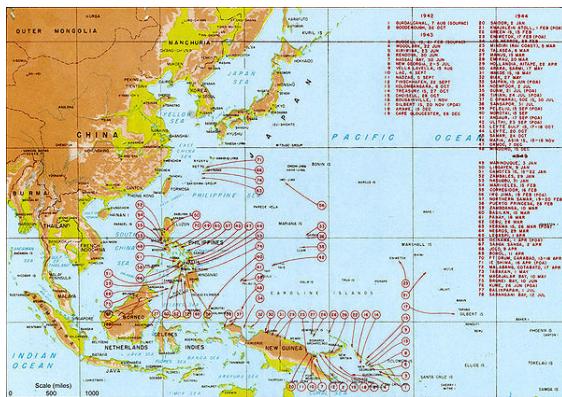
On August 28, the occupation of Japan by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers began. The surrender ceremony was held on September 2, aboard the United States Navy battleship *USS Missouri*, at which officials from the Japanese government signed the Japanese Instrument of Surrender, thereby ending the hostilities. Allied civilians and military personnel alike celebrated V-J Day, the end of the war; however, some isolated sol-

diers and personnel from Imperial Japan's far-flung forces throughout Asia and the Pacific islands refused to surrender for months and years afterwards, some even refusing into the 1970s. The role of the atomic bombings in Japan's unconditional surrender, and the ethics of the two attacks, is still debated. The state of war formally ended when the Treaty of San Francisco came into force on April 28, 1952. Four more years passed before Japan and the Soviet Union signed the Soviet–Japanese Joint Declaration of 1956, which formally brought an end to their state of war.

12.1 Impending defeat

Main article: Japan campaign

By 1945, the Japanese had suffered an unbroken string



*Allied landings in the Pacific Theatre of Operations, August 1942
to August 1945*

of defeats for nearly two years in the South West Pacific, the **Marianas campaign**, and the **Philippines campaign**. In July 1944, following the loss of Saipan, General Hideki Tōjō was replaced as prime minister by General Kuniaki Koiso, who declared that the **Philippines** would be the site of the decisive battle.* [1] After the Japanese loss of the Philippines, Koiso in turn was replaced by Admiral Kantarō Suzuki. The Allies captured the nearby islands of Iwo Jima and Okinawa in the first half of 1945. Okinawa was to be a staging area for **Operation Downfall**, the American invasion of the Japanese **Home Islands**.* [2] Following Germany's defeat, the Soviet Union quietly began redeploying its battle-hardened European forces to the Far East, in addition to about forty divisions that had been stationed there since 1941, as a counterbalance to the million-strong **Kwantung Army**.* [3]

The Allied submarine campaign and the mining of Japanese coastal waters had largely destroyed the Japanese merchant fleet. With few natural resources, Japan was dependent on raw materials, particularly oil, imported from Manchuria and other parts of the East Asian mainland, and from the conquered territory in the Dutch East Indies.* [4] The destruction of the Japanese

merchant fleet, combined with the strategic bombing of Japanese industry, had wrecked Japan's war economy. Production of coal, iron, steel, rubber, and other vital supplies was only a fraction of that before the war.* [5]*[6]



The rebuilt battlecruiser Haruna sank at her moorings in the naval base of Kure on July 24 during a series of bombings.

As a result of the losses it had suffered, the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) had ceased to be an effective fighting force. Following a series of raids on the Japanese shipyard at Kure, Japan, the only major warships in fighting order were six aircraft carriers, four cruisers, and one battleship, none of which could be fueled adequately. Although 19 destroyers and 38 submarines were still operational, their use was limited by the lack of fuel. [7] [8]

12.1.1 Defense preparations

Faced with the prospect of an invasion of the Home Islands, starting with Kyūshū, and the prospect of a Soviet invasion of Manchuria—Japan's last source of natural resources—the War Journal of the Imperial Headquarters concluded:

We can no longer direct the war with any hope of success. The only course left is for Japan's one hundred million people to sacrifice their lives by charging the enemy to make them lose the will to fight.* [9]

As a final attempt to stop the Allied advances, the Japanese Imperial High Command planned an all-out defense of Kyūshū codenamed Operation Ketsugō.* [10] This was to be a radical departure from the defense in

depth plans used in the invasions of Peleliu, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa. Instead, everything was staked on the beach-head; more than 3,000 kamikazes would be sent to attack the amphibious transports before troops and cargo were disembarked on the beach.*[8]

If this did not drive the Allies away, they planned to send another 3,500 kamikazes along with 5,000 *Shin'yō* suicide boats and the remaining destroyers and submarines—"the last of the Navy's operating fleet"—to the beach. If the Allies had fought through this and successfully landed on Kyūshū, only 3,000 planes would have been left to defend the remaining islands, although Kyūshū would be "defended to the last" regardless.*[8] The strategy of making a last stand at Kyūshū was based on the assumption of continued Soviet neutrality.*[11]

A set of caves were excavated near Nagano on Honshu, the largest of the Japanese islands. In the event of invasion, these caves, the Matsushiro Underground Imperial Headquarters, were to be used by the army to direct the war and to house the Emperor and his family.*[12]

12.2 Supreme Council for the Direction of the War

Japanese policy-making centered on the Supreme Council for the Direction of the War (created in 1944 by earlier Prime Minister Kuniaki Koiso), the so-called "Big Six"—the Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of the Army, Minister of the Navy, Chief of the Army General Staff, and Chief of the Navy General Staff.*[13] At the formation of the Suzuki government in April 1945, the council's membership consisted of:



The Suzuki cabinet in June 1945

- Prime Minister: Admiral Kantarō Suzuki
- Minister of Foreign Affairs: Shigenori Tōgō
- Minister of the Army: General Korechika Anami
- Minister of the Navy: Admiral Mitsumasa Yonai
- Chief of the Army General Staff: General Yoshijirō Umezu

- Chief of the Navy General Staff: Admiral Koshirō Oikawa (later replaced by Admiral Soemu Toyoda)

All of these positions were nominally appointed by the Emperor and their holders were answerable directly to him. Nevertheless, from 1936 the Japanese Army and Navy held, effectively, a legal right to nominate (or refuse to nominate) their respective ministers. Thus, they could prevent the formation of undesirable governments, or by resignation bring about the collapse of an existing government.*[14]*[15]

Emperor Hirohito and Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal Kōichi Kido also were present at some meetings, following the Emperor's wishes.*[16] As Iris Chang reports, "the Japanese deliberately destroyed, hid or falsified most of their secret wartime documents." * [17]*[18]

12.3 Divisions within the Japanese leadership

For the most part, Suzuki's military-dominated cabinet favored continuing the war. For the Japanese, surrender was unthinkable—Japan had never been invaded or lost a war in its history.*[19] Only Mitsumasa Yonai, the Navy minister, was known to desire an early end to the war.*[20] According to historian Richard B. Frank:

Although Suzuki might indeed have seen peace as a distant goal, he had no design to achieve it within any immediate time span or on terms acceptable to the Allies. His own comments at the conference of senior statesmen gave no hint that he favored any early cessation of the war ... Suzuki's selections for the most critical cabinet posts were, with one exception, not advocates of peace either.*[21]

After the war, Suzuki and others from his government and their apologists claimed they were secretly working towards peace, and could not publicly advocate it. They cite the Japanese concept of *haragei*—"the art of hidden and invisible technique"—to justify the dissonance between their public actions and alleged behind-the-scenes work. However, many historians reject this. Robert J. C. Butow wrote:

Because of its very ambiguity, the plea of *haragei* invites the suspicion that in questions of politics and diplomacy a conscious reliance upon this 'art of bluff' may have constituted a purposeful deception predicated upon a desire to play both ends against the middle. While this judgment does not accord with the much-lauded character of Admiral Suzuki, the fact remains that from the moment he became Premier until the day he resigned no one could ever

be quite sure of what Suzuki would do or say next.* [22]

Japanese leaders had always envisioned a negotiated settlement to the war. Their prewar planning expected a rapid expansion and consolidation, an eventual conflict with the United States, and finally a settlement in which they would be able to retain at least some new territory they had conquered.* [23] By 1945, Japan's leaders were in agreement that the war was going badly, but they disagreed over the best means to negotiate its end. There were two camps: the so-called “peace” camp favored a diplomatic initiative to persuade Joseph Stalin, the leader of the Soviet Union, to mediate a settlement between the Allies and Japan; and the hardliners who favored fighting one last “decisive” battle that would inflict so many casualties on the Allies that they would be willing to offer more lenient terms.* [1] Both approaches were based on Japan's experience in the Russo-Japanese War, forty years earlier, which consisted of a series of costly but largely indecisive battles, followed by the decisive naval Battle of Tsushima.* [24]



As prime minister, Admiral Kantarō Suzuki headed the Japanese government in the final months of the war.

In February 1945, Prince Fumimaro Konoe gave Emperor Hirohito a memorandum analyzing the situation, and told him that if the war continued, the imperial family might be in greater danger from an internal revolution than from defeat.* [25] According to the diary of Grand Chamberlain Hisanori Fujita, the Emperor, looking for a decisive battle (*tennōzan*), replied that it was premature

to seek peace “unless we make one more military gain”.* [26] Also in February, Japan's treaty division wrote about Allied policies towards Japan regarding “unconditional surrender, occupation, disarmament, elimination of militarism, democratic reforms, punishment of war criminals, and the status of the emperor.”* [27] Allied-imposed disarmament, Allied punishment of Japanese war criminals, and especially occupation and removal of the Emperor, were not acceptable to the Japanese leadership.* [28]* [29]

On April 5, the Soviet Union gave the required 12 months' notice that it would not renew the five-year Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact* [30] (which had been signed in 1941 following the Nomonhan Incident).* [31] Unknown to the Japanese, at the Tehran Conference in November–December 1943, it had been agreed that the Soviet Union would enter the war against Japan once Nazi Germany was defeated. At the Yalta conference in February 1945, the United States had made substantial concessions to the Soviets to secure a promise that they would declare war on Japan within three months of the surrender of Germany. Although the five-year Neutrality Pact did not expire until April 5, 1946, the announcement caused the Japanese great concern, because Japan had amassed its forces in the South to repel the inevitable US attack, thus leaving its Northern islands vulnerable to Soviet invasion.* [32]* [33] Russian Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov, in Moscow, and Yakov Malik, Soviet ambassador in Tokyo, went to great lengths to assure the Japanese that “the period of the Pact's validity has not ended”.* [34]



Foreign Minister Shigenori Tōgō

At a series of high-level meetings in May, the Big Six first seriously discussed ending the war—but none of them on terms that would have been acceptable to the Allies. Because anyone openly supporting Japanese surrender risked assassination by zealous army officers, the meetings were closed to anyone except the Big Six, the Emperor, and the Privy Seal—no second- or third-echelon officers could attend.*[35] At these meetings, despite the dispatches from Japanese ambassador Satō in Moscow, only Foreign minister Tōgō realized that Roosevelt and Churchill might have already made concessions to Stalin to bring the Soviets into the war against Japan.*[36] As a result of these meetings, Tōgō was authorized to approach the Soviet Union, seeking to maintain its neutrality, or (despite the very remote probability) to form an alliance.*[37]

In keeping with the custom of a new government declaring its purposes, following the May meetings the Army staff produced a document, “The Fundamental Policy to Be Followed Henceforth in the Conduct of the War,” which stated that the Japanese people would fight to extinction rather than surrender. This policy was adopted by the Big Six on June 6. (Tōgō opposed it, while the other five supported it.)*[38] Documents submitted by Suzuki at the same meeting suggested that, in the diplomatic overtures to the USSR, Japan adopt the following approach:

It should be clearly made known to Russia that she owes her victory over Germany to Japan, since we remained neutral, and that it would be to the advantage of the Soviets to help Japan maintain her international position, since they have the United States as an enemy in the future.*[39]

On June 9, the Emperor's confidant Marquis Kōichi Kido wrote a “Draft Plan for Controlling the Crisis Situation,” warning that by the end of the year Japan's ability to wage modern war would be extinguished and the government would be unable to contain civil unrest. "... We cannot be sure we will not share the fate of Germany and be reduced to adverse circumstances under which we will not attain even our supreme object of safeguarding the Imperial Household and preserving the national polity.”*[40] Kido proposed that the Emperor take action, by offering to end the war on “very generous terms.” Kido proposed that Japan withdraw from the formerly European colonies it had occupied provided they were granted independence, that Japan disarm provided this not occur under Allied supervision, and that Japan for a time be “content with minimum defense.” Kido's proposal did not contemplate Allied occupation of Japan, prosecution of war criminals or substantial change in Japan's system of government. With the Emperor's authorization, Kido approached several members of the Supreme Council, the “Big Six.” Tōgō was very supportive. Suzuki and Admiral Mitsumasa Yonai, the Navy minister, were both cau-

tiously supportive; each wondered what the other thought. General Korechika Anami, the Army minister, was ambivalent, insisting that diplomacy must wait until “after the United States has sustained heavy losses” in Operation Ketsugō.*[41]

In June, the Emperor lost confidence in the chances of achieving a military victory. The Battle of Okinawa was lost, and he learned of the weakness of the Japanese army in China, of the Kwantung Army in Manchuria, of the navy, and of the army defending the Home Islands. The Emperor received a report by Prince Higashikuni from which he concluded that “it was not just the coast defense; the divisions reserved to engage in the decisive battle also did not have sufficient numbers of weapons.”*[42] According to the Emperor:

I was told that the iron from bomb fragments dropped by the enemy was being used to make shovels. This confirmed my opinion that we were no longer in a position to continue the war.*[42]

On June 22, the Emperor summoned the Big Six to a meeting. Unusually, he spoke first: “I desire that concrete plans to end the war, unhampered by existing policy, be speedily studied and that efforts made to implement them.”*[43] It was agreed to solicit Soviet aid in ending the war. Other neutral nations, such as Switzerland, Sweden, and the Vatican City, were known to be willing to play a role in making peace, but they were so small they were believed unable to do more than deliver the Allies' terms of surrender and Japan's acceptance or rejection. The Japanese hoped that the Soviet Union could be persuaded to act as an agent for Japan in negotiations with America and Britain.*[44]

12.4 Attempts to deal with the Soviet Union

On June 30, Tōgō told Naotake Satō, Japan's ambassador in Moscow, to try to establish “firm and lasting relations of friendship.” Satō was to discuss the status of Manchuria and “any matter the Russians would like to bring up.”*[45] Well aware of the overall situation and cognizant of their promises to the Allies, the Soviets responded with delaying tactics to encourage the Japanese without promising anything. Satō finally met with Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov on July 11, but without result. On July 12, Tōgō directed Satō to tell the Soviets that:

His Majesty the Emperor, mindful of the fact that the present war daily brings greater evil and sacrifice upon the peoples of all the belligerent powers, desires from his heart that



Naotake Satō

it may be quickly terminated. But so long as England and the United States insist upon unconditional surrender, the Japanese Empire has no alternative but to fight on with all its strength for the honor and existence of the Motherland.*[46]

The Emperor proposed sending Prince Konoe as a special envoy, although he would be unable to reach Moscow before the Potsdam Conference.

Satō advised Tōgō that in reality, “unconditional surrender or terms closely equivalent thereto” was all that Japan could expect. Moreover, in response to Molotov’s requests for specific proposals, Satō suggested that Tōgō’s messages were not “clear about the views of the Government and the Military with regard to the termination of the war,” thus questioning whether Tōgō’s initiative was supported by the key elements of Japan’s power structure.*[47]

On July 17, Tōgō responded:

Although the directing powers, and the government as well, are convinced that our war strength still can deliver considerable blows to the enemy, we are unable to feel absolutely secure peace of mind ... Please bear particularly in mind, however, that we are not seeking the Russians’ mediation for anything like an unconditional surrender.*[48]

In reply, Satō clarified:

It goes without saying that in my earlier message calling for unconditional surrender or closely equivalent terms, I made an exception of the question of preserving [the imperial family].*[49]

On July 21, speaking in the name of the cabinet, Tōgō repeated:

With regard to unconditional surrender we are unable to consent to it under any circumstances whatever. ... It is in order to avoid such a state of affairs that we are seeking a peace, ... through the good offices of Russia. ... it would also be disadvantageous and impossible, from the standpoint of foreign and domestic considerations, to make an immediate declaration of specific terms.*[50]

American cryptographers had broken most of Japan’s codes, including the Purple code used by the Japanese Foreign Office to encode high-level diplomatic correspondence. As a result, messages between Tokyo and Japan’s embassies were provided to Allied policy-makers nearly as quickly as to the intended recipients.*[51]

12.4.1 Soviet intentions

Main article: Soviet–Japanese War (1945)

Security concerns dominated Soviet decisions concerning the Far East.*[52] Chief among these was gaining unrestricted access to the Pacific Ocean. The year-round ice-free areas of the Soviet Pacific coastline—Vladivostok in particular—could be blockaded by air and sea from Sakhalin island and the Kurile Islands. Acquiring these territories, thus guaranteeing free access to the Soya Strait, was their primary objective.*[53]*[54] Secondary objectives were leases for the Chinese Eastern Railway, Southern Manchuria Railway, Dairen, and Port Arthur.*[55]

To this end, Stalin and Molotov strung out the negotiations with the Japanese, giving them false hope of a Soviet-mediated peace.*[56] At the same time, in their dealings with the United States and Britain, the Soviets insisted on strict adherence to the Cairo Declaration, re-affirmed at the Yalta Conference, that the Allies would not accept separate or conditional peace with Japan. The Japanese would have to surrender unconditionally to all the Allies. To prolong the war, the Soviets opposed any attempt to weaken this requirement.*[56] This would give the Soviets time to complete the transfer of their troops from the Western Front to the Far East, and conquer Manchuria (Manchukuo), Inner Mongolia (Mengjiang), Korea, Sakhalin, the Kuriles, and possibly, Hokkaidō*^[57] (starting with a landing at Rumoi).*[58]

12.5 Manhattan Project

Main article: Manhattan Project

In 1939, Albert Einstein and Leó Szilárd wrote a letter to President Roosevelt warning him that the Germans might be researching the development of atomic weaponry and that it was necessary that the United States fund research and development of its own such project. Roosevelt agreed, and the result was the **Manhattan Project**—a top-secret research program administered by General Leslie Groves, with scientific direction from J. Robert Oppenheimer. The first bomb was tested successfully in the Trinity explosion on July 16, 1945.

As the project neared its conclusion, American planners began to consider the use of the bomb. Groves formed a committee that met in April and May 1945 to draw up a list of targets. One of the primary criteria was that the target cities must not have been damaged by conventional bombing. This would allow for an accurate assessment of the damage done by the atomic bomb.* [59] The targeting committee's list included 18 Japanese cities. At the top of the list were Kyoto, Hiroshima,* [60] Yokohama, Kokura, and Niigata.* [61]* [62] Ultimately, Kyoto was removed from the list at the insistence of Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, who had visited the city on his honeymoon and knew of its cultural and historical significance.* [63]

The Allies' atomic bomb program was considered to be so sensitive that not even the Vice President of the United States was told of its existence. As a result, Harry S. Truman only learned about the Manhattan Project and its purpose after becoming President upon Franklin Roosevelt's death on April 12. In May, Truman approved the formation of an "Interim Committee", an advisory group that would report on the atomic bomb.* [62] It consisted of George L. Harrison, Vannevar Bush, James Bryant Conant, Karl Taylor Compton, William L. Clayton, and Ralph Austin Bard, advised by scientists Oppenheimer, Enrico Fermi, Ernest Lawrence, and Arthur Compton. In a June 1 report, the Committee concluded that the bomb should be used as soon as possible against a war plant surrounded by workers' homes, and that no warning or demonstration should be given.* [64]

The Committee's mandate did not include the use of the bomb—its use upon completion was presumed.* [65] Following a protest by scientists involved in the project, in the form of the **Franck Report**, the Committee re-examined the use of the bomb. In a June 21 meeting, it reaffirmed that there was no alternative.* [66]

The leaders of the major Allied powers met at the Potsdam Conference from July 16 to August 2, 1945. The participants were the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States, represented by Stalin, Winston Churchill (later Clement Attlee), and Truman respectively.

12.6.1 Negotiations

Although the Potsdam Conference was mainly concerned with European affairs, the war against Japan was also discussed in detail. Truman learned of the successful Trinity test early in the conference, and shared this information with the British delegation. The successful test caused the American delegation to reconsider the necessity and wisdom of Soviet participation, for which the U.S. had lobbied hard at the **Tehran** and **Yalta Conferences**.* [67] High on the United States' list of priorities was shortening the war and reducing American casualties—Soviet intervention seemed likely to do both, but at the cost of possibly allowing the Soviets to capture territory beyond that which had been promised to them at Tehran and Yalta, and causing a postwar division of Japan similar to that which had occurred in Germany.* [68]

In dealing with Stalin, Truman decided to give the Soviet leader vague hints about the existence of a powerful new weapon without going into details. However, the other Allies were unaware that Soviet intelligence had penetrated the Manhattan Project in its early stages, so Stalin already knew of the existence of the atomic bomb, but did not appear impressed by its potential.* [69]

12.6.2 The Potsdam Declaration

It was decided to issue a statement, the **Potsdam Declaration**, defining "Unconditional Surrender" and clarifying what it meant for the position of the emperor and for Hirohito personally. The American and British governments strongly disagreed on this point—the United States wanted to abolish the position and possibly try him as a war criminal, while the British wanted to retain the position, perhaps with Hirohito still reigning. The Potsdam Declaration went through many drafts until a version acceptable to all was found.* [70]

On July 26, the United States, Britain and China released the Potsdam Declaration announcing the terms for Japan's surrender, with the warning, "We will not deviate from them. There are no alternatives. We shall brook no delay." For Japan, the terms of the declaration specified:

- the elimination "for all time [of] the authority and influence of those who have deceived and misled the people of Japan into embarking on world conquest"
- the occupation of "points in Japanese territory to be designated by the Allies"

12.6 Events at Potsdam

Main article: Potsdam Conference

- that the “Japanese sovereignty shall be limited to the islands of Honshū, Hokkaidō, Kyūshū, Shikoku and such minor islands as we determine.” As had been announced in the Cairo Declaration in 1943, Japan was to be reduced to her pre-1894 territory and stripped of her pre-war empire including Korea and Taiwan, as well as all her recent conquests.
- that “[t]he Japanese military forces, after being completely disarmed, shall be permitted to return to their homes with the opportunity to lead peaceful and productive lives.”
- that “[w]e do not intend that the Japanese shall be enslaved as a race or destroyed as a nation, but stern justice shall be meted out to all war criminals, including those who have visited cruelties upon our prisoners.”



A session of the Potsdam Conference – those pictured include Clement Attlee, Ernest Bevin, Vyacheslav Molotov, Joseph Stalin, William D. Leahy, James F. Byrnes, and Harry S. Truman

On the other hand, the declaration stated that:

- “The Japanese Government shall remove all obstacles to the revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies among the Japanese people. Freedom of speech, of religion, and of thought, as well as respect for the fundamental human rights shall be established.”
- “Japan shall be permitted to maintain such industries as will sustain her economy and permit the exactation of just reparations in kind, but not those which would enable her to rearm for war. To this end, access to, as distinguished from control of, raw materials shall be permitted. Eventual Japanese participation in world trade relations shall be permitted.”
- “The occupying forces of the Allies shall be withdrawn from Japan as soon as these objectives have been accomplished and there has been established, in accordance with the freely expressed will of the Japanese people, a peacefully inclined and responsible government.”

The only use of the term “unconditional surrender” came at the end of the declaration:

- “We call upon the government of Japan to proclaim now the unconditional surrender of all Japanese armed forces, and to provide proper and adequate assurances of their good faith in such action. The alternative for Japan is prompt and utter destruction.”

Contrary to what had been intended at its conception, the Declaration made no mention of the Emperor at all. Allied intentions on issues of utmost importance to the Japanese, including whether Hirohito was to be regarded as one of those who had “misled the people of Japan” or even a war criminal, or alternatively, whether the Emperor might become part of a “peacefully inclined and responsible government” were thus left unstated.

The “prompt and utter destruction” clause has been interpreted as a veiled warning about American possession of the atomic bomb (which had been tested successfully on the first day of the conference).* [71] On the other hand, the declaration also made specific references to the devastation that had been wrought upon Germany in the closing stages of the European war. To contemporary readers on both sides who were not yet aware of the atomic bomb’s existence, it was easy to interpret the conclusion of the declaration simply as a threat to bring similar destruction upon Japan using conventional weapons.

12.6.3 Japanese reaction

On July 27, the Japanese government considered how to respond to the Declaration. The four military members of the Big Six wanted to reject it, but Tōgō persuaded the cabinet not to do so until he could get a reaction from the Soviets. In a telegram, Shun’ichi Kase, Japan’s ambassador to Switzerland, observed that “unconditional surrender” applied only to the military and not to the government or the people, and he pleaded that it should be understood that the careful language of Potsdam appeared “to have occasioned a great deal of thought” on the part of the signatory governments—“they seem to have taken pains to save face for us on various points.”* [72] The next day, Japanese newspapers reported that the Declaration, the text of which had been broadcast and dropped by leaflet into Japan, had been rejected. In an attempt to manage public perception, Prime Minister Suzuki met with the press, and stated:

I consider the Joint Proclamation a rehash of the Declaration at the Cairo Conference. As for the Government, it does not attach any important value to it at all. The only thing to do is just kill it with silence (*mokusatsu*). We will do nothing but press on to the bitter end to bring about a successful completion of the war.* [73]

The meaning of *mokusatsu*, literally “kill with silence,” can range from “ignore” to “treat with contempt”—which rather accurately described the range of reactions within the government.*[73] On July 30, Ambassador Satō wrote that Stalin was probably talking to Roosevelt and Churchill about his dealings with Japan, and he wrote: “There is no alternative but immediate unconditional surrender if we are to prevent Russia's participation in the war.” * [74] On August 2, Tōgō wrote to Satō: “it should not be difficult for you to realize that ... our time to proceed with arrangements of ending the war before the enemy lands on the Japanese mainland is limited, on the other hand it is difficult to decide on concrete peace conditions here at home all at once.” * [75]

12.7 Hiroshima, Manchuria, and Nagasaki

12.7.1 August 6: Hiroshima

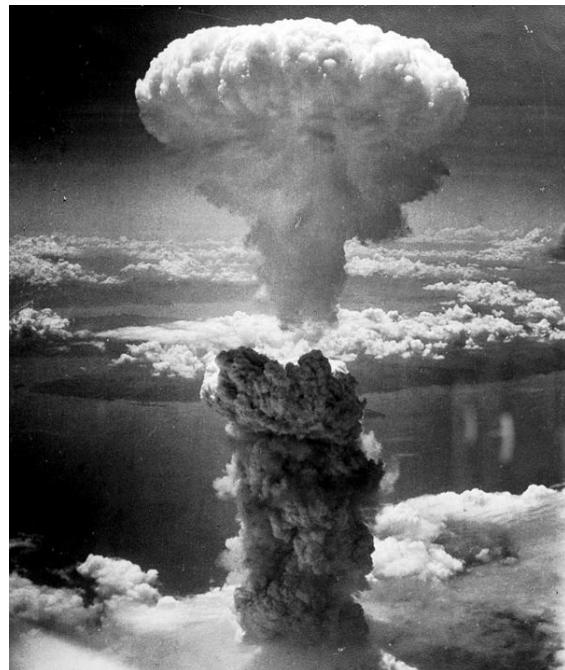
On August 6 at 8:15 AM local time, the Enola Gay, a Boeing B-29 Superfortress piloted by Colonel Paul Tibbets, dropped an atomic bomb (code-named Little Boy by the U.S.) on the city of Hiroshima in southwest Honshū.*[76] Throughout the day, confused reports reached Tokyo that Hiroshima had been the target of an air raid, which had leveled the city with a “blinding flash and violent blast”. Later that day, they received U.S. President Truman's broadcast announcing the first use of an atomic bomb, and promising:

We are now prepared to obliterate more rapidly and completely every productive enterprise the Japanese have above ground in any city. We shall destroy their docks, their factories, and their communications. Let there be no mistake; we shall completely destroy Japan's power to make war. It was to spare the Japanese people from utter destruction that the ultimatum of July 26 was issued at Potsdam. Their leaders promptly rejected that ultimatum. If they do not now accept our terms they may expect a rain of ruin from the air, the like of which has never been seen on this earth ...* [77]

The Japanese Army and Navy had their own independent atomic-bomb programs and therefore the Japanese understood enough to know how very difficult building it would be. Therefore, many Japanese and in particular the military members of the government refused to believe the United States had built an atomic bomb, and the Japanese military ordered their own independent tests to determine the cause of Hiroshima's destruction.*[78] Admiral Soemu Toyoda, the Chief of the Naval General Staff, argued that even if the United States had made one,

they could not have many more.*[79] American strategists, having anticipated a reaction like Toyoda's, planned to drop a second bomb shortly after the first, to convince the Japanese that the U.S. had a large supply.*[62]*[80]

12.7.2 August 8–9: Soviet invasion and Nagasaki



Atomic bombing of Nagasaki

At 04:00 on August 9 word reached Tokyo that the Soviet Union had broken the Neutrality Pact,*[30] declared war on Japan,*[81] and launched an invasion of Manchuria.*[82]

When the Russians invaded Manchuria, they sliced through what had once been an elite army and many Russian units only stopped when they ran out of gas. The Soviet 16th Army—100,000 strong—launched an invasion of the southern half of Sakhalin Island. Their orders were to mop up Japanese resistance there, and then—with 10 to 14 days—be prepared to invade Hokkaido, the northernmost of Japan's home islands. The Japanese force tasked with defending Hokkaido, the 5th Area Army, was under strength at two divisions and two brigades, and was in fortified positions on the east side of the island. The Soviet plan of attack called for an invasion of Hokkaido from the west. The Soviet declaration of war also changed the calculation of how much time was left for maneuver. Japanese intelligence was predicting that U.S. forces might not invade for months. Soviet forces, on the other hand, could be in Japan proper in as little as 10 days. The Soviet invasion made a decision on ending the war extremely time sensitive.*[83]

These “twin shocks”—the atomic bombing of Hiroshima

and the Soviet entry—had immediate profound effects on Prime Minister Suzuki and Foreign Minister Tōgō Shigenori, who concurred that the government must end the war at once.*[84] However, the senior leadership of the Japanese Army took the news in stride, grossly underestimating the scale of the attack. With the support of Minister of War Anami, they started preparing to impose martial law on the nation, to stop anyone attempting to make peace.*[85] Hirohito told Kido to “quickly control the situation” because “the Soviet Union has declared war and today began hostilities against us.” * [86]

The Supreme Council met at 10:30. Suzuki, who had just come from a meeting with the Emperor, said it was impossible to continue the war. Tōgō Shigenori said that they could accept the terms of the Potsdam Declaration, but they needed a guarantee of the Emperor's position. Navy Minister Yonai said that they had to make some diplomatic proposal—they could no longer afford to wait for better circumstances.

In the middle of the meeting, shortly after 11:00, news arrived that Nagasaki, on the west coast of Kyūshū, had been hit by a second atomic bomb (called "Fat Man" by the United States). By the time the meeting ended, the Big Six had split 3–3. Suzuki, Tōgō, and Admiral Yonai favored Tōgō's one additional condition to Potsdam, while Generals Anami, Umezu, and Admiral Toyoda insisted on three further terms that modified Potsdam: that Japan handle their own disarmament, that Japan deal with any Japanese war criminals, and that there be no occupation of Japan.*[87]

Following the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, Truman issued another statement:

The British, Chinese, and United States Governments have given the Japanese people adequate warning of what is in store for them. We have laid down the general terms on which they can surrender. Our warning went unheeded; our terms were rejected. Since then the Japanese have seen what our atomic bomb can do. They can foresee what it will do in the future.

The world will note that the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, a military base. That was because we wished in this first attack to avoid, insofar as possible, the killing of civilians. But that attack is only a warning of things to come. If Japan does not surrender, bombs will have to be dropped on her war industries and, unfortunately, thousands of civilian lives will be lost. I urge Japanese civilians to leave industrial cities immediately, and save themselves from destruction.

I realize the tragic significance of the atomic bomb.

Its production and its use were not lightly undertaken by this Government. But we knew

that our enemies were on the search for it. We know now how close they were to finding it. And we knew the disaster which would come to this Nation, and to all peace-loving nations, to all civilization, if they had found it first.

That is why we felt compelled to undertake the long and uncertain and costly labor of discovery and production.

We won the race of discovery against the Germans.

Having found the bomb we have used it. We have used it against those who attacked us without warning at Pearl Harbor, against those who have starved and beaten and executed American prisoners of war, against those who have abandoned all pretense of obeying international laws of warfare. We have used it in order to shorten the agony of war, in order to save the lives of thousands and thousands of young Americans.

We shall continue to use it until we completely destroy Japan's power to make war. Only a Japanese surrender will stop us.*[88]

12.8 Imperial intervention, Allied response, and Japanese reply



War Minister Korechika Anami

The full cabinet met on 14:30 on August 9, and spent most of the day debating surrender. As the Big Six had done, the cabinet split, with neither Tōgō's position nor Anami's attracting a majority.*[89] Anami told the other cabinet ministers that, under torture, a captured American P-51 fighter pilot had told his interrogators that the United States possessed 100 atom bombs and that Tokyo and Kyoto would be bombed "in the next few days". The pilot, Marcus McDilda, was lying. He knew nothing of the Manhattan Project and simply told his interrogators what he thought they wanted to hear to end the torture. The lie, which caused him to be classified as a high-priority prisoner, probably saved him from beheading.*[90] In reality, the United States would have had the third bomb ready for use around August 19, and a fourth in September 1945.*[91] The third bomb probably would have been used against Tokyo.*[92]

The cabinet meeting adjourned at 17:30 with no consensus. A second meeting lasting from 18:00 to 22:00 also ended with no consensus. Following this second meeting, Suzuki and Tōgō met the Emperor, and Suzuki proposed an impromptu Imperial conference, which started just before midnight on the night of August 9–10.*[93] Suzuki presented Anami's four-condition proposal as the consensus position of the Supreme Council. The other members of the Supreme Council spoke, as did Kiichirō Hiranuma, the president of the Privy Council, who outlined Japan's inability to defend itself and also described the country's domestic problems, such as the shortage of food. The cabinet debated, but again no consensus emerged. At around 02:00 (August 10), Suzuki finally addressed Emperor Hirohito, asking him to decide between the two positions. The participants later recollected that the Emperor stated:

I have given serious thought to the situation prevailing at home and abroad and have concluded that continuing the war can only mean destruction for the nation and prolongation of bloodshed and cruelty in the world. I cannot bear to see my innocent people suffer any longer. ...

I was told by those advocating a continuation of hostilities that by June new divisions would be in place in fortified positions [at Kujūkuri Beach, east of Tokyo] ready for the invader when he sought to land. It is now August and the fortifications still have not been completed. ...

There are those who say the key to national survival lies in a decisive battle in the homeland. The experiences of the past, however, show that there has always been a discrepancy between plans and performance. I do not believe that the discrepancy in the case of Kujūkuri can be rectified. Since this is also the shape of things, how can we repel the invaders? [He then made some specific reference to the

increased destructiveness of the atomic bomb]

It goes without saying that it is unbearable for me to see the brave and loyal fighting men of Japan disarmed. It is equally unbearable that others who have rendered me devoted service should now be punished as instigators of the war. Nevertheless, the time has come to bear the unbearable. ...

I swallow my tears and give my sanction to the proposal to accept the Allied proclamation on the basis outlined by the Foreign Minister.*[94]

According to General Sumihisa Ikeda and Admiral Zen-shirō Hoshina, Privy Council President Kiichirō Hiranuma then turned to the Emperor and asked him: "Your majesty, you also bear responsibility (*sekinin*) for this defeat. What apology are you going to make to the heroic spirits of the imperial founder of your house and your other imperial ancestors?"**[95]

Once the Emperor had left, Suzuki pushed the cabinet to accept the Emperor's will, which it did. Early that morning (August 10), the Foreign Ministry sent telegrams to the Allies (by way of the Swiss Federal Political Department and Max Grässli in particular) announcing that Japan would accept the Potsdam Declaration, but would not accept any peace conditions that would "prejudice the prerogatives" of the Emperor. That effectively meant no change in Japan's form of government—that the Emperor of Japan would remain a position of real power.*[96]

12.8.1 August 12

The Allied response was written by James F. Byrnes and approved by the British, Chinese, and Soviet governments, although the Soviets agreed only reluctantly. The Allies sent their response (via the Swiss Political Affairs Department) to Japan's qualified acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration on August 12. On the status of the Emperor it said:

From the moment of surrender the authority of the Emperor and the Japanese government to rule the state shall be subject to the Supreme Commander of the Allied powers who will take such steps as he deems proper to effectuate the surrender terms. ...The ultimate form of government of Japan shall, in accordance with the Potsdam Declaration, be established by the freely expressed will of the Japanese people.*[97]

President Truman ordered military operations (including the B-29 bombings) to continue until official word of Japanese surrender was received. However, news correspondents incorrectly interpreted a comment by Carl Andrew Spaatz that the B-29s were not flying on August 11

(because of bad weather) as a statement that a ceasefire was in effect. To avoid giving the Japanese the impression that the Allies had abandoned peace efforts and resumed bombing, Truman then ordered a halt to further bombings.*[98]*[99]

The Japanese cabinet considered the Allied response, and Suzuki argued that they must reject it and insist on an explicit guarantee for the imperial system. Anami returned to his position that there be no occupation of Japan. Afterward, Tōgō told Suzuki that there was no hope of getting better terms, and Kido conveyed the Emperor's will that Japan surrender. In a meeting with the Emperor, Yonai spoke of his concerns about growing civil unrest:

I think the term is inappropriate, but the atomic bombs and the Soviet entry into the war are, in a sense, divine gifts. This way we don't have to say that we have quit the war because of domestic circumstances.*[100]

That day, Hirohito informed the imperial family of his decision to surrender. One of his uncles, Prince Asaka, then asked whether the war would be continued if the *kokutai* (imperial sovereignty) could not be preserved. The Emperor simply replied “of course.”*[101]*[102]

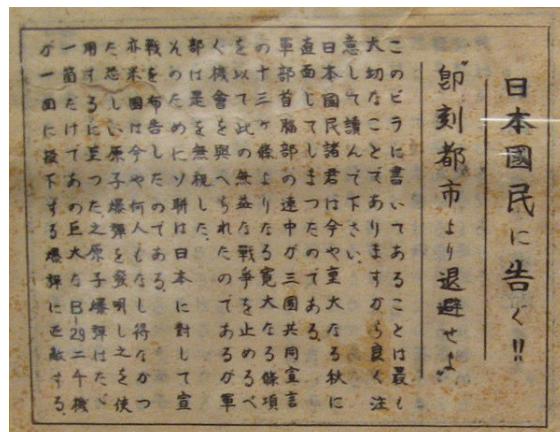
12.8.2 August 13–14

The Big Six and the cabinet spent August 13 debating their reply to the Allied response, but remained deadlocked. Meanwhile, the Allies grew doubtful, waiting for the Japanese to respond. The Japanese had been instructed that they could transmit an unqualified acceptance in the clear, but in fact they sent out coded messages on matters unrelated to the surrender parlay. The Allies took this coded response as non-acceptance of the terms.*[103]

Via Ultra intercepts, the Allies also detected increased diplomatic and military traffic, which was taken as evidence that the Japanese were preparing an “all-out banzai attack.”*[103] President Truman ordered a resumption of attacks against Japan at maximum intensity “so as to impress Japanese officials that we mean business and are serious in getting them to accept our peace proposals without delay.”*[103] The United States Third Fleet began shelling the Japanese coast. In the largest bombing raid of the Pacific War, more than 400 B-29s attacked Japan during daylight on August 14, and more than 300 that night.*[104] A total of 1,014 aircraft were used with no losses.*[105]

In the longest bombing mission of the war,*[106] B-29s from the 315 Bombardment Wing flew 6,100 km (3,800 mi) to destroy the Nippon Oil Company refinery at Tsuchizaki on the northern tip of Honshū. This was the last operational refinery in the Japan Home Islands and it produced 67% of their oil.*[107] After the war,

the bombing raids were justified as already in progress when word of the Japanese surrender was received, but this is only partially true.*[108]



A leaflet dropped on Japan after the bombing of Hiroshima. The leaflet says, in part: The Japanese people are facing an extremely important autumn. Your military leaders were presented with thirteen articles for surrender by our three-country alliance to put an end to this unprofitable war. This proposal was ignored by your army leaders... [T]he United States has developed an atom bomb, which had not been done by any nation before. It has been determined to employ this frightening bomb. One atom bomb has the destructive power of 2000 B-29s.

At the suggestion of American psychological operations experts, B-29s spent August 13 dropping leaflets over Japan, describing the Japanese offer of surrender and the Allied response.*[103] The leaflets had a profound effect on the Japanese decision-making process. As August 14 dawned, Suzuki, Kido, and the Emperor realized the day would end with either an acceptance of the American terms or a military coup.*[109]

The Emperor met with the most senior Army and Navy officers. While several spoke in favor of fighting on, Field Marshal Shunroku Hata did not. As commander of the Second General Army, the headquarters of which had been in Hiroshima, Hata commanded all the troops defending southern Japan—the troops preparing to fight the “decisive battle”. Hata said he had no confidence in defeating the invasion and did not dispute the Emperor's decision. The Emperor asked his military leaders to cooperate with him in ending the war.*[109]

At a conference with the cabinet and other councilors, Anami, Toyoda, and Umezu again made their case for continuing to fight, after which the Emperor said:

I have listened carefully to each of the arguments presented in opposition to the view that Japan should accept the Allied reply as it stands and without further clarification or modification, but my own thoughts have not undergone any change. ... In order that the people may know my decision, I request you to prepare at

once an imperial rescript so that I may broadcast to the nation. Finally, I call upon each and every one of you to exert himself to the utmost so that we may meet the trying days which lie ahead.*[110]

The cabinet immediately convened and unanimously ratified the Emperor's wishes. They also decided to destroy vast amounts of material pertaining to war crimes and the war responsibility of the nation's highest leaders.*[111] Immediately after the conference, the Foreign ministry transmitted orders to its embassies in Switzerland and Sweden to accept the Allied terms of surrender. These orders were picked up and received in Washington at 02:49, August 14.*[110]

Difficulty with senior commanders on the distant war fronts was anticipated. Three princes of the Imperial Family who held military commissions were dispatched on August 14 to deliver the news personally. Prince Tsuneyoshi Takeda went to Korea and Manchuria, Prince Yasuhiko Asaka to the China Expeditionary Army and China Fleet, and Prince Kan'in Haruhito to Shanghai, South China, Indo-China and Singapore.*[112]*[113]

The text of the Imperial Rescript on surrender was finalized by 19:00 August 14, transcribed by the official court calligrapher, and brought to the cabinet for their signatures. Around 23:00, the Emperor, with help from an NHK recording crew, made a gramophone record of himself reading it.*[114] The record was given to court chamberlain Yoshihiro Tokugawa, who hid it in a locker in the empress's secretary's office.*[115]

12.9 Attempted military coup d'état (August 12–15)

Main article: Kyūjō incident

Late on the night of August 12, 1945, Major Kenji Hatanaka, along with Lieutenant Colonels Masataka Ida, Masahiko Takeshita (Anami's brother-in-law), and Inaba Masao, and Colonel Okitsugu Arao, the Chief of the Military Affairs Section, spoke to War Minister Korechika Anami (the army minister and “most powerful figure in Japan besides the Emperor himself”),*[116] and asked him to do whatever he could to prevent acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration. General Anami refused to say whether he would help the young officers in treason.*[117] As much as they needed his support, Hatanaka and the other rebels decided they had no choice but to continue planning and to attempt a coup d'état on their own. Hatanaka spent much of August 13 and the morning of August 14 gathering allies, seeking support from the higher-ups in the Ministry, and perfecting his plot.*[118]

Shortly after the conference on the night of August 13–14 at which the surrender finally was decided, a group of senior army officers including Anami gathered in a nearby



Kenji Hatanaka, leader of the coup d'état

room. All those present were concerned about the possibility of a coup d'état to prevent the surrender—some of those present may have even been considering launching one. After a silence, General Torashirō Kawabe proposed that all senior officers present sign an agreement to carry out the Emperor's order of surrender—"The Army will act in accordance with the Imperial Decision to the last." It was signed by all the high-ranking officers present, including Anami, Hajime Sugiyama, Yoshijirō Umezu, Kenji Doihara, Torashirō Kawabe, Masakazu Kawabe, and Tadaichi Wakamatsu. "This written accord by the most senior officers in the Army ... acted as a formidable firebreak against any attempt to incite a coup d'état in Tokyo." *[119]

Around 21:30 on August 14, Hatanaka's rebels set their plan into motion. The Second Regiment of the First Imperial Guards had entered the palace grounds, doubling the strength of the battalion already stationed there, presumably to provide extra protection against Hatanaka's rebellion. But Hatanaka, along with Lt. Col. Jirō Shizaki, convinced the commander of the 2nd Regiment of the First Imperial Guards, Colonel Toyojirō Haga, of their cause, by telling him (falsely) that Generals Anami and Umezu, and the commanders of the Eastern District Army and Imperial Guards Divisions were all in on the plan. Hatanaka also went to the office of Shizuichi Tanaka, commander of the Eastern region of the army, to try to persuade him to join the coup. Tanaka refused, and ordered Hatanaka to go home. Hatanaka ignored the order.*[115]



The coup collapsed after Shizuichi Tanaka convinced the rebellious officers to go home. Tanaka committed suicide nine days later.

Originally, Hatanaka hoped that simply occupying the palace and showing the beginnings of a rebellion would inspire the rest of the Army to rise up against the move to surrender. This notion guided him through much of the last days and hours and gave him the blind optimism to move ahead with the plan, despite having little support from his superiors. Having set all the pieces into position, Hatanaka and his co-conspirators decided that the Guard would take over the palace at 02:00. The hours until then were spent in continued attempts to convince their superiors in the Army to join the coup. At about the same time, General Anami committed *seppuku*, leaving a message that, “I—with my death—humbly apologize to the Emperor for the great crime.” *[120] Whether the crime involved losing the war, or the coup, remains unclear.*[121]

At some time after 01:00, Hatanaka and his men surrounded the palace. Hatanaka, Shiizaki and Captain Shigetarō Uehara (of the Air Force Academy) went to the office of Lt. General Takeshi Mori to ask him to join the coup. Mori was in a meeting with his brother-in-law, Michinori Shiraishi. The cooperation of Mori, as commander of the 1st Imperial Guards Division, was crucial. When Mori refused to side with Hatanaka, Hatanaka killed him, fearing Mori would order the Guards to stop the rebellion.*[122] Uehara killed Shiraishi. These were the only two murders of the night. Hatanaka then used General Mori's official stamp to authorize Imperial Guards Division Strategic Order No. 584, a false set of orders created by his co-conspirators, which would greatly increase the strength of the forces occupying the

Imperial Palace and Imperial Household Ministry, and “protecting” the Emperor.*[123]

The palace police were disarmed and all the entrances blocked.*[114] Over the course of the night, Hatanaka's rebels captured and detained eighteen people, including Ministry staff and NHK workers sent to record the surrender speech.*[114]

The rebels, led by Hatanaka, spent the next several hours fruitlessly searching for Imperial House Minister Sōtarō Ishiwatari, Lord of the Privy Seal Kōichi Kido, and the recordings of the surrender speech. The two men were hiding in the “bank vault”, a large chamber underneath the Imperial Palace.*[124]*[125] The search was made more difficult by a blackout in response to Allied bombings, and by the archaic organization and layout of the Imperial House Ministry. Many of the names of the rooms were unrecognizable to the rebels. The rebels did find the chamberlain Tokugawa. Although Hatanaka threatened to disembowel him with a samurai sword, Tokugawa lied and told them he did not know where the recordings or men were.*[126]*[127] During their search, the rebels cut nearly all of the telephone wires, severing communications between the palace grounds and the outside world.

At about the same time, another group of Hatanaka's rebels led by Captain Takeo Sasaki went to Prime Minister Suzuki's office, intent on killing him. When they found it empty, they machine-gunned the office and set the building on fire, then left for his home. Hisatsune Sakomizu had warned Suzuki, and he escaped minutes before the would-be assassins arrived. After setting fire to Suzuki's home, they went to the estate of Kiichirō Hiranuma to assassinate him. Hiranuma escaped through a side gate and the rebels burned his house as well. Suzuki spent the rest of August under police protection, spending each night in a different bed.*[126]*[128]

Around 03:00, Hatanaka was informed by Lieutenant Colonel Masataka Ida that the Eastern District Army was on its way to the palace to stop him, and that he should give up.*[129]*[130] Finally, seeing his plan collapsing around him, Hatanaka pleaded with Tatsuhiko Takashima, Chief of Staff of the Eastern District Army, to be given at least ten minutes on the air on NHK radio, to explain to the people of Japan what he was trying to accomplish and why. He was refused.*[131] Colonel Haga, commander of the 2nd Regiment of the First Imperial Guards, discovered that the Army did not support this rebellion, and he ordered Hatanaka to leave the palace grounds.

Just before 05:00, as his rebels continued their search, Major Hatanaka went to the NHK studios, and, brandishing a pistol, tried desperately to get some airtime to explain his actions.*[132] A little over an hour later, after receiving a telephone call from the Eastern District Army, Hatanaka finally gave up. He gathered his officers and walked out of the NHK studio.*[133]

At dawn, Tanaka learned that the palace had been in-

vaded. He went there and confronted the rebellious officers, berating them for acting contrary to the spirit of the Japanese army. He convinced them to return to their barracks.*[126]*[134] By 08:00, the rebellion was entirely dismantled, having succeeded in holding the palace grounds for much of the night but failing to find the recordings.*[135]

Hatanaka, on a motorcycle, and Shiizaki, on horseback, rode through the streets, tossing leaflets that explained their motives and their actions. Within an hour before the Emperor's broadcast, sometime around 11:00, August 15, Hatanaka placed his pistol to his forehead, and shot himself. Shiizaki stabbed himself with a dagger, and then shot himself. In Hatanaka's pocket was found his death poem: "I have nothing to regret now that the dark clouds have disappeared from the reign of the Emperor." *[128]

12.10 Surrender

12.10.1 Broadcast of the Imperial Rescript on surrender

At 12:00 noon Japan standard time on August 15, the Emperor's recorded speech to the nation, reading the Imperial Rescript on the Termination of the War, was broadcast:

After pondering deeply the general trends of the world and the actual conditions obtaining in Our Empire today, We have decided to effect a settlement of the present situation by resorting to an extraordinary measure.

We have ordered Our Government to communicate to the Governments of the United States, Great Britain, China and the Soviet Union that Our Empire accepts the provisions of their Joint Declaration.

To strive for the common prosperity and happiness of all nations as well as the security and well-being of Our subjects is the solemn obligation which has been handed down by Our Imperial Ancestors and which lies close to Our heart.

Indeed, We declared war on America and Britain out of Our sincere desire to ensure Japan's self-preservation and the stabilization of East Asia, it being far from Our thought either to infringe upon the sovereignty of other nations or to embark upon territorial aggrandizement.

But now the war has lasted for nearly four years. Despite the best that has been done by everyone—the gallant fighting of the military and naval forces, the diligence and assiduity of Our servants of the State, and the devoted service of Our one hundred million people—the

war situation has developed not necessarily to Japan's advantage, while the general trends of the world have all turned against her interest.

Moreover, the enemy has begun to employ a new and most cruel bomb, the power of which to do damage is, indeed, incalculable, taking the toll of many innocent lives. Should we continue to fight, not only would it result in an ultimate collapse and obliteration of the Japanese nation, but also it would lead to the total extinction of human civilization.

Such being the case, how are We to save the millions of Our subjects, or to atone Ourselves before the hallowed spirits of Our Imperial Ancestors? This is the reason why We have ordered the acceptance of the provisions of the Joint Declaration of the Powers....

The hardships and sufferings to which Our nation is to be subjected hereafter will be certainly great. We are keenly aware of the inmost feelings of all of you, Our subjects. However, it is according to the dictates of time and fate that We have resolved to pave the way for a grand peace for all the generations to come by enduring the unendurable and suffering what is unsufferable.*[136]

The low quality of the recording, combined with the Classical Japanese language used by the Emperor in the Rescript, made the recording very difficult to understand for most listeners.*[137]*[138] This speech marked the end of imperial Japan's ultranationalist ideology, and was a major turning point in Japanese history.*[138]

Public reaction to the Emperor's speech varied—many Japanese simply listened to it, then went on with their lives as best they could, while some Army and Navy officers chose suicide over surrender. At a base north of Nagasaki, some Japanese Army officers, enraged at the prospect of surrender, pulled some 16 captured American airmen out of the base prison and hacked them to death with swords. A large, weeping crowd gathered in front of the Imperial Palace in Tokyo, with their cries sometimes interrupted by the sound of gunshots as military officers present committed suicide.*[139]

On August 17, Suzuki was replaced as prime minister by the Emperor's uncle, Prince Higashikuni, perhaps to forestall any further coup or assassination attempts;*[140] Mamoru Shigemitsu replaced Tōgō as foreign minister.

Japan's forces were still fighting against the Soviets as well as the Chinese, and managing their cease-fire and surrender was difficult. The last air combat by Japanese fighters against American reconnaissance bombers took place on August 18.*[141] The Soviet Union continued to fight until early September, taking the Kuril Islands.

12.10.2 Beginning of occupation and the surrender ceremony



Allied personnel celebrate Japanese surrender in Paris

Allied civilians and servicemen alike rejoiced at the news of the end of the war. A photograph, *V-J day in Times Square*, of an American sailor kissing a woman in New York, and a news film of the *Dancing Man* in Sydney have come to epitomize the immediate celebrations. August 14 and 15 are celebrated as Victory over Japan Day in many Allied countries.*[142]

The Soviet Union had some intentions of occupying Hokkaidō.*[143] Unlike the Soviet occupations of East Germany and North Korea, however, these plans were frustrated by the opposition of President Truman.*[143]

Japanese officials left for Manila on August 19 to meet Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers Douglas MacArthur, and to be briefed on his plans for the occupation. On August 28, 150 U.S. personnel flew to Atsugi, Kanagawa Prefecture, and the occupation of Japan began. They were followed by USS *Missouri*, whose accompanying vessels landed the 4th Marines on the southern coast of Kanagawa. Other Allied personnel followed.

MacArthur arrived in Tokyo on August 30, and immediately decreed several laws: No Allied personnel were to assault Japanese people. No Allied personnel were to eat the scarce Japanese food. Flying the *Hinomaru* or “Rising Sun” flag was severely restricted.*[144]

The formal surrender occurred on September 2, 1945 around 9 a.m. Tokyo time, when representatives from the Empire of Japan signed the Japanese Instrument of Surrender in Tokyo Bay aboard USS *Missouri*.*[145]*[146] Japanese Foreign Minister Shigemitsu signed for the Japanese government, while Gen. Umezu signed for the Japanese armed forces.*[147]

On *Missouri* that day was the American flag flown in 1853 on USS *Powhatan* by Commodore Matthew C. Perry on the first of his two expeditions to Japan. Perry's expeditions had resulted in the Convention of Kanagawa, which forced the Japanese to open the country to American



MacArthur at surrender ceremony. The flag flown by Perry is visible in the background.

trade.*[148]*[149]

After the formal surrender on September 2 aboard *Missouri*, investigations into Japanese war crimes began quickly. At a meeting with General MacArthur later in September, Emperor Hirohito offered to take blame for the war crimes, but his offer was rejected, and he was never tried.*[150] Legal procedures for the International Military Tribunal for the Far East were issued on January 19, 1946.*[151]

In addition to August 14 and 15, September 2, 1945 is also known as *V-J Day*.*[150] President Truman declared September 2 to be V-J Day, but noted that “It is not yet the day for the formal proclamation of the end of the war nor of the cessation of hostilities.”*[152] In Japan, August 15 is often called *Shūsen-kinenbi* (終戦記念日), which literally means the “memorial day for the end of the war,” but the government’s name for the day (which is not a national holiday) is *Senbotsusha o tsuitō shi heiwa o kinen suru hi* (戦没者を追悼し平和を祈念する日, “day for mourning of war dead and praying for peace”).*[153]

12.11 Further surrenders and continued Japanese military resistance

Following the signing of the instrument of surrender, many further surrender ceremonies took place across

Japan's remaining holdings in the Pacific. Japanese forces in Southeast Asia surrendered on September 10, 1945 in Labuan, September 11 in Kingdom of Sarawak and September 12 in Singapore.*[154] Taiwan's Retrocession Day (October 25), marked the end of Japanese rule of Taiwan and the subsequent rule by the Republic Of China government.*[155]*[156] It was not until 1947 that all prisoners held by America and Britain were repatriated. As late as April 1949, China still held more than 60,000 Japanese prisoners.*[157] Some, such as Shozo Tominaga, were not repatriated until the late 1950s.*[158]

The logistical demands of the surrender were formidable. After Japan's capitulation, more than 5,400,000 Japanese soldiers and 1,800,000 Japanese sailors were taken prisoner by the Allies.*[159]*[160] The damage done to Japan's infrastructure, combined with a severe famine in 1946, further complicated the Allied efforts to feed the Japanese POWs and civilians.*[161]*[162]

The state of war between the United States and Japan officially ended when the *Treaty of San Francisco* took effect on April 28, 1952. Japan and the Soviet Union formally made peace four years later, when they signed the *Soviet-Japanese Joint Declaration of 1956*.*[163]

Some Japanese holdouts, especially on small Pacific Islands, refused to surrender at all (believing the declaration to be propaganda or considering surrender against their code). Some may never have heard of it. Teruo Nakamura, the last known holdout, emerged from his hidden retreat in Indonesia in December 1974, while two other Japanese soldiers, who had joined Communist guerrillas at the end of the war, fought in southern Thailand until 1991.*[164]

12.12 See also

- Aftermath of World War II
- Japanese holdouts
- Post–World War II economic expansion
- Hypothetical Axis victory in World War II
- Japanese dissidence during the Shōwa period
- Japanese American service in World War II

12.13 References

12.13.1 Footnotes

- [1] Frank, 90.
- [2] Skates, 158, 195.
- [3] Bellamy, Chris (2007). *Absolute War: Soviet Russia in the Second World War*. Alfred A. Knopf. p. 676. ISBN 978-0-375-41086-4.
- [4] Frank, 87–88.
- [5] Frank, 81.
- [6] Pape, Robert A. (Fall 1993). “Why Japan Surrendered”. *International Security*. 18 (2): 154–201. doi:10.2307/2539100.
- [7] Feifer, 418.
- [8] Reynolds, 363.
- [9] Frank, 89, citing Daikichi Irokawa, *The Age of Hirohito: In Search of Modern Japan* (New York: Free Press, 1995; ISBN 978-0-02-915665-0). Japan consistently overstated its population as 100 million, when in fact the 1944 census counted 72 million.
- [10] Skates, 100–115.
- [11] Hasegawa, 295–296
- [12] McCormack, 253.
- [13] Frank, 87.
- [14] Frank, 86.
- [15] Spector 33.
- [16] The exact role of the Emperor has been a subject of much historical debate. Following PM Suzuki's orders, many key pieces of evidence were destroyed in the days between Japan's surrender and the start of the Allied occupation. Starting in 1946, following the constitution of the Tokyo tribunal, the imperial family began to argue that Hirohito was a powerless figurehead, which brought some historians to accept this point of view. Others, like Herbert Bix, John W. Dower, Akira Fujiwara, and Yoshiaki Yoshimi, argue that he actively ruled from behind the scenes. According to Richard Frank, “Neither of these polar positions is accurate”, and the truth appears to lie somewhere in between.—Frank, 87.
- [17] Iris Chang (2012). *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II*. Basic Books. p. 177.
- [18] For more details on what was destroyed see Page Wilson (2009). *Aggression, Crime and International Security: Moral, Political and Legal Dimensions of International Relations*. Taylor & Francis. p. 63.
- [19] Alan Booth. *Lost: Journeys through a Vanishing Japan*. Kodansha Globe, 1996, ISBN 978-1-56836-148-2. Page 67.
- [20] Frank, 92.
- [21] Frank, 91–92.
- [22] Butow, 70–71.
- [23] Spector, 44–45.
- [24] Frank, 89.
- [25] Bix, 488–489.
- [26] Michael J. Hogan (March 29, 1996). *Hiroshima in History and Memory*. Cambridge University Press. p. 86.

- [27] Hasegawa, 39.
- [28] Hasegawa, 39, 68.
- [29] Frank, 291.
- [30] Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact, April 13, 1941. (Avalon Project at Yale University)
Declaration Regarding Mongolia, April 13, 1941. (Avalon Project at Yale University)
- [31] *Soviet Denunciation of the Pact with Japan*. Avalon Project, Yale Law School. Text from United States Department of State Bulletin Vol. XII, No. 305, April 29, 1945. Retrieved February 22, 2009.
- [32] "Molotov's note was neither a declaration of war nor, necessarily, of intent to go to war. Legally, the treaty still had a year to run after the notice of cancellation. But the Foreign Commissar's tone suggested that this technicality might be brushed aside at Russia's convenience." "So Sorry, Mr. Sato". *Time*, April 16, 1945.
- [33] Russia and Japan, declassified CIA report from April 1945.
- [34] Slavinskii (page 153-4), quoting from Molotov's diary, recounts the conversation between Molotov and Satō, the Japanese ambassador to Moscow: After Molotov has read the statement, Satō "permits himself to ask Molotov for some clarifications", saying he thinks his government expects that during that year April 25, 1945 – April 25, 1946, the Soviet government will maintain the same relations with Japan it had maintained up to present, "bearing in mind that the Pact remains in force". Molotov replies that "Factually Soviet-Japanese relations revert to the situation in which they were before conclusion of the Pact". Satō observes that in that case the Soviet and Japanese government interpret the question differently. Molotov replies that "there is some misunderstanding" and explains that "on expiry of the five year period ... Soviet-Japanese relations will obviously revert to the status quo ante conclusion of the Pact". After further discussion, Molotov states: "The period of the Pact's validity has not ended".
Boris Nikolaevich Slavinskii, *The Japanese-Soviet Neutrality Pact: A Diplomatic History 1941–1945*, Translated by Geoffrey Jukes, 2004, Routledge. (Extracts on-line). Page 153-4.
Later in his book (page 184), Slavinskii further summarizes the chain of events:
- "Even after Germany's exit from the war, Moscow went on saying the Pact was still operative, and that Japan had no cause for anxiety about the future of Soviet-Japanese relations."
 - May 21, 1945: Malik (Soviet ambassador to Tokyo) tells Sukeatsu Tanakamura, representing Japanese fishing interests in Soviet waters, that the treaty continues in force.
 - May 29, 1945: Molotov tells Satō: "we have not torn up the pact".
 - June 24, 1945: Malik tells Kōki Hirota that the Neutrality Pact ...will continue ...until it expires.
- Note, however, that Malik did not know (had not been informed) that the Soviets were preparing to attack. Slavinskii, pg.184.
- [35] Frank, 93.
- [36] Frank, 95.
- [37] Frank, 93–94.
- [38] Frank, 96.
- [39] Toland, John. *The Rising Sun*. Modern Library, 2003. ISBN 978-0-8129-6858-3. Page 923.
- [40] Frank, 97, quoting *The Diary of Marquis Kido, 1931–45: Selected Translations into English*, p 435–436.
- [41] Frank, 97–99.
- [42] Frank, 100, quoting Terasaki, 136–37.
- [43] Frank, 102.
- [44] Frank, 94.
- [45] Frank, 221, citing *Magic Diplomatic Summary* No. 1201.
- [46] Frank, 222–3, citing *Magic Diplomatic Summary* No. 1205, 2 (PDF).
- [47] Frank, 226, citing *Magic Diplomatic Summary* No. 1208, 10–12.
- [48] Frank, 227, citing *Magic Diplomatic Summary* No. 1209.
- [49] Frank, 229, citing *Magic Diplomatic Summary* No. 1212.
- [50] Frank, 230, citing *Magic Diplomatic Summary* No. 1214, 2–3 (PDF).
- [51] "Some messages were deciphered and translated the same day and most within a week; a few in cases of key change took longer"—*The Oxford Guide to World War II*, ed. I.C.B. Dear. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. ISBN 978-0-19-534096-9 S.v. "MAGIC".
- [52] Hasegawa, 60.
- [53] Hasegawa, 19.
- [54] Hasegawa, 25.
- [55] Hasegawa, 32.
- [56] Hasegawa, 86.
- [57] Hasegawa, 115–116.
- [58] Frank, 279.
- [59] United States Army Corps of Engineers, Manhattan Engineer District (1946). "The atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki". OCLC 77648098. Retrieved January 23, 2011.
- [60] Quiner, Tom. "What lesson can we learn from Japan?". Retrieved December 30, 2013.
- [61] Frank, 254.
- [62] Hasegawa, 67.

- [63] David F. Schmitz. *Henry L. Stimson: The First Wise Man.* Rowman & Littlefield, 2001, ISBN 978-0-8420-2632-1. Page 182.
- [64] Hasegawa, 90.
- [65] Frank, 256.
- [66] Frank, 260.
- [67] Hasegawa, 152–153.
- [68] “American officials meeting in Washington on August 10, 1945 …decided that a useful dividing line between the U.S. and Soviet administrative occupation zones would be the 38th parallel across the midsection of the [Korean] peninsula, thereby leaving Korea’s central city, Seoul, within the U.S. zone. This arrangement was suggested to the Soviet side shortly after the USSR entered both the Pacific War and the Korean peninsula. The Soviets accepted that dividing line, even though their attempt to obtain a corresponding northern Japan occupation zone on the island of Hokkaido was rejected by Washington.” – Edward A. Olsen. *Korea, the Divided Nation.* Greenwood Publishing Group, 2005. ISBN 978-0-275-98307-9. Page 62.
- [69] Rhodes, 690.
- [70] Hasegawa, 145–148.
- [71] Hasegawa, 118–119.
- [72] Weintraub, 288.
- [73] Frank, 234.
- [74] Frank, 236, citing *Magic Diplomatic Summary* No. 1224.
- [75] Frank, 236, citing *Magic Diplomatic Summary* No. 1225, 2 (PDF).
- [76] Tucker, Spencer. *A Global Chronology of Conflict: From the Ancient World to the Modern Middle East: From the Ancient World to the Modern Middle East*, p. 2086 (ABC-CLIO, 2009).
- [77] *White House Press Release Announcing the Bombing of Hiroshima, August 6, 1945.* The American Experience: Truman. PBS.org. Sourced to The Harry S. Truman Library, “Army press notes,” box 4, Papers of Eben A. Ayers.
- [78] “While senior Japanese officers did not dispute the theoretical possibility of such weapons, they refused to concede that the United States had vaulted over the tremendous practical problems to create an atomic bomb.” On August 7, the Imperial Staff released a message saying that Hiroshima had been struck by a new type of bomb. A team led by Lieutenant General Seizō Arisue was sent to Hiroshima on August 8 to sort out several competing theories as to the cause of the explosion, including that Hiroshima was struck by a magnesium or liquid-oxygen bomb.—Frank, 270–271.
- [79] Frank, 270–271.
- [80] Frank, 283–284.
- [81] Soviet Declaration of War on Japan, August 8, 1945. (Avalon Project at Yale University)
- [82] The Soviets delivered a declaration of war to Japanese ambassador Satō in Moscow two hours before the invasion of Manchuria. However, despite assurances to the contrary they did not deliver Satō’s cable notifying Tokyo of the declaration, and cut the embassy phone lines. This was revenge for the Japanese sneak attack on Port Arthur 40 years earlier. The Japanese found out about the attack from radio broadcast from Moscow.—Butow, 154–164; Hoyt, 401.
- [83] Wilson, Ward (30 May 2013). “The Bomb Didn’t Beat Japan... Stalin Did” . *foreignpolicy.com*. Retrieved 18 June 2016.
- [84] Sadao Asada. “The Shock of the Atomic Bomb and Japan’s Decision to Surrender: A Reconsideration” . *The Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 67, No. 4 (Nov. 1998), pp. 477–512.
- [85] Frank, 288–9.
- [86] Diary of Kōichi Kido, 1966, p. 1223.
- [87] Frank, 290–91.
- [88] Radio Report to the American People on the Potsdam Conference by President Harry S. Truman, Delivered from the White House at 10 p.m., August 9, 1945
- [89] Hasagawa, 207–208.
- [90] Jerome T. Hagen. *War in the Pacific: America at War, Volume I.* Hawaii Pacific University, ISBN 978-0-9762669-0-7. Chapter, “The Lie of Marcus McDilda”, 159–162.
- [91] Hasegawa 298.
- [92] A few hours before the Japanese surrender was announced, Truman had a discussion with the Duke of Windsor and Sir John Balfour (British ambassador to the U.S.). According to Balfour, Truman “remarked sadly that he now had no alternative but to order an atomic bomb dropped on Tokyo”.—Frank, 327, citing Bernstein, *Eclipsed by Hiroshima and Nagasaki*, p 167.
- [93] Hasagawa, 209.
- [94] Frank, 295–296.
- [95] Bix, 517, citing Yoshida, *Nihonjin no sensōkan*, 42–43.
- [96] Hoyt, 405.
- [97] Frank, 302.
- [98] Frank, 303.
- [99] While the ceasefire was in effect, Spaatz made a momentous decision. Based on evidence from the European Strategic Bombing Survey, he ordered the strategic bombing to refocus its efforts away from firebombing Japanese cities, to concentrate on wiping out Japanese oil and transportation infrastructure. Frank, 303–307.
- [100] Frank, 310.
- [101] Terasaki, 129.

- [102] Bix, 129.
- [103] Frank, 313.
- [104] Smith, 188.
- [105] Wesley F. Craven and James L. Cate, *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, Vol. 5, pp. 732–33. (Catalog entry, U Washington.)
- [106] Smith, 183.
- [107] Smith, 187.
- [108] Smith 187–188 notes that though the daytime bombers had already attacked Japan, the night bombers had not yet taken off when radio notification of the surrender was received. Smith also notes that, despite substantial efforts, he has found no historical documentation relating to Carl Spaatz's order to go ahead with the attack.
- [109] Frank, 314.
- [110] Frank, 315.
- [111] Bix, 558.
- [112] MacArthur, Douglas. “Reports of General MacArthur Vol II - Part II” . US Army Center of Military History. Retrieved 16 February 2016. On the same day that the Rescript to the armed forces was issued, three Imperial Princes left Tokyo by air as personal representatives of the Emperor to urge compliance with the surrender decision upon the major overseas commands. The envoys chosen all held military rank as officers of the Army, and they had been guaranteed safety of movement by General MacArthur's headquarters. General Prince Yasuhiko Asaka was dispatched as envoy to the headquarters of the expeditionary forces in China, Maj. Gen. Prince Haruhiko Kanin to the Southern Army, and Lt. Col. Prince Tsuneyoshi Takeda to the Kwantung Army in Manchuria.
- [113] Fuller, Richard *Shokan: Hirohito's Samurai* 1992 p.290 ISBN 1-85409-151-4
- [114] Hasegawa, 244.
- [115] Hoyt, 409.
- [116] Frank, 316.
- [117] Frank, 318.
- [118] Hoyt 407–408.
- [119] Frank, 317.
- [120] Frank, 319.
- [121] Butow, 220.
- [122] Hoyt, 409–410.
- [123] The Pacific War Research Society, 227.
- [124] The Pacific War Research Society, 309.
- [125] Butow, 216.
- [126] Hoyt, 410.
- [127] The Pacific War Research Society, 279.
- [128] Wainstock, 115.
- [129] The Pacific War Research Society, 246.
- [130] Hasegawa, 247.
- [131] The Pacific War Research Society, 283.
- [132] Hoyt, 411.
- [133] The Pacific War Research Society, 303.
- [134] The Pacific War Research Society, 290.
- [135] The Pacific War Research Society, 311.
- [136] “Text of Hirohito's Radio Rescript”, *The New York Times*, p. 3, 15 August 1945, retrieved 8 August 2015
- [137] Dower, 34.
- [138] “The Emperor's Speech: 67 Years Ago, Hirohito Transformed Japan Forever” . The Atlantic. Retrieved May 23, 2013.
- [139] Dower, 38–39.
- [140] Spector, 558. (Spector incorrectly identifies Higashikuni as the Emperor's brother.)
- [141] The Last to Die | Military Aviation | Air & Space Magazine. Airspacemag.com. Retrieved on 2010-08-05.
- [142] Which day they celebrate V-J day depends on the local time at which they received word of Japan's surrender. British Commonwealth countries celebrate the 15th, whereas the United States celebrates the 14th.
- [143] Hasegawa, 271ff
- [144] Individuals and prefectural offices could apply for permission to fly it. The restriction was partially lifted in 1948 and completely lifted the following year.
- [145] USS *Missouri* was anchored at 35° 21' 17" N 139° 45' 36"E'
- [146] USS *Missouri* Instrument of Surrender, WWII, Pearl Harbor, Historical Marker Database, www.hmdb.org, Retrieved 2012-03-27.
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- [157] Dower, 51.
- [158] Cook 40, 468.
- [159] Weinberg, 892.
- [160] Cook 403 gives the total number of Japanese servicemen as 4,335,500 in Japan on the day of the surrender, with an additional 3,527,000 abroad.
- [161] Frank, 350–352.
- [162] Cook contains an interview with Iitoyo Shogo about his experiences as POW of the British at Galang Island—known to prisoners as “Starvation Island” .
- [163] “Preface” . Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.
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12.14 External links

- Japanese Instruments of Surrender
- Original document: surrender of Japan
- United Newsreel of surrender on YouTube
- Hirohito's Determination of surrender 終戦Shūsen (Japanese)
- Minutes of private talk between British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Marshal Joseph Stalin at the Potsdam Conference on July 17, 1945
- Article concerning Japan's surrender

Chapter 13

Decolonisation of Asia

The **decolonization of Asia** was the gradual growth of independence movements on the Asian continent, leading ultimately to the retreat of foreign powers and the creation of a number of nation-states in the region. A number of events were catalysts for this shift, most importantly the Second World War. Prior to World War II, some countries such as the **Philippines** during 1898 had proclaimed independence from Spain.

13.1 Background

Main article: Western imperialism in Asia

European powers began colonizing Asia in the early 16th century, beginning with the Portuguese seizure of sites along the west coast of India, **Ceylon** and **Malacca**. In 1511, Portugal established a permanent base in Malacca. In 1565, Spain commenced its colonization of the Philippine Islands, creating a long sea trade route via Mexico to Spain.

The decline of Spain and Portugal in the 17th century paved the way for other European powers, namely the Netherlands, France and England. Portugal would lose influence in all but three of its colonies, **Portuguese India**, **Macau** and **Timor**.

By the end of the 17th century, the Dutch had taken over much of the old Portuguese colonies, and had established a strong presence in present-day Indonesia, with colonies in **Aceh**, **Bantam**, **Makassar** and **Jakarta**. The Dutch also had trade links with **Siam**, Japan, China and **Bengal**.

The British had competed with Portuguese, Spanish and Dutch for their interests in Asia since the early 17th century, and by the mid-19th century held much of India (via the **British East India Company**), as well as **Burma**, **Ceylon**, **Malaya** and **Singapore**. After India's First War of Independence of 1857, Queen Victoria was declared Empress of India, thus solidifying the British rule on the subcontinent. The last British acquisition in Asia was the **New Territories** of Hong Kong, which was leased from the **Qing emperor** in 1897, expanding the British colony originally ceded in the **Treaty of Nanking** in 1842.

The French had little success in India following de-

feats against the British in the 17th century, though they held onto possessions on the east coast of India (such as **Pondicherry** and **Mahar**) until decolonisation. The French established their most lucrative and substantial colony in Indochina from 1862, eventually occupying the present-day areas of **Vietnam**, **Laos**, and **Cambodia** by 1887.

Japan's first colony was the island of **Taiwan**, occupied in 1874 and officially ceded by the **Qing emperor** in 1894. Japan continued its early imperialism with the annexation of Korea in 1910.

The United States entered the region in 1898 during the **Spanish–American War**, taking the **Philippines** as its sole colony through a mock battle in the capital and the purchase of the Philippines from Spain after the declaration of independence and the First Philippine Republic.

13.2 Asian colonies from the 19th century to the end of the Second World War

The following list shows the colonial powers following the end of **World War II** in 1945, their colonial or administrative possessions, and date of decolonization.

-  **United Kingdom:**
 -  **Afghanistan** (1919)
 -  **India** (1947)
 -  **Burma** (1948)
 -  **Palestine** (1948)
 -  **Ceylon** (1948)
 -  **Malaya** (1957)
 -  **North Borneo** (1963)
 -  **Sarawak** (1963)
 -  **Singapore** (1963)
 -  **Brunei** (1984)
 -  **Hong Kong** (1997)

-  France:
 -  Vietnam (1945)
 -  Cambodia (1953)
 -  Laos (1953)
 - French India (1954)
-  Portugal:
 - Portuguese India (1961)
 -  Macau (1999)
 -  Timor-Leste (1975/2002)
-  Spain:
 -  Guam (1898)
 -  Philippines (1898)
 -  F.S. Micronesia (1899)
 -  Northern Mariana Islands (1899)
 -  Palau (1899)
-  Netherlands:
 -  Indonesia (1945)
 - Netherlands New Guinea (1962)
-  Australia:
 -  Papua New Guinea (1975)
-  United States:
 -  Philippines (1946)
-  Japan:
 -  North Korea (1945)
 -  South Korea (1945)
 - Taiwan (1945)

13.3 Individual countries

13.3.1 Burma

See Burma's colonial era.

Burma was almost completely occupied by the Imperial Japanese Army during the Second World War. Many Burmese fought alongside Japan in the initial stages of the war, though the Burmese Army and most Burmese switched sides in 1945.

A transitional government sponsored by the British government was formed in the years following the Second World War, ultimately leading to Burma's independence in January 1948.

13.3.2 Cambodia

See Cambodia's passage to independence.

Following the capitulation of France and the formation of the Vichy regime, France's Indochinese possessions were given to Japan. While there was some argument that Indochina should not be returned to France, particularly from the United States, Cambodia nevertheless remained under French rule after the end of hostilities.

France had placed Norodom Sihanouk on the throne in 1941, and were hoping for a puppet monarch. They were mistaken however, as the King led the way to Cambodian independence in 1953, taking advantage of the background of the First Indochina War being fought in Vietnam.

13.3.3 Ceylon

See Ceylon and independence.

Ceylon was an important base of operations for the Western Allies during the Second World War. The British gave in to popular pressure for independence and in February 1948, the country won its independence as the Dominion of Ceylon.

13.3.4 Hong Kong

Hong Kong was returned to the United Kingdom following its occupation by the Japanese during the Second World War. It was controlled directly by a British governor until the expiry of the hundred-year lease, which occurred in 1997. From that date the territory was controlled as a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.

13.3.5 Philippines

The Philippines unilaterally declared independence from Spain on 12 June 1898 under the leadership of President Emilio Aguinaldo, culminating the 1896 Revolution. Unbeknownst to the newly established government and the Filipino people in general, the United States of America had secretly arranged to purchase the colony along with several other possessions from Spain through the Treaty of Paris that concluded the Spanish–American War. After staging a mock battle in Manila, the Philippine–American War ensued until the Philippine government capitulated in 1902.

The Philippines subsequently underwent successive stages of rule under the United States, first as an unincorporated territory, then as a Commonwealth. It was then occupied by the Japanese during the Second World War and, after the Allied victory in 1945, granted full independence by the United States on 4 July 1946.

13.4 Timeline

The “colonial power” and “colonial name” columns are merged when required to denote territories, where current countries are established, that have not been de-colonised, but achieved independence in different ways.

13.5 See also

- United Nations list of Non-Self-Governing Territories
- List of dependent territories
- Colonialism
- Imperialism in Asia
- Taiwan under Japanese rule
- Decolonisation
- Wars of national liberation

13.6 Notes

- [1] Timeline list arranged according to current countries. Explanatory notes are added in cases where decolonization was achieved jointly or where the current state is formed by merger of previously decolonized states.
- [2] Some territories changed hands multiple times, so in the list is mentioned the last colonial power. In addition to it the mandatory or trustee powers are mentioned for territories that were League of Nations mandates and United Nations trust territories.
- [3] Date of decolonization. Dates for territories annexed by or integrated into previously decolonized independent countries are given in separate notes. Subsequent mergers, secessions and civil and other wars in the period after decolonization and the resulting states and federations are not part of this list - see the list of sovereign states by formation date.
- [4] First head of state after independence. For current and former Commonwealth realms instead of first head of state is listed the first head of government.
- [5] Turkey succeeded the Ottoman Empire on 24 July 1923 following the Turkish War of Independence against some of the Entente Powers of World War I.
- [6] After the overthrow of Mongol rule China was organized under the Ming Dynasty, to be succeeded by the Qing Dynasty, then by the Republic of China and that is competing to present day with the People's Republic of China.
- [7] China has endured many modifications to its territory. Some of these include the establishment of small foreign concessions and colonies by European states (Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Portugal, Russia), Japan (including larger territories like Manchukuo) and the United States. The last of these territories, Hong Kong and Macau were returned to Chinese sovereignty in 1997 and 1999 by Britain and Portugal respectively. Because of the Chinese Civil War since 1 October 1949 there are two competing governments of China - one with de facto control over the island of Taiwan (RoC) and the other - over the mainland (PRC).
- [8] In the 1896-19 period there were the Philippine Revolution and Philippine-American War Prior to American invasion and annexation, the country declared independence from Spain during 1898.
- [9] North Yemen and South Yemen were unified into the Republic of Yemen on 22 May 1990.
- [10] As the Dominion of Pakistan.
- [11] See Pakistan Movement.
- [12] Subsequently, a free and sovereign India unilaterally annexed Hyderabad State from a local ruler in 1948 and Goa from Portugal in 1961; Puducherry was ceded by France in 1954.
- [13] See Indian independence movement and Goa liberation movement.
- [14] The Korea peninsula was liberated from Japan on 15 August 1945. The southern half was put under United States administration until 15 August 1948. The northern half was put under Soviet administration until 9 September 1948.
- [15] Transcontinental country, partially located in Oceania.
- [16] Netherlands New Guinea was separated from the Dutch East Indies on 29 December 1950. Following skirmishes with Indonesia in 1961 and the New York Agreement, the Netherlands transferred authority of Dutch New Guinea to a UN protectorate on 1 October 1962 and it was integrated into Indonesia on 1 May 1963.
- [17] Transcontinental country, partially located in Africa.
- [18] North Vietnam proclaimed independence on 2 September 1945 as the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The State of Vietnam declared independence on 14 June 1949, but remained de facto under French rule until 1 August 1954. South Vietnam was the successor state to the State of Vietnam under the name of Republic of Vietnam. Both parts of Vietnam merged into the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on 30 April 1975, after the Vietnam War.
- [19] The Malayan Communist Party fought in the Malayan Emergency between June 1948 – 12 July 1960.
- [20] Armed struggles by the EOKA (Greek) and TMT (Turkish) organizations.

- [21] Muscat and Oman was de facto a British protectorate. On 4 June 1856, the Sultan who ruled from Stone Town, Zanzibar, died without appointing an heir. With British intervention on 6 April 1861, Zanzibar and Oman were divided into two separate principalities. Zanzibar later became a formal British protectorate, but the British influence over Muscat and Oman remained informal. In 1962 Britain declared Muscat and Oman an independent nation.
- [22] See the Dhofar Rebellion defeated with British help.
- [23] Between 16 September 1963 and 9 August 1965 Singapore was part of the Federation of Malaysia.
- [24] The independent UAE was joined by Ras al-Khaimah on 11 February 1972.
- [25] See March Intifada of 1965.
- [26] The Brunei Revolt was a rebellion against the sultan suppressed with British assistance in 1966.
- [27] Transcontinental country]], located in Oceania, but sometimes considered Asian.
- [28] Independence was declared on 28 November 1975, but nine days later began the Indonesian invasion of East Timor. Independence was restored after UN intervention from 25 October 1999 till 20 May 2002.
- [29] In 1948 the Palestinian territories were divided between Israel, Egypt and Jordan. Following decades of Arab-Israeli conflict the State of Palestine was proclaimed in 1988 by the Palestine Liberation Organization, but its control over the West Bank and Gaza (through the Palestinian National Authority) is still limited by Israel.* [30] See also Israeli-occupied territories.
- [30] Israel allows the PNA to execute some functions in the Palestinian territories, depending on the area classification. It maintains minimal interference (retaining control of borders: air,* [31] sea beyond internal waters,* [31]* [32] land*[33]) in the Gaza Strip (its interior and Egypt portion of the land border are under Hamas control), and varying degrees of interference elsewhere.* [34]* [35]* [36]* [37]<ref>Salih, Zak M. (17 November 2005). “Panelists Disagree Over Gaza’s Occupation Status” . University of Virginia School of Law. Retrieved 26 September 2011.
- [31] Israel's control of the airspace and the territorial waters of the Gaza Strip.
- [32] Map of Gaza fishing limits, “security zones” .
- [33] Israel's Disengagement Plan: Renewing the Peace Process: “Israel will guard the perimeter of the Gaza Strip, continue to control Gaza air space, and continue to patrol the sea off the Gaza coast. ... Israel will continue to maintain its essential military presence to prevent arms smuggling along the border between the Gaza Strip and Egypt (Philadelphi Route), until the security situation and cooperation with Egypt permit an alternative security arrangement.”
- [34] “Israel: ‘Disengagement’ Will Not End Gaza Occupation” . Human Rights Watch. 29 October 2004. Retrieved 16 July 2010.
- [35] Gold, Dore; Institute for Contemporary Affairs (26 August 2005). “Legal Acrobatics: The Palestinian Claim that Gaza Is Still ‘Occupied’ Even After Israel Withdraws” . *Jerusalem Issue Brief*. Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs. 5 (3). Retrieved 16 July 2010.
- [36] Bell, Abraham (28 January 2008). “International Law and Gaza: The Assault on Israel’s Right to Self-Defense” . *Jerusalem Issue Brief*. Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs. 7 (29). Retrieved 16 July 2010.
- [37] Transcript (22 January 2008). “Address by FM Livni to the 8th Herzliya Conference” . Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Retrieved 26 September 2011.
- [38] Also referred to as Judea and Samaria Area or West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Chapter 14

The Holocaust

“Holocaust” and “Shoah” redirect here. For other uses, see [Holocaust \(disambiguation\)](#) and [Shoah \(disambiguation\)](#).

The Holocaust (from the Greek ὄλόκαυστος *holókaustos*: *hólos*, “whole” and *kaustós*, “burnt”),^{*[3]} also known as the **Shoah** (Hebrew: השואה, *HaShoah*, “the catastrophe”), was a genocide in which Adolf Hitler’s Nazi Germany and its collaborators killed about six million Jews.^{*[4]} The victims included 1.5 million children^{*[5]} and represented about two-thirds of the nine million Jews who had resided in Europe.^{*[6]} Some definitions of the Holocaust include the additional five million non-Jewish victims of Nazi mass murders, bringing the total to about 11 million. Killings took place throughout Nazi Germany, German-occupied territories^{*[7]} and territories held by allies of Nazi Germany.

From 1941 to 1945, Jews were systematically murdered in the [deadliest genocide in history](#), which was part of a broader aggregate of acts of oppression and killings of various ethnic and political groups in Europe by the Nazi regime.^{*[8]} Under the coordination of the SS, following directions from the highest leadership of the Nazi Party, every arm of Germany’s bureaucracy was involved in the logistics and the carrying out of the genocide. Other victims of Nazi crimes included ethnic Poles, Soviet citizens and Soviet POWs, other Slavs, Romanis, communists, homosexuals, Freemasons, Jehovah’s Witnesses and the mentally and physically disabled.^{*[9]*[10]*[11]} A network of about 42,500 facilities in Germany and German-occupied territories was used to concentrate victims for slave labor, mass murder, and other human rights abuses.^{*[12]} Over 200,000 people are estimated to have been Holocaust perpetrators.^{*[13]}

The persecution and genocide were carried out in stages, culminating in what Nazis termed the “Final Solution to the Jewish Question” (*die Endlösung der Judenfrage*), an agenda to exterminate Jews in Europe. Initially the German government passed laws to exclude Jews from civil society, most prominently the [Nuremberg Laws of 1935](#). Nazis established a network of [concentration camps](#) starting in 1933 and [ghettos](#) following the outbreak of [World War II](#) in 1939. In 1941, as Germany conquered new

territory in eastern Europe, specialized paramilitary units called [Einsatzgruppen](#) murdered around two million Jews, partisans, and others often in mass shootings. By the end of 1942, victims were being regularly transported by freight trains to [extermination camps](#) where, if they survived the journey, most were systematically killed in gas chambers. This continued until the [end of World War II](#) in Europe in April–May 1945.

Jewish armed resistance was limited. The most notable exception was the [Warsaw Ghetto uprising](#) of 1943, when thousands of poorly-armed Jewish fighters held the [Waffen-SS](#) at bay for four weeks. An estimated 20,000–30,000 Jewish partisans actively fought against the Nazis and their collaborators in Eastern Europe.^{*[14]*[15]} French Jews took part in the [French Resistance](#), which conducted a guerilla campaign against the Nazis and [Vichy French authorities](#). Over a hundred armed Jewish uprisings took place.^{*[16]}

14.1 Etymology and use of the term

Main article: [Names of the Holocaust](#)

The term *holocaust* comes from the Greek word *holókauston*, referring to an animal sacrifice offered to a god in which the whole (*olos*) animal is completely burnt (*kaustos*).^{*[17]}

Writing in Latin, Richard of Devizes, a 12th-century monk, was the first to use in his *Chronicon de rebus gestis Ricardi Primi* (1192) the term “holocaustum”.^{*[18]} The earliest use of the word *holocaust* to denote a massacre recorded by the *Oxford English Dictionary* dates from 1833 when the journalist Leitch Ritchie, describing the wars of the medieval French monarch Louis VII, wrote that he “once made a holocaust of thirteen hundred persons in a church”, a massacre by fire of the inhabitants of Vitry-le-François in 1142. The English poet John Milton had used the word to denote a conflagration in his 1671 poem *Samson Agonistes* and the word gradually developed to mean a massacre thereon.^{*[19]*[20]} The term was used in the 1950s by historians as a translation of the Jewish word *shoah* to refer specifically to the Nazi

genocide of Jews.*[21]*[20] The television mini-series *Holocaust* is credited with introducing the term into common parlance after 1978.*[22]

The biblical word *shoah* (שֹׁאָה; also transliterated *sho'ah* and *shoa*), meaning “calamity” became the standard Hebrew term for the Holocaust as early as the 1940s, especially in Europe and Israel.*[23] *Shoah* is preferred by some Jews for several reasons including the theologically offensive nature of the word “holocaust” which they take to refer to the Greek pagan custom.*[24]

The Nazis used the phrase “Final Solution to the Jewish Question” and the formula “Final Solution” has been widely used as a term for the genocide of the Jews.

14.2 Distinctive features

14.2.1 Institutional collaboration



Ghettos were established in which Jews were confined before being shipped to extermination camps.

All branches of Germany's bureaucracy were engaged in the logistics that led to the genocides, turning the Third Reich into what one Holocaust scholar, Michael Berenbaum, has called “a genocidal state”.*[25]

Every arm of the country's sophisticated bureaucracy was involved in the killing process. Parish churches and the Interior Ministry supplied birth records showing who was Jewish; the Post Office delivered the deportation and denaturalization orders; the Finance Ministry confiscated Jewish property; German firms fired Jewish workers and disenfranchised Jewish stockholders.

The universities refused to admit Jews, denied degrees to those already studying, and fired Jewish academics; government transport offices arranged the trains for deportation to the camps; German pharmaceutical companies

tested drugs on camp prisoners; companies bid for the contracts to build the crematoria; detailed lists of victims were drawn up using the Dehomag (IBM Germany) company's punch card machines, producing meticulous records of the killings. As prisoners entered the death camps, they were made to surrender all personal property, which was catalogued and tagged before being sent to Germany to be reused or recycled. Berenbaum writes that the Final Solution of the Jewish question was “in the eyes of the perpetrators ... Germany's greatest achievement.”*[26] Through a concealed account, the German National Bank helped launder valuables stolen from the victims.

Saul Friedländer writes that: “Not one social group, not one religious community, not one scholarly institution or professional association in Germany and throughout Europe declared its solidarity with the Jews.”*[27] He writes that some Christian churches declared that converted Jews should be regarded as part of the flock, but even then only up to a point. Friedländer argues that this makes the Holocaust distinctive because antisemitic policies were able to unfold without the interference of countervailing forces of the kind normally found in advanced societies such as industry, small businesses, churches, trade unions, and other vested interests and lobby groups.*[27]

14.2.2 Ideology and scale

In many other genocides, pragmatic considerations such as control of territory and resources were central to the genocide policy. Israeli historian and scholar Yehuda Bauer argues:

The basic motivation [of the Holocaust] was purely ideological, rooted in an illusionary world of Nazi imagination, where an international Jewish conspiracy to control the world was opposed to a parallel Aryan quest. No genocide to date had been based so completely on myths, on hallucinations, on abstract, non-pragmatic ideology—which was then executed by very rational, pragmatic means.*[28]

German historian Eberhard Jäckel wrote in 1986 that one distinctive feature of the Holocaust was:

Never before had a state with the authority of its responsible leader decided and announced that a specific human group, including its aged, its women and its children and infants, would be killed as quickly as possible, and then carried through this resolution using every possible means of state power.*[29]

The killings were systematically conducted in virtually all areas of German-occupied territory in what are now 35

separate European countries.*[30] It was at its most severe in Central and Eastern Europe, which had more than seven million Jews in 1939. About five million Jews were killed there, including three million in occupied Poland and over one million in the Soviet Union. Hundreds of thousands also died in the Netherlands, France, Belgium, Yugoslavia, and Greece. The **Wannsee Protocol** makes it clear the Nazis intended to carry their “final solution of the Jewish question” to Britain and all neutral states in Europe, such as Ireland, Switzerland, Turkey, Sweden, Portugal, and Spain.*[31]

Anyone with three or four Jewish grandparents was to be exterminated without exception. The Nazis envisioned the extermination of the Jews worldwide, not only in Germany proper,*[32] unless their grandparents had converted before 18 January 1871.*[33]

14.2.3 Extermination camps

Main article: **Extermination camp**

The use of extermination camps (also called “death camps”) equipped with gas chambers for the systematic mass extermination of peoples was an unprecedented feature of the Holocaust. These were established at Auschwitz, Belzec, Chełmno, Jasenovac, Majdanek, Maly Trostenets, Sobibór, and Treblinka. They were built for the systematic killing of millions, primarily by gassing, but also by execution and extreme work under starvation conditions.*[34] Stationary facilities built for the purpose of mass extermination resulted from earlier Nazi experimentation with poison gas during the secret **Action T4** euthanasia programme against mental patients.*[35]

14.2.4 Medical experiments

Further information: **Nazi human experimentation**

A distinctive feature of Nazi genocide was the ex-



Romani children in Auschwitz, victims of medical experiments

tensive use of human subjects in “medical” experiments. According to **Raul Hilberg**, “German physicians were highly Nazified, compared to other professionals, in terms of party membership.”* [36] Some carried out experiments at Auschwitz, Dachau, Buchenwald, Ravensbrück, Sachsenhausen, and Natzweiler concentration camps.*[37]

The most notorious of these physicians was **Josef Mengele**, who worked in Auschwitz. His experiments included placing subjects in pressure chambers, testing drugs on them, freezing them, attempting to change eye color by injecting chemicals into children’s eyes, and amputations and other surgeries.*[37] The full extent of his work is unknown as **Otmar von Verschuer** destroyed the truckload of records Mengele sent to him at the **Kaiser Wilhelm Institute**.* [38] Subjects who survived Mengele’s experiments were almost always killed and dissected shortly afterwards.

Mengele worked extensively with Romani children. He would bring them sweets and toys and personally take them to the gas chamber. They would call him “Onkel (Uncle) Mengele”.* [39] Vera Alexander was a Jewish inmate at Auschwitz who looked after 50 sets of Romani twins:

I remember one set of twins in particular: Guido and Ina, aged about four. One day, Mengele took them away. When they returned, they were in a terrible state: they had been sewn together, back to back, like Siamese twins. Their wounds were infected and oozing pus. They screamed day and night. Then their parents—I remember the mother’s name was Stella—managed to get some morphine and they killed the children in order to end their suffering.* [39]

14.3 Development and execution

14.3.1 Origins

See also: **History of the Jews in Germany**, **Antisemitism**, **Christianity and antisemitism**, **Martin Luther and antisemitism**, and **Nazi boycott of Jewish businesses**

Yehuda Bauer and **Lucy Dawidowicz** maintained that from the Middle Ages onward, German society and culture were suffused with antisemitism, and that there was a direct ideological link from medieval pogroms such as the Rhineland massacres to the Nazi death camps.* [40]

The second half of the 19th century saw the emergence in **Germany** and **Austria-Hungary** of the **Völkisch** movement developed by such thinkers as **Houston Stewart Chamberlain** and **Paul de Lagarde**. The movement presented a pseudo-scientific, biologically based racism that viewed

Jews as a race locked in mortal combat with the Aryan race for world domination.*[41] *Völkisch* antisemitism drew upon stereotypes from Christian antisemitism but differed in that Jews were considered to be a race rather than a religion.*[42]

Friedrich Nietzsche, an opponent of antisemitism and nationalism, wrote in 1886:

The whole problem of the Jews exists only in nation states, for here their energy and higher intelligence, their accumulated capital of spirit and will, gathered from generation to generation through a long schooling in suffering, must become so preponderant as to arouse mass envy and hatred. In almost all contemporary nations, therefore—in direct proportion to the degree to which they act up nationalistically—the literal obscenity of leading the Jews to slaughter as scapegoats for every conceivable public and internal misfortune is spreading.

—Friedrich Nietzsche, 1886, [HH 1 475, (translation: R. J. Hollingdale)]*[43]

In a speech before the *Reichstag* in 1895, *völkisch* leader Hermann Ahlwardt called Jews “predators” and “cholera bacilli” who should be “exterminated” for the good of the German people.*[44] In his best-selling 1912 book *Wenn ich der Kaiser wär* (*If I were the Kaiser*), Heinrich Class, leader of the *völkisch* group *Alldeutscher Verband*, urged that all German Jews be stripped of their German citizenship and be reduced to *Fremdenrecht* (alien status).*[45] Class also urged that Jews should be excluded from all aspects of German life, forbidden to own land, hold public office, or participate in journalism, banking, and the liberal professions.*[45] Class defined a Jew as anyone who was a member of the Jewish religion on the day the German Empire was proclaimed in 1871 or anyone with at least one Jewish grandparent.*[45]

The first medical experimentation on humans and ethnic cleansing by Germans took place in the death camps of German South-West Africa during the Herero and Namaqua Genocide. It has been suggested that this was an inspiration for the Holocaust.*[46]*[47]

During the era of the German Empire, *völkisch* notions and pseudo-scientific racism had become commonplace and were accepted throughout Germany,*[48] with the educated professional classes of the country, in particular, adopting an ideology of human inequality.*[49] Though the *völkisch* parties were defeated in the 1912 *Reichstag* elections, being all but wiped out, antisemitism was incorporated into the platforms of the mainstream political parties.*[48] The National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nazi Party; NSDAP) was founded in 1920 as an offshoot of the *völkisch* movement and adopted their antisemitism.*[50] In a 1986 es-

say, German historian Hans Mommsen wrote about the situation in post-First World War Germany that:

If one emphasizes the indisputably important connection in isolation, one should not then force a connection with Hitler's *weltanschauung* [worldview], which was in no ways original itself, in order to derive from it the existence of Auschwitz.[...] Thoughts about the extermination of the Jews had long been current, and not only for Hitler and his satraps. Many of these found their way to the NSDAP from the *Deutschvölkisch Schutz-und Trutzbund* [German Racial Union for Protection and Defiance], which itself had been called into life by the Pan-German Union.*[51]

Tremendous scientific and technological changes in Germany during the late 19th and early 20th centuries together with the growth of the welfare state created widespread hopes that utopia was at hand and that soon all social problems could be solved.*[52] At the same time a racist, social Darwinist, and eugenics world-view which declared some people to be more biologically valuable than others was common.*[53] Historian Detlev Peukert states that the Shoah did not result solely from antisemitism, but was a product of the “cumulative radicalization” in which “numerous smaller currents” fed into the “broad current” that led to genocide.*[54] After the First World War, the pre-war mood of optimism gave way to disillusionment as German bureaucrats found social problems to be more insoluble than previously thought, which in turn led them to place increasing emphasis on saving the biologically “fit” while the biologically “unfit” were to be written off.*[55]



Antisemitism in Germany: on 1 April 1933 SA troopers urge a national boycott of Jewish businesses. Here they are outside Israel's Department Store in Berlin. The signs read: “Germans! Defend yourselves! Don't buy from Jews.” (“Deutsche! Wehrt Euch! Kauft nicht bei Juden!”)[56] The store was later ransacked during Kristallnacht in 1938, then handed over to a non-Jewish family.*

The political situation in Germany and elsewhere in Europe after World War I also contributed to virulent antisemitism. Many Germans did not accept that their

country had been defeated in battle, giving rise to the **Stab-in-the-back myth**. The myth insinuated that it was disloyal politicians, chiefly Jews and Communists, who orchestrated Germany's surrender. Inflaming the anti-Jewish sentiment espoused by the myth was the apparent overrepresentation of ethnic Jews in the leadership of Communist revolutionary governments in Europe, among them Russian Bolshevik leader **Vladimir Lenin**, and in Germany itself **Ernst Toller** as head of a short lived revolutionary government in Bavaria, contributing to the canard of **Jewish Bolshevism**.^{*[57]}

The economic strains of the **Great Depression** led many in the German medical establishment to advocate the idea of euthanasia of the “incurable” mentally and physically disabled as a cost-saving measure to free up money to care for the curable.^{*[58]} By the time the Nazis came to power in 1933, a tendency already existed in the German social policy to save the racially “valuable” while seeking to rid society of the racially “undesirable”.^{*[59]}

Although Hitler never wrote that he would exterminate the Jews, he was open about his hatred of them. Although the origin and first expression of Hitler's anti-Semitism remain a matter of debate.^{*[60]} Hitler states in *Mein Kampf* that he first became an anti-Semite in Vienna.^{*[61]} In *Mein Kampf*, he announced his intention of removing them from Germany's political, intellectual, and cultural life. From the early 1920s Hitler linked the Jews with bacteria and that they should be dealt with in exactly the same way; in August 1920 he said that resolving “racial tuberculosis” would be solved by the removal of the “causal agent, the Jew”.^{*[62]} In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler wrote: “The nationalization of our masses will succeed only when, aside from all the positive struggle for the soul of our people, their international poisoners are exterminated.”^{*[62]} Hitler with the idea of poisoning the poisoners suggested: “If at the beginning of the War and during the War twelve or fifteen thousand of these Hebrew corrupters of the people had been held under poison gas, as happened to hundreds of thousands of our very best German workers in the field, the sacrifice of millions at the front would not have been in vain”.^{*[62]} Hitler had by now viewed Marxism as a Jewish doctrine and proclaimed he was fighting against “Jewish Marxism”.^{*[63]}

During his time writing *Mein Kampf*, Hitler reflected on the Jewish Question and concluded that he had been too soft and in the future only the most severe measures were to be taken if there was any chance of solving it. Hitler believed the Jewish Question was not only a problem for the German people but for all peoples as “Juda is the world plague”.^{*[64]} Ian Kershaw writes that some passages in *Mein Kampf* are undeniably of an inherently genocidal nature.^{*[62]}

In 1922, he allegedly told Major Joseph Hell, at the time a journalist:

Once I really am in power, my first and foremost task will be the annihilation of the

Jews. As soon as I have the power to do so, I will have gallows built in rows—at the Marienplatz in Munich, for example—as many as traffic allows. Then the Jews will be hanged indiscriminately, and they will remain hanging until they stink; they will hang there as long as the principles of hygiene permit. As soon as they have been untied, the next batch will be strung up, and so on down the line, until the last Jew in Munich has been exterminated. Other cities will follow suit, precisely in this fashion, until all Germany has been completely cleansed of Jews.^{*[65]}

As early as 1933, Julius Streicher was calling for the extermination of the Jews in the Nazi newspaper *Der Stürmer*.^{*[66]} During the war, Streicher regularly authorized articles demanding the annihilation of the Jewish race.^{*[67]}

Mommsen suggested there were three types of antisemitism in Germany: 1) the cultural antisemitism found among German conservatives, especially in the military officer corps as well as in the top members of the civil administration; 2) the “volkisch” antisemitism or racism which advocated using violence against the Jews; and 3) the religious anti-Judaism, particularly within the Catholic Church. The cultural antisemitism kept the ruling establishment from distancing itself or opposing the violent, racial antisemitism of the Nazis, and religious antisemitism meant that the religious establishment did not present opposition to racial persecution of the Jews.^{*[68]}

14.3.2 Legal repression and emigration

Further information: Anti-Jewish legislation in pre-war Nazi Germany, Racial policy of Nazi Germany, Nuremberg Laws, Haavara Agreement, and Jews escaping from Nazi Europe to Britain

With the establishment of the Third Reich, Nazi leaders proclaimed the existence of a *Volksgemeinschaft* (“people's community”). Nazi policies divided the population into two categories, the *Volksgenossen* (“national comrades”), who belonged to the *Volksgemeinschaft*, and the *Gemeinschaftsfremde* (“community aliens”), who did not. Nazi policies about repression divided people into three types of enemies, the “racial” enemies such as the Jews and the Romani who were viewed as enemies because of their “blood”; political opponents such as Marxists, liberals, Christians and the “reactionaries” who were viewed as wayward “National Comrades”; and moral opponents such as homosexuals, the “work-shy” and habitual criminals, also seen as wayward “National Comrades”.^{*[69]} The last two groups were to be sent to concentration camps for “re-education”, with the aim of eventual absorption into the *Volksgemeinschaft*, though some

of the moral opponents were to be sterilized, as they were regarded as “genetically inferior”.*[69]



Jewish refugees being marched away by British police at Croydon airport in March 1939. They were put on a flight to Warsaw.

“Racial” enemies such as the Jews could, by definition, never belong to the *Volksgemeinschaft*; they were to be totally removed from society.*[69] German historian Detlev Peukert wrote that the National Socialists’ “goal was an utopian *Volksgemeinschaft*, totally under police surveillance, in which any attempt at nonconformist behaviour, or even any hint or intention of such behaviour, would be visited with terror”.*[70] Peukert quotes policy documents on the “Treatment of Community Aliens” from 1944, which (though never implemented) showed the full intentions of Nazi social policy: “persons who ... show themselves [to be] unable to comply by their own efforts with the minimum requirements of the national community” were to be placed under police supervision, and if this did not reform them, they were to be taken to a concentration camp.*[71]

Leading up to the March 1933 *Reichstag* elections, the Nazis intensified their campaign of violence against the opposition. With the co-operation of local authorities, they set up concentration camps for extrajudicial imprisonment of their opponents. One of the first, at Dachau, opened on 9 March 1933.*[72] Initially the camp primarily contained Communists and Social Democrats.*[73] Other early prisons—for example, in basements and storehouses run by the *Sturmabteilung* (SA) and less commonly by the *Schutzstaffel* (SS)—were consolidated by mid-1934 into purpose-built camps outside the cities, run exclusively by the SS. The initial purpose of the camps was to serve as a deterrent by terrorizing those Germans who did not conform to the *Volksgemeinschaft*.*[74] Those sent to the camps included the “educable”, whose wills could be broken into becoming “National Comrades”, and the “biologically depraved”, who were to be sterilized, were to be held permanently, and over time were increasingly subject to extermination through labor, i.e., being worked to death.*[74]

Throughout the 1930s, the legal, economic, and social

rights of Jews were steadily restricted. The Israeli historian Saul Friedländer writes that, for the Nazis, Germany drew its strength “from the purity of its blood and from its rootedness in the sacred German earth.”*[75] On 1 April 1933, there occurred a boycott of Jewish businesses, which was the first national antisemitic campaign, initially planned for a week, but called off after one day owing to lack of popular support. In 1933, the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service was passed which excluded all Jews and other “non-Aryans” from the civil service. All persons in the civil service had to obtain an *Ariernachweis* (Aryan certificate) in order to prove their Aryan ancestry. The first antisemitic law passed in the Third Reich; the Physicians’ Law; and the Farm Law, forbidding Jews from owning farms or taking part in agriculture.

Jewish lawyers were disbarred, and in Dresden, Jewish lawyers and judges were dragged out of their offices and courtrooms and beaten.*[76] At the insistence of President Paul von Hindenburg, Hitler added an exemption allowing Jewish civil servants who were veterans of the First World War or whose fathers or sons had served, to remain in office, but he revoked this exemption in 1937, after Hindenburg’s death. Jews were excluded from schools and universities (the Law to Prevent Over-crowding in Schools), from belonging to the Journalists’ Association, and from being owners or editors of newspapers.*[75] The *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of 27 April 1933 wrote:

A self-respecting nation cannot, on a scale accepted up to now, leave its higher activities in the hands of people of racially foreign origin ... Allowing the presence of too high a percentage of people of foreign origin in relation to their percentage in the general population could be interpreted as an acceptance of the superiority of other races, something decidedly to be rejected.*[77]

In July 1933, the Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring calling for compulsory sterilization of the “inferior” was passed. This major eugenics policy led to over 200 Hereditary Health Courts (*Erbgesundheitsgerichte*) being set up, under whose rulings over 400,000 people were sterilized against their will during the Nazi period.*[78]

In 1935, Hitler introduced the Nuremberg Laws, which prohibited “Aryans” from having sexual relations or marriages with Jews, although this was later extended to include “Gypsies, Negroes or their bastard offspring” (the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor),*[79] stripped German Jews of their citizenship and deprived them of all civil rights. At the same time the Nazis used propaganda to promulgate the concept of *Rassenschande* (race defilement) to justify the need for a restrictive law.*[80] Hitler described the “Blood Law” in



Racial classification chart based on the Nuremberg Laws of 1935

particular as “the attempt at a legal regulation of a problem, which in the event of further failure would then have through law to be transferred to the final solution of the National Socialist Party”. Hitler said that if the “Jewish problem” cannot be solved by these laws, it “must then be handed over by law to the National-Socialist Party for a final solution”.^{*[81]} The “final solution” (*Endlösung*) became the standard Nazi euphemism for the extermination of the Jews. In January 1939, he said in a public speech: “If international-finance Jewry inside and outside Europe should succeed once more in plunging the nations into yet another world war, the consequences will not be the Bolshevization of the earth and thereby the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation (*vernichtung*) of the Jewish race in Europe”.^{*[82]} Footage from this speech was used to conclude the 1940 Nazi propaganda movie *The Eternal Jew* (*Der ewige Jude*), whose purpose was to provide a rationale and blueprint for eliminating the Jews from Europe.^{*[83]}

Intellectuals were among the first Jews to leave. The philosopher Walter Benjamin left for Paris on 18 March 1933. Novelist Lion Feuchtwanger went to Switzerland. The conductor Bruno Walter fled after being told that the hall of the Berlin Philharmonic would be burned down if he conducted a concert there: the *Frankfurter Zeitung* explained on 6 April that Walter and fellow conductor Otto Klemperer had been forced to flee because the government was unable to protect them against the mood of the German public, which had been provoked by “Jewish artistic liquidators”.^{*[84]} Albert Einstein was visiting the US on 30 January 1933. He returned to Ostende in Belgium, never to set foot in Germany again, and calling events there a “psychic illness of the masses”; he was expelled from the Kaiser Wilhelm Society and the Prussian Academy of Sciences, and his citizenship was rescinded.^{*[85]} When Germany annexed Austria in 1938, Sigmund Freud and his family fled from Vienna to England. Saul Friedländer writes that when Max Liebermann, honorary president of the Prussian Academy of Arts, resigned his position, none of his colleagues expressed sympathy, and he was still ostracized at his death two years later. When the police arrived in 1943 with a

stretcher to deport his 85-year-old bedridden widow, she committed suicide with an overdose of barbiturates rather than be taken.^{*[85]}

14.3.3 Kristallnacht (1938)

Main article: [Kristallnacht](#)

On 7 November 1938, Jewish minor Herschel Grünspan



The synagogue of Siegen burning on 10 November 1938.

assassinated Nazi German diplomat Ernst vom Rath in Paris.^{*[86]} The Nazis used this incident as a pretext to go beyond legal repression to large-scale physical violence against Jewish Germans. What the Nazis claimed to be spontaneous “public outrage” was a wave of pogroms instigated by the Nazi Party and carried out by SA members and affiliates throughout Nazi Germany, at the time consisting of Germany proper, Austria, and Sudetenland.^{*[86]} These pogroms became known as *Kristallnacht* (“Crystal Night” or “Night of Broken Glass”). Jews were attacked and Jewish property was vandalized. Over 7,000 Jewish shops and more than 1,200 synagogues (roughly two-thirds of the synagogues in areas under German control) were damaged or destroyed.^{*[87]}

The death toll is assumed to be much higher than the official number of 91 dead.^{*[86]} 30,000 were sent to concentration camps, including Dachau, Sachsenhausen, Buchenwald, and Oranienburg,^{*[88]} where they were kept for several weeks, and released when they could either prove that they were about to emigrate in the near future, or transferred their property to the Nazis.^{*[89]} German Jewry was made collectively responsible for restitution of the material damage of the pogroms, amounting to several hundred thousand Reichsmarks, and furthermore had to pay an “atonement tax” of more than a billion Reichsmarks.^{*[86]} After these pogroms, Jewish emigration from Germany accelerated, while public Jewish life in Germany ceased to exist.^{*[90]*[86]}

14.3.4 Resettlement and deportation

Before the war, the Nazis considered mass deportation of German (and subsequently the European) Jewry from



The 930 Jewish refugees aboard the MS St. Louis were refused entry to Cuba, the United States and Canada, and the ship was forced to return to Europe.

Europe. Hitler's agreement to the 1938–39 Schacht Plan, and the continued flight of thousands of Jews for an extended period when the Schacht Plan came to nothing, indicate that the preference for a concerted genocide of the type that came later did not yet exist.*[91]

Nazi bureaucrats also developed plans to deport Europe's Jews to Siberia.*[92] Palestine was the only location to which any Nazi relocation plan succeeded in producing significant results, via an agreement begun in 1933 between the Zionist Federation of Germany (*die Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland*) and the Nazi government, the Haavara Agreement. This agreement resulted in the transfer of about 60,000 German Jews and \$100 million from Germany to Palestine, until the outbreak of World War II.*[93]

Hitler halted plans to reclaim former German colonies such as Tanganyika and South West Africa for Jewish resettlement, arguing that no place where "so much blood of heroic Germans had been spilled" should be made available as a residence for the "worst enemies of the Germans".*[94] Diplomatic efforts were undertaken to convince the other colonial powers, primarily the United Kingdom and France, to accept expelled Jews in their colonies.*[95] Areas considered for possible resettlement included British Palestine,*[96] Italian

Abyssinia,*[96] British Rhodesia,*[97] French Madagascar,*[96] and Australia.*[98]

Of these areas, Madagascar was the most seriously discussed. Heydrich called the Madagascar Plan a "territorial final solution"; it was a remote location, and the island's unfavorable conditions would hasten deaths.*[99] Hitler approved in 1938 and Adolf Eichmann's office carried out resettlement planning, but abandoned it once the mass killing of Jews had begun in 1941.*[100] The end of the Madagascar Plan was announced on 10 February 1942. The German Foreign Office was given the official explanation that due to the war with the Soviet Union, Jews were to be "sent to the east".*[101]

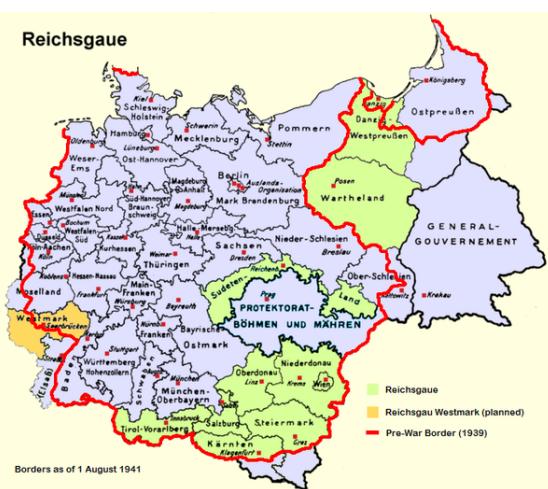
Nazi resettlement schemes entailed taking measures to prepare the way eastwards. Ethnic Germans required more *Lebensraum* ("living space") according to Nazi doctrine so population displacement (which included murder) and colonial settlement were intrinsically linked.*[102] Once the Nazis embarked on their push eastwards through Poland and later into Russia with Operation Barbarossa, there was a radicalization in the speed and brutality of their methods. Winning land from the Russian and Slavic peoples in the east was more than just territorial aggrandizement for Hitler; it was part of the final reckoning with Jewish Bolshevism.*[103]

14.3.5 Early measures

In German-occupied Poland

Main article: The Holocaust in Poland

Further information: Invasion of Poland, Occupation of Poland (1939–45), and History of the Jews in Poland
Germany's invasion of Poland in September 1939 in-



Nazi Germany 1941, including areas annexed from Poland and the General Government area.

creased the urgency of the "Jewish Question". Poland was home to about three million Jews (nearly nine percent of the Polish population) in centuries-old communities,

two-thirds of whom fell under Nazi control with Poland's capitulation.

In September 1939, Himmler appointed Reinhard Heydrich chief of the Reich Main Security Office (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt* or RSHA). This organization was made up of seven departments, including the Security Service (SD) and Gestapo.*[104] They were to oversee the work of the SS in occupied Poland, and carry out the policy towards the Jews described in Heydrich's report. The first organized murders of Jews by German forces occurred during Operation Tannenberg and through *Selbstschutz* units. Heydrich (later the Reichsprotector of Bohemia and Moravia) recommended concentrating all the Polish Jews in ghettos in major cities, where they would be put to work for the German war industry. The ghettos would be in cities located on railway junctions to furnish, in Heydrich's words, "a better possibility of control and later deportation".*[105] During his interrogation in 1961, Adolf Eichmann recalled that this "later deportation" actually meant "physical extermination."*[106]

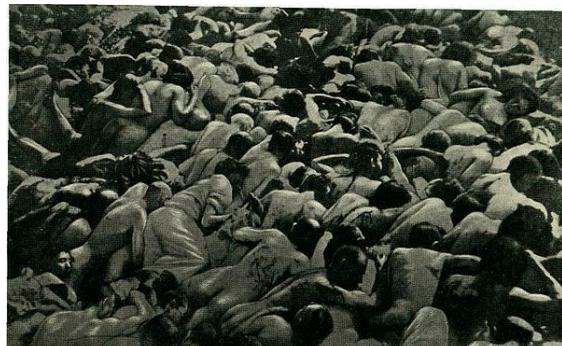
The Jews were later herded into ghettos, mostly in the General Government area of central Poland, where they were put to work under the Reich Labor Office headed by Fritz Sauckel. Here many thousands died from maltreatment, disease, starvation, and exhaustion, but there was still no program of systematic killing. There is little doubt, however, that the Nazis saw forced labor as a form of extermination. The expression *Vernichtung durch Arbeit* ("destruction through work") was frequently used.

Further information: Jewish ghettos in German-occupied Poland

Although it was clear by late 1941 that the SS hierarchy was determined to embark on a policy of killing all the Jews under German control, there was still opposition to this policy within the Nazi regime, although the motive was economic, not humanitarian. Hermann Göring, who had overall control of the German war industry, and the German army's Economics Department, argued that the enormous Jewish labor force assembled in the General Government area (more than a million able-bodied workers), was an asset too valuable to waste, particularly with Germany failing to secure rapid victory over the Soviet Union.

In other occupied countries

When Germany occupied Norway, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Belgium, and France in 1940, and Yugoslavia and Greece in 1941, antisemitic measures were also introduced into these countries, although the pace and severity varied greatly from country to country according to local political circumstances. Jews were removed from economic and cultural life and were subject to various restrictive laws, but physical deportation did not occur



Jewish mass grave near Zolochiv, west Ukraine (Nazi occupied USSR). Photo was found by Soviets at former Gestapo headquarters in Zolochiv.

in most places before 1942. The Vichy regime in occupied France actively collaborated in persecuting French Jews. Germany's allies Italy, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Finland were pressured to introduce antisemitic measures, but for the most part they did not comply until compelled to do so. During the course of the war some 900 Jews and 300 Roma passed through the Banjica concentration camp in Belgrade, intended primarily for Serbian communists, royalists and others who resisted occupation. The German puppet regime in Croatia, on the other hand, began actively persecuting Jews on its own initiative, so the *Legal Decree on the Nationalization of the Property of Jews and Jewish Companies* was declared on 10 October 1941 in the Independent State of Croatia.

In North Africa See also: The Holocaust in Italian Libya

Though the vast majority of the Jews affected and killed during Holocaust were of Ashkenazi descent, Sephardi and Mizrahi Jews suffered greatly as well.

In 1938, the Fascist Italian regime passed anti-Semitic laws which barred Jews from government jobs and government schools, and required them to stamp "Jewish race" into their passports.*[108] But these laws were not harsh enough to force Jews to leave Libya, because 25% of Tripoli's population was Jewish, and the city had over 44 synagogues.*[109] In 1942, the Nazis occupied Benghazi's Jewish Quarter and deported more than 2,000 Jews to Nazi labor camps. By the end of WWII, about one-fifth of those who were sent away had perished.*[110] Several forced labor camps for Jews were established in Libya, the largest of which, the Giado camp, held almost 2,600 inmates, of whom 562 died of weakness, hunger, and disease. Smaller labor camps were established in Gharyan, Jeren, and Tigrinna.*[110]*[111]

Tunisia, the only North African country to come under direct Nazi occupation, had 100,000 Jews when the Nazis arrived in November 1942. During their six months of occupation, the Nazis imposed anti-Semitic policies in

Tunisia, including forcing Jews to wear the Yellow Star, fines, and property confiscation. Some 5,000 Tunisian Jews were subjected to forced labor, and some were deported to European death camps.*[112] More than 2,500 Tunisian Jews died in slave labor camps during the German occupation.*[113]

General Government and Lublin reservation (Nisko plan)

Main articles: Nisko Plan and General Government

On 28 September 1939, Germany gained control over the Lublin area through the German-Soviet agreement in exchange for Lithuania.*[114] According to the Nisko Plan, they set up the Lublin-Lipowa Reservation in the area. The reservation was designated by Adolf Eichmann, who was assigned the task of removing all Jews from Germany, Austria, and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.*[115] They shipped the first Jews to Lublin on 18 October 1939. The first train loads consisted of Jews deported from Austria and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.*[116] By 30 January 1940, a total of 78,000 Jews had been deported to Lublin from Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia.*[117] On 12 and 13 February 1940, the Pomeranian Jews were deported to the Lublin reservation, resulting in Pomeranian Gauleiter Franz Schwede-Coburg to be the first to declare his Gau (country subdivision) *judenrein* (“free of Jews”).*[118] On 24 March 1940 Göring put the Nisko Plan on hold, and abandoned it entirely by the end of April.*[119] By the time the Nisko Plan was stopped, the total number of Jews who had been transported to Nisko had reached 95,000, many of whom had died from starvation.*[120]

In July 1940, due to the difficulties of supporting the increased population in the General Government, Hitler had the deportations temporarily halted.*[121]

In October 1940, Gauleiters Josef Bürckel and Robert Heinrich Wagner oversaw Operation Bürckel, the expulsion of the Jews into unoccupied France from their Gaues and the parts of Alsace-Lorraine that had been annexed that summer to the Reich.*[122] Only those Jews in mixed marriages were not expelled.*[122] The 6,500 Jews affected by Operation Bürckel were given at most two hours warning on the night of 22–23 October 1940, before being rounded up. The nine trains carrying the deported Jews crossed over into France “without any warning to the French authorities”, who were not happy with receiving them.*[122] The deportees had not been allowed to take any of their possessions with them, these being confiscated by the German authorities.*[122] The German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop treated the ensuing complaints by the Vichy government over the expulsions in a “most dilatory fashion”.*[122] As a result, the Jews expelled in Operation Bürckel were interned in harsh conditions by the Vichy authorities at the camps in

Gurs, Rivesaltes and Les Milles while awaiting a chance to return them to Germany.*[122]

During 1940 and 1941, the murder of large numbers of Jews in German-occupied Poland continued, and the deportation of Jews to the General Government was undertaken. The deportation of Jews from Germany, particularly Berlin, was not officially completed until 1943. (Many Berlin Jews were able to survive in hiding.) By December 1939, 3.5 million Jews were crowded into the General Government area.

14.3.6 Concentration and labor camps (1933–1945)

Further information: Nazi concentration camps, List of Nazi concentration camps, and Extermination through labor

The Third Reich first used concentration camps as places



12 April 1945: Lager Nordhausen, where 20,000 inmates are believed to have died.

of incarceration. And though death rates were high—with a mortality rate of 50%—they were not designed to be killing centers. After 1939, the camps increasingly became places where Jews and POWs were either killed or made to work as slave laborers, undernourished and tortured.*[123] By 1942, six large camps were built in Poland solely for mass killing. It is estimated Germans established 15,000 camps and subcamps in the occupied countries, mostly in eastern Europe.*[124]*[125] New camps were founded in areas with large Jewish, Polish intelligentsia, communist, or Roma and Sinti populations, including inside Germany. Prisoner transportation was often carried out under horrifying conditions in rail freight cars; many died before reaching their destination.

Extermination through labor was a policy of systematic extermination—camp inmates would literally be worked to death, or worked to physical exhaustion, when they would be gassed or shot.*[126] Slave labour was used in war production, for example producing V-2 rockets at Mittelbau-Dora, and various armaments around the

Mauthausen-Gusen concentration camp complex.

Some camps tattooed prisoners with an identification number on arrival.*[127] Those fit for work were dispatched for 12- to 14-hour shifts. Roll calls before and after could sometimes last for hours; prisoners regularly died of exposure.*[128]

14.3.7 Ghettos (1939–1945)

Main articles: Ghettos in occupied Europe 1939–1944 and List of Nazi-era ghettos

Main ghettos: Białystok, Budapest, Kraków, Kovno, Łódź, Lvov, Riga, Vilna, Warsaw



A starving child lying in the streets of the Warsaw Ghetto.

After invading Poland, the Nazis established ghettos in the incorporated territories and General Government to confine Jews. The ghettos were formed and closed off from the outside world at different times and for different reasons.*[129] Ghettos were intended to be temporary until the Jews were deported. But deportation never occurred. Instead, the ghettos' inhabitants were sent to extermination camps.

Germany required each ghetto to be run by a *Judenrat* (Jewish council). The first order establishing a council is contained in a 29 September 1939 letter from Heydrich to the heads of the *Einsatzgruppen*.*[130] Councils were responsible for a ghetto's day-to-day operations, including distributing food, water, heat, medical care, and shelter. The Germans also required councils to confiscate property, organize forced labor, and, finally, facilitate deportations to extermination camps.*[131] The councils' basic strategy was one of trying to minimize losses, largely by cooperating with Nazi authorities (or their surrogates), accepting the increasingly terrible treatment, bribery,

petitioning for better conditions, and clemency.*[132] Overall, to try and mitigate still worse cruelty and death, “the councils offered words, money, labor, and finally lives.” * [133]

The ultimate test of each *Judenrat* was the demand to compile lists of names of deportees to be murdered. Though the predominant pattern was compliance with even this final task,*[134] some council leaders insisted that not a single individual should be handed over who had not committed a capital crime. Leaders who refused to compile a list, such as Joseph Parnas in Lviv, were shot. On 14 October 1942, the entire council of Byaroza committed suicide rather than cooperate with the deportations.*[135] Adam Czerniaków in Warsaw killed himself on 23 July 1942 when he could take no more as the final liquidation of the ghetto got under way.*[136] Others, like Chaim Rumkowski, who became the “dedicated autocrat” of Łódź,*[137] argued that their responsibility was to save the Jews who *could* be saved, and that therefore others had to be sacrificed.

The councils' importance in facilitating Germany's persecution and murder of ghetto inhabitants was not lost on the Nazis: one official was emphatic that “the authority of the Jewish council be upheld and strengthened under all circumstances”,*[138] another that “Jews who disobey instructions of the Jewish council are to be treated as saboteurs.” *[139] When cooperation crumbled, as happened in the Warsaw ghetto after the Jewish Combat Organisation displaced the council's authority, the Germans lost control.*[140]



Emaciated corpses of children in Warsaw Ghetto

The Warsaw Ghetto was the largest, with 380,000 people; the Łódź Ghetto was second, holding 160,000. They were, in effect, immensely crowded prisons serving as instruments of “slow, passive murder.” *[141] Though the Warsaw Ghetto contained 30% of Warsaw's population, it occupied only 2.4% of the city's area, averaging 9.2 people per room.*[142]

Between 1940 and 1942, starvation and disease, especially typhoid, killed hundreds of thousands. Over 43,000 Warsaw ghetto residents, or one in ten of the total population, died in 1941;*[142] in Theresienstadt, more than

half the residents died in 1942.*[141]

The Germans came, the police, and they started banging houses: “Raus, raus, raus, Juden raus.” ... [O]ne baby started to cry ... The other baby started crying. So the mother urinated in her hand and gave the baby a drink to keep quiet ... [When the police had gone], I told the mothers to come out. And one baby was dead ... from fear, the mother [had] choked her own baby.

—Abraham Malik, describing his experience in the Kovno Ghetto*[143]

Himmler ordered the start of the deportations on 19 July 1942, and three days later, on 22 July, the deportations from the Warsaw Ghetto began; over the next 52 days, until 12 September 300,000 people from Warsaw alone were transported in freight trains to the Treblinka extermination camp. Many other ghettos were completely depopulated.

Further information: [Timeline of Treblinka](#)

The first ghetto uprising occurred in September 1942 in the small town of Łachwa in southeast Poland. Although there were armed resistance attempts in the larger ghettos in 1943, such as the Warsaw Ghetto uprising and the Białystok Ghetto Uprising, in every case they failed against the overwhelming Nazi military force, and the remaining Jews were either killed or deported to the death camps.*[144]

14.3.8 Pogroms (1939–1942)

Main articles: Pogrom, Dorohoi Pogrom, Iași pogrom, Jedwabne Massacre, Legionnaires' Rebellion and Bucharest Pogrom, History of Lviv § Lviv pogroms and the Holocaust, and Odessa massacre

A number of deadly pogroms occurred during the Second World War. The Nazis encouraged some and others were spontaneous. Notable are the Iași pogrom in Romania on 30 June 1941, in which as many as 14,000 Jews were killed by Romanian residents and police. In the infamous series of Lviv pogroms committed in occupied Poland by nationalists from the Ukrainian People's Militia in Lwów (now, Ukraine), some 6,000 Polish Jews were murdered in the streets between 30 June and 29 July 1941, on top of 3,000 arrests and mass shootings by Einsatzgruppe C.*[145]*[146] Other pogroms perpetrated by the Ukrainian militia in Polish provincial capitals included Luck and Tarnopol. During the Jedwabne pogrom of July 1941, in the presence of the Nazi Ordnungspolizei 300 Jews were burned to death in a locked barn by local Poles, which was preceded by German execution of 40 Jewish men at the same location.*[lower-alpha 1]



Jewish woman chased by men and youth armed with clubs in Lviv, Ukraine, July 1941

14.3.9 Death squads (1941–1943)

Main articles: The Holocaust in Ukraine, The Holocaust in Lithuania, The Holocaust in Latvia, The Holocaust in Estonia, The Holocaust in Belarus, The Holocaust in Russia, Einsatzgruppen, Mass graves in the Soviet Union, War crimes of the Wehrmacht, and Collaboration with the Axis Powers during World War II

See also: Babi Yar, Rumbula massacre, Kamianets-Podilskyi Massacre, and Ponary massacre

Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 opened a new phase in the Holocaust. Even before the invasion of the Soviet Union, German troops had been indoctrinated with anti-Bolshevik, anti-Semitic and anti-Slavic ideology via movies, radio, lectures, books and leaflets.*[151] Following the invasion, Wehrmacht officers told their soldiers to target people who were described as “Jewish Bolshevik subhumans”, the “Mongol hordes”, the “Asiatic flood” and the “red beast”.*[152] Nazi propaganda portrayed the war against the Soviet Union as both an ideological war between German National Socialism and Jewish Bolshevism and a racial war between the Germans and the Bolsheviks, Jews, Romani and Slavic *Untermenschen* (“sub-humans”).*[153] Hitler on 30 March 1941 described the war with the Soviet Union as a “war of annihilation”.*[154] The pace of extermination intensified after the Nazis occupied Lithuania, where close to 80% of the country's 220,000 Jews

were exterminated before year's end.*[155] The Soviet territories occupied by early 1942, including all of Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, and Moldova and most Russian territory west of the line Leningrad–Moscow–Rostov, were inhabited at the start of the war by about three million Jews.



Executions of Jews by German army mobile killing units (Einsatzgruppen) near Ivanhorod, now Ukraine. The photo was mailed from the Eastern Front to Germany and intercepted by a member of the Polish resistance.

Due to shortage of manpower, an order of February 1943 forbid anyone to characterize the peoples of Eastern Europe as “beasts,” “subhumans” or other derogatory descriptions in order to gain their support in “the struggle against Bolshevism.”*[156] Local populations in some occupied Soviet territories actively participated in the killings of Jews and others.*[157] But it was ultimately the Germans who organized and channelled these local efforts.*[157] Many of the collaborators who participated in the killings of Jews enlisted in the Waffen-SS.*[158] In Lithuania, Latvia, and western Ukraine locals were deeply involved in the murder of Jews from the very beginning of the German occupation.*[157] The Latvian Arajs Kommando is an example of an auxiliary unit involved in these killings.*[157] Some of these Latvian and Lithuanian units left their own countries to murder Jews in Belarus. In the south, Ukrainians killed about 24,000 Jews and some went to Poland to serve as concentration and death-camp guards.*[157] Ustaše militia in Croatia also persecuted and murdered Jews, among others.

Many of the mass killings were carried out in public, a change from previous practice.*[157] German witnesses to these killings emphasized the locals' participation.*[157]

The mass killings of Jews in the occupied Soviet territories was assigned to SS formations called *Einsatzgruppen* (“task groups”), which were under Heydrich's overall command. These had been used to a limited extent in Poland in 1939, but were organized in the Soviet territories on a much larger scale. *Einsatzgruppe A* was assigned to the Baltic area, *Einsatzgruppe B* to Belarus, *Einsatzgruppe C* to north and central Ukraine, and *Einsatzgruppe D* to Moldova, south Ukraine, Crimea, and, during 1942, the north Caucasus.*[159] The *Einsatzgruppen*'s commanders were ordinary citizens: the great majority were professionals, most were intellectuals, and they brought to bear all their skills and training in becoming efficient killers.*[160]

According to Otto Ohlendorf at his trial, “the *Einsatzgruppen* had the mission to protect the rear of the troops by killing the Jews, Gypsies, Communist functionaries, active Communists, and all persons who would endanger the security.” In practice, their victims were nearly all defenseless Jewish civilians (not a single *Einsatzgruppe* member was killed in action during these operations). By December 1941, the four *Einsatzgruppen* had killed, respectively, 125,000, 45,000, 75,000, and 55,000 people—a total of 300,000 people—mainly by shooting or with hand grenades at mass-killing sites outside the major towns.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum provides the account of one survivor of the *Einsatzgruppen* in Piryatin, Ukraine, where the Germans killed 1,600 Jews on 6 April 1942, the second day of Passover:

I saw them do the killing. At 5:00 pm they gave the command, “Fill in the pits.” Screams and groans were coming from the pits. Suddenly I saw my neighbor Ruderman rise from under the soil ... His eyes were bloody and he was screaming: “Finish me off!” ... A murdered woman lay at my feet. A boy of five years crawled out from under her body and began to scream desperately. “Mommy!” That was all I saw, since I fell unconscious.*[161]

The most notorious massacre of Jews in the Soviet Union was at a ravine called Babi Yar outside Kiev, where 33,771 Jews were killed in a single operation on 29–3 September 1941.*[162] The decision to kill all the Jews in Kiev was made by the military governor Major-General Friedrich Eberhardt, the Police Commander for Army Group South SS-Obergruppenführer Friedrich Jeckeln, and the *Einsatzgruppe C* Commander Otto Rasch. A mixture of SS, SD, and Security Police, assisted by Ukrainian police, carried out the killings. Although they did not participate in the killings, men of the 6th Army played a key role in rounding up the Jews of Kiev and transporting them to be shot at Babi Yar.*[163]

On 29 September Kiev's Jews gathered by the cemetery as ordered, expecting to be loaded onto trains. The crowd was large enough that most of the men, women, and children could not have known what was happening until it was too late; by the time they heard the machine gun fire, there was no chance to escape. All were driven down a corridor of soldiers, in groups of ten, and shot. A truck driver described the scene:

one after the other, they had to remove

their luggage, then their coats, shoes, and outer garments and also underwear ... Once undressed, they were led into the ravine which was about 150 meters long and 30 meters wide and a good 15 meters deep ... When they reached the bottom of the ravine they were seized by members of the *Schutzpolizei* and made to lie down on top of Jews who had already been shot ... The corpses were literally in layers. A police marksman came along and shot each Jew in the neck with a submachine gun ... I saw these marksmen stand on layers of corpses and shoot one after the other ... The marksman would walk across the bodies of the executed Jews to the next Jew, who had meanwhile lain down, and shoot him.*[164]



From left to right; Heinrich Himmler, Reinhard Heydrich, and Karl Wolff (second from the right) at the Obersalzberg, May 1939. Wolff wrote in his diary that Himmler had vomited after witnessing the mass shooting of 100 Jews.[165]*

In August 1941 Himmler travelled to Minsk, where he personally witnessed 100 Jews being shot in a ditch outside the town. Karl Wolff described the event in his diary: "Himmler's face was green. He took out his handkerchief and wiped his cheek where a piece of brain had squirted up onto it. Then he vomited. After recovering his composure, Himmler lectured the SS men on the need to follow the "highest moral law of the Party" in carrying out their tasks.*[166]

Germany usually justified the *Einsatzgruppen*'s massacres on the grounds of anti-Bolshevik, anti-partisan or anti-bandit operations, but the German historian Andreas Hillgruber wrote that this was merely an excuse for the German Army's considerable involvement in the Holocaust in Russia. He wrote in 1989 that the terms "war crimes" and "crimes against humanity" were indeed correct labels for what happened.*[167] Hillgruber maintained that the slaughter of about 2.2 million defenseless men, women, and children based on a racist ideology cannot possibly be justified for any reason, and that those German generals who claimed that the *Einsatzgruppen* were a necessary anti-partisan response were lying.*[167]

Army co-operation with the SS in anti-Bolshevik, anti-partisan and anti-Jewish operations was close and intensive.*[168] In mid-1941, the SS Cavalry Brigade, commanded by Hermann Fegelein, killed 699 Red Army soldiers, 1,100 partisans, and 14,178 Jews during the course of "anti-partisan" operations in the Pripyat Marshes.*[168] Before the operation, Fegelein had been ordered to shoot all adult Jews and herd the women and children into the marshes. After the operation, General Max von Schenckendorff, who commanded the rear areas of Army Group Center, ordered that all *Wehrmacht* security divisions should emulate Fegelein's example when on anti-partisan duty, and organized a joint SS-*Wehrmacht* seminar on how best to kill Jews.*[168] The seminar ended with the 7th Company of Police Battalion 322 shooting 32 Jews before the assembled officers at a village called Knjashizy as an example of how to "screen" the population for partisans.*[169]

As the war diary of the Battalion 322 read:

The action, first scheduled as a training exercise, was carried out under real-life conditions (*ernstfallmäßig*) in the village itself. Strangers, especially partisans could not be found. The screening of the population, however resulted in 13 Jews, 27 Jewish women and 11 Jewish children, of which 13 Jews and 19 Jewish women were shot in co-operation with the Security Service*[169]



German police shooting women and children from the Mizocz Ghetto, 14 October 1942

Based on what they had learned during the Mogilev seminar, one *Wehrmacht* officer told his men: "Where the partisan is, there is the Jew and where the Jew is, there is the partisan".*[169]

Head of the OKW, Field-Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, in an order on 12 September 1941, declared:

The struggle against Bolshevism demands ruthless and energetic, rigorous action above all against the Jews, the main carriers of Bolshevism.*[170]

In Order No. 24 24 November 1941, the commander of the 707th division declared:

Jews and Gypsies:...As already has been ordered, the Jews have to vanish from the flat country and the Gypsies have to be annihilated too. The carrying out of larger Jewish actions is not the task of the divisional units. They are carried out by civilian or police authorities, if necessary ordered by the commandant of White Ruthenia, if he has special units at his disposal, or for security reasons and in the case of collective punishments. When smaller or larger groups of Jews are met in the flat country, they can be liquidated by divisional units or be massed in the ghettos near bigger villages designated for that purpose, where they can be handed over to the civilian authority or the SD.[171]*

Jürgen Förster, a leading expert on the *Wehrmacht's* war crimes, argued that the *Wehrmacht* played a key role in the Holocaust. He said it is wrong to describe the *Shoah* as solely the work of the SS with the *Wehrmacht* as a passive and disapproving bystander.*[172]



The mass murder of 2,749 Jews on the beach near the city of Liepāja, in Latvia, on 15–17 December 1941.

14.3.10 New methods of mass murder

Starting in December 1939, the Nazis introduced new methods of mass murder by using gas.*[173] First, experimental gas vans equipped with gas cylinders and a sealed trunk compartment, were used to kill mental-care clients of sanatoria in Pomerania, East Prussia, and occupied Poland, as part of an operation termed Action T4.*[173] In the Sachsenhausen concentration camp, larger vans holding up to 100 people were used from November 1941, using the engine's exhaust rather than a cylinder.*[173] These vans were introduced to the Chełmno extermination camp in December 1941, and another 15 of them were used by the Einsatzgruppen in the occupied Soviet Union.*[173] These gas vans

were developed and run under supervision of the SS-*Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (Reich Main Security Office) and were used to kill about 500,000 people, primarily Jews but also Romani and others.*[173] The vans were carefully monitored and after a month of observation a report stated that “ninety seven thousand have been processed using three vans, without any defects showing up in the machines” .*[174]

A need for new mass murder techniques was also expressed by Hans Frank, governor of the General Government, who noted that this many people could not be simply shot. “We shall have to take steps, however, designed in some way to eliminate them.” It was this problem which led the SS to experiment with large-scale killings using poison gas. Christian Wirth seems to have been the inventor of the gas chamber.

14.3.11 Wannsee Conference and the Final Solution (1942–1945)

Further information: Operation Reinhard, Wannsee Conference, and Final Solution

Reinhard Heydrich convened the Wannsee Conference

GPDD 355a 2.		
12. OMX de OMQ	1000	89 ? ?
Geheime Reichssache! An das Reichssicherheitshauptamt, zu Händen SS Obersturmbannführer EICHMANN, BERLIN ...rest missed..		
13/15. OLA de OMQ	1005	83 234 250
Geheime Reichssache! An den Befehlshaber der Sicherheitspol., zu Händen SS Obersturmbannführer REINHART. Bezug: dort. Betr: 14-tägige Meldung Einsatz REINHART. Bezug: dort. Ps. Zugang bis 31.12.42, L 12761, B 0, S 515, T 10335 zusammen 23611. Stand... 31.12.42, L 24733, B 434508, S 101370, T 71355, zusammen 1274166. SS und Pol.Führer LUBLIN, HOEPPEL, Sturmabnführer.		

The Nazis methodically tracked the progress of the Holocaust in thousands of reports and documents. Pictured is the Höfle Telegram sent to Adolf Eichmann in January 1943, that reported that 1,274,166 Jews had been killed in the four Aktion Reinhard camps during 1942.

on 20 January 1942 in Berlin's Wannsee suburb. It brought together 15 Nazi leaders, including a number of state secretaries, senior officials, party leaders, SS officers, and other leaders of government departments responsible for policies linked to Jewish issues. The conference's initial purpose was to discuss plans for a comprehensive solution to the “Jewish question in Europe.” Heydrich intended to “outline the mass murders in the various occupied territories...as part of a solution to the European Jewish question ordered by Hitler...to ensure that they, and especially the ministerial bureaucracy, would share both knowledge and responsibility for this policy.”*[177]

A copy of the minutes drawn up by Eichmann has survived, but on Heydrich's instructions, they were written in “euphemistic language” so the exact words used at the meeting are not known.*[178] But Heydrich announced that the emigration policy was superseded by a policy of evacuating Jews to the east. This was seen to be only a temporary solution leading up to a final solution that

Land	Zahl
A. Altreich	131.800
Ostmark	43.700
Ostgebiete	420.000
Generalgouvernement	2.284.000
Bialystok	400.000
Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren	74.200
Estland - Judenfrei -	
Lettland	3.500
Litauen	34.000
Belgien	43.000
Dänemark	5.600
Frankreich / Besetztes Gebiet	165.000
Unbesetztes Gebiet	700.000
Griechenland	69.600
Niederlande	160.800
Norwegen	1.300
B. Bulgarien	48.000
England	330.000
Finnland	2.300
Irland	4.000
Italien einschl. Sardinien	58.000
Albanien	200
Kroatien	40.000
Portugal	3.000
Rumänien einschl. Bessarabien	542.000
Schweden	8.000
Schweiz	18.000
Serbien	10.000
Slowakei	88.000
Spanien	6.000
Türkei (europ. Teil)	55.500
Ungarn	742.800
UdSSR	5.000.000
Ukraine	2.994.684
Weißrussland aus- schl. Bialystok	446.484
Zusammen: über	11.000.000

List of Jewish populations by country used at the Wannsee Conference in 1942.

would involve some 11 million Jews living not only in territories then controlled by Germany, but in major countries in the rest of the world including the UK and the US.*[179] There was little doubt what the solution was: “Heydrich also made it clear what was understood by the phrase ‘Final Solution’: the Jews were to be annihilated by a combination of forced labour and mass murder.”*[180]

The officials were told there were 2.3 million Jews in the General Government, 850,000 in Hungary, 1.1 million in the other occupied countries, and up to five million in the USSR, although two million of these were in areas still under Soviet control—a total of about 6.5 million. These would all be transported by train to **extermination camps** (*Vernichtungslager*) in Poland, where almost all of them would be gassed at once. In some camps, such as Auschwitz, those fit for work would be kept alive for a while, but eventually all would be killed. Göring's representative, Erich Neumann, gained a limited exemption for some classes of industrial workers.*[181]

14.3.12 Reaction

German public

In his 1983 book, *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich*, Ian Kershaw examined the *Alltagsgeschichte* (history of everyday life) in Bavaria dur-

ing the Nazi period.*[182] Describing the attitudes of most Bavarians, Kershaw argued that the most common viewpoint was indifference towards what was happening to the Jews.*[183] Kershaw argued that most Bavarians were vaguely aware of the *Shoah*, but were vastly more concerned about the war than about the “Final Solution to the Jewish Question”.*[183] Kershaw made the analogy that “the road to Auschwitz was built by hate, but paved with indifference”.*[184]

Kershaw's assessment that most Bavarians, and by implication most Germans, were indifferent to the *Shoah* faced criticism from the Israeli historian Otto Dov Kulka, an expert on public opinion in Nazi Germany, and the Canadian historian Michael Kater. Kater maintained that Kershaw downplayed the extent of popular antisemitism, and that though admitting that most of the “spontaneous” antisemitic actions of Nazi Germany were staged, argued that because these actions involved substantial numbers of Germans, it is wrong to see the extreme antisemitism of the Nazis as coming solely from above.*[185] Kulka argued that most Germans were more antisemitic than Kershaw portrayed them in *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent*, and that rather than “indifference”, “passive complicity” would be a better term to describe the reaction of the German people.*[186]

In a study focusing only on the views about Jews or Germans opposed to the Nazi regime, the German historian Christof Dipper in his 1983 essay “Der Deutsche Widerstand und die Juden” (translated into English as “The German Resistance and the Jews” in *Yad Vashem Studies*, Volume 16, 1984) argued that the majority of the anti-Nazi national-conservatives were antisemitic.*[185] Dipper wrote that for the majority of the national-conservatives “the bureaucratic, pseudo-legal deprivation of the Jews practiced until 1938 was still considered acceptable”.*[185] Though Dipper noted no one in the German resistance supported the Holocaust, he also commented that the national-conservatives did not intend to restore civil rights to the Jews after the planned overthrow of Hitler.*[185] Dipper went on to argue that, based on such views held by opponents of the regime, “a large part of the German people ... believed that a “Jewish Question” existed and had to be solved ... ”.*[185]

A study conducted in 2012 established that in Berlin alone there were 3,000 camps of various functions, another 1,300 were in Hamburg and its co-researcher concluded that it is unlikely that the German population could avoid knowing about the persecution considering such prevalence.*[12] Robert Gellately has argued that the German civilian population were, by and large, aware of what was happening. According to Gellately, the government openly announced the conspiracy through the media and civilians were aware of its every aspect except for the use of gas chambers.*[187] In contrast, some historical evidence indicates that the vast majority of Holocaust victims, prior to their deportation to concentration camps, were either unaware of the fate that awaited them or were

in denial; they honestly believed that they were to be resettled.*[188]

International

Main article: International response to the Holocaust

14.3.13 Motivation

In his 1965 essay “Command and Compliance”, which originated in his work as an expert witness for the prosecution at the Frankfurt Auschwitz Trials, the German historian Hans Buchheim wrote there was no coercion to murder Jews and others, and all who committed such actions did so out of free will.*[189] Buchheim wrote that chances to avoid executing criminal orders “were both more numerous and more real than those concerned are generally prepared to admit”,*[189] and that he found no evidence that SS men who refused to carry out criminal orders were sent to concentration camps or executed.*[190] Moreover, SS rules prohibited acts of gratuitous sadism, as Himmler wished for his men to remain “decent”, and that acts of sadism were taken on the individual initiative of those who were either especially cruel or who wished to prove themselves ardent National Socialists.*[189] Finally, he argued that those of a non-criminal bent who committed crimes did so because they wished to conform to the values of the group they had joined and were afraid of being branded “weak” by their colleagues if they refused.*[191]

In his 1992 monograph *Ordinary Men*, the Holocaust historian Christopher Browning examined the deeds of German Reserve Police Battalion 101 of the *Ordnungspolizei* (Order Police), used to commit massacres and round-ups of Jews as well as mass deportations to the Nazi death camps. The members of the battalion were middle-aged men of working-class background from Hamburg, who were too old for regular military duty. They were given no special training for genocide and at first, the commander gave his men the choice of opting out of direct participation in murder of 1,500 Jews from Józefów if they found it too unpleasant. The majority chose not to exercise that option; fewer than 12 men, out of a battalion of 500 did so on that occasion. Influenced by postwar Milgram experiment on obedience, Browning argued that the men of the battalion killed out of peer pressure, not blood-lust.*[192]

The Russian historian Sergei Kudryashov similarly to Browning studied the guards trained at the Trawniki SS camp division (“Trawniki men”), who provided the bulk of personnel for the Operation Reinhard death camps, and performed massacres for Battalion 101. Most of them were former Red Army soldiers who volunteered to join the SS in order to get out of the POW camps.*[193] Christopher R. Browning wrote that *Hiwis*

“were screened on the basis of their anti-Communist (and hence almost invariably anti-Semitic) sentiments.”*[194] The majority of the “volunteers” were from Ukraine, but also from Latvia and Lithuania (*Hilfswillige*, or *Hiwis*).*[194] Kudryashov claimed that prior to their capture many had been Communists.*[195] The vast majority faithfully carried out the SS's expectations of how to mistreat Jews.*[195] Almost all Trawniki men working as guards in the Operation Reinhard camps personally killed an unknown number of Jews.*[196] Following Christopher Browning, Kudryashov argued that the Trawniki men were examples of ordinary people becoming willing killers.*[197]

The “Trawniki men” were deployed in all major killing sites of the “Final Solution”—it was their primary purpose of training. They took an active role in the executions of Jews at Belzec, Sobibór, Treblinka II, Warsaw (three times), Częstochowa, Lublin, Lvov, Radom, Kraków, Białystok (twice), Majdanek as well as Auschwitz, not to mention Trawniki itself,*[194] and the remaining subcamps of KL Lublin/Majdanek camp complex including Poniatowa, Budzyń, Kraśnik, Puławy, Lipowa, and also during massacres in Łomazy, Międzyrzec, Łuków, Radzyń, Parczew, Końskowola, Komarówka and other locations.*[198]

14.3.14 Extermination camps

Main article: Extermination camp

During 1942, in addition to Auschwitz, five other camps were designated as extermination camps (*Verничтungslager*) for the carrying out of the Reinhard plan.*[211]*[212] Two of these, Chelmno*[213] and Majdanek, were already functioning as, respectively, a labor camp and a POW camp: these now had extermination facilities added to them. Three new camps were built for the sole purpose of killing large numbers of Jews as quickly as possible, at Belzec, Sobibór and Treblinka, but Auschwitz was the most radically transformed in terms of systematic killing.*[214] A seventh camp, at Maly Trostinetz in Belarus, was also used for this purpose. Jasenovac was an extermination camp where mostly ethnic Serbs were killed.

Extermination camps are frequently confused with concentration camps such as Dachau and Belsen, which were mostly located in Germany and intended as places of incarceration and forced labor for a variety of enemies of the Nazi regime (such as Communists and homosexuals). They should also be distinguished from slave labor camps, which were set up in all German-occupied countries to exploit the labor of prisoners of various kinds, including prisoners of war. In all Nazi camps there were very high death rates as a result of starvation, disease and exhaustion, but only the extermination camps were designed specifically for mass killing.

There was a place called the ramp where the trains with the Jews were coming in. They were coming in day and night, and sometimes one per day and sometimes five per day ... Constantly, people from the heart of Europe were disappearing, and they were arriving to the same place with the same ignorance of the fate of the previous transport. And the people in this mass...I knew that within a couple of hours...ninety percent would be gassed.

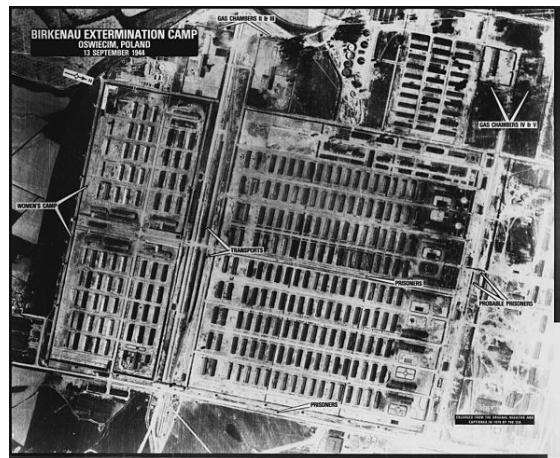
—Rudolf Vrba, who worked on the *Judenrampe* in Auschwitz from 18 August 1942 to 7 June 1943.*[141]

There were another few “concentration” camps, such as the Mauthausen-Gusen concentration camp in pre-war Austria, which were designed as Extermination through labor camps. These were specifically for the process where very extreme hard labor was deliberately intended to murder. This is in contrast to those concentration camps, where the murder was “incidental” to the extremely harsh conditions.

Gas chambers

At the extermination camps with gas chambers all the prisoners arrived by train. Sometimes entire trainloads were sent straight to the gas chambers, but usually the camp doctor on duty subjected individuals to selections, where a small percentage were deemed fit to work in the slave labor camps; the majority were taken directly from the platforms to a reception area where all their clothes and other possessions were seized by the Nazis to help fund the war. They were then herded naked into the gas chambers. Usually they were told these were showers or delousing chambers, and there were signs outside saying “baths” and “sauna.” They were sometimes given a small piece of soap and a towel so as to avoid panic, and were told to remember where they had put their belongings for the same reason. When they asked for water because they were thirsty after the long journey in the cattle trains, they were told to hurry up, because coffee was waiting for them in the camp, and it was getting cold.*[215]

According to Rudolf Höss, commandant of Auschwitz, bunker 1 held 800 people, and bunker 2 held 1,200.*[216] Once the chamber was full, the doors were screwed shut and solid pellets of *Zyklon-B* were dropped into the chambers through vents in the side walls, releasing toxic HCN, or *hydrogen cyanide*. Those inside died within 20 minutes; the speed of death depended on how close the inmate was standing to a gas vent, according to Höß, who estimated that about one-third of the victims died immediately.*[217] Johann Kremer, an SS doctor who oversaw the gassings, testified that: “Shouting and screaming of the victims could be heard through the opening and it was clear that they fought for their lives.” * [218] When they



Picture of Auschwitz–Birkenau taken by an American surveillance plane, 13 September 1944.

were removed, if the chamber had been very congested, as they often were, the victims were found half-squatting, their skin colored pink with red and green spots, some foaming at the mouth or bleeding from the ears.*[217]

The gas was then pumped out, the bodies were removed (which would take up to four hours), gold fillings in their teeth were extracted with pliers by dentist prisoners, and women's hair was cut.*[219] The floor of the gas chamber was cleaned, and the walls whitewashed.*[218] The work was done by the *Sonderkommando*, which were work units of Jewish prisoners. In crematoria 1 and 2, the *Sonderkommando* lived in an attic above the crematoria; in crematoria 3 and 4, they lived inside the gas chambers.*[220] When the *Sonderkommando* had finished with the bodies, the SS conducted spot checks to make sure all the gold had been removed from the victims' mouths. If a check revealed that gold had been missed, the *Sonderkommando* prisoner responsible was thrown into the furnace alive as punishment.*[221]

At first, the bodies were buried in deep pits and covered with lime, but between September and November 1942, on the orders of Himmler, they were dug up and burned. In early 1943, new gas chambers and crematoria were built to accommodate the numbers.*[222]

Another improvement we made over Treblinka was that we built our gas chambers to accommodate 2,000 people at one time, whereas at Treblinka their 10 gas chambers only accommodated 200 people each. The way we selected our victims was as follows: we had two SS doctors on duty at Auschwitz to examine the incoming transports of prisoners. The prisoners would be marched by one of the doctors who would make spot decisions as they walked by. Those who were fit for work were sent into the Camp. Others were sent immediately to the extermination plants. Children of tender years were invariably exterminated,

since by reason of their youth they were unable to work. Still another improvement we made over Treblinka was that at Treblinka the victims almost always knew that they were to be exterminated and at Auschwitz we endeavored to fool the victims into thinking that they were to go through a delousing process. Of course, frequently they realized our true intentions and we sometimes had riots and difficulties due to that fact. Very frequently women would hide their children under the clothes but of course when we found them we would send the children in to be exterminated. We were required to carry out these exterminations in secrecy but of course the foul and nauseating stench from the continuous burning of bodies permeated the entire area and all of the people living in the surrounding communities knew that exterminations were going on at Auschwitz.

—Rudolf Höss, Auschwitz camp commandant, Nuremberg testimony.*[223]

14.3.15 Jewish resistance



Jews captured and forcibly pulled out from dugouts by the Germans during the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. The photo is from Jurgen Stroop's report to Heinrich Himmler.



Warsaw Ghetto uprising.

Main article: [Jewish resistance during the Holocaust](#)

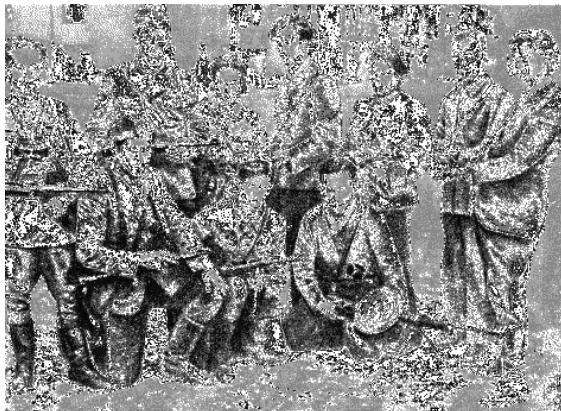
In his study, Peter Longerich observes with respect to the Polish ghettos: “On the Jewish side there was practically no resistance.”* [224] Hilberg accounts for this compliant attitude by evoking the history of Jewish persecution: as had been the case so many times before down through the centuries, simply appealing to their oppressors, and complying with orders, would hopefully avoid inflaming the situation and so mitigate the damage done to the Jews until the onslaught abated. “There were many casualties in these times of stress, but always the Jewish community emerged once again like a rock from a receding tidal wave. The Jews had never disappeared from the earth.” They were “caught in the straitjacket of their history”, and the realisation that this time was different came too late.*[225]

In *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Raul Hilberg noted:

The reaction pattern of the Jews is characterized by [an] almost complete lack of resistance. In marked contrast to German propaganda, the documentary evidence of Jewish resistance, overt or submerged, is very slight. On a European-wide scale the Jews had no resistance organization, no blueprint for armed action, no plan even for psychological warfare. They were completely unprepared.[...] Measured in German casualties, Jewish armed opposition shrinks into insignificance.[...] A large component of the entire [destruction] process depended on Jewish participation, from the simple acts of individuals to the organized activity in councils.[...] Jewish resistance organizations attempting to reverse the mass inertia spoke the words: “Do not be led like sheep to slaughter.” [...] Franz Stangl, who had commanded two death camps, was asked in a West German prison about his reaction to the Jewish victims. He said that only recently he had read a book about lemmings. It reminded him of Treblinka.*[226]

Discussing the case of Warsaw, Timothy Snyder notes in a similar vein that it was only during the three months after the massive deportations of July–September 1942 that general agreement on the need for armed resistance was reached, and lays the passivity emanating from the conservative center of Jewish politics at the door of the overall success the Jewish community had enjoyed by engaging in a *quid pro quo* with the pre-war Polish government.*[228] By the time of the biggest act of armed resistance, the **Warsaw Ghetto uprising** of spring 1943, only a small minority of Polish Jews were still alive.*[224]

Yehuda Bauer and other historians argue that resistance consisted not only of physical opposition, but of any activi-



Armed members of the Jewish resistance, the Fareynikte Partizan Organizatsye, active in the Vilnius Ghetto. The motto of the FPO was “We will not allow them to take us like sheep to the slaughter.” [227]*

ity that gave the Jews dignity and humanity in humiliating and inhumane conditions.*[229]

In every ghetto, in every deportation train, in every labor camp, even in the death camps, the will to resist was strong, and took many forms. Fighting with the few weapons that would be found, individual acts of defiance and protest, the courage of obtaining food and water under the threat of death, the superiority of refusing to allow the Germans their final wish to gloat over panic and despair.

Even passivity was a form of resistance. To die with dignity was a form of resistance. To resist the demoralizing, brutalizing force of evil, to refuse to be reduced to the level of animals, to live through the torment, to outlive the tormentors, these too were acts of resistance. Merely to give a witness of these events in testimony was, in the end, a contribution to victory. Simply to survive was a victory of the human spirit. (Gilbert 1986, p. 828)

Hilberg argued against overstating the extent of Jewish resistance, or using all-encompassing definitions of it like that deployed by Gilbert. “When relatively isolated or episodic acts of resistance are represented as typical, a basic characteristic of the German measures is obscured”, namely that the merciless slaughter of peaceable innocent people is turned into some kind of battle. “The inflation of resistance has another consequence which has been of concern to those Jews who have regarded themselves as the actual resisters. If heroism is an attribute that should be assigned to every member of the European Jewish community, it will diminish the accomplishment of the few who took action.” Finally, the blending of the passive majority with the active few was “not merely a form of dilution, which blurred the multitudinous problems of organizing a defense in a cautious, reluctant Jew-



Captured members of the Jewish resistance, Warsaw Ghetto, 1943.

ish community; it was also a way of shutting off a great many questions about that community, its reasoning and survival strategy.” Without posing these questions, Jewish history could not be written.*[230]

The most well known example of Jewish armed resistance was the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of January 1943, when thousands of poorly armed Jewish fighters held the SS at bay for four weeks before being crushed by overwhelmingly superior forces. According to Jewish accounts, several hundred Germans were killed, while the Germans claimed to have lost 17 dead and 93 wounded. 13,000 Jews were killed, 57,885 were deported and gassed according to German figures. This uprising was followed by the revolt in the Treblinka extermination camp in May 1943, when about 200 inmates escaped from the camp. They overpowered and killed a number of German guards and set the camp buildings ablaze, but 900 inmates were also killed, and out of the 600 who successfully escaped, only 40 survived the war. Two weeks later, there was an uprising in the Bialystok Ghetto. The uprising was launched on the night of 16 August 1943 and was the second-largest ghetto uprising organized in Nazi-occupied Poland after the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of April–May 1943.*[231] The revolt began upon the German announcement of mass deportations from the Ghetto. A group of 300 to 500 Jewish insurgents armed with 25 rifles, 100 pistols and home-made Molotov cocktails attacked the overwhelmingly larger German force.

In September, there was a short-lived uprising in the Vilna Ghetto. The armed Jewish resistance group Fareynikte Partizaner Organizatsye (United Partisan Organization), which was one of the first resistance organizations established in the Nazi ghettos during World War II, was formed to defend the ghetto population and sabotage German industrial and military activities. When the Nazis came to liquidate the ghetto in September 1943, members of the FPO fled to the forest and fought with alongside partisans. In October, 600 Jewish prisoners, including Jewish Soviet prisoners of war, attempted an escape at the Sobibór death camp. The prisoners killed 11 German SS officers and a number of camp guards. However, the killings were discovered, and the inmates were forced to run for their lives under heavy fire. Three hundred of the prisoners were killed during the escape. Most of the survivors either died in the mine-fields surrounding the camp or were recaptured and executed. About 60 survived and joined the Soviet partisans. On 7 October 1944, 250 Jewish *Sonderkommandos* (laborers) at Auschwitz attacked their guards and blew up Crematorium IV with explosives that female prisoners had smuggled-in from a nearby factory. Three German guards were killed during the uprising, one of whom was stuffed into an oven. The Sonderkommandos attempted a mass breakout, but all 250 were killed soon afterwards.



Jewish Soviet POW captured by the German Army, August 1941. About 500,000 Jews served in the Soviet Army during World War II.

While there were no independent Jewish partisan groups during the war, many joined other active partisan groups.* [14] An estimated 20,000 to 30,000 Jews joined the Soviet partisan movement.* [15] (see the list at the top of this section) and actively fought the Nazis and their collaborators in Eastern Europe. They engaged in guerrilla warfare and sabotage against the Nazis, instigated Ghetto uprisings, and freed prisoners. In Lithuania alone, they killed about 3,000 German soldiers. As many as 1.4 million Jewish soldiers fought in the Allied armies.* [232] including 500,000 in the Red Army, 550,000 in the U.S. Army, 100,000 in the Polish army and 30,000 in the British army.* [233] About 200,000 Jewish soldiers serving in the Red Army died in the war.* [234] The Jewish Brigade, a unit of 5,000 Jewish volunteers from the British Mandate of Palestine, fought in the British Army. German-speaking Jewish volunteers from the Special Interrogation Group performed commando and sabotage operations against the Nazis behind front lines in the Western Desert Campaign.

In occupied Poland and Soviet territories, thousands of Jews fled into the swamps or forests and joined the partisans, although the partisan movements did not always welcome them. In Lithuania and Belarus, an area with a heavy concentration of Jews, and also an area which suited partisan operations, Jewish partisan groups saved thousands of Jewish civilians from extermination. No such opportunities existed for the Jewish populations of cities such as Budapest. However, in Amsterdam, and other parts of the Netherlands, many Jews were active in the Dutch Resistance.* [235] Timothy Snyder wrote that “Other combatants in the Warsaw Uprising were veterans of the ghetto uprising of 1943. Most of these Jews joined the Home Army; others found the People's Army, or even the antisemitic National Armed Forces. Some Jews (or Poles of Jewish origin) were already enlisted in the Home Army and the People's Army. Almost certainly, more Jews fought in the Warsaw Uprising of August 1944 than in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of April 1943.” * [236] Joining the partisans was an option only for the young and the fit who were willing to leave their families. Many Jewish families preferred to die together rather than be separated.

French Jews were also highly active in the French Resistance, which conducted a guerrilla campaign against the Nazis and Vichy French authorities, assisted the Allies in their sweep across France, and supported Allied including Free French forces in the liberation of many occupied French cities. Although Jews made up only one percent of the French population, they made up fifteen to twenty percent of the French Resistance.* [237] The Jewish youth movement EEIF, which had originally shown support for the Vichy regime, was banned in 1943, and many of its older members formed armed resistance units. Zionist Jews also formed the Armee Juive (Jewish Army), which participated in armed resistance under a Zionist flag, and smuggled Jews out of the coun-

try. Both organizations merged in 1944, and participated in the liberation of Paris, Lyon, Toulouse, Grenoble, and Nice.*[238]

Many people think the Jews went to their deaths like sheep to the slaughter, and that's not true—it's absolutely not true. I worked closely with many Jewish people in the Resistance, and I can tell you, they took much greater risks than I did.

—Pieter Meerburg*[239]



SS troops stand near the bodies of Jews who committed suicide rather than be captured, Warsaw Ghetto, 1943.

For the great majority of Jews, resistance could take only the passive forms of delay, evasion, negotiation, bargaining and where possible, bribery of German officials. The Nazis encouraged this by forcing the Jewish communities to police themselves, through bodies such as the Reich Association of Jews (*Reichsvereinigung der Juden*) in Germany and the Jewish Councils (*Judenräte*) in the urban ghettos in occupied Poland. They held out the promise of concessions in exchange for each surrender, enmeshing the Jewish leadership so deeply in well-intentioned compromise that a decision to stand and fight was never possible. Holocaust survivor Alexander Kimel wrote: “The youth in the Ghettos dreamed about fighting. I believe that although there were many factors that inhibited our responses, the most important factors were isolation and historical conditioning to accepting martyrdom.” *[240]

The historical conditioning of the Jewish communities of Europe to accept persecution and avert disaster through compromise and negotiation was the most important factor in the failure to resist until the very end. The Warsaw Ghetto uprising took place only when the Jewish population had been reduced from 500,000 to 100,000, and it was obvious that no further compromise was possible. Paul Johnson writes:

The Jews had been persecuted for a millennium and a half and had learned from long

experience that resistance cost lives rather than saved them. Their history, their theology, their folklore, their social structure, even their vocabulary trained them to negotiate, to pay, to plead, to protest, not to fight.*[241]

The Jewish communities were also systematically deceived about German intentions, and were cut off from most sources of news from the outside world. The Germans told the Jews that they were being deported to work camps – euphemistically calling it “resettlement in the East” – and maintained this illusion through elaborate deceptions all the way to the gas chamber doors (which were marked with labels stating that the chambers were for the removal of lice) to avoid uprisings. As photographs testify, Jews disembarked at the railway stations at Auschwitz and other extermination camps carrying sacks and suitcases, clearly having no idea of the fate that awaited them. Rumours of the reality of the extermination camps filtered back only slowly to the ghettos, and were usually not believed, just as they were not believed when couriers such as Jan Karski, the Polish resistance fighter, conveyed them to the western Allies.*[242]

In spite of common disbelief in the true meaning of “resettlement” the Jewish Uprisings took place in dozens of Nazi ghettos. Examples of notable Jewish resistance leaders include Mordechaj Anielewicz, leader of the Jewish Combat Organization during the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, killed in action in 1943; Paweł Frenkiel, a Polish Jewish youth leader in Warsaw and a senior commander of the Jewish Military Union, killed in action defending the JMU headquarters; Icchak Cukierman, one of the leaders of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising 1943 and fighter in the 1944 Warsaw uprising; Zivia Lubetkin, one of the leaders of the Jewish underground in Nazi-occupied Warsaw and the only woman on the High Command of the resistance group Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa; Dov Lopatyn, leader of one of the first ghetto uprisings of the war and member of a partisan unit, killed in action; and Abba Kovner, a founder of the United Partisan Organization in Vilna, who coined the phrase: “Let us not go like lambs to the slaughter!” The FPO was one of the first armed underground organizations in the Jewish ghettos under Nazi occupation.*[243]

14.3.16 Climax

Reinhard Heydrich was assassinated in Prague in June 1942 by soldiers from Czechoslovakia's army-in-exile on a clandestine mission codenamed Operation Anthropoid.*[244] He was succeeded as head of the RSHA by Ernst Kaltenbrunner.*[245] With Heydrich's death, Kaltenbrunner inherited the responsibility of the Gestapo, Sicherheitsdienst, the concentration camps, and the administrative apparatus designed to carry out the Final Solution.*[246] During 1943 and 1944, the extermination camps worked at a furious rate to kill the hundreds

of thousands of people shipped to them by rail from almost every country within the German sphere of influence.*[247] By the spring of 1944, up to 8,000 people were being gassed every day at Auschwitz.*[248]

Despite the high productivity of the war industries based in the Jewish ghettos in the General Government, they were liquidated during 1943, and their populations shipped to the camps for extermination.*[249] The largest of these operations, the deportation of 100,000 people from the Warsaw Ghetto in early 1943, provoked the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, which was suppressed with great brutality.*[250] About 42,000 Jews were shot during the **Operation Harvest Festival** on 3–4 November 1943.*[251] At the same time, rail shipments arrived regularly from western and southern Europe. Few Jews were shipped from the occupied Soviet territories to the camps: the killing of Jews in this zone was left in the hands of the SS, aided by locally recruited auxiliaries.*[252] In any case, by the end of 1943 the Germans had been driven from most Soviet territory.



Budapest, Hungary—Hungarian and German soldiers drive arrested Jews into the municipal theatre. October 1944.



Budapest, Hungary—Captured Jewish women in Wesselényi Street, 20–22 October 1944.

Shipments of Jews to the camps had priority on the German railways, and continued even in the face of the increasingly dire military situation after the **Battle of Stalingrad** at the end of 1942 and the escalating Allied air attacks on German industry and transport. Conducting a global war did not deter the Nazis from directing resources to their killing operations. Confounding as it

must have been for military leaders, strategy suffered as additional manpower and material allocations needed to transport Jews took priority and train schedules were adjusted accordingly.*[253]

Army leaders and economic managers complained about this diversion of resources and at the killing of irreplaceable skilled Jewish workers; however, Nazi leaders rated ideological imperatives above economic considerations.*[254] In fact, many of the industries supporting the war effort using SS slave labor from the east and Jews were more productive when the SS was far removed from their operations;*[255] otherwise their brutality and inconsideration for human needs proved counterproductive.

By 1944, it was evident to most Germans not blinded by Nazi fanaticism that Germany was losing the war. Many senior officials began to fear the retribution that might await Germany and them personally for the crimes being committed in their name.*[256] But the power of Himmler and the SS within the German Reich was too great to resist, and Himmler could always invoke Hitler's authority for his demands.

In October 1943, Himmler gave a speech to senior Nazi Party officials gathered in Poznań. Here he came closer than ever before to stating explicitly his intent to exterminate the Jews of Europe:

I am now referring to the evacuation of the Jews, the extermination of the Jewish people. It's one of those things that is easily said: "The Jewish people are being exterminated", says every party member, "this is very obvious, it's in our program, elimination of the Jews, extermination, we're doing it, hah, a small matter." And then they turn up, the upstanding 80 million Germans, and each one has his decent Jew. They say the others are all swines, but this particular one is a splendid Jew. But none has observed it, endured it. Most of you here know what it means when 100 corpses lie next to each other, when there are 500 or when there are 1,000. To have endured this and at the same time to have remained a decent person—with exceptions due to human weaknesses—has made us tough, and is a glorious chapter that has not and will not be spoken of. Because we know how difficult it would be for us if we still had Jews as secret saboteurs, agitators and rabble-rousers in every city, what with the bombings, with the burden and with the hardships of the war. If the Jews were still part of the German nation, we would most likely arrive now at the state we were at in 1916/17.

The hard decision had to be made that *this people should be caused to disappear from earth* ...Perhaps, at a much later time, we can consider whether we should say something more

about this to the German people. I myself believe that it is better for us—us together—to have borne this for our people, that we have taken the responsibility for it on ourselves (the responsibility for an act, not just for an idea), and that we should now take this secret with us to the grave.

—Heinrich Himmler, Secret Address to SS Officers (Poznan, 10 June 1943).*[257]



Jewish women and children from Carpatho-Ruthenia after their arrival at the Auschwitz death camp. May/June 1944.

The audience for this speech included Admiral **Karl Dönitz** and Armaments Minister **Albert Speer**. Dönitz successfully claimed at the **Nuremberg trials** that he had had no knowledge of the Final Solution. Speer declared at the trial and in a subsequent interview that “If I didn’t see it, then it was because I didn’t want to see it.” *[258] The text of this speech was not known at the time of their post-war trials.

The scale of extermination slackened somewhat at the beginning of 1944 once the ghettos in occupied Poland were emptied, but on 19 March 1944, Hitler ordered the **military occupation of Hungary**, and Eichmann was dispatched to Budapest to supervise the deportation of Hungary’s 800,000 Jews. Hitler had personally complained to the Hungarian regent **Admiral Miklós Horthy** on the previous day, 18 March 1944, that:

Hungary did nothing in the matter of the Jewish problem, and was not prepared to settle accounts with the large Jewish population in Hungary.*[259]

More than half of them were shipped to Auschwitz after the occupation. The commandant, Rudolf Höss, said at his trial that he killed 400,000 Hungarian Jews in three months.*[260]

“Blood for goods”

The operation to kill Hungarian Jews met strong opposition within the Nazi hierarchy, and there were some suggestions that Hitler should offer the Allies a deal where they would be spared in exchange for a favorable peace settlement. There were unofficial negotiations in **Istanbul** between Himmler's agents, British agents, and representatives of Jewish organizations; at one point an attempt by Eichmann to exchange one million Jews for 10,000 trucks—the so-called “blood for goods” proposal—but there was no real possibility of such a deal being struck on this scale.*[261] During Eichman's trial in Jerusalem, he denied having knowledge of this attempt to blackmail the Allies in this manner but the evidence showed otherwise.*[262]

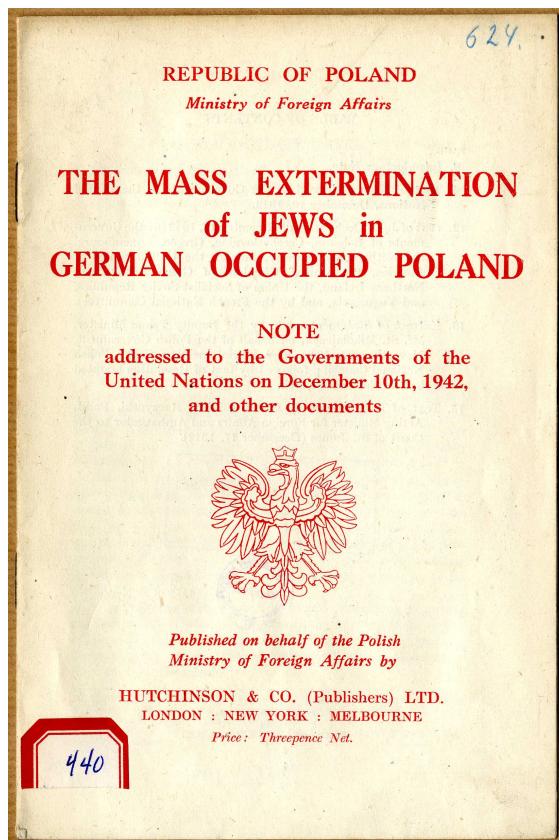
14.3.17 Escapes, publication of existence (April–June 1944)



Bratislava, June–July 1944. Rudolf Vrba (right) escaped from Auschwitz on 7 April 1944, bringing the first credible news to the world of the mass murder that was taking place there. Arnost Rosin (left), escaped on 27 May 1944.[263]*

Escapes from the camps were few, but not unknown. In 1940, the Auschwitz commandant reported that “the local population is fanatically Polish and ... prepared to take any action against the hated SS camp personnel. Every prisoner who managed to escape can count on help the moment he reaches the wall of a first Polish farmstead.” *[264] According to Ruth Linn, however, escapees, particularly Jewish ones, could *not* rely on help from the local population or the Polish underground.*[265]

In February 1942, an escaped inmate from the Chełmno extermination camp, Jacob Grojanowski, reached the Warsaw Ghetto, where he gave detailed information about the Chełmno camp to the **Oneg Shabbat** group. His report, which became known as the **Grojanowski Report**, was smuggled out of the ghetto through the channels of the Polish underground to the **Delegatura**, and reached London by June 1942. It is unclear what was done with the report at that point.*[204]*[266] In the meantime, by 1 February, the **United States Office of War Information** had decided not to release information about the extermination

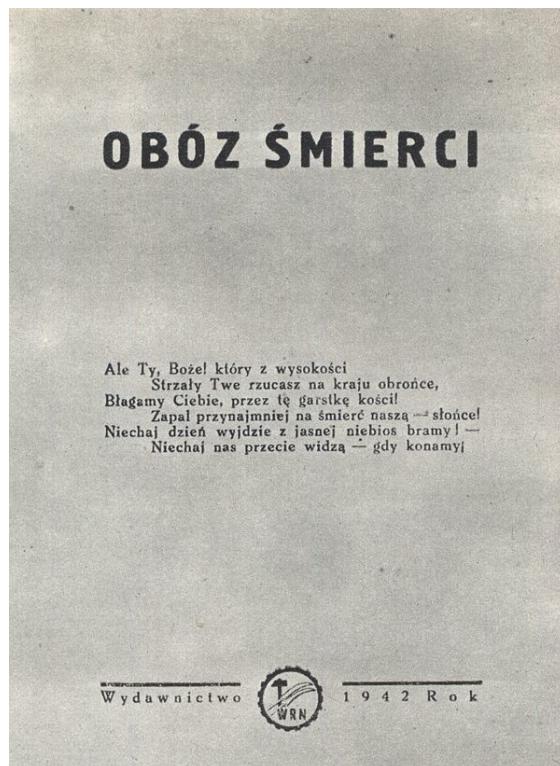


"The Mass Extermination of Jews in German Occupied Poland", by the Polish government-in-exile addressed to the wartime allies of the then-United Nations, 1942.

nation of the Jews because it was felt that it would mislead the public into thinking the war was simply a Jewish problem.*[267]

By at least 9 October 1942, British radio had broadcast news of gassing of Jews to the Netherlands.*[268] In December 1942, the western Allies released the Joint Declaration by Members of the United Nations, that described how "Hitler's oft-repeated intention to exterminate the Jewish people in Europe" was being carried out and which declared that they "condemn in the strongest possible terms this bestial policy of cold-blooded extermination." Lemkin 2005, p. 89 n.45

In 1942, Jan Karski reported to the Polish, British and US governments on the situation in Poland, especially the destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto and the Holocaust of the Jews. He met with Polish politicians in exile including the prime minister, as well as members of political parties such as the Socialist Party, National Party, Labor Party, People's Party, Jewish Bund and Poalei Zion. He also spoke to Anthony Eden, the British foreign secretary, and included a detailed statement on what he had seen in Warsaw and Bełżec.*[269] In 1943 in London he met the then-well-known journalist Arthur Koestler. He then traveled to the United States and reported to president Franklin D. Roosevelt. His report was a major factor in informing the West.



Conspiratorial reportage about Auschwitz "Camp of death" written by Natalia Zarembina in 1942.

In July 1943, Karski again personally reported to Roosevelt, telling him about the situation in Poland and becoming the first eyewitness to tell him about the Jewish Holocaust.*[270] During their meeting Roosevelt asked about the condition of horses in Poland,*[271] but did not ask one question about the Jews.*[272] He also met with many other government and civic leaders in the United States, including Felix Frankfurter, Cordell Hull, William Joseph Donovan, and Stephen Wise. Karski also presented his report to the media, bishops of various denominations (including Cardinal Samuel Stritch) and members of the Hollywood film industry and artists, but without success. Many of those he spoke to did not believe him, or supposed that his testimony was much exaggerated or was propaganda from the Polish government in exile.*[273]

News about gassing Jews was also published in illegal newspapers of the Dutch resistance, like in the issue of *Het Parool* of 27 September 1943. However, the news was so unbelievable that many assumed it was merely war propaganda. The publications were halted because they were counter-productive for the Dutch resistance. Nevertheless, many Jews were warned that they would be murdered, but as escape was impossible for most of them, they preferred to believe that the warnings were false.*[274]

In September 1940, Captain Witold Pilecki, a member of the Polish underground and a soldier of the Polish Home Army, worked out a plan to enter Auschwitz and volunt-



Auschwitz concentration camp photos of Pilecki (1941).

teered to be sent there, the only person known to volunteer to be imprisoned at Auschwitz. He organized an underground network *Związek Organizacji Wojskowej* (translation: “Union of Military Organizations”) that was ready to initiate an uprising but it was decided that the probability of success was too low for the uprising to succeed. UMO's numerous and detailed reports became a principal source of intelligence on Auschwitz for the Western Allies. Pilecki escaped from Auschwitz with information that became the basis of a two-part report in August 1943 that was sent to the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in London. The report included details about the gas chambers, about “selection”, and about the sterilization experiments. It stated that there were three crematoria in Birkenau able to burn 10,000 people daily, and that 30,000 people had been gassed in one day. The author wrote: “History knows no parallel of such destruction of human life.”* [275] When Pilecki returned to Poland after the war the communist authorities arrested and accused him of spying for the Polish government in exile. He was sentenced to death in a show trial and was executed on 25 May 1948.

Before Pilecki escaped from Auschwitz the most spectacular escape took place on 20 June 1942, when Ukrainian Eugeniusz Bendera and three Poles, Kazimierz Piechowski, Stanisław Gustaw Jaster and Józef Lempart made a daring escape. The escapees were dressed as members of the SS-Totenkopfverbände, fully armed and in an SS staff car. They drove out the main gate in a stolen Steyr 220 automobile with a smuggled first report from Witold Pilecki to the Polish resistance about the Holocaust. The Germans failed to recapture any of them.* [276]

Rudolf Vrba and Alfred Wetzler, Jewish inmates, escaped from Auschwitz in April 1944, eventually reaching Slovakia. The 32-page document they dictated to Jewish officials about the mass murder at Auschwitz became known as the *Vrba-Wetzler report*. Vrba had an eidetic memory and had worked on the *Judenrampe*, where Jews disembarked from the trains to be “selected” either for the gas chamber or slave labor. The level of detail with which he described the transports allowed Slovakian officials to compare his account with their own deportation records, and the corroboration convinced the Allies to take the report seriously.* [277]

Two other Auschwitz inmates, Arnost Rosin and Czesław Mordowicz escaped on 27 May 1944, arriving in Slo-

vakia on 6 June, the day of the Normandy landing (D-Day). Hearing about Normandy, they believed the war was over and got drunk to celebrate, using dollars they'd smuggled out of the camp. They were arrested for violating currency laws, and spent eight days in prison, before the *Judenrat* paid their fines. The additional information they offered the Judenrat was added to Vrba and Wetzler's report and became known as the *Auschwitz Protocols*. They reported that, between 15 and 27 May 1944, 100,000 Hungarian Jews had arrived at Birkenau, and had been killed at an unprecedented rate, with human fat being used to accelerate the burning.* [278]

The BBC and *The New York Times* published material from the Vrba-Wetzler report on 15 June,* [279] 20 June 3 July* [280] and 6 July* [281] 1944. The subsequent pressure from world leaders persuaded Miklós Horthy to bring the mass deportations of Jews from Hungary to Auschwitz to a halt on 9 July, saving up to 200,000 Jews from the extermination camps.* [278]

On 14 November 2001, in the 150th anniversary issue, *The New York Times* ran an article by former editor Max Frankel reporting that before and during World War II, the *Times* had maintained a strict policy in their news reporting and editorials to minimize reports on the Holocaust.* [282] The *Times* accepted the detailed analysis and findings of journalism professor Laurel Leff, who had published an article the year before in the *Harvard International Journal of the Press and Politics*, that *The New York Times* had deliberately suppressed news of the Third Reich's persecution and murder of Jews.* [283] Leff concluded that *New York Times* reporting and editorial policies made it virtually impossible for American Jews to impress Congress, church or government leaders with the importance of helping Europe's Jews.* [284]

Further information: *The New York Times* and the Holocaust

14.3.18 Death marches (1944–1945)

Main article: Death marches (Holocaust)

By mid-1944, the Final Solution had largely run its course. Those Jewish communities within easy reach of the Nazi regime had been largely exterminated, in proportions ranging from about 25 percent in France to more than 90 percent in Poland. On 5 May, Himmler claimed in a speech that “The Jewish question has in general been solved in Germany and in the countries occupied by Germany.”* [285] During 1944, in any case, the task became steadily more difficult. German armies were evicted from the Soviet Union, the Balkans and Italy, and German forces—as well as forces aligned with them—were either defeated or were switching sides to the Allies. In June, the western Allies landed in France. Allied air attacks and the operations of partisans made rail transport increasingly difficult, and the objections of the military to



Grave and Memorial in Wodzisław of the most infamous Death march from Auschwitz Birkenau to Wodzisław Śląski.

the diversion of rail transport for carrying Jews to Poland more urgent and harder to ignore.

At this time, as the Soviet armed forces approached, the camps in eastern Poland were closed down, any surviving inmates being shipped west to camps closer to Germany, first to Auschwitz and later to Gross Rosen in Silesia. Auschwitz itself was closed as the Soviets advanced through Poland. The last 13 prisoners, all women, were killed in Auschwitz II on 25 November 1944; records show they were "*unmittelbar getötet*" ("killed outright"), leaving open whether they were gassed or otherwise murdered.*[286]

Despite the desperate military situation, great efforts were made to conceal evidence of what had happened in the camps. The gas chambers were dismantled, the crematoria dynamited, mass graves dug up and the corpses cremated, and Polish farmers were induced to plant crops on the sites to give the impression that they had never existed. Local commanders continued to kill Jews, and to shuttle them from camp to camp by forced "death marches" until the last weeks of the war.*[287]

Already sick after months or years of violence and starvation, prisoners were forced to march for tens of miles in the snow to train stations; then transported for days at a time without food or shelter in freight trains with open carriages; and forced to march again at the other end to the new camp. Those who lagged behind or fell were shot. Around 250,000 Jews died during these marches.*[288]

The largest and best-known of the death marches took place in January 1945, when the Soviet army advanced on Poland. Nine days before the Soviets arrived at Auschwitz, the SS marched 60,000 prisoners out of the camp toward Wodzisław (German: Loslau), 56 km (35 mi) away, where they were put on freight trains to other camps. Around 15,000 died on the way. Elie Wiesel and his father, Shlomo, were among the marchers:

An icy wind blew in violent gusts. But we marched without faltering. . . .
Pitch darkness. Every now and then, an ex-

plosion in the night. They had orders to fire on any who could not keep up. Their fingers on the triggers, they did not deprive themselves of this pleasure. If one of us had stopped for a second, a sharp shot finished off another filthy son of a bitch. . . .

Near me, men were collapsing in the dirty snow. Shots.

—Elie Wiesel*[289]

14.3.19 Liberation

Main articles: [Battle of Berlin](#), [Death of Adolf Hitler](#), [Prague Offensive](#), and [Victory in Europe Day](#)

The first major camp to be directly encountered by Allied



A grave inside Bergen-Belsen.

troops, Majdanek, was discovered by the advancing Soviets on 23 July 1944. Chełmno was liberated by the Soviets on 20 January 1945. Auschwitz was liberated, also by the Soviets, on 27 January 1945;*[290] Buchenwald by the Americans on 11 April;*[291] Bergen-Belsen by the British on 15 April;*[292] Dachau by the Americans on 29 April;*[293] Ravensbrück by the Soviets on the same day; Mauthausen by the Americans on 5 May;*[294] and Theresienstadt by the Soviets on 8 May.*[295] Treblinka, Sobibór, and Bełżec were never liberated, but were destroyed by the Nazis in 1943. Colonel William W. Quinn of the US Seventh Army said of Dachau: "There our troops found sights, sounds, and stenches horrible beyond belief, cruelties so enormous as to be incomprehensible to the normal mind." * [296]*[297]

In most of the camps discovered by the Soviets, almost all the prisoners had already been removed, leaving only a few thousand alive—7,600 inmates were found in Auschwitz,*[298] including 180 children who had been experimented on by doctors. Some 60,000 prisoners were discovered at Bergen-Belsen by the British 11th Armoured Division,*[299] 13,000 corpses lay unburied, and another 10,000 died from typhus or malnutrition over the following weeks.*[300] The British forced the remaining SS guards to gather up the corpses and place them in mass graves.*[301]



Starving prisoners in Mauthausen camp liberated on 5 May 1945.

The BBC's Richard Dimbleby described the scenes that greeted him and the British Army at Belsen:

Here over an acre of ground lay dead and dying people. You could not see which was which...The living lay with their heads against the corpses and around them moved the awful, ghostly procession of emaciated, aimless people, with nothing to do and with no hope of life, unable to move out of your way, unable to look at the terrible sights around them...Babies had been born here, tiny wizened things that could not live...A mother, driven mad, screamed at a British sentry to give her milk for her child, and thrust the tiny mite into his arms...He opened the bundle and found the baby had been dead for days. This day at Belsen was the most horrible of my life.* [302]

14.4 Victims

Further information: The Destruction of the European Jews, The War Against the Jews, and Holocaust victims

The number of victims depends on which definition of "the Holocaust" is used. For Donald Niewyk and Francis Nicosia* [7] the term is commonly defined as the mass murder of more than five million European Jews. They further state that 'Not everyone finds this a fully satisfactory definition'.* [317] According to British historian Martin Gilbert, the total number of victims is just under six million—around 78 percent of the 7.3 million Jews in occupied Europe at the time.* [318] Timothy D. Snyder wrote that "The term Holocaust is sometimes used in two other ways: to mean all German killing policies during the war, or to mean all oppression of Jews by the Nazi regime." * [319]

Broader definitions include the two to three million Soviet POWs who died as a result of mistreatment due

to Nazi racial policies, two million non-Jewish ethnic Poles who died due to the conditions of Nazi occupation, 90,000–220,000 Romani, 270,000 mentally and physically disabled killed in Germany's eugenics program, 80,000–200,000 Freemasons, 20,000–25,000 Slovenes, 5,000–15,000 homosexuals, 2,500–5,000 Jehovah's Witnesses and 7,000 Spanish Republicans, bringing the death toll to around 11 million. The broadest definition would include six million Soviet civilians who died as a result of war-related famine and disease, raising the death toll to 17 million.* [7] A research project conducted by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum estimated that 15 to 20 million people died or were imprisoned.* [12] R.J. Rummel estimates the total democide death toll of Nazi Germany to be 21 million.

14.4.1 Jewish



Monument to commemorate deaf Jewish students at a special school on Hortusplantsoen in Amsterdam, Netherlands

Since 1945, the most commonly cited figure for the total number of Jews killed has been six million. The Yad Vashem Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority in Jerusalem, writes that there is no precise figure for the number of Jews killed,* [321] but has been able to find documentation of more than three million names of Jewish victims killed,* [322] which it displays at its visitors center. The figure most commonly used is the six million attributed to Adolf Eichmann, a senior SS official.* [323]

Early calculations range from about 4.2 to 4.5 million

in *The Final Solution* (1953) by Gerald Reitlinger (arguing against higher Russian estimates),* [324] and 5.1 million from Raul Hilberg, to 5.95 million from Jacob Lestschinsky. Yisrael Gutman and Robert Rozett in the *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* estimate 5.59–5.86 million.* [325] A study led by Wolfgang Benz of the Technical University of Berlin suggests 5.29 to 6.20 million.* [321]* [326] Yad Vashem writes that the main sources for these statistics are comparisons of prewar and postwar censuses and population estimates, and Nazi documentation on deportations and murders.* [321] Its Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names currently holds close to three million names of Holocaust victims, all accessible online. Yad Vashem continues its project of collecting names of Jewish victims from historical documents and individual memories.* [327]

Hilberg's estimate of 5.1 million, in the third edition of *The Destruction of the European Jews*, includes over 800,000 who died from "ghettoization and general privation"; 1,400,000 killed in open-air shootings; and up to 2,900,000 who perished in camps. Hilberg estimates the death toll of Jews in Poland as up to 3,000,000.* [328] Hilberg's numbers are generally considered to be a conservative estimate, as they typically include only those deaths for which records are available, avoiding statistical adjustment.* [329]

Martin Gilbert arrived at a "minimum estimate" of over 5.75 million Jewish victims.* [330] Lucy S. Dawidowicz used pre-war census figures to estimate that 5.934 million Jews died (see table below).* [303]

There were about eight to ten million Jews in the territories controlled directly or indirectly by Germany (the uncertainty arises from the lack of knowledge about how many Jews there were in the Soviet Union). The six million killed in the Holocaust thus represent 60 to 75 percent of these Jews. Of Poland's 3.3 million Jews, about 90 percent were killed.* [331] At the beginning of World War II, the Jewish population of the Baltic States was around 350,000: 250,000 in Lithuania, 95,000 in Latvia, and 4,500 in Estonia.* [332] By the end of 1941, close to 230,000 Jews in Latvia and Lithuania had been murdered during the previous six months.* [333] Of 4,000 Jews in Estonia before the German invasion, some 3,000 fled to the Soviet Union. The remaining 1,000 were all murdered by the SS killing squads.* [334] Of the 750,000 Jews in Germany and Austria in 1933, only about a quarter survived. Although many German Jews emigrated before 1939, the majority of these fled to Czechoslovakia, France or the Netherlands, from where they were later deported to their deaths.

In Czechoslovakia, Greece, the Netherlands, and Yugoslavia, over 70 percent were killed. Fifty to 70 percent were killed in Romania, Belgium and Hungary. It is likely that a similar proportion were killed in Belarus and Ukraine, but these figures are less certain. Countries with notably lower proportions of deaths include

Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Italy, and Norway. Albania was the only country occupied by Germany that had a significantly larger Jewish population in 1945 than in 1939. About two hundred native Jews and over a thousand refugees were provided with false documents, hidden when necessary, and generally treated as honored guests in a country whose population was about 60 percent Muslim.* [335] Additionally, Japan, as an Axis member, had its own unique response to German policies regarding Jews; see *Shanghai Ghetto*.

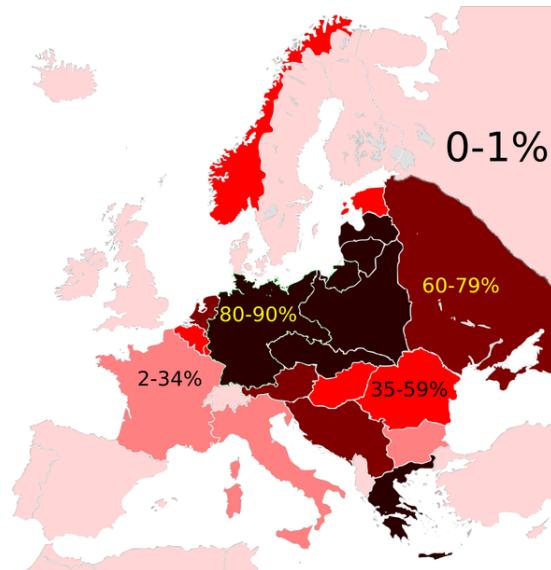
This gives a total of over 3.8 million; of these, 80–90% were estimated to be Jews. These seven camps thus accounted for half the total number of Jews killed in the entire Nazi Holocaust. Virtually the entire Jewish population of Poland died in these camps.* [303]

In addition to those who died in the above extermination camps, at least half a million Jews died in other camps, including the major concentration camps in Germany. These were not extermination camps, but had large numbers of Jewish prisoners at various times, particularly in the last year of the war as the Nazis withdrew from Poland. About a million people died in these camps, and although the proportion of Jews is not known with certainty, it was estimated to be at least 50 percent. Another 800,000 to one million Jews were killed by the *Einsatzgruppen* in the occupied Soviet territories (an approximate figure, since the *Einsatzgruppen* killings were frequently undocumented).* [339] Many more died through execution or of disease and malnutrition in the ghettos of Poland before they could be deported.

By country

In the 1990s, the opening of government archives in Eastern Europe resulted in the adjustment of the death tolls published in the pioneering work by Hilberg, Dawidowicz and Gilbert (e.g. compare Gilbert's estimation of two million deaths in Auschwitz-Birkenau with the updated figure of one million in the Extermination Camp data box). As pointed out above, Wolfgang Benz has been carrying out work on the more recent data. He concluded in 1999:

The goal of annihilating all of the Jews of Europe, as it was proclaimed at the conference in the villa Am Grossen Wannsee in January 1942, was not reached. Yet the six million murder victims make the holocaust a unique crime in the history of mankind. The number of victims—and with certainty the following represent the minimum number in each case—cannot express that adequately. Numbers are just too abstract. However they must be stated in order to make clear the dimension of the genocide: 165,000 Jews from Germany, 65,000 from Austria, 32,000 from France and Belgium, more than 100,000 from the Nether-



Jewish Holocaust death toll as a percentage of the total pre-war Jewish population.

0-1%
2-34%
35-59%
60-79%
80-90%



Entrance to Auschwitz-Birkenau, 1945.

religious, that used it in their day-to-day life were largely destroyed. Around five million (85%) of the victims of the Holocaust were speakers of Yiddish.* [343]

Of the remaining non-Yiddish speaking population, the Ladino (Judeo-Spanish) speaking Jewish communities of Greece and the Balkans were also destroyed, which contributed to the near-extinction of this language.

14.4.2 Non-Jewish

Slavs

Main articles: Generalplan Ost and Hunger Plan
Hitler declared in *Mein Kampf* that the German people



Europe, with pre-World War II borders and showing the extension of the future Generalplan Ost master plan.

needed Lebensraum ("living space") in Eastern Europe at the expense of the racially inferior Slavs.* [344] The Nazis considered the Slavs as *Untermenschen* (sub-humans).* [345]

Heinrich Himmler in his secret memorandum "Reflections on the Treatment of Peoples of Alien Races in the East" dated 25 May 1940 expressed his own thoughts and the future plans for the populations in the East.* [346] Himmler stated that it was in the German interests to discover as many ethnic groups in the East and splinter them as much as possible, find and select racially valuable children to be sent to Germany to assimilate them and restrict

Considering the massive numbers of killed Jews all across Europe, Benz erroneously must have thought that the same would be the case for Denmark and Albania. However, in Albania no Jew was deported, and in Denmark about 1 percent of the Jewish population was deported.* [341]

Effect on the Yiddish and Ladino languages

Because the significant majority of the Jewish victims of the Holocaust were speakers of *Yiddish*, the Holocaust had a profound and permanent effect on the fate of the Yiddish language and culture (see *Yiddish Renaissance*). On the eve of *World War II*, there were 11 to 13 million Yiddish speakers in the world.* [342] The Holocaust led to a dramatic, sudden decline in the use of Yiddish, because the extensive Jewish communities, both secular and

non-Germans in the General Government and conquered territories to four-grade elementary school which would only teach them how to write their own name, count up to 500 and to obey Germans.*[346] Himmler believed the Germanization process in Eastern Europe would be complete when “in the East dwell only men with truly German, Germanic blood”.*[347]

Himmler's *Generalplan Ost* (General Plan East), which was enthusiastically agreed to by Hitler in the summer of 1942, involved exterminating, expelling, or enslaving most or all Slavs from their native lands so as to make living space for German settlers, something that would be carried out over a period of 20–30 years.*[348]

Author and historian Doris L. Bergen has written: “Like so much Nazi writing, General Plan East was full of euphemisms. ... Nevertheless its intentions were obvious. It also made clear that German policies toward different population groups were closely connected. Settlement of Germans and ethnic Germans in the east; expulsion, enslavement, and decimation of Slavs; and murder of Jews were all parts of the same plan.”*[349]

Though *Generalplan Ost* was ultimately never implemented, historian Rudolph Rummel estimates the number of Slav civilians and POWs murdered by the Nazis to be 10,547,000.*[350]

According to historian William W. Hagen:

Generalplan Ost [...] forecast the diminution of the targeted east European peoples' populations by the following measures: Poles—85 percent; Belarusians—75 percent; Ukrainians—65 percent; Czechs—50 percent. These enormous reductions would result from “extermination through labor” or decimation through malnutrition, disease, and controls on reproduction. [...] The Russian people, once subjugated in war, would join the four Slavic-speaking nations whose fate *Generalplan Ost* foreshadowed.*[351]

It is a question of existence, thus it will be a racial struggle of pitiless severity, in the course of which 20 to 30 million Slavs and Jews will perish through military actions and crises of food supply.

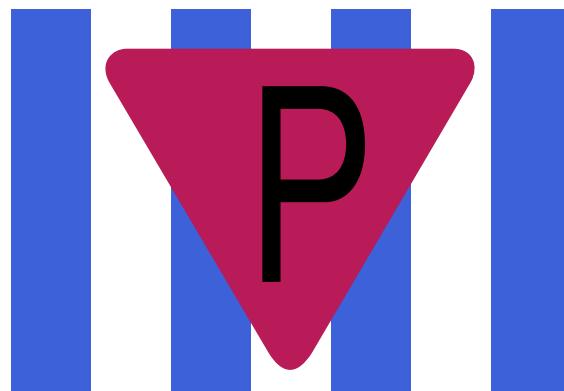
—Heinrich Himmler speaking about Operation *Barbarossa*, June 1941.*[352]

Ethnic Poles Further information: Nazi crimes against ethnic Poles, Occupation of Poland (1939–1945), Pacification operations in German-occupied Poland, Sonderfahndungsbuch Polen, and The Holocaust in Poland

German planners had in November 1939 called for “the complete destruction” of all Poles.*[353] “All Poles”



A 12-year-old Polish girl in Auschwitz 1942/43. Prisoner identity photographs.

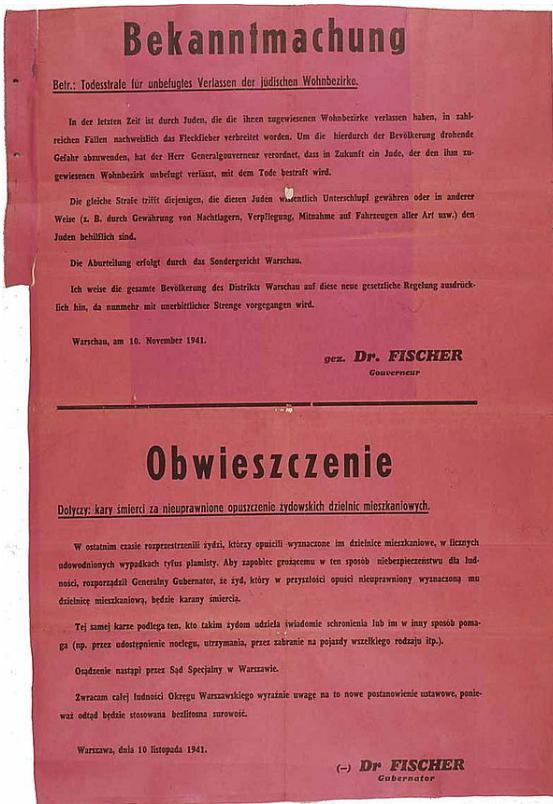


Auschwitz I patch with the letter “P”, required wear for Polish inmates.



Polish civilians executed in Warsaw.

, Heinrich Himmler swore, “will disappear from the world”.*[354] The Polish state under German occupation was to be cleared of ethnic Poles and settled by German colonists.*[355] Of the Poles, by 1952 only about three-four million of them were to be left in the former Poland, and only to serve as slaves for German settlers. They were to be forbidden to marry, the existing ban on any medical



Announcement of death penalty for Poles helping Jews.



Execution of Poles by Einsatzkommando, Leszno, October 1939.

help to Poles in Germany would be extended, and eventually Poles would cease to exist. On 22 August 1939, just over a week before the onset of war, Hitler declared that “the object of the war is ... physically to destroy the enemy. That is why I have prepared, for the moment only in the East, my ‘Death’s Head’ formations with orders to kill without pity or mercy all men, women, and children of Polish descent or language. Only in this way can we obtain the living space we need.”* [356] Nazi planners decided against a genocide of ethnic Poles on the same scale as against ethnic Jews; it could not proceed in the short term since “such a solution to the Polish question would represent a burden to the German people into the distant future, and everywhere rob us of all understanding, not least in that neighbouring peoples would have to reckon

at some appropriate time, with a similar fate”.* [357]

The actions taken against ethnic Poles were not on the scale of the genocide of the Jews. Most Polish Jews (perhaps 90% of their pre-war population) perished during the Holocaust, while most Christian Poles survived the brutal German occupation.* [358] Between 1.8 and 2.1 million non-Jewish Polish citizens perished in German hands during the course of the war, about four-fifths of whom were ethnic Poles with the remaining fifth being ethnic minorities of Ukrainians and Belarusians, the vast majority of them civilians.* [305]* [306] At least 200,000 of these victims died in concentration camps with about 146,000 being killed in Auschwitz. Many others died as a result of general massacres such as in the Warsaw uprising where between 120,000 and 200,000 civilians were killed.* [359]

The policy of the Germans in Poland included diminishing food rations, conscious lowering of the state of hygiene and depriving the population of medical services. The general mortality rate rose from 13 to 18 per thousand.* [360] Overall, about 5.6 million of the victims of World War II were Polish citizens,* [306] both Jewish and non-Jewish, and over the course of the war Poland lost 16 percent of its pre-war population; about 3.1 million of the 3.3 million Polish Jews and about two million of the 31.7 million non-Jewish Polish citizens died at German hands during the war.* [361] According to recent (2009) estimates by the IPN, over 2.5 million non-Jewish Polish citizens died as a result of the German occupation.* [362] Over 90 percent of the death toll came through non-military losses, as most of the civilians were targeted by various deliberate actions by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union.* [359]

A few days before the invasion of Poland, on 22 August 1939, Adolf Hitler said to his generals:

Genghis Khan led millions of women and children to slaughter—with premeditation and a happy heart. History sees in him solely the founder of a state. ... Our war aim does not consist in reaching certain lines, but in the physical destruction of the enemy. Accordingly, I have placed my death-head formations in readiness—for the present only in the East—with orders to them to send to death mercilessly and without compassion, men, women, and children of Polish derivation and language. Only thus shall we gain the living space (*Lebensraum*) which we need. Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians? ... Poland will be depopulated and settled with Germans. ... As for the rest, gentlemen, the fate of Russia will be exactly the same as I am now going through with in the case of Poland.* [363] * [364]

Other West Slavs Other West Slavic populations were persecuted to some extent. By one estimate, 345,000 Czechoslovak citizens were executed or otherwise killed, and hundreds of thousands more of all of these groups were sent to concentration camps and used as forced labor.*[365] The villages of Lidice and Ležáky were completely destroyed by the Nazis; all men over 16 years of age from the village were murdered and the rest of the population was sent to Nazi concentration camps where many women and nearly all of the children were killed.

The German ethnic Sorbian population was also persecuted.

Ethnic Serbs and other South Slavs Main article: World War II persecution of Serbs
In the Balkans, up to 581,000 Yugoslav civilians were



Croatian Ustaše sawing off the head of Branko Jungić, an ethnic Serb from Bosnia.

killed during World War II in Yugoslavia.*[366]*[367] German forces, under express orders from Hitler, fought with a special vengeance against the Serbs, who were considered *Untermenschen* (sub-humans).*[368] The Ustaše collaborators conducted a systematic extermination of large numbers of people for political, religious or racial reasons. The most numerous victims were Serbs. Bosniaks, Croats and others were also victims of the Jasenovac concentration camp. According to the US Holocaust Museum:

The Ustaše authorities established numer-

ous concentration camps in Croatia between 1941 and 1945. These camps were used to isolate and murder Serbs, Jews, Roma, Muslims [Bosniaks], and other non-Catholic minorities, as well as Croatian political and religious opponents of the regime.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) and Jewish Virtual Library report that between 56,000 and 97,000 persons were killed at the Jasenovac concentration camp.*[369]*[370] Yad Vashem reports an overall number of over 500,000 murders of Serbs at the hands of the Ustaše.*[307]

According to the most recent study, *Bošnjaci u Jasenovačkom logoru* (“Bosniaks in the Jasenovac concentration camp”) by the author Nihad Halilbegović, at least 103,000 Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims) perished during the Holocaust at the hands of the Nazi regime and the Croatian Ustaše. According to the study, “unknown is the full number of Bosniaks who were murdered under Serb or Croat alias or national name” and “a large numbers of Bosniaks were killed and listed under Roma populations”, therefore in advance sentenced to death and extermination.*[371] Excluding Slovenes under Italian rule, between 20,000 and 25,000 Slovenes were killed by Nazis or fascists (counting only civilian victims).*[372]

Albanian collaborationists cooperated with the Nazis and what followed was an extensive persecution of non-Albanians (mostly Serbs) by Albanian fascists. Most of the war crimes were perpetrated by the Albanian SS Skenderbeg Division and the Balli Kombëtar. 3,000 to 10,000 Kosovo Serbs were murdered by the Albanians during the war, and another 30,000 to 100,000 were expelled.*[373]

East Slavs Main articles: Occupation of Belarus by Nazi Germany and Reichskommissariat Ukraine
Soviet civilian populations in the occupied areas were



Mass murder of Soviet civilians near Minsk, Belarus, 1943

also heavily persecuted (in addition to the barbarity of the Eastern Front frontline warfare manifesting itself in episodes such as the siege of Leningrad in which

more than one million civilians died).^{*[374]} Thousands of peasant villages across Soviet Russia, Belarus and Ukraine were annihilated by German troops. Bohdan Wytywycky has estimated that as many as one-quarter of all Soviet civilian deaths at the hands of the Nazis and their allies were racially motivated.^{*[7]}

The Russian Academy of Sciences in 1995 reported civilian victims in the USSR at German hands, including Jews, totaled 13.7 million dead, 20% of the 68 million persons in the occupied USSR. This included 7.4 million victims of Nazi genocide and reprisals.^{*[375]}

In Belarus, Nazi Germany imposed a regime in the country that was responsible for burning down some 9,000 villages, deporting some 380,000 people for slave labour, and killing hundreds of thousands of civilians. More than 600 villages, like Khatyn, were burned along with their entire population and at least 5,295 Belarusian settlements were destroyed by the Nazis and some or all of their inhabitants killed. Tim Snyder states: “Of the nine million people who were on the territory of Soviet Belarus in 1941, some 1.6 million were killed by the Germans in actions away from battlefields, including about 700,000 prisoners of war, 500,000 Jews, and 320,000 people counted as partisans (the vast majority of whom were unarmed civilians.”^{*[376]}

The German racists assigned the Slavs to the lowest rank of human life, from which the Jews were altogether excluded. The Germans thus looked upon Slavs as people not fit to be educated, not able to govern themselves, worthy only as slaves whose existence would be justified because they served their German masters. Hitler's racial policy with regard to the Slavs, to the extent that it was formulated, was “depopulation.” The Slavs were to be prevented from procreating, except to provide the necessary continuing supply of slave laborers.

—Lucy Dawidowicz, *The Holocaust and the historians.*^{*[377]}



Naked Soviet POWs in Mauthausen concentration camp. Unknown date.

Soviet POWs

Main article: Nazi crimes against Soviet POWs

According to Michael Berenbaum, between two and three million Soviet prisoners-of-war—which was around 57 percent of all Soviet POWs—died of starvation, mistreatment, or executions between June 1941 and May 1945, and most of those during their first year of captivity. According to other estimates by Daniel Goldhagen, an estimated 2.8 million Soviet POWs died in eight months in 1941–42, with a total of 3.5 million by mid-1944.^{*[378]} The USHMM has estimated that 3.3 million of the 5.7 million Soviet POWs died in German custody—compared to 8,300 of 231,000 British and American prisoners.^{*[379]} The death rates decreased as the POWs were needed to work as slaves to help the German war effort; by 1943, half a million of them had been deployed as slave labor.^{*[304]}

Romani people

Main article: Porajmos

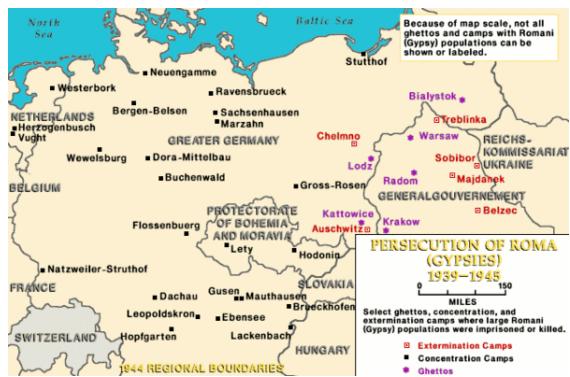
[T]hey wish to toss into the Ghetto everything that is characteristically dirty, shabby, bizarre, of which one ought to be frightened and which anyway had to be destroyed.

—Emmanuel Ringelblum on the Roma.^{*[380]}

The Nazi crimes against the Roma and Sinti people in many ways paralleled that of the Jews, and both were subject under the Nuremberg racial laws. West Germany officially recognized the Porajmos as a genocide and a crime against humanity in 1982. About 25% of the Romani population of Europe died in the war. Because the Romani are traditionally a private people with a culture based on oral history, less is known about their experience of the genocide than about that of any other group.^{*[381]} Yehuda Bauer writes that the lack of information can be attributed to the Romani's distrust and suspicion, and to their humiliation, because some of the basic taboos of Romani culture regarding hygiene and sexual contact were violated at Auschwitz. Bauer writes that “most [Romani] could not relate their stories involving these tortures; as a result, most kept silent and thus increased the effects of the massive trauma they had undergone.”^{*[382]}

The treatment of the Romani was not consistent in the different areas that Nazi Germany conquered. In some areas (e.g. Luxembourg and the Baltic countries), the Nazis killed virtually the entire Romani population. In other areas (e.g. Denmark, Greece), there is no record of Romanis being subjected to mass killings.^{*[383]}

Donald Niewyk and Frances Nicosia write that the death toll was at least 130,000 of the nearly one million Ro-



Map of persecution of the Roma

mani in Nazi-controlled Europe.* [381] Michael Berenbaum writes that serious scholarly estimates lie between 90,000 and 220,000.* [384] A study by Sybil Milton, senior historian at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, calculated a death toll of at least 220,000 and possibly closer to 500,000, but this study explicitly excluded the Independent State of Croatia where the genocide of Romanies was intense.* [310]* [385] Martin Gilbert estimates a total of more than 220,000 of the 700,000 Romani in Europe.* [386] Ian Hancock, Director of the Program of Romani Studies and the Romani Archives and Documentation Center at the University of Texas at Austin, has argued in favour of a much higher figure of between 500,000 and 1,500,000.* [311]

Before being sent to the camps, the victims were herded into ghettos, including several hundred into the Warsaw Ghetto.* [142] Further east, teams of *Einsatzgruppen* tracked down Romani encampments and murdered the inhabitants on the spot, leaving no records of the victims. They were also targeted by the puppet regimes that cooperated with the Nazis, e.g. the *Ustaše* regime in Croatia, where a large number of Romani were killed in the Jasenovac concentration camp. The genocide analyst Helen Fein has stated that the Ustashe killed virtually every Romani in Croatia.* [387]

In May 1942, the Romani were placed under similar labor and social laws to the Jews. On 16 December 1942, Heinrich Himmler, Commander of the SS and regarded as the “architect” of the Nazi genocide,* [388] issued a decree that “Gypsy *Mischlinge* (mixed breeds), Romani, and members of the clans of Balkan origins who are not of German blood” should be sent to Auschwitz, unless they had served in the *Wehrmacht*.* [389] On 29 January 1943, another decree ordered the deportation of all German Romani to Auschwitz.

This was adjusted on 15 November 1943, when Himmler ordered that, in the occupied Soviet areas, “sedentary Gypsies and part-Gypsies (*Mischlinge*) are to be treated as citizens of the country. Nomadic Gypsies and part-Gypsies are to be placed on the same level as Jews and placed in concentration camps.”* [390] Bauer argues that this adjustment reflected Nazi ideology that the Romani,

originally an Aryan population, had been “spoiled” by non-Romani blood.* [391]

Persons of color

Main articles: Black people in Nazi Germany, Rhineland Bastard, and Racial policy of Nazi Germany § Other “non-Aryans”

The number of black people in Germany when the Nazis came to power is variously estimated at 5,000–25,000.* [392] It is not clear whether these figures included Asians. According to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C., “The fate of black people from 1933 to 1945 in Nazi Germany and in German-occupied territories ranged from isolation to persecution, sterilization, medical experimentation, incarceration, brutality, and murder. However, there was no systematic program for their elimination as there was for Jews and other groups.”* [393] Meanwhile, Afrikaaners, Berbers, Iranians and Pre-Partition Indians were classified as Aryans, so they were not persecuted (see main article). Racial restrictions were relaxed to the extent that Turkic peoples, Arabs and South Asians were recruited by the German military due to the shortage of manpower.* [394]

14.4.3 Other

Disabled and mentally ill

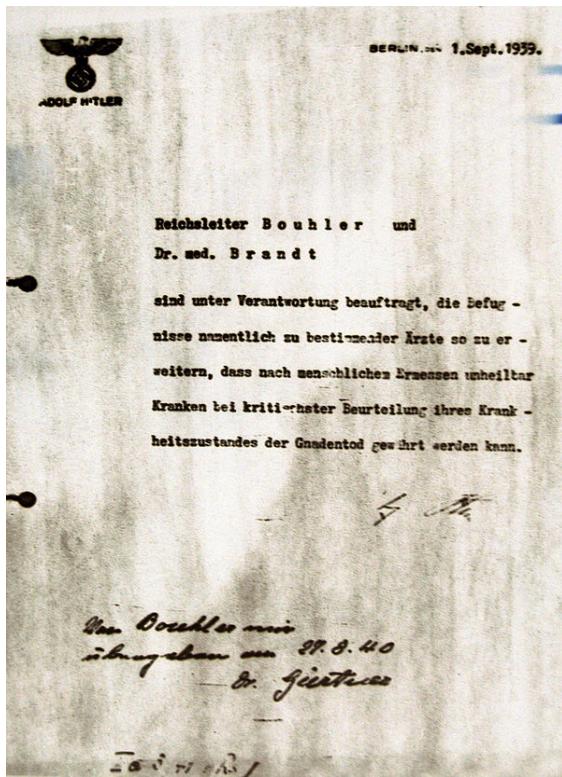
Main articles: Nazi eugenics, Action T4, Erbkrank, Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring, Life unworthy of life, and Schloss Hartheim

Our starting-point is not the individual, and we do not subscribe to the view that one should feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty or clothe the naked—those are not our objectives. Our objectives are entirely different. They can be put most crisply in the sentence: we must have a healthy people in order to prevail in the world.

—Joseph Goebbels, 1938.* [395]

Nazis used the phrase *Lebensunwertes Leben* (Life unworthy of life) in reference to their victims in an attempt to justify the killings.* [396]

In October 1939 Adolf Hitler signed a “euthanasia decree” backdated to 1 September 1939 that authorized *Reichsleiter Philipp Bouhler*, the chief of his Chancellery (*Kanzlei des Führer der NSDAP*),* [397] and *Karl Brandt*, Hitler’s personal physician, to carry out the programme of involuntary euthanasia (*translated as follows*):



Hitler's order for Action T4.

Reich Leader Bouhler and Dr. Brandt are entrusted with the responsibility of extending the authority of physicians, designated by name, so that patients who, on the basis of human judgment [*menschlichem Ermessen*], are considered incurable, can be granted mercy death [*Gnaden Tod*] after a definitive diagnosis.

—Adolf Hitler^{*[398]}

The *Action T4* program was established to maintain the racial purity of the German people by killing or sterilizing citizens who were judged to be disabled or suffering from mental disorder.^{*[399]}

Between 1939 and 1941, 80,000 to 100,000 mentally ill adults in institutions were killed; 5,000 children in institutions; and 1,000 Jews in institutions.^{*[400]} Outside the mental health institutions, the figures are estimated as 20,000 (according to Georg Renno, the deputy director of Schloss Hartheim, one of the euthanasia centers) or 400,000 (according to Frank Zeireis, the commandant of Mauthausen concentration camp).^{*[400]} Another 300,000 were forcibly sterilized.^{*[401]} Overall it has been estimated that over 270,000 individuals^{*[309]} with mental disorders of all kinds were put to death, although their mass murder has received relatively little historical attention. Along with the physically disabled, people suffering from dwarfism were persecuted as well. Many were put on display in cages and experimented on

by the Nazis.^{*[402]} Despite not being formally ordered to take part, psychiatrists and many psychiatric institutions took part in the planning and carrying out of controversial practices at every stage, and constituted the connection to the later annihilation of Jews and other deemed undesirable in the Holocaust.^{*[403]} After strong protests by the German Catholic and Protestant churches on 24 August 1941 Hitler ordered the cancellation of the T4 program.^{*[404]}

The program was named after Tiergartenstraße 4, the address of a villa in the Berlin borough of Tiergarten, the headquarters of the General Foundation for Welfare and Institutional Care,^{*[405]} led by Bouhler and Brandt.

Brandt was tried in December 1946 at Nuremberg, along with 22 others, in a case known as *United States of America vs. Karl Brandt et al.*, also known as the Doctors' Trial. He was found guilty and was sentenced to death. He was hanged at Landsberg Prison on 2 June 1948.

Homosexuals

Main articles: Institut für Sexualwissenschaft, Pink triangle, and Persecution of homosexuals in Nazi Germany and the Holocaust

Between 5,000 and 15,000 homosexuals of German na-



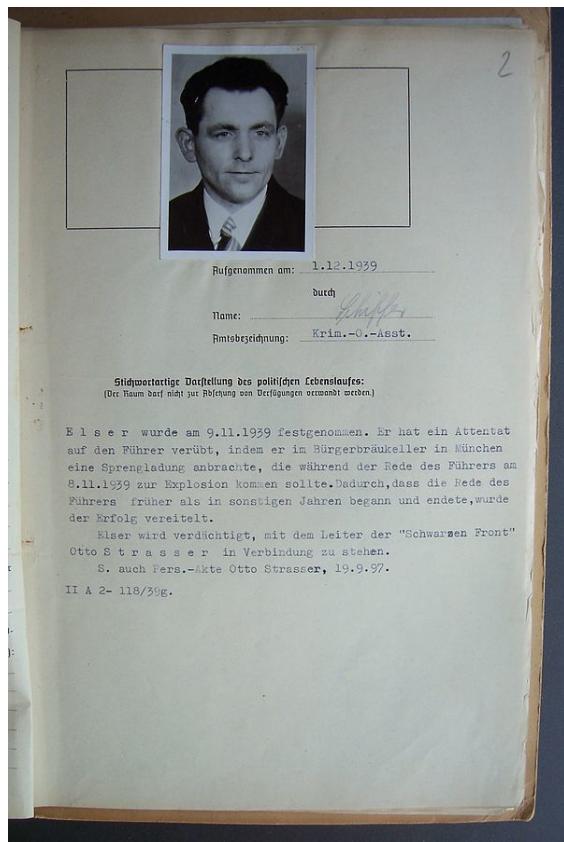
The Homomonument in Amsterdam, a memorial to the homosexual victims of Nazi Germany.

tionality are estimated to have been sent to concentration camps.^{*[314]} James D. Steakley writes that what mattered in Germany was criminal intent or character, rather than criminal acts, and the “gesundes Volksempfinden” (“healthy sensibility of the people”) became the leading normative legal principle.^{*[406]} In 1936, Himmler created the Reich Central Office for the Combating of Homosexuality and Abortion.^{*[407]} Homosexuality was declared contrary to “wholesome popular sentiment,”^{*[314]} and homosexuals were consequently regarded as “defilers of German blood.” The Gestapo raided gay bars, tracked individuals using the address books of those they arrested, used the subscription lists of gay magazines to find others, and encouraged people to report suspected

homosexual behavior and to scrutinize the behavior of their neighbors.*[314]*[406]

Tens of thousands were convicted between 1933 and 1944 and sent to camps for “rehabilitation”, where they were identified by yellow armbands*[408] and later pink triangles worn on the left side of the jacket and the right trouser leg, which singled them out for sexual abuse.*[406] Hundreds were castrated by court order.*[409] They were humiliated, tortured, used in hormone experiments conducted by SS doctors, and killed.*[314] Steakley writes that the full extent of gay suffering was slow to emerge after the war. Many victims kept their stories to themselves because homosexuality remained criminalized in postwar Germany.*[406]

The political left



German opponent of Nazism executed at Dachau.

German communists, socialists and trade unionists were among the earliest domestic opponents of Nazism*[410] and were also among the first to be sent to concentration camps. Hitler claimed that communism was a Jewish ideology which the Nazis termed "Judeo-Bolshevism". Fear of communist agitation was used as justification for the Enabling Act of 1933, the law which gave Hitler his original dictatorial powers. Hermann Göring later testified at the Nuremberg Trials that the Nazis' willingness to repress German communists prompted president

Paul von Hindenburg and the German elite to cooperate with the Nazis. MI6 assisted the Gestapo via “the exchange of information about Communism”, and as late as October 1937, the head of the British agency's Berlin station, Frank Foley, described his relationship with Heinrich Müller's so-called communism expert as “cordial” .*[411]

Hitler and the Nazis also hated German leftists because of their resistance to the party's racism. Many leaders of German leftist groups were Jews, and Jews were especially prominent among the leaders of the Spartacist uprising in 1919. Hitler already referred to Marxism and "Bolshevism" as a means of “the international Jew” to undermine “racial purity” and survival of the Nordics or Aryans, as well as to stir up socioeconomic class tension and labor unions against the government or state-owned businesses. Within concentration camps such as Buchenwald, German communists were privileged in comparison to Jews because of their “racial purity” .*[412]

Whenever the Nazis occupied a new territory, members of communist, socialist, or anarchist groups were normally to be the first persons detained or executed. Evidence of this is found in Hitler's infamous Commissar Order, in which he ordered the summary execution of all political commissars captured among Soviet soldiers, as well as the execution of all Communist Party members in German-held territory.*[413]*[414] Einsatzgruppen carried out these executions in the east. *Nacht und Nebel* (“Night and Fog”) was a directive of Hitler on 7 December 1941 signed and implemented by Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces Wilhelm Keitel, resulting in kidnapping and the disappearance of many political activists throughout Nazi Germany's occupied territories.

Among the well-known leftist prisoners of the concentration camps were German socialists Hermann Brill, Rudolf Breitscheid, Heinrich Bußmann, Josef Felder, Heinrich Fulda, Ernst Heilmann, and Alfred Schmieder; German communists Emil Carlebach, Ernst Grube, Walter Krämer, Adolf Maislinger, Oskar Müller, Beppo Römer, Werner Scholem, and Ernst Thälmann; Jewish socialist and former French Prime Minister Léon Blum; Slovenian socialist activist Andrej Gosar; Jewish Austrian socialist Robert Danneberg; and Austrian socialist (and later Interior Minister) Franz Olah. Kurt Schumacher, a leading German socialist politician, was imprisoned in various concentration camps for ten years, and left the camps severely ill, leading to the amputation of his leg in 1948 and ultimately his death in 1952; however, during that time he played an instrumental role in re-establishing the Social Democratic Party of Germany.

Freemasons

Main articles: Suppression of Freemasonry § Nazi Germany and Occupied Europe, and *Nacht und Nebel*

In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler wrote that Freemasonry had “suc-



A memorial for Loge Liberté chérie, founded in November 1943 in Hut 6 of Emslandlager VII (KZ Esterwegen), one of two Masonic Lodges founded in a Nazi concentration camp.

cumbed” to the Jews: “The general pacifistic paralysis of the national instinct of self-preservation begun by Freemasonry is then transmitted to the masses of society by the Jewish press.” *[415] Within the Reich, however, the “threat” posed by Freemasons was not considered serious from the mid-1930s onwards.*[416] Heydrich even established a Freemasonry museum—at which Eichmann spent some time early in his SD career*[417]—for what he regarded as a “disappeared cult”. *[418] Similarly, Hitler was happy to issue a proclamation on 27 April 1938 whose third point lifted restrictions on Party membership for former Freemasons, “provided the applicants had not served with the Lodge as high degree members.” *[419] The *Führer* still maintained Freemasonry within his conspiratorial outlook,*[420] but its adherents were not persecuted in a systematic fashion like groups such as the Jews.*[416] Those Freemasons who were sent to concentration camps as political prisoners were forced to wear an inverted red triangle.*[421]

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum believes that, “because many of the Freemasons who were arrested were also Jews and/or members of the political opposition, it is not known how many individuals were placed in Nazi concentration camps and/or were targeted only because they were Freemasons.” *[422] However, the Grand Lodge of Scotland estimates the number of Freemasons executed between 80,000 and 200,000.

Jehovah's Witnesses

Main article: Persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses in Nazi Germany

Refusing to pledge allegiance to the Nazi party or to serve in the military, roughly 12,000 Jehovah's Witnesses were

forced to wear a purple triangle and were placed in camps where they were given the option of renouncing their faith and submitting to the state's authority. Between 2,500 and 5,000 were killed.*[315] Historian Detlef Garbe, director of Hamburg's Neuengamme Memorial, writes that “no other religious movement resisted the pressure to conform to National Socialism with comparable unanimity and steadfastness.” *[423]

Spanish Republicans

After losing the Spanish Civil War many republicans fled to France. With the subsequent fall of France, many were sent to concentration camps, particularly the Mauthausen-Gusen concentration camp, where about 7000 died.*[316]*[424]

14.5 Uniqueness question

Shimon Samuels, director for International Liaison of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre, describes the acrimonious debate in Holocaust scholarship between “specifists” and “universalists”. The former regards comparisons to be invidious trivialization, while the latter places the Holocaust alongside other experiences of mass killings as part and parcel of the global context of genocide and human suffering.*[425] The implications of either perspective are summarized by Hebrew University scholar Yehuda Bauer:

“If what happened to the Jews was unique, then it took place outside of history, it becomes a mysterious event, an upside-down miracle, so to speak, an event of religious significance in the sense that it is not man-made as the term is normally understood. On the other hand, if it is not unique at all, then where are the parallels or the precedents?”

Yehuda Bauer, “Against Mystification” in *The Holocaust in Historical Perspective* (1978)*[426]

Bauer identified the Holocaust's “closest parallel” as the Armenian Genocide, and argued that the genocides' similarities significantly outweighed their differences. Nevertheless, he distinguished several key differences between the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide, particularly in regard to motivation: “[T]he Nazis saw the Jews as the central problem of world history. Upon its solution depended the future of mankind. Unless International Jewry was defeated, human civilization would not survive. The attitude towards the Jews had in it important elements of pseudo-religion. There was no such motivation present in the Armenian case; Armenians were to be annihilated for power-political reasons, and in Turkey only ... The differences between the holocaust and the Armenian massacres are less important than the similarities—and even if the Armenian case is not seen as a holocaust in the extreme form which it took towards Jews, it

is certainly the nearest thing to it.”

Proponents of the Holocaust’s uniqueness argue that comparisons to other genocides trivializes the Holocaust, with regards to scope, scale, methods, and motivations.*[427] Opponents of this view consider it immoral and unjustified to hold any tragedy as unique and beyond comparison. Peter Novick argued, “A moment’s reflection makes clear that the notion of uniqueness is quite vacuous [… and], in practice, deeply offensive. What else can all of this possibly mean except ‘your catastrophe, unlike ours, is ordinary’.”*[428] Others believe that debating uniqueness itself is offensive and misguided. Samuels considers the debate, *ipso facto*, to dishonour the memory of the respective victims of *each* genocide. In his words, “Each case is specific as a threshold phenomenon, while each also adds its unique memory as signposts along an incremental continuum of horror.”*[425]

A 2011 survey by Dan Stone deemed the debate “irrelevant” in scholarship. “The notion that the Holocaust is unique has been replaced by detailed, scholarly examinations of the history of genocide, in which the Holocaust is neither set apart from nor reduced to broader trends in world history.”*[13] However specifist arguments are still found in scholarship. A 2015 view from the eminent British historian, Richard Evans of the Third Reich:

Thus although the Nazi ‘Final Solution’ was one genocide among many, it had features that made it stand out from all the rest as well. Unlike all the others it was bounded neither by space nor by time. It was launched not against a local or regional obstacle, but at a world-enemy seen as operating on a global scale. It was bound to an even larger plan of racial reordering and reconstruction involving further genocidal killing on an almost unimaginable scale, aimed, however, at clearing the way in a particular region—Eastern Europe—for a further struggle against the Jews and those the Nazis regarded as their puppets. It was set in motion by ideologues who saw world history in racial terms. It was, in part, carried out by industrial methods. These things all make it unique. But its uniqueness in this sense doesn’t mean we can’t learn from it. We can look at extreme nationalist and racist ideologies and see from the experience of Nazi extermination when they look like spilling over into genocide and mass murder, and intervene at this point to stop them going any further.*[429]



Defendants in the dock at the Nuremberg trials. The main target of the prosecution was Hermann Göring (at the left edge on the first row of benches), considered to be the most important surviving official in the Third Reich after Hitler's death. Göring later committed suicide.

14.6.1 Nuremberg trials

The Nuremberg trials were a series of military tribunals, held by the Allied forces after World War II, most notable for the prosecution of prominent members of the political, military, and economic leadership of Nazi Germany. The trials were held in the city of Nuremberg, Germany. The first, and best known of these trials, described as “the greatest trial in history” by Norman Birkett, one of the British judges who presided over it,*[430] was the trial of the major war criminals before the International Military Tribunal (IMT). Held between 20 November 1945 and 1 October 1946,*[431] the Tribunal tried 23 of the most important political and military leaders of the Third Reich (except for Adolf Hitler, Heinrich Himmler, and Joseph Goebbels, all of whom had committed suicide several months before).*[432]

The International Military Tribunal was opened on 19 November 1945, in the Palace of Justice in Nuremberg.*[433] The first session was presided over by the Soviet judge, Nikitchenko. The prosecution entered indictments against 24 major war criminals and seven organizations—the leadership of the Nazi party, the Reich Cabinet, the Schutzstaffel (SS), Sicherheitsdienst (SD), the Gestapo, the Sturmabteilung (SA) and the “General Staff and High Command”, comprising several categories of senior military officers.*[434] These organizations were to be declared “criminal” if found guilty.

The indictments were for: participation in a common plan or conspiracy for the accomplishment of a crime against peace; planning, initiating and waging wars of aggression and other crimes against peace; war crimes; and crimes against humanity. The Tribunal passed out sentences ranging from acquittal to 10 to 15 years in prison, to life imprisonment, to death by hanging (standard drop method).

14.6 Aftermath

14.6.2 Reparations

Main article: Reparations Agreement between Israel and West Germany

In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War,



Railcar manufactured by [Maschinenfabrik Esslingen](#) in the old train station of Jerusalem, shortly after delivery as part of the reparations agreement with Germany.

the Jewish Agency led by Chaim Weizmann submitted to the Allies a memorandum demanding reparations to Jews by Germany but it received no answer. In March 1951, a new request was made by Israel's foreign minister Moshe Sharett which claimed global recompense to Israel of \$1.5 billion based on the financial cost absorbed by Israel for the rehabilitation of 500,000 Jewish survivors. West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer accepted these terms and declared he was ready to negotiate other reparations. A Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany was opened in New York City by Nahum Goldmann in order to help with individual claims. After negotiations, the claim was reduced to a sum of \$845 million in direct and indirect compensation to be paid over a period of 14 years.

On 1952 Ben Gurion argued that the reparation demand was based on recovering as much Jewish property as possible "so that the murderers do not become the heirs as well". His other argument was that the reparations were needed to finance the absorption and rehabilitation of the Holocaust survivors in Israel.^{*[435]}

In 1988, West Germany allocated another \$125 million for reparations.^{*[436]} In 1999, many German industries such as Deutsche Bank, Siemens or BMW faced lawsuits for their role in the forced labour during World War II. In order to dismiss these lawsuits, Germany agreed to raise \$5 billion of which Jewish forced laborers still alive could apply to receive a lump sum payment of between \$2,500 and \$7,500.^{*[436]} In 2012, Germany agreed to pay a new reparation of €772 million as a result of negotiations with Israel.^{*[437]}

In 2014, the [SNCF](#), the French state-owned railway company, was compelled to allocate \$60 million to American Jewish Holocaust survivors for its role in the transport of deportees to Germany, a sum equivalent to about

\$100,000 for each survivor.^{*[438]} This is despite the fact that SNCF was forced by German authorities to cooperate in providing transport for French Jews to the border and did not make any profit from this transport, according to [Serge Klarsfeld](#), president of the organization Sons and Daughters of Jewish Deportees from France.

These reparations were sometimes criticized in Israel where they were seen as "blood money".^{*[436]} Some of the reparations money was subject to a fraud between 1993 and 2009, in which \$57 million was diverted to people who were not eligible.^{*[439]}

14.7 See also

See also: Category:The Holocaust by country

- [השואה](#) on the Hebrew Wikipedia (Hebrew)
- Aftermath of the Holocaust
- Antisemitism
- Antiziganism
- Bibliography of The Holocaust
- Dachau trials
- Genocide
- German war crimes
- Holocaust denial
- Holocaust research
- Individuals and groups who assisted Jews during the Holocaust
- International Holocaust Remembrance Day
- International response to the Holocaust
- Jewish resistance under Nazi rule
- Holocaust memorials
- List of Holocaust survivors
- List of major perpetrators of the Holocaust
- Nuremberg trials
- Responsibility for the Holocaust
- Righteous Among the Nations
- Stolperstein
- War crimes of the Wehrmacht

14.8 Notes

- [1] Initial estimates inflated the number of the murdered. Those accounts were disproved by the Office of Public Prosecutor in 2002,* [147] the Institute of National Remembrance,* [148] and the Polish parliament.* [149] The inscription on the memorial stone raised by the communist authorities in place of the barn at Jedwabne used to read: "Place of torture and execution of the Jewish population. The Gestapo and Nazi gendarmerie burned 1,600 people alive on 10 July 1941." (Polish: *Miejsce kaźni ludności żydowskiej. Gestapo i żandarmeria hitlerowska spaliła żywcem 1600 osób 10.VII.1941.*). The stone was removed in 2001 after the collapse of the Soviet empire and deposited in the Polish Army Museum in Białystok because it did not present the true number of the dead confirmed by an official investigation conducted in 2000–2003 by the Institute of National Remembrance with Jewish presence.* [150]

14.9 Citations

- [1] *The Auschwitz Album*. Yad Vashem. Retrieved 24 September 2012.
- [2] The extended definition of the Holocaust includes other victims of Nazi crimes against humanity and war crimes, such as the Romani genocide, Germany's eugenics program, the German mistreatment of Soviet prisoners of war, the Nazi crimes against the Polish nation and other Slavs as well as political opponents, the persecution of homosexuals in Nazi Germany and the Holocaust, the persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses in Nazi Germany, as well as murder of civil hostages and Resistance during World War II members from all over Europe.
- [3] Dawidowicz 1975, p. xxxvii.
- [4] Snyder 2010, p. 45.
Further examples of this usage can be found in: Bauer 2002, Cesarani 2004, Dawidowicz 1981, Evans 2002, Gilbert 1986, Hilberg 1996, Longerich 2012, Phayer 2000, Zuccotti 1999.
- [5] Inside Yad Vashem
- [6] Dawidowicz 1975, p. 403.
- [7] Niewyk & Nicosia 2000, pp. 45–52.
- [8] "The Holocaust: Definition and Preliminary Discussion". yadvashem.org. Yad Vashem. Retrieved 26 June 2015.
- [9] Evans, Richard (9 July 2015). *The Anatomy of Hell*, *The New York Review of Books*
- [10] Fitzgerald 2011, p. 4; Hedgepeth & Saidel 2010, p. 16.
- [11] Holocaust Memorial Day
- [12] Eric Lichtenblau (1 March 2013). "The Holocaust Just Got More Shocking". *The New York Times*. Retrieved 2 March 2013.
- [13] Stone 2011, p. 109.
- [14] Kennedy 2007, p. 780.
- [15] Laqueur 2001, p. 546.
- [16] Jewish Partisan Education Foundation, accessed 22 December 2013.
- [17] Whitney, William Dwight, ed. (1904). "Holocaust". *The Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia*. 4. p. 2859. Retrieved 1 June 2016.
- [18] Bertelli, Sergio; Litchfield, R. Burr (2003). *The King's Body: Sacred Rituals of Power in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. Penn State Press. p. 45. ISBN 978-0271041391. Retrieved 1 June 2016.
- [19] John Milton quotes
- [20] *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Clarendon Press, 2nd ed. Oxford 1989, vol. VII p. 315 sect c.'complete destruction, esp. of a large number of persons; a great slaughter or massacre' citing examples from 1883 onwards.
- [21] Niewyk & Nicosia 2000, p. 45.
- [22] Steinweis 2001 provides a survey of this phenomenon.
- [23] "The Holocaust: Definition and Preliminary Discussion", Yad Vashem. Retrieved 24 September 2012.
- [24] For example, Israeli journalist Amira Hass, the daughter of two Holocaust survivors and translator of the 2009 English edition of her mother's diary of surviving Bergen-Belsen (Lévy-Hass 2009) has argued that " 'The Holocaust' is an incorrect term ... as if something came out from the sky, from heaven, some disaster, a calamity, a nature calamity, and not human-made calamity." Asked for a better way to refer to it, she responded, "The German industry of murder. Or the assembly-line of [mass] murder" ("Diary of Bergen-Belsen, 1944–1945": Amira Hass Discusses Her Mother's Concentration Camp Diary". *Independent Global News*).
For an opposing view on the allegedly offensive nature of the meaning of the word *holocaust*, see Petrie 2000.
- [25] Compare: Berenbaum, Michael; Kramer, Arnold (2005-12-09). Berenbaum, Michael, ed. *The world must know: the history of the Holocaust as told in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* (2 ed.). United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (published 2005). p. 103. ISBN 9780801883583. Retrieved 2015-10-08. Nazi Germany became a genocidal state. The goal of annihilation called for participation by every arm of the government.
- [26] Berenbaum 2005, p. 104.
- [27] Friedländer 2007, p. xxi.
- [28] Bauer 2002, p. 48.
- [29] Maier 1988, p. 53.
- [30] "Holocaust Map of Concentration and Death Camps", History1900s, About.com. 16 June 2010. Retrieved 31 July 2010.
- [31] Dear & Foot 2001, p. 289.

- [32] For a summary of this point, see: Bauer, Yehuda (27 January 1998). “Address to the Bundestag”. Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Retrieved 21 September 2012.
- [33] Bauer 2002, p. 49.
- [34] Gellately & Stoltzfus 2001, p. 216.
- [35] Holocaust Encyclopedia (20 June 2014). “Gassing Operations”. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC. Retrieved 25 January 2015.
- [36] Hilberg 1995, p. 66.
- [37] Harran 2000, p. 384
- [38] Müller-Hill 1998, p. 22.
- [39] Berenbaum 2005, pp. 194–195.
- [40] Dawidowicz 1975, p. 47; Goldhagen 1997, p. 53.
- [41] Fischer 2002, pp. 47–49.
- [42] Gramel 1992, pp. 53–4.
- [43] Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm (2009). *Human, All-Too-Human*. Translation: Helen Zimmern. Prometheus. pp. 175–6. ISBN 978-1591026785.
- [44] Gramel 1992, p. 61.
- [45] Friedländer 1997, p. 76.
- [46] David B. MacDonald (2007). *Identity Politics in the Age of Genocide: The Holocaust and Historical Representation*. Routledge. p. 97. ISBN 1134085710.
- [47] “Hitler's Holocaust blueprint: A new book reveals how the Kaiser's Germany used concentration camps in Africa to advance their theories of racial supremacy”. 23 September 2010.
- [48] Evans 1989, p. 69.
- [49] Friedlander 1994, pp. 495–6.
- [50] Fischer 2002, pp. 47–51.
- [51] Mommsen 1993, p. 121.
- [52] Peukert 1994, pp. 280–4.
- [53] Peukert 1994, pp. 279–280.
- [54] Peukert 1994, p. 280.
- [55] Peukert 1994, p. 288.
- [56] “Boycotts”. www.chgs.umn.edu. Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, University of Minnesota. Archived from the original on 11 June 2007. Retrieved 30 October 2016.
- [57] “Antisemitism in History: World War I”. ushm.org. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Retrieved 1 September 2015.
- [58] Burleigh 2000, pp. 47–48.
- [59] Peukert 1994, p. 289.
- [60] Kershaw 1998, pp. 60–67.
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- [62] Kershaw 1998, p. 258
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- [221] Piper 1998, p. 171.
- [222] Piper 1998, p. 164.
- [223] Pelt 2002, p. 4.
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- [291] Hitchcock 2009, p. 297.
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14.11 External links

- Library resources in your library and in other libraries by The Holocaust
- Other external links, references, and resources are listed at [Holocaust \(resources\)](#)
- H-Holocaust, H-Net discussion list for librarians, scholars and advanced students
- Online documents available from the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library
- Guide to materials available at the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library
- The Wiener Library for the Study of the Holocaust & Genocide—The World's Oldest Holocaust Memorial Institution
- Common Questions about the Holocaust by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
- The Minutes from the Wannsee Conference in English
- Stills from Soviet documentary “The Atrocities committed by German Fascists in the USSR” ((1); (2); (3))

- Slide show “Nazi Crimes in the USSR (Graphic images!)”
- Nazi Concentration and Prison Camps (1945)
Nuremberg Trials Documentary

Chapter 15

Timeline of World War II

This is a timeline of events that stretched over the period of World War II. Because of length it is subdivided into pages by year, as well as events preceding the war:

- Timeline of events preceding World War II
 - Events preceding World War II in Asia
 - Events preceding World War II in Europe
- Timeline of World War II (1939)
- Timeline of World War II (1940)
- Timeline of World War II (1941)
- Timeline of World War II (1942)
- Timeline of World War II (1943)
- Timeline of World War II (1944)
- Timeline of World War II (1945)
- Long-term engagements:
 - Battle of the Atlantic (40-44)
 - Timeline of the Eastern Front of World War II (41-45)
- Timeline of the United Kingdom home front during World War II
- Strategic conferences of the Allies during World War II (politicians and military staff)

15.1 See also

- Timeline of World War I (1914–1918)

15.2 External links

- WW2DB: Day-by-Day Timeline
- HistoryOrb.com

Chapter 16

Diplomatic history of World War II

The **Diplomatic history of World War II** includes the major foreign policies and interactions inside the opposing coalitions, the Allies and the Axis powers. The military history of the war is covered at [World War II](#).

16.1 The United Nations

See also: [Allies of World War II](#)

Britain, the United States, the Soviet Union and China were the "Big Four" Allied powers,^{*[1]} who called themselves "The United Nations." They were joined by numerous other countries, such as [Canada](#),^{*[2]} and other Commonwealth countries, as well as governments in exile, such as the Free France and the Netherlands.

16.1.1 Cairo Conference

Main article: [Cairo Conference](#)

The Cairo Conference held in Cairo, Egypt, outlined



Chiang Kai-shek of China with Roosevelt and Churchill at the Cairo Conference in 1943.

the Allied position against Japan during World War II and made decisions about postwar Asia. The meeting was attended by President of the United States Franklin Roosevelt, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Win-

ston Churchill, and Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek of the Republic of China. Soviet leader Joseph Stalin did not attend the conference because his meeting with Chiang could have caused friction between the Soviet Union and Japan.^{*[3]}

16.1.2 Big Three conferences

See also: [List of World War II conferences](#)

Britain, the USSR and the US, were in frequent con-



Stalin (left), Roosevelt and Churchill at Tehran, Nov. 1943

tact through ambassadors, top generals, foreign ministers and special emissaries such as the American [Harry Hopkins](#). There were numerous high-level conferences; in total Churchill attended 14 meetings, Roosevelt 12, and Stalin 5. Most visible were the three summit conferences that brought together the three top leaders.^{*[4]*[5]}

Tehran conference

Main article: [Tehran Conference](#)

The first meeting of the Big Three, Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill, came at the Tehran Conference in Iran from 28 November to 1 December 1943. It agreed on an invasion of France in 1944 (the "Second front") and dealt with

Turkey, Iran, Yugoslavia and the war against Japan as well as the post-war settlement.*[6]

Yalta conference

Main article: Yalta Conference

The Yalta Conference met in the Crimea (Russia) February 4–11, 1945. It focused on postwar plans for European boundaries. The Soviets already controlled Poland. The new boundaries of Poland were especially important, with Stalin seeking control of western Belorussia and western Ukraine. Poland was to gain parts of Germany. Stalin promised free elections in Poland under the auspices of a government he controlled. At Roosevelt's strong urging, Stalin agreed to enter the war against Japan three months after the defeat of Germany. It was agreed the USSR would be a member of the United Nations Security Council, with a veto, and Ukraine and Belorussia would be UN members, but not the other 12 Soviet republics. Germany was to be divided into three zones of occupation, and France was also to get a zone. In a decision that became highly controversial, all civilians would be repatriated.*[7]



Clement Attlee, Harry Truman and Joseph Stalin at the Potsdam Conference, circa 28 July -- 1 August 1945

Potsdam conference

Main article: Potsdam Conference

The Potsdam Conference was held July 17-Aug. 2, 1945, at Potsdam, Germany, near Berlin. Stalin met with the new U.S. President Harry S. Truman and two British prime ministers in succession—Winston Churchill and Clement Attlee. It demanded “unconditional surrender” from Japan, and finalized arrangements for Germany to be occupied and controlled by the Allied Control Commission. The status of other occupied countries was discussed in line with the basic agreements made earlier at

Yalta.*[8]

16.1.3 Dumbarton Oaks Conference

Main article: Dumbarton Oaks Conference

The Dumbarton Oaks Conference or, more formally, the Washington Conversations on International Peace and Security Organization was an international conference at which the United Nations was formulated and negotiated among international leaders. The conference was held at Dumbarton Oaks from August 21, 1944 to October 7, 1944. At the conference, delegations from the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, the United States and the Republic of China deliberated over proposals for the establishment of an organization to maintain peace and security in the world.

16.1.4 San Francisco Conference

Main article: San Francisco Conference

San Francisco Conference was a convention of delegates from 50 Allied nations that took place from 25 April 1945 to 26 June 1945 in San Francisco, United States. At this convention, the delegates reviewed and rewrote the Dumbarton Oaks agreements.*[9] The convention resulted in the creation of the United Nations Charter, which was opened for signature on 26 June. The heads of the delegations of the four sponsoring countries (China, Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union) took turns as chairman of the plenary meetings.*[10]

16.2 Britain - United States

See also: Lend-Lease, Destroyers for Bases Agreement, and Manhattan Project

Though most Americans favoured Britain in the war, there was widespread opposition to American military intervention in European affairs. President Roosevelt's policy of cash-and-carry still allowed Britain and France to purchase munitions from the United States and carry them home.

Churchill, who had long warned against Germany and demanded rearmament, became prime minister after Chamberlain's policy of appeasement had totally collapsed and Britain was unable to reverse the German invasion of Norway in April 1940. After the fall of France Roosevelt gave Britain all aid short of war. The Destroyers for Bases Agreement of September 1940, gave the United States a ninety-nine-year lease on strategically located bases in the Atlantic in exchange for



Roosevelt and Churchill drafted the Atlantic Charter in August 1941

the Royal Navy receiving fifty old destroyers to use in anti-submarine warfare. Roosevelt also sold (for cash) munitions that were carried away in British ships, including over half a million rifles, 85,000 machine guns, 25,000 automatic rifles, mortars, hundreds of field guns, with supplies of the necessary ammunition. The British needed these munitions to reequip the soldiers who lost all their arms when Dunkirk was evacuated in June 1940.*[11]

Beginning in March 1941, the United States enacted Lend-Lease sending tanks, warplanes, munitions, ammunition, food, and medical supplies. Britain received \$31.4 billion out of a total of \$50.1 billion of supplies sent to the Allies. In sharp contrast to the First World War, these were not loans and no repayment was involved.*[12]

16.2.1 Arcadia

The Arcadia Conference was held in Washington, from December 22, 1941 to January 14, 1942, bringing together the top British and American military leaders in Washington, December 22, 1941, to January 14, 1942. Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt and their aides had very candid conversations that led to a series of major decisions that shaped the war effort in 1942–1943. The decision was made to invade North Africa in 1942, to send American bombers to bases in England, and for the British to strengthen their forces in the Pacific. The Conference established the Combined Chiefs of Staff, headquartered in Washington, which approved and finalized all military decisions. It also created a unified American-British-Dutch-Australian Command (ABDA) in the Far East; it fared poorly. Finally the conference drafted the Declaration by the United Nations, which committed the Allies to make no separate peace with the enemy, and to employ full resources until victory.*[13]

At the Quebec Conference, 1943 held in Canada in August 1943, Churchill, Roosevelt and the Combined Chiefs

plotted strategy against Germany. They began planning the invasion of France, codenamed Overlord using a report by the Combined Chiefs. They also discussed an increase of the bombing offensive against facilities Germany was using in France and the Low Countries. They decided to continue the buildup of American forces in Britain prior to an invasion of France. Churchill kept drawing attention to the advantages of operations in the Mediterranean theatre. They agreed to use more force to force Italy out of the war, and to occupy it along with Corsica. Military cooperation was close and successful.*[14]

16.2.2 Technical collaboration

Main article: Technology during World War II § Allied cooperation

Technical collaboration was even closer, as the two nations shared secrets and weapons regarding the proximity fuze and radar, as well as airplane engines, Nazi codes, and the atomic bomb.*[15]*[16]*[17]

Millions of American servicemen were based in Britain during the war, which led to a certain amount of friction with British men and intermarriage with British women. This animosity was explored in art and film, most particularly *A Matter of Life and Death* and *A Canterbury Tale*.*[18] In 1945 Churchill sent a British fleet to help the United States attack and invade Japan.

16.2.3 Casablanca conference

Main article: Casablanca Conference

From January 14–24, 1943 Roosevelt, Churchill and the Combined Staff met in Casablanca, Morocco. They decided on the major Allied strategy for 1943 in Europe, especially the invasion of Italy and planning for the invasion of France. At Roosevelt's suggestion they agreed on a policy of "unconditional surrender." This policy uplifted Allied morale, but it also made the Nazis resolve to fight to the bitter end. Roosevelt also tried to establish a working relationship between the two main French allies, Henri Giraud, the French high commissioner in North Africa, and General de Gaulle, leader of the Free French.*[19]

16.3 Britain

See also: Military history of the United Kingdom during World War II

Britain's declaration of war against Germany in September 1939 included the Crown colonies and India, which it directly controlled. The dominions were independent in foreign policy but all of them (Australia, Canada, New



The heads of government of five members of the Commonwealth of Nations at the 1944 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference.

Zealand, and South Africa) soon declared war on Germany. The fears in London that South Africa would take the advice of Prime Minister J. B. M. Hertzog and remain neutral were relieved when the parliament voted 80 to 67 for war, and Hertzog resigned.* [20] After the French defeat in June 1940, Britain and its empire stood alone in combat against Germany, until June 1941. The United States gave strong diplomatic, financial and material support, starting in 1940, especially through **Lend Lease**, which began in 1941. In August 1941, Churchill and Roosevelt met and agreed on the **Atlantic Charter**, which proclaimed “the rights of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they live” should be respected. This wording was ambiguous and would be interpreted differently by the British, Americans, and nationalist movements.

Starting in December 1941, Japan overran British possessions in Asia, including Hong Kong, Malaya, and especially the key base at **Singapore**, and marched into Burma, headed toward India. Churchill's reaction to the entry of the United States into the war was that Britain was now assured of victory and the future of the empire was safe, but the rapid defeats irreversibly harmed Britain's standing and prestige as an imperial power. The realisation that Britain could not defend them pushed Australia and New Zealand into permanent close ties with the United States.* [21]

16.3.1 India

Serious tension erupted over American demands that **India** be given independence, a proposition Churchill vehemently rejected. For years Roosevelt had encouraged Britain's disengagement from India. The American position was based on principled opposition to colonialism, practical concern for the outcome of the war, and the expectation of a large American role in a post-colonial era. However, in 1942 when the **Congress Party** launched a **Quit India** movement, the British authorities immedi-

ately arrested tens of thousands of activists, including **Jawaharlal Nehru** and **Mahatma Gandhi**, and imprisoned them until 1945. Meanwhile, India became the main American staging base for aid to China. Churchill threatened to resign if Roosevelt pushed too hard regarding independence, so Roosevelt backed down.* [22]* [23]

16.3.2 Britain and France

In spring 1939 both Britain and France formally announced they would defend the integrity of Poland. Hitler did not believe they would fight in such a faraway hopeless cause, and he invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. Britain and France declared war on September 3, 1939. But there was little they could or did do to help Poland. When Germany began its attack on France in April 1940, British troops and French troops again fought side by side, but defeat came quickly. The Royal Navy evacuated 198,000 British and 140,000 French soldiers in the **Dunkirk evacuation** in late May/early June 1940. Tens of thousands of tanks, trucks and artillery guns were left behind, as well as all of the radios, machine guns, rifles, tents, spare parts and other gear. The new Prime Minister **Winston Churchill** pledged that Britain would continue to fight for France's freedom, even if it must do so alone.* [24] After **Mers el Kebir**, Britain recognised **Free France** as its ally and the legitimate government of France.



Prime Minister Churchill and General de Gaulle at Marrakesh, January 1944

The United States maintained diplomatic relations with Vichy (until late 1942) and avoided recognition of de Gaulle's claim to be the one and only government of France. Churchill, caught between the U.S. and de Gaulle, tried to find a compromise.*[25]*[26]

16.3.3 Britain and Soviet Union

In October 1944 Churchill and his Foreign Minister Anthony Eden met in Moscow with Stalin and his foreign minister Molotov. They planned who would control what in postwar Eastern Europe. They agreed to give 90% of the influence in Greece to Britain and 90% in Romania to Russia. Russia gained an 80%/20% division in Bulgaria and Hungary. There was a 50/50 division in Yugoslavia, and no Russian share in Italy.*[27]*[28]

16.3.4 Middle East

Iraq



Gloster Gladiators of British RAF refuel in Iraq, 1941

Iraq was an independent country in 1939, with a strong British presence, especially in the oil fields. Iraq broke relations with Germany but there was a strong pro-German element. The regime of Regent 'Abd al-Ilah was overthrown in 1941 by the Golden Square pro-Nazi army officers, headed by Rashid Ali. The short living pro-Nazi government was overpowered in May 1941 by British forces in Anglo-Iraqi War and the Regent returned to power. Iraq was later used as a base for allied attacks on Vichy-French held Mandate of Syria and support for the Anglo-Soviet invasion of Iran.*[29]

Iran (Persia)

In 1939 the dictator of Iran was Shah Reza Pahlavi, an army officer who took control in a coup d'état in 1925 and called himself "shah." He was a modernizer who had little use for traditional religion, but collaborated with the Germans. Iran proclaimed neutrality when the war began in 1939. British and Soviet forces occupied Iran in August 1941, deposed the Shah, and installed his son Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi. Iran, with a largely rural population of 13 million, had oil wells and became a major route for shipping military supplies from the U.S. to the Soviet Union.

At the Tehran Conference of 1943, Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill issued the Tehran Declaration that guaranteed the post-war independence and boundaries of Iran. However, when the war actually ended, Soviet troops stationed in northwestern Iran not only refused to withdraw but backed revolts that established short-lived, pro-Soviet separatist national states in the northern regions of Azerbaijan and Iranian Kurdistan, the Azerbaijan People's Government and the Republic of Kurdistan respectively, in late 1945. Soviet troops did not withdraw from Iran proper until May 1946 after receiving a promise of oil concessions. The Soviet republics in the north were soon overthrown and the oil concessions were revoked.*[30]

16.3.5 Commonwealth

The British dominions joined in the September 3 declaration of war, except for Canada. In a symbolic statement of autonomous foreign policy, Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King delayed Parliament's vote on a declaration of war until September 10.*[31]

Britain generally handled the diplomatic relations of the Commonwealth nations. Canada hosted top level conferences between Britain and the U.S., but did not itself participate in the formal discussions.

Australia, however, felt abandoned by London and moved to a close relationship with the U.S., playing a support role in the American war against Japan. Australian Prime Minister John Curtin stated, "I make it clear that Australia looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom."*
*[32] U.S. President Roosevelt ordered General Douglas MacArthur, to move the American base from the Philippines to Brisbane, Australia. By September 1943, more than 120,000 American soldiers were in Australia. The Americans were warmly welcomed but there was some tensions. MacArthur worked very closely with the Australian government and took command of its combat operations. Fighting continued throughout Southeast Asia for the next two years. When the European war was declared over, Australia and the US still had a war to win against Japan. MacArthur promoted a policy of "island hopping" for his American troops while he suggested that

the Australian troops should continue clearing and rounding up the Japanese from New Guinea, New Britain, Borneo and Bougainville.*[33]

16.4 United States

Main article: Franklin D. Roosevelt § Third term, 1941–45

President Roosevelt tried to avoid repeating what he saw as Woodrow Wilson's mistakes in World War I.*[34] He often made exactly the opposite decision. Wilson called for neutrality in thought and deed, while Roosevelt made it clear his administration strongly favored Britain and China. Unlike the loans in World War I, the United States made large-scale grants of military and economic aid to the Allies through Lend-Lease, with little expectation of repayment. Wilson did not greatly expand war production before the declaration of war; Roosevelt did. Wilson waited for the declaration to begin a draft; Roosevelt started one in 1940. Wilson never made the United States an official ally but Roosevelt did. Wilson never met with the top Allied leaders but Roosevelt did. Wilson proclaimed independent policy, as seen in the 14 Points, while Roosevelt always had a collaborative policy with the Allies. In 1917, United States declared war on Germany; in 1941, Roosevelt waited until the enemy attacked at Pearl Harbor. Wilson refused to collaborate with the Republicans; Roosevelt named leading Republicans to head the War Department and the Navy Department. Wilson let General John J. Pershing make the major military decisions; Roosevelt made the major decisions in his war including the "Europe first" strategy. He rejected the idea of an armistice and demanded unconditional surrender. Roosevelt often mentioned his role in the Wilson administration, but added that he had profited more from Wilson's errors than from his successes.*[35]*[36]*[37]

16.4.1 1941-42

After Pearl Harbor, antiwar sentiment in the United States evaporated overnight; The nation was now united on foreign policy. On December 11, 1941, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States, which responded in kind. Roosevelt and his military advisers implemented a war strategy with the objectives of halting the German advances in the Soviet Union and in North Africa; launching an invasion of western Europe with the aim of crushing Nazi Germany between two fronts; and saving China and defeating Japan. Public opinion, however, gave priority to the destruction of Japan, so American forces were sent chiefly to the Pacific in 1942.*[38]

In the opening weeks of the war, Japan had conquered the Philippines, and the British and Dutch colonies in Southeast Asia, capturing Singapore in February 1942.



The major long-term goal of Roosevelt's foreign policy during the war was creating a successful United Nations resolve all world problems

Furthermore, Japan cut off the overland supply route to China. The United States flew supplies to China "over the hump" (The Himalayan Mountains) at enormous cost, until a road could be opened in 1945.

Roosevelt met with Churchill in late December and planned a broad informal alliance among the U.S., Britain, China and the Soviet Union. This included Churchill's initial plan to invade North Africa (called Operation Gymnast) and the primary plan of the U.S. generals for a western Europe invasion, focused directly on Germany (Operation Sledgehammer). An agreement was also reached for a centralized command and offensive in the Pacific theater called ABDA (American, British, Dutch, Australian) to save China and defeat Japan. Nevertheless, the Atlantic First strategy was intact, to Churchill's great satisfaction. On New Year's Day 1942, Churchill and FDR issued the "Declaration by United Nations", representing 26 countries in opposition to the Tripartite Pact of Germany, Italy and Japan.*[39]

16.5 China

See also: Second Sino-Japanese War and Chiang Kai-shek

The United States was a strong supporter of China after Japan invaded in 1937. Even the isolationists who op-

posed war in Europe supported a hard-line against Japan. The outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937 saw aid flow into the Republic of China, led by Chiang Kai-shek.*[40]

American public sympathy for the Chinese was aroused by reports from missionaries, novelists such as Pearl Buck, and *Time Magazine* of Japanese brutality in China, including reports surrounding the Nanking Massacre, also known as the 'Rape of Nanking'. Japanese-American relations were further soured by the USS Panay Incident during the bombing of Nanjing. Roosevelt demanded an apology from the Japanese, which was received, but relations between the two countries continued to deteriorate. By early 1941 the U.S. was preparing to send American planes flown by American pilots under American command, but wearing Chinese uniforms, to fight the Japanese invaders and even to bomb Japanese cities. The "Flying Tigers" under Claire Chennault arrived just as the U.S. entered the war.*[41]

To augment Chennault's 100 P-40Bs, in May 1941 Washington decided to send 144 Vultee P-48's, 125 P-43's and 66 Lockheed and Douglas medium bombers. The goal was to give China by early 1942, a respectable air force, judged by Far Eastern standards, sufficient to "(a) protect strategic points, (b) permit local army offensive action, (c) permit the bombing of Japanese air bases and supply dumps in China and Indo-China, and the bombing of coastal and river transport, and (d) permit occasional incendiary bombing of Japan." *[42]

A year before the U.S. officially entered the war (after Dec. 7, 1941), Chennault developed an ambitious plan for a sneak attack on Japanese bases. His Flying Tigers would use American bombers and American pilots, all with Chinese markings. The U.S. military was opposed to his scheme, and kept raising obstacles, but it was adopted by top civilian officials including Henry Morgenthau, Jr. (the Secretary of the Treasury who financed China) and especially President Roosevelt himself, who made it a high priority to keep China alive.*[43] By October, 1941, bombers and crews were on their way to China. However the American attack never took place. The bombers and crews arrived after Pearl Harbor and were used for the war in Burma, for they lacked the range to reach China.*[44]*[45]*[46]

16.5.1 Wartime

After the formal declaration of war in December 1941, the U.S. stepped up the flow of aid, but it had to be routed through India and over the Himalayan Mountains because Japan blocked the other routes. Chiang's beleaguered government was now headquartered in remote Chongqing. Madame Chiang Kaishek,*[47] who had been educated in the United States, addressed the US Congress and toured the country to rally support for China. Congress amended the Chinese Exclusion Act and

Roosevelt moved to end the unequal treaties. However, the perception that Chiang's government, with his poorly equipped and ill-fed troops was unable to effectively fight the Japanese or that he preferred to focus more on defeating the Communists grew. *China Hands* such as Joseph Stilwell argued that it was in American interest to establish communication with the Communists to prepare for a land-based counteroffensive invasion of Japan. The Dixie Mission, which began in 1943, was the first official American contact with the Communists. Other Americans, such as Claire Chennault, argued for air power. In 1944, Generalissimo Chiang acceded to Roosevelt's request that an American general take charge of all forces in the area, but demanded that Stilwell be recalled. General Albert Wedemeyer replaced Stilwell, Patrick Hurley became ambassador, and US-China relations became much smoother.

After World War II ended in 1945, the showdown came between the Nationalists and the Communists in a full-scale civil war. American general George C. Marshall tried to broker a truce but he failed. The Kuomintang (Nationalist) military position steadily worsened and by 1949, the Communists were victorious and drove the Nationalists from the mainland onto the island of Taiwan. and other islands. Mao Zedong established the People's Republic of China (PRC) in mainland China, while the Republic of China remains in Taiwan to this day.*[48]

16.6 Soviet Union



Soviet foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov (left) meets with German foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop at the signing the German-Soviet non-aggression pact on 23 August 1939

Joseph Stalin controlled the foreign policy of the Soviet Union, with Vyacheslav Molotov as his foreign minister.*[49]*[50] Their policy was neutrality until August 1939. The Soviet military had conversations in

Moscow with a high level military delegation from Britain and France. The Soviets demanded an agreement from Poland to allow Soviet troops to enter that country to defend it against Germany, but Poland refused. Those talks went nowhere.*[51] On August 21, Hitler made friendly proposals to Stalin that led to the **Molotov–Ribbentrop nonaggression pact** on August 23 that stunned the world. The Soviets achieved friendly relations with Germany in order to carve up Key elements of Eastern Europe, especially Poland and the Baltic states. Following the pact, Germany invaded and quickly defeated Poland; then the Soviets invaded and took control of its preassigned areas of eastern Poland. Both invaders systematically decimated the Polish elite. In the 1940 **Katyń massacre**, the **NKVD** (Soviet secret police) executed 22,000 Polish military and police officers and civilian intelligentsia.*[52]

For the next two years, the USSR supplied Germany with oil and grain. Furthermore, the Kremlin ordered Communist parties around the world to denounce the imperialistic war waged by Britain and France against Germany. For example, B. Farnborough says, “During the entire period up to the fall of France the British Communist Party functioned as a propaganda agency for Hitler.” * [53]

After he ignored repeated warnings, Stalin was stunned when Hitler invaded in June 1941. Stalin quickly came to terms with Britain and the United States, cemented through a series of summit meetings. The U.S. and Britain supplied war materials in large quantity through **Lend Lease**.*[54] There was some coordination of military action, especially in summer 1944. At war's end the central issue was whether Stalin would allow free elections in eastern Europe.*[55]*[56]

16.7 France

Further information: **Military history of France during World War II**

16.7.1 French Republic

France and Britain collaborated closely in 1939, and together declared war against Germany two days after it invaded Poland. Apart from the British Dominions (Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa), no independent nation joined their cause. Britain and France took a defensive posture, fearing German air attacks on cities. France hoped the **Maginot Line** would protect it from an invasion. There was little fighting between the fall of Poland in mid-September and the following spring; it was the **Phoney War** in Britain or *Drôle de guerre* – the funny sort of war – in France. Britain tried several peace feelers, but Hitler did not respond.

When Germany had its hands free for an attack in the west, it launched its **Blitzkrieg** against Denmark and Nor-

way, easily pushing the British out. Then it invaded the Low Countries and tricked Britain and France into sending its best combat units deep into the Netherlands, where they became trapped in the **Battle of France** in May 1940. The Royal Navy rescued over 300,000 British and French soldiers from Dunkirk, but left behind all the equipment.*[57]

16.7.2 Vichy France

Main article: **Foreign relations of Vichy France**

Paris fell to the Germans on 14 June 1940, and the government surrendered in the **Armistice of 22 June 1940**. Nazi Germany occupied three-fifths of France's territory, leaving the rest in the southeast to the new Vichy government, which was a bit more than a puppet state since it still had a navy. Germany controlled the entire French economy, and demanded huge reparations in gold and food. However nearly 2 million French soldiers became prisoners of war in Germany. They served as hostages and forced laborers in German factories. The United States suddenly realized Germany was on the verge of controlling practically all of Europe, and it determined to rapidly build up its small Army and Air Force, and expand its Navy. Sympathy with Britain was high, and many were willing to send munitions, but few Americans called for war.

Theoretically **Vichy France** it was neutral, but in practice it was largely controlled by Germany until November 1942, when Germany took full control. Vichy was intensely conservative and anti-Communist, but it was practically helpless. Vichy finally collapsed when the Germans fled in summer 1944.*[58]



Chief French collaborationist Marshal Pétain shaking hands with German Führer Hitler at Montoire on October 24, 1940.

The United States granted Vichy full diplomatic recognition, sending Admiral **William D. Leahy** to Paris as American ambassador. President Roosevelt hoped to use American influence to encourage those elements in the Vichy government opposed to military collaboration with Germany. Vichy still controlled its overseas colonies and

Washington encouraged Vichy to resist German demands such as for air bases in Syria or to move war supplies through French North Africa. The essential American position was that France should take no action not explicitly required by the armistice terms that could adversely affect Allied efforts in the war. When Germany took full control, the U.S. and Canada cut their ties with Vichy.*[59]

French fleet

Britain feared that the French naval fleet could end up in German hands and be used against its own naval forces, which were so vital to maintaining north Atlantic shipping and communications. Under the armistice, France had been allowed to retain the **French Navy**, the *Marine Nationale*, under strict conditions. Vichy pledged that the fleet would never fall into the hands of Germany, but refused to send the fleet beyond Germany's reach by sending it to Britain or to far away territories of the French empire such as the West Indies. Shortly after France gave up it attacked a large French naval contingent in Mers-el-Kebir, killing 1,297 French military personnel. Vichy severed diplomatic relations but did not declare war on Britain. Churchill also ordered French ships in British ports to be seized by the Royal Navy. The French squadron at Alexandria, Egypt, under Admiral René-Emile Godfroy, was effectively interned until 1943.

The American position towards Vichy France and Free France was inconsistent. President Roosevelt disliked and distrusted de Gaulle, and agreed with Ambassador Leahy's view that he was an "apprentice dictator." *[60]

North Africa

Preparing for a landing in North Africa in late 1942, the US looked for a top French ally. It turned to **Henri Giraud** shortly before the landing on 8 November 1942, but he had little local support. By happenstance the Vichy leader Admiral François Darlan was captured and supported the Americans. The Allies, with General Dwight D. Eisenhower in charge, signed a deal with Admiral Darlan on 22 November 1942 in which the Allies recognized Darlan as high commissioner for North Africa and West Africa.*[61] The Allied world was stunned at giving a high command to man who days before had been collaborating with the Nazis; Roosevelt and Churchill supported Eisenhower, for he was following a plan that had been worked out in London and had been approved by Roosevelt and Churchill. Darlan was assassinated on 24 December 1942, so Washington turned again towards Giraud, who was made High Commissioner of French North and West Africa. Giraud failed to build a political base and was displaced by the last man with any standing, de Gaulle.*[62]

16.7.3 Free France

See also: **Free French Forces**

Free France was the insurgent French government based



General de Gaulle speaking on BBC Radio during the war

in London and the overseas French colonies and led by charismatic general **Charles de Gaulle**. He was the most senior French military officer to reject the June 1940 surrender ("Armistice") and oppose the Vichy government of Marshall Pétain. From London on 18 June 1940 he gave an impassioned radio address exhorting the patriotic French people to resist Nazi Germany*[63] He organized the **Free French Forces** from soldiers that had escaped with the British at Dunkirk. With British military support the Free French gradually gained control of all French colonies except Indochina, which the Japanese controlled. The U.S., Britain and Canada wanted Vichy to keep nominal control of the small islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon for reasons of prestige, but de Gaulle seized them anyway in late 1941.*[64]

When the British and Americans landed in France in June 1944 de Gaulle headed a government in exile based in London, but he continued to create diplomatic problems for the U.S. and Britain. He refused to allow French soldiers to land on D-Day, and insisted that France be treated as a great power by the other Allies, and that he himself was the only representative of France. Churchill, caught between the U.S. and de Gaulle, tried to find a compromise.*[25]*[26] The U.S. and Britain allowed de Gaulle the honor of being the first to march into Paris at the head of his army after the Germans had fled.*[65]

16.8 Neutrals

The main neutrals were **Ireland**, Portugal, Spain, **Sweden**, Switzerland and Turkey.*[66]

The Soviet Union was officially neutral until June 1941 in Europe, and until August 1945 in Asia, when it attacked Japan in cooperation with the U.S.

16.8.1 Latin America

The U.S. believed, falsely, that Germany had a master plan to subvert and take control of the economy of much of South America. Washington made anti-Nazi activity a high priority in the region. Three countries actively joined the war effort, while others passively broke relations or nominally declared war.*[67] Cuba declared war in December 1941 and actively helped in the defense of the Panama Canal. It did not send forces to Europe. Mexico declared war on Germany in 1942 after u-boats sank Mexican tankers carrying crude oil to the United States. It sent a 300-man fighter squadron to the war against Japan in 1945.*[68] Brazil declared war against Germany and Italy on 22 August 1942 and sent a 25,700-man infantry force that fought mainly on the Italian front, from September 1944 to May 1945. Its Navy and Air Force acted in the Atlantic Ocean.*[69]

Argentina

Main article: Argentina during World War II

Argentina hosted a strong, very-well-organized pro-Nazi element before the war that was controlled by German ambassadors. Brazil, Chile and Mexico had smaller movements.*[70] American foreign-policy worked to unite all of Latin America in a coalition against Germany. Argentina proved recalcitrant, and the US worked to undermine the Argentine government. The American policy backfired when the military seized power in a coup in 1943. Relationships grew worse to the point that Washington seriously considered economic and diplomatic isolation of Argentina and tried unsuccessfully to keep it out of the United Nations in 1945. Historians now agree that the supposed affinity between Argentina and Germany was greatly exaggerated.*[71]

The Argentine government remained neutral until the last days of the war but quietly tolerated entry of Nazi leaders fleeing Germany, Belgium and Vichy France in 1945. Indeed, a conspiracy theory grew up after the war that greatly exaggerated the Nazi numbers and amount of gold they brought. Historians have shown there was little gold and probably not many Nazis, but the myths live on.*[72]*[73]

16.8.2 Baltic States

Main article: Occupation of the Baltic states

Despite declaring neutrality the Baltic states were secretly assigned to the Soviet Sphere of influence via the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact and subsequently occupied by the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. Diplomatic legations continued to represent the Baltic states throughout

the period. The United States never recognized control by Germans or USSR.

16.8.3 Ireland

Main article: Irish neutrality during World War II

Ireland tried to be strictly neutral during the war, and refused to allow Britain to use bases. However it had large sales of exports to Britain, and tens of thousands joined the British armed forces.*[74]

16.8.4 Portugal

Portugal was officially neutral, but in practice its dictator Salazar collaborated with the British and sold them rubber and tungsten ("wolfram").* [75] In late 1943 he allowed the Allies to establish air bases in the Azores to fight U-boats. He helped Spain avoid German control. Tungsten was a major product, and he sold to Germany; he stopped in June 1944, when the threat of a German invasion of Portugal was no longer possible.*[76]*[77] He worked to regain control of East Timor after the Japanese seized it.*[78] He admitted several thousand Jewish refugees. Lisbon maintained air connections with Britain and the U.S. Lisbon was a hotbed of spies and served as the base for the International Red Cross in its distribution of relief supplies to POWs held by Germany. The Quakers and other peace groups used it as a base for their aid to refugees.*[79]

16.8.5 Spain

Main article: Spain in World War II

Nazi leaders spent much of the war attempting to per-



Nazi leaders (from left) Karl Wolff and Heinrich Himmler meet with Spanish dictator Francisco Franco and his Foreign Minister Serrano Suñer in Madrid, October 1940.

suade the Franco regime to enter the war and allow a German army to march on Gibraltar. The overtures proved

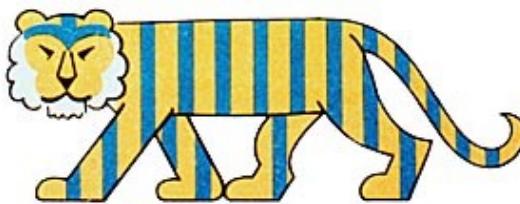
futile. Franco was sympathetic but remained emphatically neutral. However, Spain did need to pay off its heavy debt to Germany. Therefore, Franco did provide various kinds of support to Italy and Germany.*[80] It sold Germany supplies, especially wolfram, the hard-to-find tungsten ore. It formed 45,000 volunteers into the Blue Division, which fought exclusively on the Eastern Front.

Spain was neutral and traded as well with the Allies. Germany had an interest in seizing the key fortress of Gibraltar, but Franco stationed his army at the French border to dissuade Germany from occupying the Iberian Peninsula. Franco displayed pragmatism and his determination to act principally in Spanish interests, in the face of Allied economic pressure, Axis military demands, and Spain's geographic isolation. As the war progressed he became more hard-line toward Germany and more accommodating to the Allies.*[81]

16.8.6 Sweden

Main article: Sweden during World War II

Sweden remained neutral during the war, avoiding the



En svensk tiger, A famous World War II poster reminding Swedes to be wary of spies asking questions.

fate of its neighbors, occupied Norway and defeated Finland. The dominant historiography for decades after the war ignored issues of the Holocaust and depended on the “small state realist” argument. It held that neutrality and cooperation with Germany were necessary for survival, for Germany was vastly more powerful, concessions were limited and were only made where the threat was too great; neutrality was bent but not broken; national unity was paramount; and in any case Sweden had the neutral right to trade with Germany. Germany needed Swedish iron and had nothing to gain—and much iron to lose—by an invasion.*[82] The nation was run by a unity government that included all major parties in the Riksdag. Its key leaders included Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson and Foreign Minister Christian Günther. King Gustav V had pro-Nazi proclivities that the government had to keep in check.

16.8.7 Switzerland

Main article: Switzerland during the World Wars

Switzerland was neutral and did business with both sides. It mobilized its army to defend itself against any invasion. The Germans did make plans, but never invaded.*[83] Cut off from the Allies, Swiss trade was mostly with Germany, with Swiss banks a favourite place for Nazis to store their loot. The Swiss depended on German permission to import its food and fuel. Smuggling high precision tools and weapons (such as jewel bearings, diamond dies, and chronographs) to Britain took place on a large scale.*[84] Switzerland became a convenient center for spies and espionage.*[85]

Swiss banks paid Germany 1.3 billion Swiss Francs for gold; Germany used the Francs to buy supplies on the world market. However much of the gold was looted and the Allies warned Switzerland during the war. In 1947 Switzerland paid 250 million francs in exchange for the dropping of claims relating to the Swiss role in the gold transactions.*[86]

Switzerland took in 48,000 refugees during the war, of whom 20,000 were Jewish. They also turned away about 40,000 applicants for refugee status.*[87]*[88]

Switzerland's role regarding Nazi Germany became highly controversial in the 1990s.*[89] Wylie says, “Switzerland has been widely condemned for its part in the war. It has been accused of abetting genocide, by refusing to offer sanctuary to Hitler's victims, bankrolling the Nazi war economy, and callously profiting from Hitler's murderous actions by seizing the assets of those who perished in the death camps.”*[90]*[91] On the other hand, Churchill told his foreign minister in late 1944:

“Of all the neutrals, Switzerland has the great right to distinction. She has been the sole international force linking the hideous-sundered nations and ourselves. What does it matter whether she has been able to give us the commercial advantages we desire or has given too many to the German, to keep herself alive? She has been a democratic state, standing for freedom in self defence among her mountains, and in thought, despite of race, largely on our side.”
*[92]

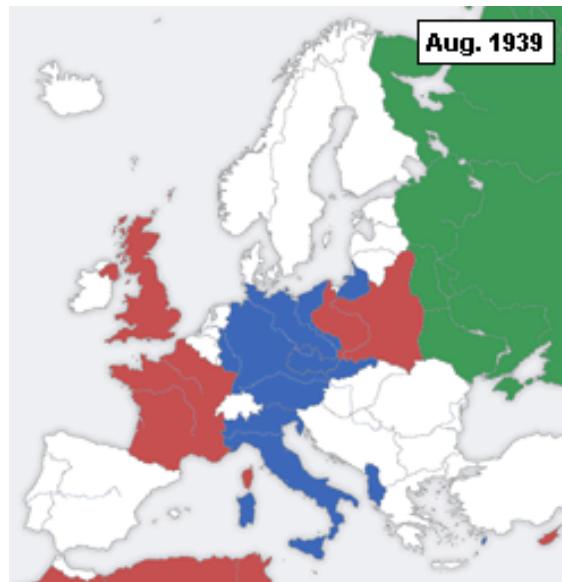
16.8.8 Turkey

Main article: History of the Republic of Turkey

Turkey was neutral in the war, but signed a treaty with Britain and France in October 1939 that said the Allies would defend Turkey if Germany attacked it. The deal was enhanced with loans of £41 million. An invasion was threatened in 1941 but did not happen and Ankara refused German requests to allow troops to cross its borders into Syria or into the USSR. Germany had been its largest trading partner before the war, and Turkey continued to do business with both sides. It purchased arms from



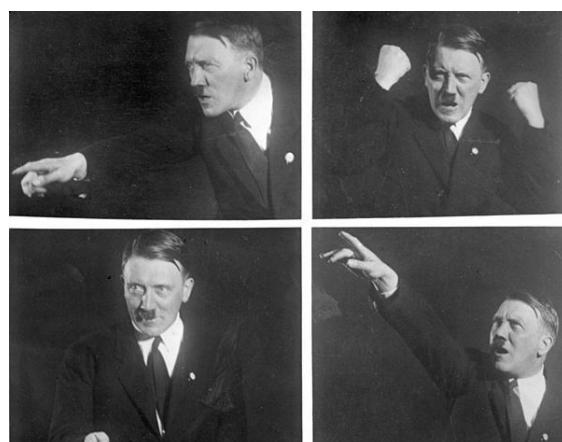
Roosevelt, İnönü of Turkey and Churchill at the Second Cairo Conference which was held between December 4–6, 1943.



Animation of the European Theatre.

both sides. The Allies tried to stop German purchases of chrome (used in making better steel). Starting in 1942 the Allies provided military aid and pressed for a declaration of war. Turkey's president conferred with Roosevelt and Churchill at the [Cairo Conference](#) in November, 1943, and promised to enter the war when it was fully armed. By August 1944, with Germany nearing defeat, Turkey broke off relations. In February 1945, it declared war on Germany and Japan, a symbolic move that allowed Turkey to join the future United Nations. Meanwhile, relations with Moscow worsened, setting stage for the [Truman Doctrine](#) of 1947 and the start of the Cold War.*[93]*[94]

full control, as it did with France in 1942, Italy in 1943, and Hungary in 1944. Full control allowed the Nazis to achieve their high priority of mass murdering all Jewish population. Although Japan was officially a powerful ally, the relationship was distant and there was little coordination or cooperation, such as Germany's refusal to share the secret formula for making synthetic oil from coal until late in the war.*[98]



Hitler in action

16.9.1 Germany

Germany's foreign policy during the war involved the creation of allied governments under direct or indirect control from Berlin. A main goal was obtaining soldiers from the senior allies, such as Italy and Hungary, and millions of workers and ample food supplies from subservient allies such as [Vichy France](#).*[96] By the fall of 1942, there were 24 divisions from Romania on the Eastern Front, 10 from Italy and 10 from Hungary.*[97] When a country was no longer dependable, Germany would assume

DiNardo argues that in Europe Germany's foreign-policy was dysfunctional during the war, as Hitler treated each ally separately, and refused to create any sort of combined staff that would synchronize policies, armaments, and strategies. Italy, Finland, Romania, and Hungary each dealt with Berlin separately, and never coordinated their activities. Germany was reluctant to share its powerful weapons systems, or to train Axis officers. There were some exceptions, such as the close collaboration between the German and Italian forces in North

Africa.*[99]*[100]

Hitler

Hitler devoted most of his attention during the war to military and diplomatic affairs. He frequently met with foreign leaders, such as the January 10, 1943 he met with Rumanian Premier Marshal Ion Antonescu at German field headquarters, with top-ranking generals on both sides. On 9 August 1943, Hitler summoned Tsar Boris III of Bulgaria to a stormy meeting at field headquarters, and demanded he declare war on Russia. The tsar refused, but did agree to declare war on far-away Britain. American news reports stated that Hitler tried to hit him and the tsar suffered a heart attack at the meeting; he died three weeks later.*[101]

Forced labour

Main article: [Forced labour under German rule during World War II](#)

German policy was not to use or build factories in occupied Eastern Europe but to move millions of workers into German factories and farms.*[102] Some were forced, some were voluntarily (going in search of food), others were prisoners of war. They were closely watched, had poor food and housing, and were harshly treated. Their morale and levels of output were mediocre or poor.*[103] At the peak the forced labourers comprised 20% of the German work force. Counting deaths and turnover, about 15 million individuals were forced labourers at one point or another during the war. Most came from Poland, Russia and other Eastern areas; all were repatriated at war's end.*[104]*[105] Vichy France was one of the few countries that was able to have much influence on German policies, as it tried to protect the nearly two million French soldiers held as POWs inside Germany. Vichy arranged a deal whereby Germany would release one POW for every three Frenchmen who volunteered to work in Germany.*[106]

Poland

In January 1934 Germany signed a non aggression pact with Poland followed by a trade treaty later in the year. By the spring Hitler was openly pondering what inducements he might have to offer to obtain a military alliance with Poland.*[107] Between 1919 and 1939 Poland pursued a policy of balance between Soviet Union and Nazi Germany and obtained non-aggression treaties with the former.*[108]

In early 1939 Hitler wanted Poland to join the [Anti-Comintern Pact](#) as a satellite state in preparation for the German invasion of the Soviet Union.*[109] Steiner states that Hitler "wanted to broker an agreement with

Colonel Beck, Poland's all-powerful foreign minister, which would bring Danzig and the Polish Corridor back into the Reich but keep Poland as a friend." *[110] Hitler offered Poland a new non-aggression pact and recognition of its current frontiers if it agreed to permit the German-inhabited city of Danzig to return to Germany as well as allow an extraterritorial highway connecting Germany proper with Danzig and East Prussia going through Polish territory. Poland rejected the proposals.*[111] For Poland these demands meant losing independence; Danzig in itself was not the primary issue.*[112] By March Hitler had given up on the Poles and in April began planning an invasion.*[113]

Poland had few friends in the international arena.*[114] Two critical developments caught Poland by surprise. At the end of March 1939 Britain and France announced that if Germany invaded Poland they would declare war. In terms of helping Poland militarily in an actual war, everyone realized very little could be done because the British and French military thought that if Germany invaded "Polish resistance would collapse in the early stages of fighting." Neither "was thinking of any major offensive action in the West." *[115] Their hope was that the threat of a two-front war would deter Germany. Hitler believed that Britain and France were bluffing, but he handled the Soviet problem in late August, by an alliance agreement with Stalin, which included secret provisions to partition Poland—and indeed divide up much of eastern Europe.*[116] The British and French offer was not a bluff—they did indeed declare war on Germany when it invaded Poland on 1 September, but neither was in a position to provide serious help.

Poland had a million-man army, but fell far short in terms of leadership, training, and equipment. The Polish military budget was about 2% of Germany's; its commanding general, Marshal Smigly-Rydz was not well prepared for the challenge.*[117] The Soviet Red Army then invaded Poland without a formal declaration of war on 17 September 1939, immediately after the undeclared war between the Soviet Union and the Empire of Japan at the Battles of Khalkhin Gol (Nomonhan) in the Far East had ended. Poland was then partitioned between Germany and the Soviet Union.

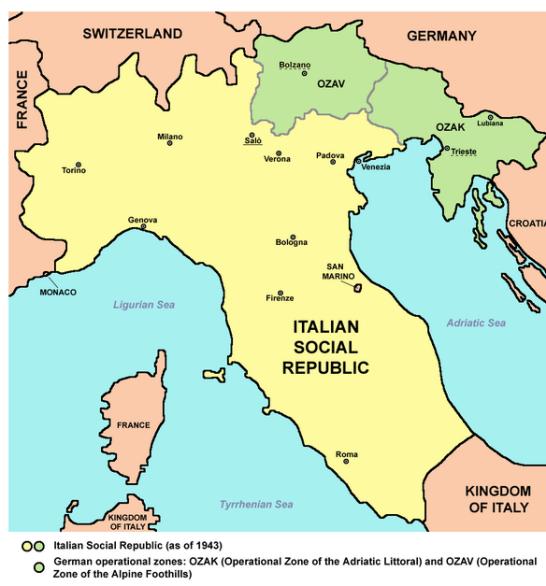
Worldwide Fascist groups

During the war, Nazi Germany cultivated relationships with Fascist and extreme right groups in neutral and Allied-controlled territory such as the Ossewabrandwag, an Afrikaner paramilitary organisation based on the Nazi Party.

16.9.2 Italy

Main articles: [History of Italy](#) and [Italian Social Republic](#)

Allied policy was to be friendly with Benito Mussolini, the Fascist dictator of Italy, in the hopes he would either remain neutral or moderate Hitler's expansion plans.*[118] However, in May 1939, he joined the Axis with Germany, signing the **Pact of Steel**. When France was in the last stages of collapse Mussolini entered the war and gained some spoils. He brought along a powerful navy that could challenge the British for control of the Mediterranean. Roosevelt denounced the move: "On this 10th day of June, 1940, the hand that held the dagger has struck it into the back of its neighbor." * [119]



Italian Social Republic (RSI) as of 1943 in yellow and green. The green areas were German military operational zones under direct German administration.

Italy was poorly prepared for war and increasingly fell under Nazi dictation.*[120] Italian military efforts failed against Egypt, Greece, Ethiopia and Yugoslavia,*[121] and Germany had to intervene to rescue its neighbor. After the Allies invaded and took Sicily and southern Italy in 1943, the regime collapsed. Mussolini was arrested and the King appointed General Pietro Badoglio as new Prime Minister. They switched sides, joined the Allies and banned the Fascist Party. However Germany moved in, occupying Italy north of Naples. German paratroopers rescued Mussolini and Hitler set him up as head of a puppet government the **Italian Social Republic**, often called the Salò Republic; a civil war resulted. The Germans gave way slowly, for mountainous Italy offered many defensive opportunities.*[122]

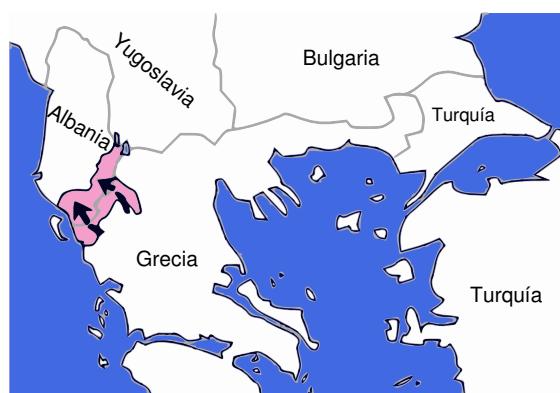
Britain by 1944 feared that Italy would become a Communist state under Soviet influence. It abandoned its original concept of British hegemony in Italy and substituted for it a policy of support for an independent Italy with a high degree of American influence.*[123]

16.9.3 Balkans

Main articles: Balkans Campaign (World War II), Yugoslavia § World War II, and Hungary § World War II 1941–1945

Hitler, preparing to invade the Soviet Union, diverted attention to make sure the southern or Balkan flank was secure. Rumania was under heavy pressure, and was forced to cede 40,000 square miles of territory with 4 million people to the USSR, Hungary and Bulgaria; German troops came in to protect the vital oil fields (Germany's only source of oil besides the USSR). Romania signed the Axis Pact and became a German ally (November 1940).*[124] So too did Hungary (November 1940) and Bulgaria (March, 1941).*[125]*[126]

Greece



Greek counteroffensive against Italian-controlled Albania, late 1940.

Main articles: History of Greece § World War II, Military history of Greece during World War II, Greek Resistance, and Battle of Greece

In spring 1939, Italy had occupied and annexed Albania. Britain tried to deter an invasion by guaranteeing Greece's frontiers. Greece under the dictatorship of Ioannis Metaxas to support the allies' interests rejected Italian demands. Italy invaded Greece on 28 October 1940, but Greeks repelled the invaders after a bitter struggle (see Greco-Italian War). By mid-December, 1940, the Greeks occupied nearly a quarter of Albania, tying down 530,000 Italian troops. Metaxas tended to favor Germany but after he died in January 1941 Greece accepted British troops and supplies. In March 1941, a major Italian counterattack failed, humiliating Italian military pretensions.*[127]

Germany needed to secure its strategic southern flank in preparation for an invasion of the USSR, Hitler reluctantly launched the **Battle of Greece** in April 1941. Axis troops successfully invaded through Yugoslavia, quickly

overcoming Greek and, British defenders. Greece was partitioned under German, Italian, and Bulgarian occupation. A Greek government-in-exile was formed in Cairo (it moved to London), and Germany set up a puppet government in Athens. The latter attracted numerous anti-Communist elements.

Wartime conditions were severe for civilians; famine was rampant as grain production plunged and Germany seized food supplies for its own needs. Malaria became epidemic. The Germans retaliated brutally for sabotage by the **Greek Resistance**. Multiple resistance groups organized, but they often opposed each other. They included the **National Republican Greek League (EDES)**, the **National and Social Liberation (EKKA)**. Strongest of all was the Communist National Liberation Front (EAM); its military arm, the National Popular Liberation Army (ELAS) had 50,000 soldiers. The rivalries set the stage for a civil war after the Germans left in September 1944.*[128]

Yugoslavia

Yugoslavia signed on as a German ally in March 1941, but within hours an anti-Nazi coup, led by Serbians with British help, overthrew the prince regent, repudiated the Nazis, and installed the 17-year-old heir as King Peter II. Germany marched in and set off an extremely bloody, long civil war that killed over a million people.*[129]



Croatia's dictator Ante Pavelić (left) with Mussolini in 1941; Croatia was a new Axis state

The **Independent State of Croatia (NDH)** was heavily Catholic and conservative. It became an Axis ally ruled by the fascist militia known as the **Ustaše**; it controlled Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Ethnic cleansing was its policy. The Ustaše murdered around 500,000 people (mostly Serbs, along with 37,000 Jews), expelled 250,000, and forced another 200,000 to convert to Catholicism.*[130] Kosovo was given to Albania (then under Italian control). Macedonia went to Bulgaria and Vojvodina was given over to Hungary. Serbia became a German puppet state and was the cockpit of the resistance.

Yugoslavia had a weak government in exile based in London that included the king. However, power inside the country was divided three ways between the Germans and their allies, and two Serbian resistance groups. The royalist anti-Communist **Chetniks** under **Draža Mihailović**, was nominally under the control of the government in exile. Chetniks were opposed to the Nazis but sometimes did collaborate with the Germans and Ustaše in their fierce guerrilla battles with the **National Liberation Army**, a Communist-controlled resistance headed by **Josip Broz Tito**. Tito's strength grew in 1943, and Mihailović and the monarchists fell far behind. Churchill reversed course in December 1943, ended his support for the royalist forces of Mihailović, and backed instead Tito.*[131]

Tito drove out the Germans in 1945 and liquidated the Mihailovic forces. This allowed the formation of a Communist state of Yugoslavia that was independent of Moscow. Historians believe that Germany's large-scale intervention in the Balkans in spring 1941 probably delayed its invasion of Russia long enough to give the Soviets a chance to survive.*[132]

16.9.4 Japan

Japan had conquered all of Manchuria and most of China by 1939 in the **Second Sino-Japanese War**, but the Allies refused to recognize the conquests. Japan joined the Axis with Germany, but shared little information. Japan depended on imports from the Allies for 90% of its oil, and the cutoff of oil shipments in mid-1941 left Japan with supplies for only a year or two of serious combat by its warships and warplanes unless it came to terms regarding China, or seized oil fields controlled by Britain and the Netherlands. The latter course meant war, and was urged by army officials who had been bloodied in **border conflicts** and were reluctant to engage the Soviets. Some admirals and many civilians, including Prime Minister **Konoe Fumimaro**, believed that a war with the U.S. would end in defeat. The alternative was loss of honor and power. Diplomats proposed political compromises in the form of the "Amau Doctrine", dubbed the "Japanese Monroe Doctrine" which would have given the Japanese free rein with regard to China. These proposals were rejected by the U.S.; the Japanese Army now demanded a military solution.*[133]*[134]

Imperial conquests

Japan launched its own blitzkriegs in East Asia. In 1937, the Japanese Army invaded and captured most of the coastal Chinese cities such as Shanghai. Japan took over French Indochina (Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia), British Malaya (Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore) as well as the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia). Thailand managed to stay independent by becoming a satellite state of Japan. In December 1941 to May 1942, Japan sank major elements of



The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere in 1942.

the American, British and Dutch fleets, captured Hong Kong,^{*[135]} Singapore, the Philippines and the Dutch East Indies, and reached the borders of India and began bombing Australia. Japan suddenly had achieved its goal of ruling the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.

Imperial rule

The ideology of Japan's colonial empire, as it expanded dramatically during the war, contained two contradictory impulses. On the one hand, it preached the unity of the **Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere**, a coalition of Asian races, directed by Japan, against the imperialism of Britain, France, the Netherlands, United States, and Europe in general. This approach celebrated the spiritual values of the East in opposition to the crass materialism of the West.^{*[136]} In practice, it was a euphemistic title for grabbing land and acquiring essential natural resources.^{*[137]} The Japanese installed organizationally-minded bureaucrats and engineers to run their new empire, and they believed in ideals of efficiency, modernization, and engineering solutions to social problems. It was **fascism** based on technology, and rejected Western norms of democracy. After 1945, the engineers and bureaucrats took over, and turned the wartime technofascism into entrepreneurial management skills.^{*[138]}

Japan set up puppet regimes in Manchuria ("Manchukuo") and China; proper; they vanished at the end of the war. The Japanese Army operated ruthless governments in most of the conquered areas, but paid more favorable attention to the Dutch East Indies. The main goal was to obtain oil, but Japan sponsored an Indonesian nationalist movement under **Sukarno**.^{*[139]} Sukarno finally came to power in the late 1940s after several years of battling the Dutch.^{*[140]} The Dutch destroyed their oil wells but the Japanese reopened them.



1935 poster of the puppet state of Manchukuo promoting harmony among peoples. The caption reads: "With the help of Japan, China, and Manchukuo, the world can be in peace."

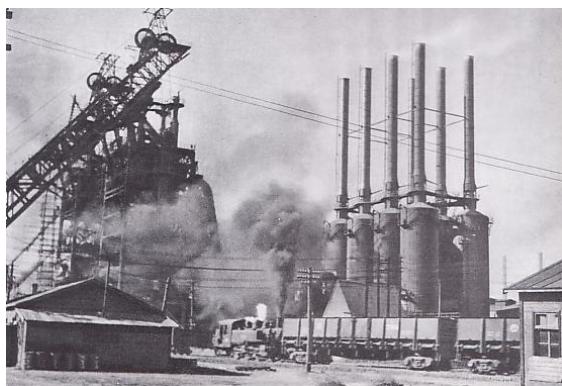
However most of the tankers taking oil to Japan were sunk by American submarines, so Japan's oil shortage became increasing acute.

Puppet states in China

Main articles: **Manchukuo** and **Reorganized National Government of China**

Japan set up puppet regimes in Manchuria ("Manchukuo") and China; proper; they vanished at the end of the war.^{*[141]}

Manchuria, the historic homeland of the Manchu dynasty, had an ambiguous character after 1912. It was run by local warlords. The Japanese Army seized control in 1931, and set up a puppet state of **Manchukuo** in 1932 for the 34,000,000 inhabitants. Other areas were added, and over 800,000 Japanese moved in as administrators. The nominal ruler was **Puyi**, who as a small child had been the last Emperor of China. He was deposed during the revolution of 1911, and now the Japanese brought him back in a powerless role. Only Axis countries recognized Manchukuo. The United States in 1932 announced the **Stimson Doctrine** stating that it would never recognize Japanese sovereignty. Japan modernized the economy and operated it as a satellite to the Japanese econ-



Shōwa Steel Works was a mainstay of the Economy of Manchukuo

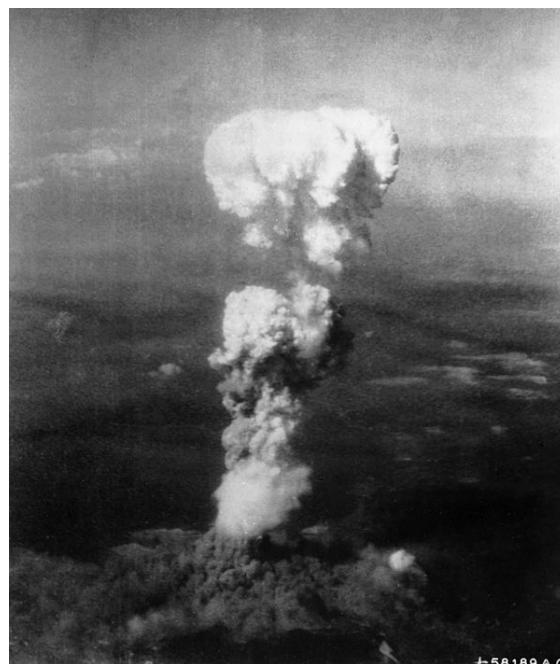
omy. It was out of range of American bombers, so its factories continued their output to the end. Manchukuo was returned to China in 1945.* [142]

When Japan seized control of China proper in 1937–38, the Japanese Central China Expeditionary Army set up the Reorganized National Government of China, a puppet state, under the nominal leadership of Wang Ching-wei (1883–1944). It was based in Nanjing. The Japanese were in full control; the puppet state declared war on the Allies in 1943. Wang was allowed to administer the International Settlement in Shanghai. The puppet state had an army of 900,000 soldiers, and was positioned against the Nationalist army under Chiang Kai-shek. It did little fighting.* [143]* [144]

Military defeats

The attack on Pearl Harbor, initially appeared to be a major success that knocked out the American battle fleet—but it missed the aircraft carriers that were at sea and ignored vital shore facilities whose destruction could have crippled US Pacific operations. Ultimately, the attack proved a long-term strategic disaster that actually inflicted relatively little significant long-term damage while provoking the United States to seek revenge in an all-out total war in which no terms short of unconditional surrender would be entertained.

However, as Admiral Yamamoto warned, Japan's six-month window of military advantage following Pearl Harbor ended with the Japanese Navy's offensive ability being crippled at the hands of the American Navy in the Battle of Midway. As the war became one of mass production and logistics, the U.S. built a far stronger navy with more numerous warplanes, and a superior communications and logistics system. The Japanese had stretched too far and were unable to supply its forward bases—many soldiers died of starvation. Japan built warplanes in large quantity but the quality plunged, and the performance of poorly trained pilots spiraled downward.* [145] The Imperial Navy lost a series of major battles, from Mid-



Atomic cloud over Hiroshima, 1945

way (1942) to the Philippine Sea (1944) and Leyte Gulf (1945), which put American long-range B-29 bombers in range. A series of massive raids burned out much of Tokyo and 64 major industrial cities beginning in March 1945 while Operation Starvation seriously disrupted the nation's vital internal shipping lanes. Regardless of how the war was becoming hopeless, the circle around the Emperor held fast and refused to open negotiations. Finally in August, two atomic bombs and the Soviet invasion of Manchuria demonstrated the cause was futile, and Hirohito authorized a surrender whereby he kept his throne.* [146]

Deaths

Total Japanese military fatalities between 1937 and 1945 were 2.1 million; most came in the last year of the war. Starvation or malnutrition-related illness accounted for roughly 80 percent of Japanese military deaths in the Philippines, and 50 percent of military fatalities in China. The aerial bombing of a total of 65 Japanese cities appears to have taken a minimum of 400,000 and possibly closer to 600,000 civilian lives (over 100,000 in Tokyo alone, over 200,000 in Hiroshima and Nagasaki combined, and 80,000–150,000 civilian deaths in the battle of Okinawa). Civilian death among settlers who died attempting to return to Japan from Manchuria in the winter of 1945 were probably around 100,000.* [147]

16.9.5 Finland

Main article: Military history of Finland during World War II

Although Finland officially was not a part of the



Hitler and Finnish commander-in-chief Field Marshal Mannerheim (right)

Axis, it was aligned with Germany in a war against the Soviet Union.*[148]*[149] The August 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact between Germany and the Soviet Union contained a secret protocol dividing much of eastern Europe and assigning Finland to the Soviet sphere of influence. Finland before 1918 had been a province of Russia, and many Finnish speakers lived in neighboring parts of Russia. After unsuccessfully attempting to force territorial and other concessions on the Finns, the Soviet Union invaded Finland in November 1939 during the Winter War, intending to establish a communist puppet government in Finland. Finland won very wide popular support in Britain and the United States.*[150] The arms-length collaboration with Germany stemmed from a precarious balance struck by the Finns in order to avoid antagonizing Britain and the United States. In the end Britain declared war to satisfy the needs of its Soviet policy, but did not engage in combat against Finland. Finland concluded armistice negotiations with the USSR under strong German pressure to continue the war, while British and American acted in accord with their own alliances with the Soviets.*[151]

Soviet success in Finland would threaten Germany's iron-ore supplies and offered the prospect of Allied interference in the region. The Soviets overwhelmed the Finnish

resistance in the Winter War, and a peace treaty was signed in March 1940. It ceded some Finnish territory to the Soviet Union, including the Karelian Isthmus, containing Finland's second-largest city, Viipuri, and the critical defensive structure of the Mannerheim Line.*[152]

After the Winter War, Finland sought protection and support from the Britain and Sweden without success. Finland drew closer to Germany, first with the intent of enlisting German support as a counterweight to thwart continuing Soviet pressure, and later to help regain lost territories. Finland declared war against the Soviet Union on 25 June 1941 in what is called the Continuation War.*[153] To meet Stalin's demands, Britain reluctantly declared war on Finland on 6 December 1941, although no other military operations followed. War was never declared between Finland and the United States, though relations were severed between the two countries in 1944 as a result of the Ryti-Ribbentrop Agreement.

Finland maintained command of its armed forces and pursued war objectives independently of Germany. Germans and Finns did work closely together during Operation Silverfox, a joint offensive against Murmansk.*[154] Finland refused German requests to participate actively in the Siege of Leningrad, and also granted asylum to Jews, while Jewish soldiers continued to serve in its army.

The relationship between Finland and Germany more closely resembled an alliance during the six weeks of the Ryti-Ribbentrop Agreement, which was presented as a German condition for help with munitions and air support, as the Soviet offensive coordinated with D-Day threatened Finland with complete occupation. The agreement bound Finland not to seek a separate peace with Moscow.

After Soviet offensives were fought to a standstill, Ryti's successor as president, Marshall Mannerheim, dismissed the agreement and opened secret negotiations with the Soviets, which resulted in the Moscow Armistice on 19 September 1944. Under the terms of the armistice, Finland was obliged to expel German troops from Finnish territory, which resulted in the Lapland War. Finland signed a peace treaty with the Allied powers in 1947.

16.10 Governments in Exile

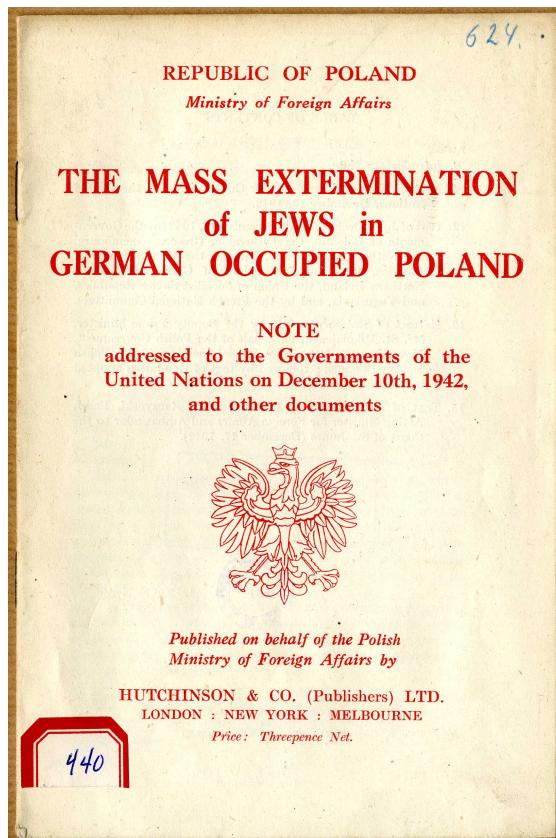
Britain welcomed governments in exile to set up their headquarters in London*[155] whilst others were set up in neutral or other allied territory. Recognition for these bodies would vary and change over time.

16.10.1 Poland

Most Polish leaders fled to Romania, where they were interred. Other leaders escaped to France, and later to Lon-

don, where the Polish government-in-exile was set up by General Sikorski. It was recognized by the Allies until 1944.*[156]*[157]

The underground resistance movement formed inside Poland; it nominally reported to the government in exile. During the war about 400,000 Poles joined the underground Polish Home Army, about 200,000 went into combat on western fronts in units loyal to the Polish government in exile, and about 300,000 fought under Soviet command in the last stages of the war.*[158]



"The Mass Extermination of Jews in German Occupied Poland", note of Polish government-in-exile addressed to the wartime allies of the then-United Nations, 1942

Since the start of the war the body protested on the international stage against the German occupation of their territory and the treatment of their civilian population. In 1940 the Polish Ministry of Information produced a list of those it believed had been murdered by the Nazis. Later in 1942 Poland addressed the governments of the Allies (the "United Nations") with a publication entitled "The Mass Extermination of Jews in German Occupied Poland".

16.10.2 Norway

After Germany swept to control in April 1940, the government in exile, including the royal family, was based in London. Politics were suspended and the govern-

ment coordinated action with the Allies, retained control of a worldwide diplomatic and consular service, and operated the huge Norwegian merchant marine. It organized and supervised the resistance within Norway. One long-term impact was the abandonment of a traditional Scandinavian policy of neutrality; Norway became a founding member of NATO in 1949.*[159] Norway at the start of the war had the world's fourth largest merchant fleet, at 4.8 million tons, including a fifth of the world's oil tankers. The Germans captured about 20% of the fleet but the remainder, about 1000 ships, were taken over by the government. Although half the ships were sunk, the earnings paid the expenses of the government.*[160]*[161]

16.10.3 Netherlands

The government in 1940 fled to London, where it had command of some colonies as well as the Dutch navy and merchant marine.*[162] When they arrived in London the Government in exile considered itself still neutral but found its desire for the liberation of the Netherlands coinciding with the war aims of the Allies.*[163] After the fall of France the Dutch Prime Minister Dirk Jan de Geer advocated negotiating a separate peace between the Netherlands and the Third Reich. Queen Wilhelmina fearing that the loss of the Dutch East Indies to Japan would be a term of any treaty vetoed any agreement. On 3 September 1940 the Queen dismissed her prime minister and replaced him with Pieter Sjoerds Gerbrandy, who worked with Churchill and Roosevelt on ways to smooth the path for an American entry. Aruba together with Curaçao the then world-class exporting oil refineries were the main suppliers of refined products to the Allies. Aruba became a British protectorate from 1940 to 1942 and a US protectorate from 1942 to 1945. On November 23, 1941, under an agreement with the Netherlands government-in-exile, the United States occupied Dutch Guiana to protect the bauxite mines.*[164]

16.10.4 Czechoslovakia

The Czechoslovak government-in-exile was an informal title given to the Czechoslovak National Liberation Committee originally created by the former Czechoslovak President, Edvard Beneš in Paris in October 1939.*[165] Unsuccessful negotiations with France for diplomatic status, as well as the impending Nazi occupation of France, forced the Committee to withdraw to London in 1940. The body was eventually considered, by those countries that recognized it, as the legal continuation of the First Republic of Czechoslovakia.

16.10.5 Belgium

Main article: Belgium in World War II

The German invasion lasted only 18 days in 1939 before the Belgian army surrendered. The king remained behind, but the government escaped to France and then to England in 1940. Belgium was liberated in late 1944.*[166]

Belgium had two holdings in Africa, the very large colony of the **Belgian Congo** and the mandate of **Ruanda-Urundi**. The Belgian Congo was not occupied and remained loyal to the Allies as a useful economic asset. The government in exile sold 3.4 million pounds of uranium ore from the Congo to the U.S. for the atomic bomb.*[167] Troops from the Belgian Congo participated in the **East African Campaign** against the Italians. The colonial **Force Publique** also served in other theatres alongside British forces.

16.10.6 Yugoslavia

16.10.7 Korea

Based in the Chinese city of Shanghai and later Chongqing the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea acted as the Korean government-in-exile from 13 April 1919 until the Republic of Korea was established in 1948.

16.11 List of all War Declarations and other outbreaks of hostilities

Main article: Declarations of War during World War II

Regarding *type* of war outbreak (fourth column): **A** = Attack without a declaration of war, **U** = State of war emerged through ultimatum, **WD** = State of war emerged after formal declaration of war, **D** = Diplomatic breakdown leading to a state of war. In some cases a diplomatic breakdown later led to a state of war. Such cases are mentioned in the comments.

Main source: Swedish encyklopedia "Bonniers Lexikon" 15 volumes from the 1960s, article "*Andra Världskriget*" ("The Second World War"), volume 1 of 15, table in columns 461-462. (Each page are in two columns, numbering of columns only)

16.12 See also

- Nordic countries in World War II

- Military production during World War II

16.13 Notes

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Chapter 17

Aftermath of World War II

The **aftermath of World War II** was the beginning of an era defined by the decline of the old great powers and the rise of two superpowers: the Soviet Union (USSR) and the United States of America (USA), creating a bipolar world. Allied during World War II, the US and the USSR became competitors on the world stage and engaged in what became known as the **Cold War**, so called because it never boiled over into open war between the two powers but was focused on espionage, political subversion and proxy wars. Western Europe and Japan were rebuilt through the American Marshall Plan whereas Eastern Europe fell in the Soviet sphere of influence and rejected the plan. Europe was divided into a US-led Western Bloc and a Soviet-led Eastern Bloc. Internationally, alliances with the two blocs gradually shifted, with some nations trying to stay out of the Cold War through the Non-Aligned Movement. The Cold War also saw a nuclear arms race between the two superpowers; part of the reason that the Cold War never became a “hot” war was that the Soviet Union and the United States had nuclear deterrents against each other, leading to a **mutually assured destruction** standoff.

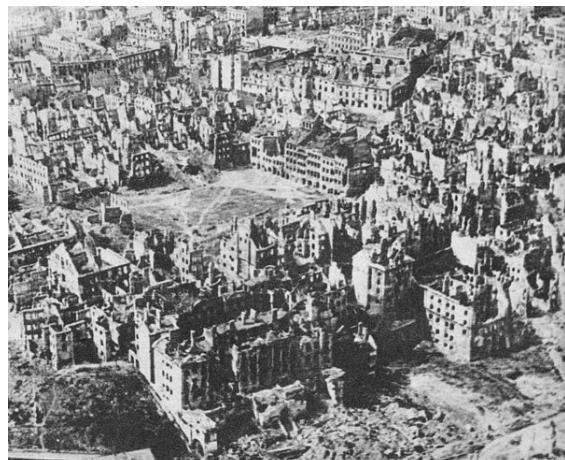
As a consequence of the war, the Allies created the United Nations, a new global organization for international cooperation and diplomacy. Members of the United Nations agreed to outlaw wars of aggression in an attempt to avoid a third world war. The devastated great powers of Western Europe formed the European Coal and Steel Community, which later evolved into the European Common Market and ultimately into the current European Union. This effort primarily began as an attempt to avoid another war between Germany and France by economic cooperation and integration, and a common market for important natural resources.

The end of the war also increased the rate of decolonization from the great powers with independence being granted to India (from the United Kingdom), Indonesia (from the Netherlands), the Philippines (from the US) and a number of Arab nations, primarily from specific rights which had been granted to great powers from League of Nations Mandates in the post World War I-era but often having existed *de facto* well before this time. Also related to this was Israel gaining independence from its previous status as part of Mandatory Palestine in

the years immediately following the war. Independence for the nations of Sub-Saharan Africa came more slowly.

The aftermath of World War II also saw the rise of the People's Republic of China, as the Chinese Communists emerged victorious from the **Chinese Civil War** in 1949.

17.1 Immediate effects



Warsaw: Aftermath of war.

At the end of the war, millions of people were homeless, the European economy had collapsed, and much of the European industrial infrastructure had been destroyed. The Soviet Union, too, had been heavily affected. In response, in 1947, U.S. Secretary of State George Marshall devised the “European Recovery Program”, which became known as the **Marshall Plan**. Under the plan, during 1948–1952 the United States government allocated US\$13 billion (US\$138 billion in 2015 dollars) for the reconstruction of Western Europe.

17.1.1 United Kingdom

By the end of the war, the economy of the United Kingdom was exhausted. More than a quarter of its national wealth had been spent. Until the introduction in 1941 of

Lend-Lease aid from the US, the UK had been spending its assets to purchase American equipment including aircraft and ships—over £437 million on aircraft alone. Lend-lease came just before its reserves were exhausted. Britain put 55% of its total labor force into war production.

In spring 1945, the Labour Party withdrew from the wartime coalition government, forcing a general election. Following a landslide victory, Labour held more than 60% of the seats in the House of Commons and formed a new government on 26 July 1945 under Clement Attlee.

Britain's war debt was described by some in the American administration as a “millstone round the neck of the British economy”. Although there were suggestions for an international conference to tackle the issue, in August 1945 the U.S. announced unexpectedly that the Lend-Lease programme was to end immediately.

The abrupt withdrawal of American Lend Lease support to Britain on 2 September 1945 dealt a severe blow to the plans of the new government. It was only with the completion of the Anglo-American loan by the United States to Great Britain on 15 July 1946 that some measure of economic stability was restored. However, the loan was made primarily to support British overseas expenditure in the immediate post-war years and not to implement the Labour government's policies for domestic welfare reforms and the nationalisation of key industries. Although the loan was agreed on reasonable terms, its conditions included what proved to be damaging fiscal conditions for Sterling. From 1946-1948, the UK introduced bread rationing which it never did during the war.^{*[1]*[2]*[3]*[4]}

17.1.2 Soviet Union



Ruins in Stalingrad, typical of the destruction in many Soviet cities.

The Soviet Union suffered enormous losses in the war against Germany. The Soviet population decreased by about 40 million during the war; of these, 8.7 million were combat deaths. The 19 million non-combat deaths had a variety of causes: starvation in the siege of Leningrad; conditions in German prisons and concentration camps; mass shootings of civilians; harsh labour in

German industry; famine and disease; conditions in Soviet camps; and service in German or German-controlled military units fighting the Soviet Union.^{*[5]} The population would not return to its pre-war level for 30 years.^{*[6]}

Soviet ex-POWs and civilians repatriated from abroad were suspected of having been Nazi collaborators, and 226,127 of them were sent to forced labour camps after scrutiny by Soviet intelligence, NKVD. Many ex-POWs and young civilians were also conscripted to serve in the Red Army. Others worked in labour battalions to rebuild infrastructure destroyed during the war.^{*[7]*[8]}

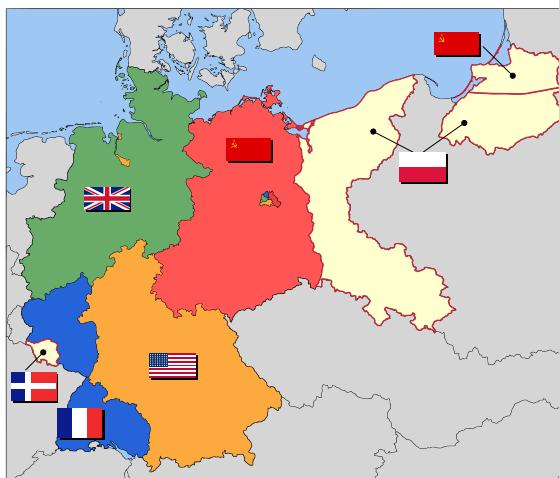
The economy had been devastated. Roughly a quarter of the Soviet Union's capital resources were destroyed, and industrial and agricultural output in 1945 fell far short of pre-war levels. To help rebuild the country, the Soviet government obtained limited credits from Britain and Sweden; it refused assistance offered by the United States under the Marshall Plan. Instead, the Soviet Union compelled Soviet-occupied Eastern Europe to supply machinery and raw materials. Germany and former Nazi satellites made reparations to the Soviet Union. The reconstruction programme emphasised heavy industry to the detriment of agriculture and consumer goods. By 1953, steel production was twice its 1940 level, but the production of many consumer goods and foodstuffs was lower than it had been in the late 1920s.^{*[9]}

The immediate post-war period in Europe was dominated by the Soviet Union annexing, or converting into Soviet Socialist Republics,^{*[10]*[11]*[12]} all the countries captured by the Red Army driving the German invaders out of central and eastern Europe. New Soviet satellite states rose in Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary,^{*[13]} Czechoslovakia,^{*[14]} Romania,^{*[15]*[16]} Albania,^{*[17]} and East Germany; the last of these was created from the Soviet zone of occupation in Germany.^{*[18]} Yugoslavia emerged as an independent Communist state allied but not aligned with the Soviet Union, owing to the independent nature of the military victory of the Partisans of Josip Broz Tito during World War II in Yugoslavia. The Allies established the Far Eastern Commission and Allied Council for Japan to administer their occupation of that country while the establishment Allied Control Council, administered occupied Germany. In accordance with the Potsdam Conference agreements, the Soviet Union occupied and subsequently annexed the strategic island of Sakhalin.

17.1.3 Germany

Main articles: History of Germany (1945–1990), Forced labor of Germans after World War II, Morgenthau Plan, Industrial plans for Germany, Denazification, Territorial changes of Germany after World War II, Legal status of Germany, and German reparations for World War II

In the west, Alsace-Lorraine was returned to France. The Sudetenland reverted to Czechoslovakia following



Post-WWII occupation zones of Germany, in its 1937 borders, with territories east of the Oder-Neisse line shown as annexed by Poland and the Soviet Union, plus the Saar protectorate and divided Berlin. East Germany was formed by the Soviet Zone, while West Germany was formed by the American, British, and French zones in 1949 and the Saar in 1957.

the European Advisory Commission's decision to delimit German territory to be the territory it held on 31 December 1937. Close to one quarter of pre-war (1937) Germany was *de facto* annexed by the Allies; roughly 10 million Germans were either expelled from this territory or not permitted to return to it if they had fled during the war. The remainder of Germany was partitioned into four zones of occupation, coordinated by the **Allied Control Council**. The Saar was detached and put in economic union with France in 1947. In 1949, the **Federal Republic of Germany** was created out of the Western zones. The Soviet zone became the **German Democratic Republic**.

Germany paid reparations to the United Kingdom, France, and the Soviet Union, mainly in the form of dismantled factories, forced labour, and coal. German standard of living was to be reduced to its 1932 level.*[19] Beginning immediately after the German surrender and continuing for the next two years, the US and Britain pursued an "intellectual reparations" programme to harvest all technological and scientific know-how as well as all patents in Germany. The value of these amounted to around US\$10 billion*[20] (US\$122 billion in 2015 dollars). In accordance with the **Paris Peace Treaties**, 1947, reparations were also assessed from the countries of Italy, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Finland.

US policy in post-war Germany from April 1945 until July 1947 had been that no help should be given to the Germans in rebuilding their nation, save for the minimum required to mitigate starvation. The Allies' immediate post-war "industrial disarmament" plan for Germany had been to destroy Germany's capability to wage war by complete or partial de-industrialization. The first industrial plan for Germany, signed in 1946, required the destruction of 1,500 manufacturing plants to lower Ger-



The hunger-winter of 1947, thousands protest against the disastrous food situation (31 March 1947).

man heavy industry output to roughly 50% of its 1938 level. Dismantling of West German industry ended in 1951. By 1950, equipment had been removed from 706 manufacturing plants, and steel production capacity had been reduced by 6.7 million tons.*[21] After lobbying by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Generals Lucius D. Clay and George Marshall, the Truman administration accepted that economic recovery in Europe could not go forward without the reconstruction of the German industrial base on which it had previously been dependent.*[22] In July 1947, President Truman rescinded on "national security grounds" * [23] the directive that had ordered the US occupation forces to "take no steps looking toward the economic rehabilitation of Germany." A new directive recognised that "[a]n orderly, prosperous Europe requires the economic contributions of a stable and productive Germany."* [24] From mid-1946 onwards Germany received US government aid through the **GARIOA** programme. From 1948 onwards West Germany also became a minor beneficiary of the Marshall Plan. Volunteer organisations had initially been forbidden to send food, but in early 1946 the **Council of Relief Agencies Licensed to Operate in Germany** was founded. The prohibition against sending **CARE Packages** to individuals in Germany was rescinded on 5 June 1946.

After the German surrender, the **International Red Cross** was prohibited from providing aid such as food or visiting POW camps for Germans inside Germany. However, after making approaches to the Allies in the autumn of 1945 it was allowed to investigate the camps in the UK and French occupation zones of Germany, as well as to provide relief to the prisoners held there. On 4 February 1946, the Red Cross was permitted to visit and assist prisoners also in the U.S. occupation zone of Germany, although only with very small quantities of food. The Red Cross petitioned successfully for improvements to be made in the living conditions of German POWs.*[25]

17.1.4 Italy

The 1947 Treaty of Peace with Italy spelled the end of the Italian colonial empire, along with other border revisions. The 1947 Paris Peace Treaties compelled Italy to pay \$360,000,000 (US dollars at 1938 prices) in war reparations: \$125,000,000 to Yugoslavia, \$105,000,000 to Greece, \$100,000,000 to the Soviet Union, \$25,000,000 to Ethiopia and \$5,000,000 to Albania. In the 1946 Italian constitutional referendum the Italian monarchy was abolished, having been associated with the deprivations of the war and the Fascist rule.

Unlike in Germany and Japan, no war crimes tribunals were held against Italian military and political leaders, though the Italian resistance summarily executed some of them (such as Mussolini) at the end of the war.

17.1.5 Austria

The Federal State of Austria had been annexed by Germany in 1938 (*Anschluss*, this union was banned by the Treaty of Versailles). Austria (called *Ostmark* by the Germans) was separated from Germany and divided into four zones of occupation. With the Austrian State Treaty, these zones reunited in 1955 to become the Republic of Austria.

17.1.6 Japan

Main article: Occupation of Japan

After the war, the Allies rescinded Japanese pre-war annexations such as Manchuria, and Korea became independent. The Philippines was returned to the United States. Burma, Malaya and Singapore were returned to Britain and French Indo-China back to France. The Dutch East Indies was to be handed back to the Dutch, but was resisted leading to the Indonesian war for independence. At the Yalta Conference, US President Franklin D. Roosevelt had secretly traded the Japanese Kurils and south Sakhalin to the Soviet Union in return for Soviet entry in the war with Japan. * [26] The Soviet Union annexed the Kuril Islands, provoking the Kuril Islands dispute, which is ongoing, as Russia continues to occupy the islands.

Hundreds of thousands of Japanese were forced to relocate to the Japanese main islands. Okinawa became a main US staging point. The US covered large areas of it with military bases and continued to occupy it until 1972, years after the end of the occupation of the main islands. The bases still remain. To skirt the Geneva Convention, the Allies classified many Japanese soldiers as Japanese Surrendered Personnel instead of POWs and used them as forced labour until 1947. The UK, France, and the Netherlands conscripted some Japanese troops

to fight colonial resistances elsewhere in Asia. General Douglas MacArthur established the International Military Tribunal for the Far East. The Allies collected reparations from Japan.

To further remove Japan as a potential future military threat, the Far Eastern Commission decided to de-industrialise Japan, with the goal of reducing Japanese standard of living to what prevailed between 1930 and 1934.* [27]* [28] In the end, the de-industrialisation programme in Japan was implemented to a lesser degree than the one in Germany.* [27] Japan received emergency aid from GARIOA, as did Germany. In early 1946, the Licensed Agencies for Relief in Asia were formed and permitted to supply Japanese with food and clothes. In April 1948 the Johnston Committee Report recommended that the economy of Japan should be reconstructed due to the high cost to US taxpayers of continuous emergency aid.

Survivors of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, known as hibakusha (被爆者), were ostracized by Japanese society. Japan provided no special assistance to these people until 1952.* [29] By the 65th anniversary of the bombings, total casualties from the initial attack and later deaths reached about 270,000 in Hiroshima* [30] and 150,000 in Nagasaki.* [31] About 230,000 hibakusha were still alive as of 2010,* [30] and about 2,200 were suffering from radiation-caused illnesses as of 2007.* [32]

17.1.7 Finland

In the Winter War of 1939–1940, the Soviet Union invaded neutral Finland and annexed some of its territory. From 1941 until 1944, Finland aligned itself with Nazi Germany in a failed effort to regain lost territories from the Soviets. Finland retained its independence following the war but remained subject to Soviet-imposed constraints in its domestic affairs.

17.1.8 The Baltic states

Main article: Occupation and annexation of the Baltic states by the Soviet Union (1940)

In 1940 the Soviet Union invaded and annexed the neutral Baltic states, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. In June 1941, the Soviet governments of the Baltic states carried out mass deportations of “enemies of the people”; as a result, many treated the invading Nazis as liberators when they invaded only a week later.

The Atlantic Charter promised self-determination to peoples deprived of it during the war. The British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, argued for a weaker interpretation of the Charter to permit the Soviet Union to continue to control the Baltic states.* [33] In March 1944 the U.S. accepted Churchill's view that the Atlantic Charter did

not apply to the Baltic states.*[34]

With the return of Soviet troops at the end of the war, the Forest Brothers mounted a guerrilla war. This continued until the mid-1950s.

17.1.9 Population displacement

Main articles: World War II evacuation and expulsion, Expulsion of Germans after World War II, Population transfer in the Soviet Union, Japanese American internment, and Japanese Canadian internment

As a result of the new borders drawn by the victori-



Expulsion of Germans from the Sudetenland

ous nations, large populations suddenly found themselves in hostile territory. The Soviet Union took over areas formerly controlled by Germany, Finland, Poland, and Japan. Poland lost the Kresy region (about half of its pre-War territory) and received most of Germany east of the Oder-Neisse line, including the industrial regions of Silesia. The German state of the Saar was temporarily a protectorate of France, but later returned to German administration. As set forth at Potsdam, approximately 12 million people were expelled from Germany, including seven million from Germany proper, and three million from the Sudetenland.

During the war, the United States government interned approximately 110,000 Japanese Americans and Japanese who lived along the Pacific coast of the United States in the wake of Imperial Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor.*[35]*[36] Canada interned approximately 22,000 Japanese Canadians, 14,000 of whom were born in Canada. After the war, some internees chose to return to Japan, while most remained in North America.

Poland

The Soviet Union expelled at least 2 million Poles from east of the new border approximating the Curzon Line. This estimate is uncertain as both the Polish Communist government and the Soviet government did not keep track of the number of expelled. The number of Polish

citizens inhabiting Polish borderlands (Kresy region) was about 13 million before World War II broke out according to official Polish statistics. Polish citizens killed in the war that originated from the Polish borderlands territory (killed by both German Nazi regime and the Soviet regime or expelled to distant parts of Siberia) were accounted as Russian, Ukrainian or Belorussian casualties of war in official Soviet historiography. This fact imposes additional difficulties in making the correct estimation of the number of Polish citizens forcibly transferred after the war.*[37] The border change also reversed the results of the 1919-1920 Polish-Soviet War. Former Polish cities such as Lwów came under control of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. Additionally, the Soviet Union transferred more than two million people within their own borders; these included Germans, Finns, Crimean Tatars, and Chechens.

17.1.10 Rape during occupation

In Europe

Main article: Rape during the occupation of Germany

As Soviet troops marched across the Balkans, they committed rapes and robberies in Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia.*[38] The population of Bulgaria was largely spared this treatment, due possibly to a sense of ethnic kinship or to the leadership of Marshal Fyodor Tolbukhin.*[38] The population of Germany was treated significantly worse.*[39] Rape and murder of German civilians was as bad as, and sometimes worse than, Nazi propaganda had anticipated.*[40]*[41] Political officers encouraged Soviet troops to seek revenge and terrorise the German population.*[42] On "the basis of *Hochrechnungen* (projections or estimations)", "1.9 million German women altogether were raped at the end of the war by Red Army soldiers." * [43]*[44]*[45] About one-third of all German women in Berlin were raped by Soviet forces.*[43] A substantial minority was raped multiple times.*[45]*[46] In Berlin, contemporary hospital records indicate between 95,000 and 130,000 women were raped by Soviet troops.*[45] About 10,000 of these women died, mostly by suicide.*[43]*[45] Over 4.5 million Germans fled towards the West.*[47] The Soviets initially had no rules against their troops "fraternising" with German women, but by 1947 they started to isolate their troops from the German population in an attempt to stop rape and robbery by the troops.*[48] Not all Soviet soldiers participated in these activities.*[49]

Foreign reports of Soviet brutality were denounced as false.*[50] Rape, robbery, and murder were blamed on German bandits impersonating Soviet soldiers.*[51] Some justified Soviet brutality towards German civilians based on previous brutality of German troops toward Russian civilians.*[52] Until the reunification of Germany, East German histories virtually ignored the actions

of Soviet troops, and Russian histories still tend to do so.*[53] Reports of mass rapes by Soviet troops were often dismissed as anti-Communist propaganda or the normal byproduct of war.*[43]

Rapes also occurred under other occupation forces, though the majority were committed by Soviet troops.*[46] French Moroccan troops matched the behaviour of Soviet troops when it came to rape, especially in the early occupations of Baden and Württemberg.*[54] In a letter to the editor of *TIME* published in September 1945, an American army sergeant wrote, “Our own Army and the British Army along with ours have done their share of looting and raping ... This offensive attitude among our troops is not at all general, but the percentage is large enough to have given our Army a pretty black name, and we too are considered an army of rapists.” * [55] Robert Lilly’s analysis of military records led him to conclude about 14,000 rapes occurred in Britain, France, and Germany at the hands of US soldiers between 1942 and 1945.*[56] Lilly assumed that only 5% of rapes by American soldiers were reported, making 17,000 GI rapes a possibility, while analysts estimate that 50% of (ordinary peace-time) rapes are reported.*[57] Supporting Lilly’s lower figure is the “crucial difference” that for World War II military rapes “it was the commanding officer, not the victim, who brought charges”. * [57]

German soldiers left many war children behind in nations such as France and Denmark, which were occupied for an extended period. After the war, the children and their mothers often suffered recriminations. In Norway, the “Tyskerunger” (German-kids) suffered greatly.*[58]*[59]

In Japan

Main article: Rape during the occupation of Japan

In the first few weeks of the American military occupation of Japan, rape and other violent crime was widespread in naval ports like Yokohama and Yokosuka, but declined shortly afterward. There were 1,336 reported rapes during the first 10 days of the occupation of Kanagawa prefecture.*[60] Historian Toshiyuki Tanaka relates that in Yokohama, the capital of the prefecture, there were 119 known rapes in September 1945.*[61]

Historians Eiji Takemae and Robert Ricketts state that “When US paratroopers landed in Sapporo, an orgy of looting, sexual violence and drunken brawling ensued. Gang rapes and other sex atrocities were not infrequent” and some of the rape victims committed suicide.*[62]

General Robert L. Eichelberger, the commander of the U.S. Eighth Army, recorded that in one instance when the Japanese formed a self-help vigilante guard to protect women from off-duty GIs, the Eighth Army ordered armored vehicles in battle array into the streets and ar-

rested the leaders, and the leaders received long prison terms.*[62]*[63]

According to Takemae and Ricketts, members of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF) were also involved in rapes:

A former prostitute recalled that as soon as Australian troops arrived in Kure in early 1946, they “dragged young women into their jeeps, took them to the mountain, and then raped them. I heard them screaming for help nearly every night”. Such behavior was commonplace, but news of criminal activity by Occupation forces was quickly suppressed.*[62]

Rape committed by U.S. soldiers occupying Okinawa was also a notable phenomenon. Okinawan historian Oshiro Masayasu (former director of the Okinawa Prefectural Historical Archives) writes:

Soon after the U.S. marines landed, all the women of a village on Motobu Peninsula fell into the hands of American soldiers. At the time, there were only women, children and old people in the village, as all the young men had been mobilized for the war. Soon after landing, the marines “mopped up” the entire village, but found no signs of Japanese forces. Taking advantage of the situation, they started “hunting for women” in broad daylight and those who were hiding in the village or nearby air raid shelters were dragged out one after another.*[64]

According to Toshiyuki Tanaka, 76 cases of rape or rape-murder were reported during the first five years of the American occupation of Okinawa. However, he claims this is probably not the true figure, as most cases were unreported.*[65]

17.2 Post-war tensions

Main articles: Iron Curtain, Origins of the Cold War, and Cold War (1947–1953)

17.2.1 Europe

The alliance between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union began to deteriorate even before the war was over,*[66] when Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill exchanged a heated correspondence over whether the Polish government-in-exile, backed by Roosevelt and Churchill, or the Provisional Government, backed by Stalin, should be recognised. Stalin won.*[67]



Soviet expansion, change of Central-Eastern European borders and creation of the Communist Eastern bloc after World War II

A number of allied leaders felt that war between the United States and the Soviet Union was likely. On 19 May 1945, American Under-Secretary of State Joseph Grew went so far as to say that it was inevitable.*[68]*[69]

On 5 March 1946, in his "Sinews of Peace" (Iron Curtain) speech at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, Winston Churchill said "a shadow" had fallen over Europe. He described Stalin as having dropped an "Iron Curtain" between East and West. Stalin responded by charging that co-existence between Communist and capitalist systems was impossible.*[70] In mid-1948 the Soviet Union imposed a blockade on the Western zone of occupation in Berlin.

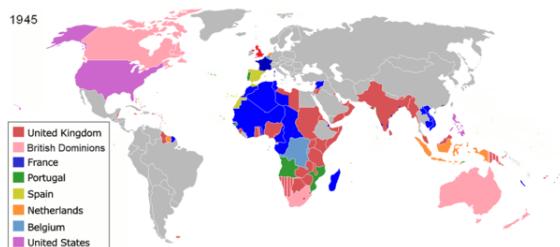
Due to the rising tension in Europe and concerns over further Soviet expansion, American planners came up with a contingency plan code-named *Operation Dropshot* in 1949. It considered possible nuclear and conventional war with the Soviet Union and its allies in order to counter a Soviet takeover of Western Europe, the Near East and parts of Eastern Asia that they anticipated would begin around 1957. In response, the US would saturate the Soviet Union with atomic and high-explosive bombs, and then invade and occupy the country.*[71] In later years, to reduce military expenditures while countering

Soviet conventional strength, President Dwight Eisenhower would adopt a strategy of massive retaliation, relying on the threat of a US nuclear strike to prevent non-nuclear incursions by the Soviet Union in Europe and elsewhere. The approach entailed a major buildup of US nuclear forces and a corresponding reduction in America's non-nuclear ground and naval strength.*[72]*[73] The Soviet Union viewed these developments as "atomic blackmail".*[74]

In Greece, civil war broke out in 1946 between Anglo-American-supported royalist forces and communist-led forces, with the royalist forces emerging as the victors.*[75] The US launched a massive programme of military and economic aid to Greece and to neighbouring Turkey, arising from a fear that the Soviet Union stood on the verge of breaking through the NATO defence line to the oil-rich Middle East. On 12 March 1947, to gain Congressional support for the aid, President Truman described the aid as promoting democracy in defence of the "free world", a principle that became known as the Truman Doctrine.*[76]

The US sought to promote an economically strong and politically united Western Europe to counter the threat posed by the Soviet Union. This was done openly using tools such as the European Recovery Program, which encouraged European economic integration. The International Authority for the Ruhr, designed to keep German industry down and controlled, evolved into the European Coal and Steel Community, a founding pillar of the European Union. The United States also worked covertly to promote European integration, for example using the American Committee on United Europe to funnel funds to European federalist movements. In order to ensure that Western Europe could withstand the Soviet military threat, the Western European Union was founded in 1948 and NATO in 1949. The first NATO Secretary General, Lord Ismay, famously stated the organisation's goal was "to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down". However, without the manpower and industrial output of West Germany no conventional defence of Western Europe had any hope of succeeding. To remedy this, in 1950 the US sought to promote the European Defence Community, which would have included a rearmed West Germany. The attempt was dashed when the French Parliament rejected it. On 9 May 1955, West Germany was instead admitted to NATO; the immediate result was the creation of the Warsaw Pact five days later.

The Cold War also saw the creation of propaganda and espionage organisations such as Radio Free Europe, the Information Research Department, the Gehlen Organization, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Special Activities Division, and the Ministry for State Security.



World map of colonization at the end of the Second World War in 1945.

17.2.2 Asia

Main articles: Decolonization of Asia and Wars of national liberation

In Asia, the surrender of Japanese forces was complicated by the split between East and West as well as by the movement toward national self-determination in European colonial territories.

China

Main articles: Chinese Civil War and Cross-Strait relations

As agreed at the Yalta Conference, the Soviet Union went

to war against Japan three months after the defeat of Germany. The Soviet forces invaded Manchuria. This was the end of the Manchukuo puppet state and all Japanese settlers were forced to leave China. The Soviet Union dismantled the industrial base in Manchuria built up by the Japanese in the preceding years. Manchuria also became a base for the Communist Chinese forces because of the Soviet presence.

After the war, the Kuomintang (KMT) party (led by generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek) and the Communist Chinese forces resumed their civil war, which had been temporarily suspended when they fought together against Japan. The fight against the Japanese occupiers had strengthened popular support among the Chinese for the Communist guerrilla forces while it weakened the KMT, who depleted their strength fighting a conventional war. Full-scale war between the opposing forces broke out in June 1946. Despite U.S. support to the Kuomintang, Communist forces were ultimately victorious and established the People's Republic of China (PRC) on the mainland. The KMT forces retreated to the island of Taiwan in 1949. Hostilities had largely ceased in 1950.

With the Communist victory in the civil war, the Soviet Union gave up its claim to military bases in China that it had been promised by the Western Allies during World War II. The defeat of the US-backed KMT led to a debate in the United States about who in the US government was responsible for this, the debate is commonly labeled "Who lost China?"

The outbreak of the Korean War diverted the attention of the PRC at the same time as it bolstered US support for Chiang Kai-shek, the two main factors that prevented the PRC from invading Taiwan. Intermittent military clashes occurred between the PRC and Taiwan from 1950-1979. Taiwan unilaterally declared the civil war over in 1991, but no formal peace treaty or truce exists and the PRC officially sees Taiwan as a breakaway province that rightfully belongs to it and has expressed its opposition to Taiwanese independence. Even so, tensions between the two states has decreased over time for example with the Chen-Chiang summits (2008-2011).

Sino-American relations (between the PRC and the US) continued to be mostly hostile up until US president Nixon visited China in 1972. From this point the relations between them have improved over time although some tension and rivalry remain even with the end of the Cold War and the PRC's distancing from the Communist ideology.

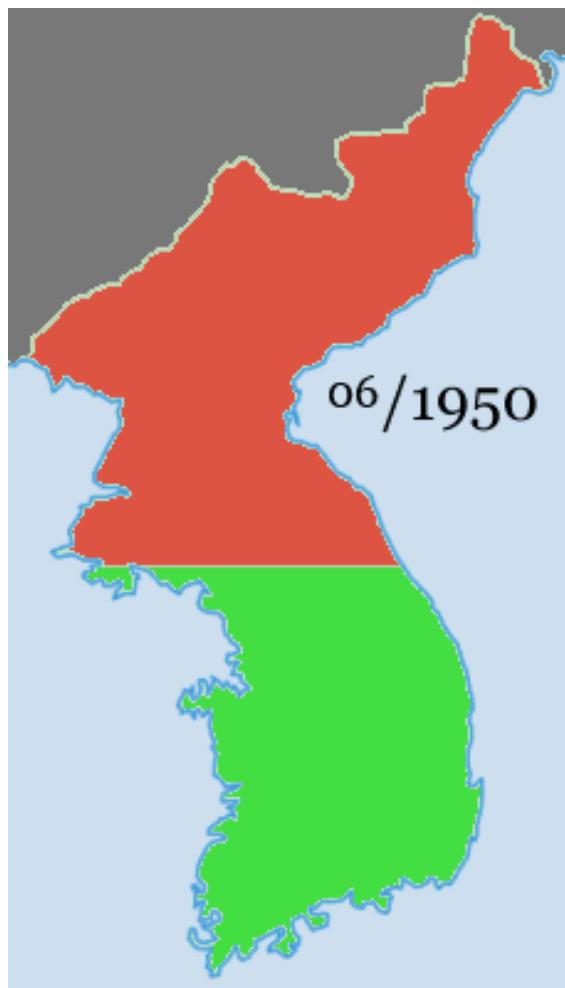


Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, leader of the Chinese nationalist Kuomintang

Korea

Main article: Division of Korea

At the Yalta Conference, the Allies agreed that an undivided post-war Korea would be placed under four-power multinational trusteeship. After Japan's surrender, this agreement was modified to a joint Soviet-American oc-



Evolution of the border between the two Koreas, from the Yalta Soviet-American 38th parallel division to the stalemate of 1953 that persists as of today

cupation of Korea.*[77] The agreement was that Korea would be divided and occupied by the Soviets from the north and the Americans from the south.*[78]

Korea, formerly under Japanese rule, and which had been partially occupied by the Red Army following the Soviet Union's entry into the war against Japan, was divided at the 38th parallel on the orders of the US War Department.*[77]*[79] A US military government in southern Korea was established in the capital city of Seoul.*[80]*[81] The American military commander, Lt. Gen. John R. Hodge, enlisted many former Japanese administrative officials to serve in this government.*[82] North of the military line, the Soviets administered the disarming and demobilisation of repatriated Korean nationalist guerrillas who had fought on the side of Chinese nationalists against the Japanese in Manchuria during World War II. Simultaneously, the Soviets enabled a build-up of heavy armaments to pro-communist forces in the north.*[83] The military line became a political line in 1948, when separate republics emerged on both sides of the 38th parallel, each republic claiming to be the legitimate

government of Korea. It culminated in the north invading the south, start of the Korean War two years later.

Malaya

Main article: Malayan Emergency

Labour and civil unrest broke out in the British colony of Malaya in 1946. A state of emergency was declared by the colonial authorities in 1948 with the outbreak of acts of terrorism. The situation deteriorated into a full-scale anti-colonial insurgency, or Anti-British National Liberation War as the insurgents referred to it, led by the Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA), the military wing of the Malayan Communist Party.*[84] The Malayan Emergency would endure for the next 12 years, ending in 1960. In 1967, communist leader Chin Peng reopened hostilities, culminating in a second emergency that lasted until 1989.

French Indochina

Main article: First Indochina War

Events during World War II in the colony of French Indochina (consisting of the modern-day states of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia) set the stage for the First Indochina War which in turn led to the Vietnam War.

During World War II, the Vichy French aligned colonial authorities cooperated with the Japanese invaders. The communist-controlled common front Viet Minh (supported by the Allies) was formed among the Vietnamese in the colony in 1941 to fight for the independence of Vietnam, against both the Japanese and prewar French powers. After the Vietnamese Famine of 1945 support for the Viet Minh was bolstered as the front launched a rebellion, sacking rice warehouses and urging the Vietnamese to refuse to pay taxes. Because the French colonial authorities started to hold secret talks with the Free French, the Japanese interned them 9 March 1945. When Japan surrendered in August, this created a power vacuum, and the Viet Minh took power in the August Revolution, declaring the independent Democratic Republic of Vietnam. However, the Allies (including the Soviet Union) all agreed that the area belonged to the French. Nationalist Chinese forces moved in from the north and British from the south (as the French were unable to do so immediately themselves) and then handed power to the French, a process completed by March 1946. Attempts to integrate the Democratic Republic of Vietnam with French rule failed and the Viet Minh launched their rebellion against the French rule starting the First Indochina War that same year (the Viet Minh organized common fronts to fight the French in Laos and Cambodia).

The war ended in 1954 with French withdrawal and a par-

tition of Vietnam that was intended to be temporary until elections could be held. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam held the north while South Vietnam formed into a separate republic in control of **Ngo Dinh Diem** who was backed in his refusal to hold elections by the US. The communist party of the south eventually organized the common front **NLF** to fight to unite south and north under the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and thus began the **Vietnam War**, which ended with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam conquering the South in 1975.

Dutch East Indies

Main article: Indonesian National Revolution
Japan invaded and occupied Indonesia during the war and



A soldier of an Indian armoured regiment examines a light tank used by Indonesian nationalists and captured by British forces during the fighting in Surabaya.

replaced much of the **Dutch** colonial state. Although the top positions were held by Japanese, the internment of all Dutch citizens meant that Indonesians filled many leadership and administrative positions. Following the Japanese surrender in August 1945, nationalist leaders **Sukarno** and **Mohammad Hatta** declared Indonesian independence. A four and a half-year struggle followed as the Dutch tried to re-establish their colony, using a significant portion of their Marshall Plan aid to this end.*[85] The Dutch were directly helped by UK forces who sought to re-establish the colonial dominions in Asia. The UK also kept 35,000 Japanese Surrendered Personnel under arms to fight the Indonesians.

Although Dutch forces re-occupied most of Indonesia's territory a **guerrilla** struggle ensued, and the majority of Indonesians, and ultimately international opinion, favoured Indonesian independence. In December 1949, the Netherlands formally recognised Indonesian sovereignty.

17.2.3 Covert operations and espionage



The "Big Three" at the Yalta Conference: Winston Churchill, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Joseph Stalin. Diplomatic relations between their three countries changed radically in the aftermath of World War II.

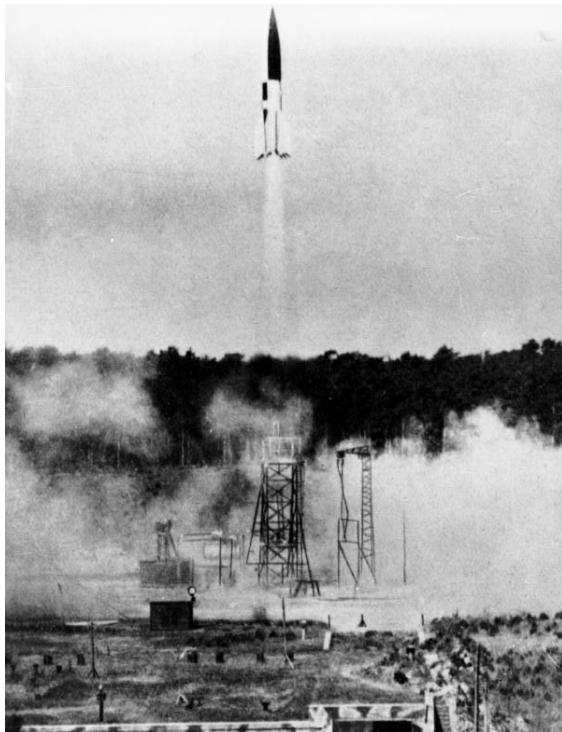
British covert operations in the Baltic States, which began in 1944 against the Nazis, escalated after the war. In **Operation Jungle**, the **Secret Intelligence Service** (known as MI6) recruited and trained Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians for the clandestine work in the Baltic states between 1948 and 1955. Leaders of the operation included **Alfons Rebane**, **Stasys Žymantė**, and **Rūdolfs Silarājs**. The agents were transported under the cover of the "British Baltic Fishery Protection Service". They launched from British-occupied Germany, using a converted World War II E-boat captained and crewed by former members of the wartime German navy.*[86] British intelligence also trained and infiltrated anti-communist agents into Russia from across the Finnish border, with orders to assassinate Soviet officials.*[87] In the end, counter-intelligence supplied to the KGB by **Kim Philby** allowed the KGB to penetrate and ultimately gain control of MI6's entire intelligence network in the Baltic states.*[88]

Vietnam and the Middle East would later damage the reputation gained by the US during its successes in Europe.*[89]

The KGB believed that the **Third World** rather than Europe was the arena in which it could win the **Cold War**.*[90] Moscow would in later years fuel an arms buildup in **Africa**. In later years, African countries used as proxies in the Cold War would often become "failed states" of their own.*[89]

17.2.4 Recruitment of former enemy scientists

When the divisions of postwar Europe began to emerge, the war crimes programmes and denazification policies



V-2 rocket launching at Peenemünde, on the Baltic German coast (1943).

of Britain and the United States were relaxed in favour of recruiting German scientists, especially nuclear and long-range rocket scientists.*[91] Many of these, prior to their capture, had worked on developing the German V-2 long-range rocket at the Baltic coast German Army Research Center Peenemünde. Western Allied occupation force officers in Germany were ordered to refuse to cooperate with the Soviets in sharing captured wartime secret weapons.*[92]

In Operation Paperclip, beginning in 1945, the United States imported 1,600 German scientists and technicians, as part of the intellectual reparations owed to the US and the UK, including about \$10 billion (US\$122 billion in 2015 dollars) in patents and industrial processes.*[93] In late 1945, three German rocket-scientist groups arrived in the U.S. for duty at Fort Bliss, Texas, and at White Sands Proving Grounds, New Mexico, as “War Department Special Employees”.*[94]

The wartime activities of some Operation Paperclip scientists would later be investigated.*[95] Arthur Rudolph left the United States in 1984, in order to not be prosecuted.*[96] Similarly, Georg Rickhey, who came to the United States under Operation Paperclip in 1946, was returned to Germany to stand trial at the Mittelbau-Dora war crimes trial in 1947. Following his acquittal, he returned to the United States in 1948 and eventually became a US citizen.*[97]

The Soviets began Operation Osoaviakhim in 1946. NKVD and Soviet army units effectively deported thou-

sands of military-related technical specialists from the Soviet occupation zone of post-war Germany to the Soviet Union.*[98] The Soviets used 92 trains to transport the specialists and their families, an estimated 10,000-15,000 people.*[99] Much related equipment was also moved, the aim being to virtually transplant research and production centres, such as the relocated V-2 rocket centre at Mittelwerk Nordhausen, from Germany to the Soviet Union. Among the people moved were Helmut Gröttrup and about two hundred scientists and technicians from Mittelwerk.*[100] Personnel were also taken from AEG, BMW's Stassfurt jet propulsion group, IG Farben's Leuna chemical works, Junkers, Schott AG, Siebel, Telefunken, and Carl Zeiss AG.*[101]

The operation was commanded by NKVD deputy Colonel General Serov,*[98] outside the control of the local Soviet Military Administration.*[102] The major reason for the operation was the Soviet fear of being condemned for noncompliance with Allied Control Council agreements on the liquidation of German military installations.*[103] Some Western observers thought Operation Osoaviakhim was a retaliation for the failure of the Socialist Unity Party in elections, though Osoaviakhim was clearly planned before that.*[104]

17.3 Demise of the League of Nations and the founding of the United Nations

As a general consequence of the war and in an effort to maintain international peace,*[105] the Allies formed the United Nations (UN), which officially came into existence on 24 October 1945.*[106] The UN replaced the defunct League of Nations (LN) as the global intergovernmental organization. The LN was formally dissolved on 20 April 1946, but had in practice ceased to function in 1939, being unable to stop the outbreak of World War II. The UN inherited some of the bodies of the LN, such as the International Labour Organization.

League of Nations mandates, mostly territories that had changed hands in World War I, became United Nations Trust Territories. South-West Africa, an exception, was still governed under terms of the original mandate. As the successor body to the League, the UN still assumed a supervisory role over the territory. The Free City of Danzig, a semi-autonomous city state that was partly overseen by the League, became part of Poland.

The UN adopted The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, “as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations.” The Soviet Union abstained from voting on adoption of the declaration. The US did not ratify the social and economic rights sections.*[107]

The five major Allied powers were given permanent

membership in the United Nations Security Council. The permanent members can veto any United Nations Security Council resolution, the only UN decisions that are binding according to international law. The five powers at the time of founding were: the United States of America, the United Kingdom, France, the Soviet Union and the Republic of China. The Republic of China lost the Chinese Civil War and retreated to the island of Taiwan by 1950 but continued to be a permanent member of the Council even though the *de facto* state in control of mainland China was the People's Republic of China (PRC). This was changed in 1971 when the PRC was given the permanent membership previously held by the Republic of China. Russia inherited the permanent membership of the Soviet Union in 1991 after the dissolution of that state.

17.4 Unresolved conflicts

Japanese holdouts persisted on various islands in the Pacific Theatre until at least 1974. Although all hostilities are now resolved, a peace treaty has never been signed between Japan and Russia due to the Kuril Islands dispute.

17.5 Economic aftermath

Further information: Post–World War II economic expansion

By the end of the war, the European economy had collapsed with 70% of the industrial infrastructure destroyed.* [108] The property damage in the Soviet Union consisted of complete or partial destruction of 1,710 cities and towns, 70,000 villages/hamlets, and 31,850 industrial establishments.* [109] The strength of the economic recovery following the war varied throughout the world, though in general it was quite robust. In Europe, West Germany, after having continued to decline economically during the first years of the Allied occupation, later experienced a remarkable recovery, and had by the end of the 1950s doubled production from its pre-war levels.* [110] Italy came out of the war in poor economic condition,* [111] but by the 1950s, the Italian economy was marked by stability and high growth.* [112] France rebounded quickly and enjoyed rapid economic growth and modernisation under the Monnet Plan.* [113] The UK, by contrast, was in a state of economic ruin after the war* [114] and continued to experience relative economic decline for decades to follow.* [115]

The Soviet Union also experienced a rapid increase in production in the immediate post-war era.* [116] Japan experienced rapid economic growth, becoming one of the most powerful economies in the world by

the 1980s.* [117] China, following the conclusion of its civil war, was essentially bankrupt. By 1953, economic restoration seemed fairly successful as production had resumed pre-war levels.* [118] This growth rate mostly persisted, though it was interrupted by economic experiments during the disastrous Great Leap Forward.

At the end of the war, the United States produced roughly half of the world's industrial output. This dominance had lessened significantly by the early 1970s.* [119]

17.6 See also

- Bretton Woods system
- Demobilization of United States armed forces after World War II
- Danube River Conference of 1948
- *Hunger's Rogues*
- Japanese holdout
- Operation Black Tulip—the eviction of Germans from the Netherlands after the war
- Operation Unthinkable

17.7 Notes

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17.9 External links

- Media related to Aftermath of World War II at Wikimedia Commons

Chapter 18

Consequences of Nazism

Nazism and the acts of the Nazi German state profoundly affected many countries, communities and people before, during and after World War II. While the attempt of Germany to exterminate several nations viewed as subhuman by Nazi ideology was eventually stopped by the Allies, Nazi aggression nevertheless led to the deaths of tens of millions and the ruin of several states.

18.1 Jewish people

Of the world's 15 million Jews in 1939, more than a third were killed in the Holocaust.^{*[1]*[2]} Of the three million Jews in Poland, the heartland of European Jewish culture, fewer than 350,000 survived. Most of the remaining Jews in Eastern and Central Europe were destitute refugees who were unable or unwilling to return to countries that became Soviet puppet states, or countries they felt had betrayed them to the Nazis.

18.2 Poland



During World War II 85% of buildings in Warsaw were destroyed by German troops.

The Nazis intended to destroy the Polish nation completely. In 1941, the Nazi leadership decided that Poland

was to be fully cleared of ethnic Poles within 10 to 20 years and settled by German colonists.^{*[3]} From the beginning of the occupation, Germany's policy was to plunder and exploit Polish territory, turning it into a giant concentration camp for Poles who were to be eventually exterminated as "Untermenschen".^{*[3]} The policy of plunder and exploitation inflicted material losses to Polish industry, agriculture, infrastructure and cultural landmarks, with the cost of the destruction by Germans alone estimated at approximately €525 billion or \$640 billion.^{*[4]} The remaining industry was largely destroyed or transported to Russia by Soviet occupation forces following the war.

The official Polish government report of war losses prepared in 1947 reported 6,028,000 war victims out of a population of 27,007,000 ethnic Poles and Jews alone. For political reasons the report excluded the losses to the Soviet Union and the losses among Polish citizens of Ukrainian and Belarusian origin.

Poland's eastern border was significantly moved westwards to the Curzon Line. The resulting territorial loss of 188,000 km² (formerly populated by 5.3 million ethnic Poles^{*[5]}) was to be compensated by the addition of 111,000 km² of former German territory east of the Oder–Neisse line (formerly populated by 11.4 million ethnic Germans^{*[6]}). Kidnapping of Polish children by Germany also took place, in which children who were believed to hold German blood were taken away; 20,000–200,000^{*[7]} Polish children were taken away from their parents. Out of the abducted only 10–15% returned home.^{*[8]} Polish elites were decimated and over half of the Polish intelligentsia were murdered. Some professions lost 20–50% of their members, for example 58% of Polish lawyers, 38% of medical doctors and 28% of university workers were exterminated by the Nazis. The Polish capital Warsaw was razed by German forces and most of its old and newly acquired cities lay in ruins (e.g. Wrocław) or lost to the Soviet Union (e.g. Lwów). In addition Poland became a Soviet satellite state, remaining under a Soviet-controlled communist government until 1989. Russian troops did not withdraw from Poland until 1993.

18.2.1 See also

- Expulsion of Poles by Germany
- Generalplan Ost
- German AB-Aktion in Poland
- Holocaust in Poland
- Operation Tannenberg

18.3 Central Europe

Central Europe's response to the Nazis (and involvement with the Nazis) was a mixture of resistance and support depending on time and political circumstances. Austria for example was first vehemently opposed to the Nazi Party but later became a key member of the Axis Powers. Other Central European countries, namely Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria, first attempted to remain neutral but later fought alongside the Nazis during the invasion of the Soviet Union. Yugoslavia's response was also mixed; Croatia and Slovenia fought alongside the Nazis (and in some cases fought with distinction) whereas Serbia did not. Some Central European countries did not fight but were conquered by the Nazis including Czechoslovakia. Nazi war materiel was made in many captured Czech factories using Czech laborers during the war. As a consequence of the war and especially Soviet occupation, Central European countries found themselves under the "Soviet sphere of influence" (as agreed upon at the Yalta Conference). Immediately following the war, communist governments were installed in all of these countries and any forms of 'western style democracy' that existed before the war were erased. For the countries of Central Europe installation of totalitarian Communism meant the decline of their economies and more significantly, a loss of national sovereignty and unique global identity until the collapse of the Warsaw Pact in 1989 (see also "the Velvet Revolution").

18.4 Soviet Union

More than 26 million Soviet citizens had been killed as a result of the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, including 10,651,000 soldiers who died in battle against Hitler's armies or died in POW camps.^{*[9]} Millions of civilians also died from starvation, exposure, atrocities, and massacres, and a huge area of the Soviet Union from the suburbs of Moscow and the Volga River to the western border had been destroyed, depopulated, and reduced to rubble. The mass death and destruction there badly damaged the Soviet economy, society, and national psyche. The death toll included c.a. 1.5 million Soviet Jews killed by the German invaders.^{*[10]} The mass destruction and mass murder was one of the reasons why the Soviet Union

installed satellite states in Central Europe; as the government hoped to use the countries as a buffer zone against any new invasions from the West. This helped break down the wartime alliance between the Soviet Union and the Western Allies, setting the stage for the Cold War, which lasted until 1989, two years before the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. Soviet culture in the 1950s was defined by results of the Great Patriotic War.

Close to 60% of the European war dead were from the Soviet Union. Russian historian Vadim Erlikman has detailed Soviet losses totaling 26.5 million war related deaths. Military losses of 10.6 million include 7.6 million killed or missing in action and 2.6 million POW dead, plus 400,000 paramilitary and Soviet partisan losses. Civilian deaths totaled 15.9 million which included 1.5 million from military actions. 7.1 million victims of Nazi genocide and reprisals; 1.8 million deported to Germany for forced labor; and 5.5 million famine and disease deaths. Additional famine deaths which totaled 1 million during 1946–47 are not included here. These losses are for the entire territory of the USSR including territories annexed in 1939–40.^{*[11]}

To the north, the Germans reached Leningrad (Saint Petersburg) in August 1941. The city was surrounded on 8 September, beginning a 900-day siege during which about 1.2 million citizens perished.

Of the 5.7 million Soviet prisoners of war captured by the Germans, more than 3.5 million had died while in German captivity by the end of the war.^{*[12]} On 11 February 1945, at the conclusion of the Yalta Conference, the United States and United Kingdom signed a Repatriation Agreement with the USSR.^{*[13]} The interpretation of this Agreement resulted in the forcible repatriation of all Soviets regardless of their wishes.^{*[14]} Millions of Soviet POWs and forced laborers transported to Germany are believed to have been treated as traitors, cowards and deserters on their return to the USSR(see Order No. 270).^{*[15]*[16]} According to some sources, many were executed or deported to the Soviet prison camps, over 1.5 million surviving Red Army soldiers imprisoned by the Germans were sent to the Gulag in Siberia and the far north.^{*[17]*[18]*[19]} However, statistical data from Soviet archives, that became available after Perestroika, attest that the overall increase of the Gulag population was minimal during 1945–46^{*[20]} and only 272,867 of repatriated Soviet POWs and civilians (out of 4,199,488) were imprisoned^{*[21]}.

18.4.1 Belarus

Belarus lost a quarter of its pre-war population, including practically all its intellectual elite and 90% of the country's Jewish population. Following bloody encirclement battles, all of the present-day Belarus territory was occupied by the Germans by the end of August 1941. The Nazis imposed a brutal regime, deporting some 380,000

young people for slave labour, and killing hundreds of thousands of other civilians. At least 5,295 Belarusian settlements were destroyed by the Nazis and some or all their inhabitants killed (out of 9,200 settlements that were burned or otherwise destroyed in Belarus during World War II). More than 600 villages like Khatyn were burned with their entire population.*[22] More than 209 cities and towns (out of 270 total) were destroyed. Himmler had pronounced a plan according to which 3/4 of Belarusian population was designated for “eradication” and 1/4 of racially cleaner population (blue eyes, light hair) would be allowed to serve Germans as slaves (*Ostarbeiter*).

Some recent estimates raise the number of Belarusians who perished in War to “3 million 650 thousand people, unlike the former 2.2 million. That is to say not every fourth inhabitant but about 40% of the pre-war Belarusian population perished (considering the present-day borders of Belarus).” *[23] This compares to 15% of Poland's post war borders and 19% of Ukrainian population in post war border and comparing to 2% of Czechoslovakian population that perished in post war borders.

18.4.2 Ukraine

Estimates on population losses in Ukraine range from 7 million to 11 million. More than 700 cities and towns and 28,000 villages were destroyed.*[24]

18.4.3 See also

- Forced settlements in the Soviet Union
- Generalplan Ost
- Hunger Plan
- Occupation of Belarus by Nazi Germany
- Operation Keelhaul
- World War II casualties

18.5 Yugoslavia

It is estimated that 1,700,000 people were killed during World War II in Yugoslavia from 1941 to 1945. Very high losses were among Serbs who lived in Bosnia and Croatia, as well as Jewish and Romani minorities, with losses also high among all other non-collaborating populations. In the summer of 1941, the Serbian uprising came at the time of the German invasion of the USSR. The Nazi response was the execution of 100 Serbian civilians for every killed soldier and 50 Serbian civilians for every wounded soldier. The Yugoslav Partisans fought both a guerrilla campaign against the Axis occupiers and a civil war against the Chetniks. The Independent State of



Due to their strong opposition to Nazism, Serbs were considered enemies of Nazi Germany. Alongside Jews, Serbs were killed and expelled in wartime Yugoslavia.

Croatia was established as a Nazi puppet-state, ruled by the fascist militia known as the Ustaše. During this time the Independent State of Croatia created extermination camps for anti-fascists, communists, Serbs, Muslims, Gypsies and Jews, one of the most infamous being the Jasenovac concentration camp. A large number of men, women and children, mostly Serbs, were murdered in these camps. In 1945, the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia was created as a communist republic.*[25]

18.6 Western Europe

Britain and France were on the side of the victors, but they were exhausted and bankrupted by the war, and Britain never recovered its status as a superpower. With Germany and Japan in ruins as well, the world was left with two dominant powers, the United States and the Soviet Union. Economic and political reality in Western Europe would soon force the dismantling of the European colonial empires, especially in Africa and Asia.

One of the most important political consequences of the Nazi experience in Western Europe was the establishment of new, human rights-based political alliances which eventually became the European Union and an international military alliance of democratic European countries known as NATO to counterbalance the Soviets' Warsaw Pact and Comintern until communist rule in Eastern Europe ended in the late 1980s.

The Communists emerged from the war sharing the vast prestige of the victorious Soviet armed forces, and for a while it looked as though they might take power in France, Italy and Greece. The West quickly acted to prevent this from happening, hence the Cold War.

18.7 Greece

In Greece the German occupation (April 1941 – October 1944) destroyed the economy through war reparations, plundering of the country's resources and hyperinflation. In addition, the Germans left most of the country's infrastructure in ruins as they withdrew in 1944. As a result of an Allied blockade and German indifference to local needs, the first winter of the occupation was marked by widespread famine in the main urban centres, with as many as 300,000 civilians dead from starvation. Although these levels of starvation were not repeated in the following years, malnourishment was common throughout the occupation. In addition, thousands more were executed by German forces as reprisals for partisan activities. As part of the Holocaust, Greece's Jewish community was almost wiped out, especially the large Sephardi community of Thessaloniki, which had earned the city the sobriquet "Mother of Israel" and had first settled there in the early 16th century at the invitation of the then-ruling Ottoman Empire. In total, at least 81% (ca. 60,000) of Greece's total pre-war Jewish population perished.

The bitterest and longest-lasting legacy of the German occupation was the social upheaval it wrought. The old political elites were sidelined, and the Resistance against the Axis brought to the fore the leftist National Liberation Front (EAM), arguably the country's first true mass-movement, where the Communists played a central role. In an effort to oppose its growing influence, the Germans encouraged the pre-war conservative establishment to confront it, and allowed the creation of armed units. As elsewhere in Eastern Europe, in the last year of the occupation, conditions in Greece often approximated a civil war between EAM and everyone else. The rift would become permanent in December 1944, when EAM and the British-backed government clashed in Athens, and again in a fully fledged civil war from 1946–1949.



German territories lost in both World Wars are shown in black, present-day Germany is marked dark grey on this 1914 map.

by Nazi Germans during World War II. This resulted in a feeling of controversy for many Germans, causing numerous discussions and rows among scholars and politicians in Post-War West Germany (for example, the "Historikerstreit" [historians' argument] in the 1980s) and after Reunification. Here, the discussion was mainly about the role that the unified Germany should play in the world and in Europe. Bernard Schlink's novel *The Reader* concerns how post-war Germans dealt with the issue.

Following World War II, the Allies embarked on a program of denazification, but as the Cold War intensified these efforts were curtailed in the west.

Germany itself and the German economy were devastated, with great parts of most major cities destroyed by the bombings of the Allied forces, sovereignty taken away by the Allies and the territory filled with millions of refugees from the former eastern provinces which the Allies had decided were to be annexed by the Soviet Union and Poland, moving the eastern German border westwards to the Oder-Neisse line and effectively reducing Germany in size by roughly 25%. (see also Potsdam Conference) The remaining parts of Germany were divided among the Allies and occupied by British (the north-west), French (the south-west), Americans (the south) and Soviets (the east) troops.

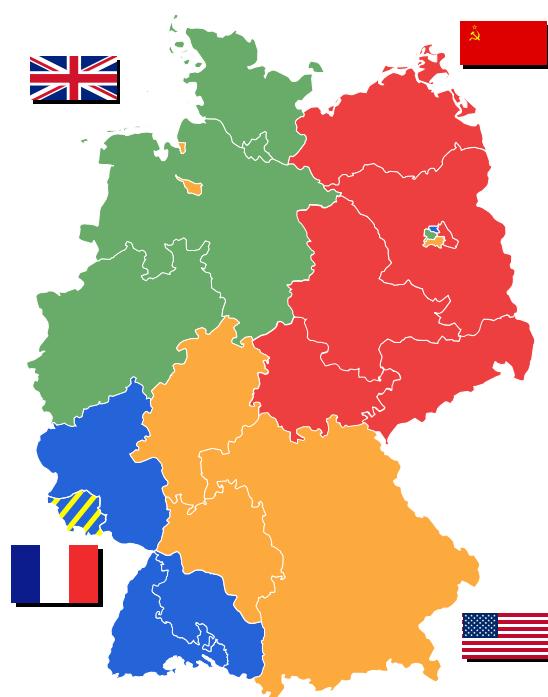
The expulsions of Germans from the lost areas in the east (see also Former eastern territories of Germany), the Sudetenland, and elsewhere in eastern Europe went on for several years. The number of Germans expelees totaled roughly 15,000,000. Estimates of number of deaths in connection with expulsion range from under 500,000 to 3 million.

After a short time the Allies broke over ideological problems (Communism versus Capitalism), and thus both

18.8 Germany

More than 7 million Germans, including almost 2 million civilians, died during World War II (see World War II casualties). After the end of the war in Europe additional casualties were incurred during the Allied occupation and also during the population expulsions that followed.

After the war, the German people were often viewed with contempt because they were blamed by other Europeans for Nazi crimes. Germans visiting abroad, particularly in the 1950s and 1960s, attracted insults from locals, and from foreigners who may have lost their families or friends in the atrocities. Today in Europe and worldwide (particularly in countries that fought against the Axis), Germans may be scorned by elderly people who were alive to experience the atrocities committed



Postwar occupation zones in Germany

sides established their own spheres of influence, creating a previously non-existent division in Germany between East and West, (although the division largely followed the borders of states which had existed in Germany before Bismarck's unification less than 100 years before).

A constitution for East Germany was drafted on 30 May 1949. Wilhelm Pieck, a leader of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) party (which was created by a forced merger of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) and Communist Party of Germany (KPD) in the Soviet sector), was elected first President of the German Democratic Republic.

West Germany, (officially: Federal Republic of Germany, FRG – this is still the official name of the unified Germany today) received (*de facto*) semi-sovereignty in 1949, as well as a constitution, called the *Grundgesetz* (Basic Law). The document was not called a Constitution officially, as at this point, it was still hoped that the two German states would be reunited in the near future.

The first free elections in West Germany were held in 1949, which were won by the Christian Democratic Party of Germany (CDU) (conservatives) by a slight margin. Konrad Adenauer, a member of the CDU, was the first *Bundeskanzler* (Chancellor) of West Germany.

Both German states introduced, in 1948, their own money, colloquially called *West-Mark* and *Ost-Mark* (Western Mark and Eastern Mark).

Foreign troops still remain in Germany today, for example Ramstein Air Base, but the majority of troops left following the end of the Cold War (By 1994 for Soviet

troops, mandated under the terms of the Treaty on the Final Settlement With Respect to Germany and in the mid-1990s for Western forces). The Bush Administration in the United States in 2004 stated intentions to withdraw most of the remaining American troops out of Germany in the coming years. During the years 1950–2000 more than 10,000,000 U.S. military personnel were stationed in Germany.* [26]

The West German economy was by the mid 1950s rebuilt thanks to the abandonment in mid-1947 of some of the last vestiges of the *Morgenthau Plan* and to fewer war reparations imposed on West Germany (see also *Wirtschaftswunder*). After lobbying by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Generals Clay and Marshall, the Truman administration realized that economic recovery in Europe could not go forward without the reconstruction of the German industrial base on which it previously had been dependent.* [27] In July 1947, President Harry S. Truman rescinded on “national security grounds” * [27] the punitive JCS 1067, which had directed the U.S. forces of occupation in Germany to “take no steps looking toward the economic rehabilitation of Germany.” It was replaced by JCS 1779, which instead stressed that “[a]n orderly, prosperous Europe requires the economic contributions of a stable and productive Germany.” * [28]

The dismantling of factories in the western zones, for further transport to the Soviet Union as reparations, was in time halted as frictions grew between East and West. Limits were placed on permitted levels of German production in order to prevent resurgence of German militarism, part of which included severely restricting German steel production and affected the rest of the German economy very negatively (see "The industrial plans for Germany"). Dismantling of factories by France and Great Britain as reparations and for the purpose of lowering German war and economic potential under the “level of industry plans” took place (halted in 1951), but to nowhere near the scale of the dismantling and transport to the Soviet Union of factories in the eastern zone of occupation. The Eastern Block did not accept the Marshall Plan, denouncing it as American economic imperialism, and thus it (East Germany included) recovered much more slowly than their Western counterparts. German political and economic control of its main remaining centers of industry was reduced, the Ruhr area was under international control. The Ruhr Agreement was imposed on the Germans as a condition for permitting them to establish the Federal Republic of Germany.* [29] (see also the International Authority for the Ruhr (IAR)). In the end, the beginning of the Cold War led to increased German control of the area, although permanently limited by the pooling of German coal and steel into a multinational community in 1951 (see European Coal and Steel Community). The neighboring Saar area, containing much of Germany's remaining coal deposits, handed over by the U. S. to French economic administration as a protectorate in 1947 and did not politically return to Germany

until January 1957, with economic reintegration occurring a few years later. (see also the Monnet Plan). Upper Silesia, Germany's second largest center of mining and industry, had been handed over to Poland at the Potsdam Conference, and its population expelled.

The Allies confiscated intellectual property of great value, all German patents, both in Germany and abroad, and used them to strengthen their own industrial competitiveness by licensing them to Allied companies.* [30] Beginning immediately after the German surrender and continuing for the next two years the U.S. pursued a vigorous program to harvest all technological and scientific know-how as well as all patents in Germany. John Gimbel comes to the conclusion, in his book "*Science Technology and Reparations: Exploitation and Plunder in Postwar Germany*", that the "intellectual reparations" taken by the U.S. and the UK amounted to close to \$10 billion.*[31]*[32]*[33] During the more than two years that this policy was in place, no industrial research in Germany could take place, as any results would have been automatically available to overseas competitors who were encouraged by the occupation authorities to access all records and facilities. Meanwhile, thousands of the best German researchers were being put to work in the Soviet Union and in the U.S. (see also Operation Paperclip)

For several years following the surrender German nutritional levels were very low, resulting in very high mortality rates. Throughout all of 1945 the U.S. forces of occupation ensured that no international aid reached ethnic Germans.*[34] It was directed that all relief went to non-German displaced persons, liberated Allied POWs, and concentration camp inmates.*[34] During 1945 it was estimated that the average German civilian in the US and UK occupation zones received 1200 calories a day.*[34] Meanwhile, non-German displaced persons were receiving 2300 calories through emergency food imports and Red Cross help.*[34] In early October 1945 the UK government privately acknowledged in a cabinet meeting that German civilian adult death rates had risen to 4 times the pre-war levels and death rates amongst the German children had risen by 10 times the pre-war levels.*[34] The German Red Cross was dissolved, and the International Red Cross and the few other allowed international relief agencies were kept from helping Germans through strict controls on supplies and travel.*[34] The few agencies permitted to help Germans, such as the indigenous Caritasverband, were not allowed to use imported supplies. When the Vatican attempted to transmit food supplies from Chile to German infants the US State Department forbade it.*[34] The German food situation reached its worst during the very cold winter of 1946–1947 when German calorie intake ranged from 1,000–1,500 calories per day, a situation made worse by severe lack of fuel for heating.*[34] Meanwhile, the Allies were well fed, average adult calorie intake was; U.S. 3200–3300; UK 2900; U.S. Army 4000.*[34] German infant mortality rate was twice that of other nations in Western Europe until the

close of 1948.*[34]

As agreed by the Allies at the Yalta conference Germans were used as forced labor as part of the reparations to be extracted to the countries ruined by Nazi aggression. By 1947 it is estimated that 4,000,000 Germans (both civilians and POWs) were being used as forced labor by the U.S., France, the UK and the Soviet Union. German prisoners were for example forced to clear minefields in France and the low countries. By December 1945 it was estimated by French authorities that 2,000 German prisoners were being killed or maimed each month in accidents.*[35] In Norway the last available casualty record, from 29 August 1945, shows that by that time a total of 275 German soldiers died while clearing mines, while 392 had been maimed.*[36] Death rates for the German civilians doing forced labor in the Soviet Union ranged between 19% and 39%, depending on category. (see also Forced labor of Germans in the Soviet Union).

Norman Naimark writes in "*The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945–1949*." that although the exact number of women and girls who were raped by members of the Red Army in the months preceding and years following the capitulation will never be known, their numbers are likely in the hundreds of thousands, quite possibly as high as the 2,000,000 victims estimate made by Barbara Johr, in "Befreier und Befreite". Many of these victims were raped repeatedly. Naimark states that not only had each victim to carry the trauma with her for the rest of her days, it inflicted a massive collective trauma on the East German nation (the German Democratic Republic). Naimark concludes "The social psychology of women and men in the soviet zone of occupation was marked by the crime of rape from the first days of occupation, through the founding of the GDR in the fall of 1949, until - one could argue - the present." * [37]

The post-war hostility shown to the German people is exemplified in the fate of the War children, sired by German soldiers with women from the local population in nations such as Norway where the children and their mothers after the war had to endure many years of abuse. In the case of Denmark the hostility felt towards all things German also showed itself in the treatment of German refugees during the years 1945 to 1949. During 1945 alone 7000 German children under the age of 5 died as a result of being denied sufficient food and denied medical attention by Danish doctors who were afraid that rendering aid to the children of the former enemy would be seen as an unpatriotic act. Many children died of easily treatable ailments. As a consequence "more German refugees died in Danish camps, "than Danes did during the entire war."**[38]**[39]**[40]**[41]

During the Cold War, it was difficult for West Germans to visit East German relatives and friends and impossible vice versa. For East Germans, especially after the building of the Berlin Wall on 13 August 1961 and until Hun-

Germany opened up its border to the West in the late 1980s, thus allowing hundreds of thousands of vacationing East Germans to flee into Western Europe, it was only possible to get to West Germany by illegally fleeing across heavily fortified and guarded border areas.

44 years after the end of World War II, the Berlin Wall fell on 9 November 1989. The East and West parts of Germany were reunited on 3 October 1990.

Economic and social divisions between East and West Germany continue to play a major role in politics and society in Germany at present. It is likely the contrast between the generally well-off and economically diverse West and the weaker, heavy-industry reliant East will continue at least into the foreseeable future.

18.8.1 See also

- Berlin Wall
- Cold War
- German reunification
- Germany
 - East Germany
 - West Germany
- History of Germany since 1945
- Marshall Plan
- Ostpolitik

18.9 World politics

The war led to the discrediting and dissolution of the League of Nations and led to the founding of the United Nations on 24 October 1945. Like its predecessor, the UN was established to help prevent other world wars and contain or stop smaller conflicts. The principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations are a testament to the world's attitudes at the fall of the Third Reich.

18.10 International law

The effect the Nazis had on present-day international law should not be underestimated. The United Nations Genocide Convention, a series of laws that made genocide a crime, was approved in December 1948, three years after the Nazi defeat.*[42] That same month, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights also became a part of international law. The Nuremberg trials, followed by other Nazi war crimes trials, also created an unwritten rule stating that government officials who “follow orders” from leaders in committing crimes against humanity cannot use



Nuremberg Trials. Defendants in the dock. The main target of the prosecution was Hermann Göring (at the left edge on the first row of benches), considered to be the most important surviving official in the Third Reich after Hitler's death.

such a motive to excuse their crimes. It also had an effect through the Fourth Geneva Convention (Art 33) in making collective punishments a war crime.*[43]

18.11 Racism

After the world viewed the Nazi death camps, many Western peoples began to outwardly oppose ideas of racial superiority. Liberal anti-racism became a staple of many Western governments. Whereas racism is still present, openly racist publications were looked down upon. The move towards tolerance of different cultures in Western societies has continued to the present day. Since the collapse of Nazi Germany, Western populations have been wary of racial political parties and have actively discouraged white ethnocentrism, fearing the return of a catastrophe similar to the purges carried out by Nazis in Germany. On the other hand, it can be argued that the conception of multiculturalism as one of the pillars of contemporary Western society has gained importance because of the same reaction. The actions of the Nazis caused an increase in Anti-German sentiment.

18.12 Military

German military doctrine under the Nazi regime, characterized (with some controversy) as Blitzkrieg, called for air strikes that softened an intended victim for attack by motorized, mechanized, and airborne forces on the schwerpunkt (focal point), followed by encirclement by motorized forces, and exploitation of the gap by conventional infantry forces. Radio communication allowed for the close coordination necessary for such attacks, and allowed for coordination of the air force. The Nazis as much broke the rules of engagement which previously

governed nations at war (such violations often deemed after the war as crimes against peace) as they innovated techniques of war. Axis reverses beginning with Allied routs of overextended German forces in El Alamein and Stalingrad resulted from British and Soviet forces adopting Nazi field strategies, and as the United States became a participant in the war it adopted much the same techniques of aerial attack upon Nazi Germany, if with greater force than the Luftwaffe could ever inflict.

As Nazi Germany faced severe defeat after the Battle of Kursk and especially the cross-channel invasion it introduced cross-channel use of the V-1 flying bomb and V-2 rocket, although too late and too ineffectively to turn the war to its advantage. The German military machine was developing jet aircraft as fighters and bombers and long-range missiles, but far too late (they were only in the design and test stages) to change the outcome of the war. The victorious Allies would incorporate the early innovations of jet technology and long-distance rocket-based missiles into their armed forces, but only after the end of World War II after getting them beyond the developmental stages of design and testing.

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Hunter, Sesesq, Hamiltonstone, Coughinink, Paris By Night, Theleaderofmany12, Brian Fenton, Xargon666x6, Heathhiggins, Seckelberry1, Somearemoreequal, Penguin King, Sickofishead, Vssun, Bvv, Damuna, Dell2boy, Just James, Peachesncream, Brunodam, Glen, Kelstonian, Chris G, DerHexer, Saburny, 12mollydog, Lijnema, Stuyhigh77, Tinmanic, Yeahsoo~enwiki, Johnbrownsbody, Daemonic Kangaroo, Arnold Reisman, Lukewalsh1234, Jab03, Caranorn, Pazzaj, Bobblehead81, Coniosis, Halibott, White Guard, TLinden, Bellemare, Jpo51, IvoShandor, SwedishPsycho, Wikianon, BigRicky, PureME, Bigsprinta, Januszewicz, Bertho, SquidSK, Jfrenchy, NatureA16, Rickterp, Stephen-chou0722, Sparkface, Jniech, Myszkin, Raoulduke47, Goober223, Marvicat, Hdt83, MartinBot, Opiner, FlieGerFaUstMe262, PAK Man, Grandia01, EyeSerene, Big Iron, Sam2031, Roger Mexico, M Van Houten, Filipore, Mpking52, Theredbanana, Bluechipser, Greekorangere, Pinkbluty, 5618, Ellibob, Dinogamer04, Rettetast, Assassin06, Ultraviolet scissor flame, Meatwad12, Sm8900, Dorvaq, Stealthzombie007, Wyrdlight, Rskellner, Samjamran, R'n'B, Soccerpro, Purcto, CommonsDelinker, 123456abcd, Hippicar, Steve98052, KTo288, Retoi, Surowiak~enwiki, Jfournier, Snozzer, Lifeisagame247, Feigenbaum13, Panda lover001, PaulmcDonald, LittleOldMe old, PrestonH, Staijk, Puddywuddy1192, Lokqs, Mbhii, MnM2324, Vhhs, Wiki Raja, Sportsnut1350, Cubfan2522, Wikipediausernumber1, RaccoonFox, Riogkol, Ahier, RockMFR, Periklis*, Slash, Sam Golden, Zzmaj, Etaicq, J.delanoy, Ninja fan, MITBeaverRocks, CBS13, Karstedt d, Funny4life, Rrostrom, Bogey97, UBeR, Numbo3, Theinternetsurfy, Chuck 444, BillWSmithJr, Hans Dunkelberg, Stankleberry, Lucky Phil, Andypoterkid, Tikiwont, Cthia, Isaac is da bomb, Uncle Dick, Ajonsey, Nigholith, Kmcd151, Colincbn, Spaininrain, Bunkerpictures, Ms408, Rickydavis0012, TrueCRaysball, Eraye1, A Nobody, Shucks999, Amzon, Merlot70, Hodja Nasreddin, England999, Wabba506, George415, Icseaturtles, Flubber555, Pstoric, Jpisqma, Mockingbird83, WikiBone, Froggyjumpoverlog, Nick683, Bot-Schafter, Homer slips., Chaser676, Bad Night, Sexymanbearpig, Dreko, DarkFalls, Buxley Hall, Gman124, Tron175, Bastardpoopshoot, DarkGhost08, McSly, Adrian M. H., Enter the chicken, Gipornm, ASDFGYUIOP, Wdemers, Ryan Postlethwaite, Trumpet marietta 45750, Bandeapart, Skier Dude, Redflagflyng, Tony360X, Pyrohair, Jackglerum, Mafia godfather, Ash sul, Ancient Land of Bosoni, Tommy Nakashima, Mrg3105, AntiSpamBot, MrBungle79, Theknightofdarkness, Edieschuermann, Spinach Dip, Beenj, RenniePet, Floaterfluss, Warrior on Terrorism, Jetsnake, Wiki1609, Alexb102072, Walrusboy91, NewEnglandYankee, Assassin3577, Aar, Some enraged farm animal, Lman1987, Ko Soi IX, Pb12, Xgmx, Karl2025, Rowenji, TheodoreL, T3hllama, Pirateogta, Intermisun, Mufka, Tascha96, Christopher Kraus, Joemale-malesign, Olegwiki, Mikeonatrike, Aka-miki~enwiki, 2812, Smitty, Jrcla2, Tstars, Sidnokid, Jpm9880, Kyli-eTastic, Juliancolton, Vamsilly, MahiMahi, Bogdan~enwiki, The slave to reality, Bu2m5dgw, DeathOfBlades, TyzwaIn, Phelix06, Angel Uriel, DH85868993, Andrewcmcardle, Jjhcap99, Socialismo01, Rohith, Potaatos, Vassosman, Tiwonk, King Toadsworth, Murphy001, Eliteagents, Trip Johnson, Dpesikan, WinterSpw, Julianhayda, Andy Marchbanks, Inwind, Henstep1313, Alex:D, Kimdime, Jeremiah-burt, ThatGUY33, Xiahou, Davidships, Dj Luca, Idioma-bot, Nintendo316, Warshark, Omegacc, Xnuala, Bobsmithbob1, Armorhead, TNTfan101, Dagedude, Histo ed, ACSE, Chromancer, Zazzer, Eater of tin, Caribbean H.Q., Carlsbaddar, G2bambino, Sam Blacketer, ChaosNil, Mike Fields, Kenkar, PeaceNT, Chinneeb, Mwskull, UnicornTapestry, Denwatts, Nanosoldier, VolkovBot, Lostlove, Drakonice, Aledevries, Hadigonzalez25, Abcdefghayden, Jbill007, Drakheim, Harveyqs, Dragoonkain, Roger M.E. Lightly, Pan Wikipedia, Kommodorekerz, Factual80man, Nug, Bry9000, Butwhatdoiknow, Lord Collettus, AlnoktaBOT, TobyTheRobot, Powered, Majoreditor, HJ32, Embokias, Ilya1166, Sleeper chevelle, Stagyar Zil Doggo, WED Imagineer, Godefroy, Vulgarid, Taraborn, RPLunk2853, Hollerbackgril, Martinevans123, Director, ESommers, Kenny04, TXiKiBoT, FleeingHomework, XavierGreen, Jakedaniel, Deadfish820, Genyusz, Jjanczy, Huang7776, Dereksanders, Minger125, Cnajer, Herb45, Stupid1991, Tatertot37, Colton123g, Pellande12, Mahal11, Gmialtft, Asarláí, Jeremy221, SilentOne17, Comrade Graham, Chuddy32, Nxavar, Rei-bot, A23259789, BlkRvr702, Anonymous Dissident, Stevesmith1789, ElinorD, Detroit4, Gerrish, 18Fox, Ray-Ginsay, Qxz, Lincolnshew, WikiReaderer, Vanished user ikijeirw34uaeolaseriffic, Kcblu, Cobosvictor, Sauronthegreat, Ultrabeater, Adityakistampally, John Carter, Nazgul02, Revizionist, KTFCdan, Mjs072, Beyond silence, Cream10152, Aaron Bowen, Jman2213, Anset, TedColes, Robo man 1, Hburg, Triplesb, Zhalcyon29, Bdot.01, Andy swann, Manchurian candidate, Mazzelino, Mkumpumphrey, MercuryBot, Seb az86556, Domitius, Casting shadows, AuthorDionysos, Smchase, Robust45, Shadowlapis, StillTrill, Lunest, Jack Naven Rulez, Wokelly, Luuu, Oblivion801, PalatinWhite, Brianna11, Jimblack, Themat21III, Lumbering Buffalo, Micha851, Tom MacPherson, Mr.NorCal55, Thomasmclennan, TheCoachZ11, Tomer.benv, Tode353, Jonnyf88, Dave00327, NachtLink, Flaw600, Tectonic042, Usergreatpower, Tribulation725, BobTheTomato, Happyme22, Eternauta3k, Stirfryking, Eskovan, Billybobjr, Wassammatta, Synthebot, Peace237, Zumbunny, Zach higgins, Jason Leach, Fleurstiger, El Hobo24, Gatkinson, Panadude, Hughstew, Ghost321, AjitPD, Paulthewhale, Cuntexploder, Lottrkdchic, Eurocopter, Jublimontoto, ThirdCross, Razgriz 10000, Mohamad hossary, Miamiu11, Frenty456, Kjun1 3, Vchimpzee, Grahamboat, Lmessenger, Person777, Spinningspark, Karlrobbo, Justmeherenow, Master of the Oríchalcos, Xxhellmanxx, Melyn, Doeric96, Entirelybs, July4th, K10wnsta, SaltyseabASS, John6712, Wikipedian64, Thidr0, AlleborgoBot, Camthetoaster93, Co1dLP1anet, Littledarknite, Dchance, Carrothippy, Billymadison21, 12 Centuries, Jim Furtado, Pyro4122, Redmrkt, Kewlkyle64, Dominichwiteman, Roland zh, Chipsmgeee36, Benoit Rochon, Ma familia, Signsolid, EmxBot, Uncle Scrooge, Carhartjimmy, Hokie92, Camsco123, Matt Gerber, D. 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Lithoderm, B-radical 1522, Magus732, Qweqwewe, Trasman, Sadda45, Xxferrarisxx, Powercurvefor, Tanhabot, One cookie, DARKDOOM9999, Laurinavicius, Yelizandpaul, Chris who reads books for a living, Fothergill Volkensniff IV, CanadianLinuxUser, Leszek Jañczuk, Ace Mendiola, Cityvalyu, Mishadeon, MrOllie, Alexbritcher, CarsracBot, Zhabequi, 37ophiuchi, Scottyferguson, DFS454, Secretdude97, Bahamut Star, Mosedschurte, Jgrosay~enwiki, ChenzwBot, Xoffie, Auunva6, LinkFA-Bot, Realmofintrigue, Blaylockjam10, Patton123, Setanta747, Brian Laishes, Megaribi, Numbo3-bot, Tide rolls, Canationalist, 77755, Asokanvr, RenegadeSniper7, Dwarfboyhopkins, Dreaming11, Jarble, Greyhood, Stuttgartkiwi, CARLDIGITAL, Williajm, Andre Toulon, Occamsrazorsky, 07ed01, DrpickeM, Luckas-bot, Yobot, Granpuff, OrgasGirl, Oilpanhands, Dede2008, MTWEmporer, II MusLiM HyBRID II, Clódhna-2, Cimicifugia, SuperFlash101, Borvan53, Mr T (Based), Paul Siebert, Intercalate, KamikazeBot, Ayrton Prost, ☐☐☐☐☐, Sachein91, Palamabron, BeBoldInEdits, Bbb23, Siberian-Princess, AnomieBOT, Momoricks, John Holmes II, FeelSunny, Metalhead94, Floquenbeam, JEdgarFreeman, 1exec1, YeshuaDavid, Grey Fox-9589, Gnomeselby, Jim1138, Tavrian, Abstruce, Galoubet, Innab, StevenWT, Blackknight12, 13seb, Pyrrhos, Roesselsprung, MtBell, Krause01, Stroganoff, Tlrmq, Materialscientist, Bukubku, Lukee1234, Phoenix of9, Citation bot, Mkustel, Digitaldomain, Kasaalan, Barriodude, HistoricWarrior007, ArthurBot, DirlBot, DannyAsher, Andyo, Aidan Jennings, Quebec99, Cliftonian, Potočnik, Sole Flounder, Madalibi, Xqbot, Kleiner, Theroflman, Capricorn42, Poetaris, Wüstenfuchs, TechBot, Jaltcoh, ITSENJOYABLE, ChildofMidnight, GenQuest, Ulf Heinsohn, Krishanpatel, Nate5446, 每日☐☐, Locos epraix, Skiboarder6730, Loveless, Mlpearc, Isheden, Robbiebulton1234, Srich32977, Barelstido, Fishmandgb, Hz7qnf, Filyo79, J04n, Nasa-verve, GrouchoBot, Mr. Military, Miesianiacal, Alumnum, Bizso, Fitgolfpro, Coltsfan, Anotherclown, RibotBOT, MatthPeder, Luther Hull, Auréola, Brutaldeluxe, Samuel1120, Renwick99, Ghaly-Bot, Moxy, Cod1337, Chongkian, Richard BB, ASOTMKX, Davido488, Fredy.00, Bluehotel, Thehelpfulbot, Haldraper, Spongefrog, Alexey Golubev, Kelsievans, Dead Mary, BSATwinTowers, JayLeno175, Hyperboreer, Egern~enwiki, FrescoBot, CaptainFugu, Chcoc, Ryan1266, LucienBOT, Paine Ellsworth, Tobby72, Taiwanrox8, KSWarrior8, Wetterfree, StaticVision, FkpCascais, Alarics, Grey Furb, Doomei, A Werewolf, Ben76266, Noventamilcointevoeintincino, Bambuway, AndresHerutJaim, Filipão, SF88, Grandiose, Gutierrezg0710, Dhtwiki, Rgvis, Citation bot 1, AdmiralKolchak, AstaBOT15, Mimzy1990, SexyBlondeGuy, Bobmack89x, I dream of horses, Boulaur, Stargnoc, ☐家俊, HRoestBot, YouReadMyMind, StNicksRocks, Kmundy, Alonso de Mendoza, Chumchum7, Codwiki, SockofSpongefrog, Kenloyds, RedBot, Mediatech492, Jaguar, NarSakSasLee, Knole Jonathan, Matu94, Lissajous, Bedivere.cs, Gasta220, December21st2012Freak, White Shadows, Cnwilliams, VOAconstrictor, CrowzRSA, 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Market, 89funtime, Huckamike, ZxxZxxZ, Wikiturcan, Sentient Planet, Passionless, NorthernKnightNo1, Ledfrog, MrGRA, ChoraPete, Dcirovic, Chiton magnificus, Addyman11, Ecko1o1, Kunetskiy, HenryXVII, Werieth, ZéroBot, Cogiat, Illegitimate Barrister, Ali55te, Josve05a, Tulandro, Jenks24, Natalia O., Michael Essmeyer, Wogniew, Space25689, NinjaFishy, Saint Lucy, SkinnedAardvark093, Wurzeln und Flügel, AvicAWB, Pan Brerus, Zloyvolsheb, IIIraute, Mcvicyc, AutoGeek, Vanished user fois8fhow3iqf9hsrlgkjw4tus, Lorde Chainsaw, BrokenAnchorBot, Kill me when i die, Brandmeister, Hb9323, Jarjarbinks10, Dannydavey123, Iamapotatohead, Rigley, Philafrenzy, Irrypride, Laika1097, \$1LENCE D00600D, ChuispastonBot, Dreamcatcher25, ClamDip, Leidseplein, GregRustFan, Mypan 97, Jordibuma, Jasonli42, MeganHernandez (WMF), Divebomb, Whoop whoop pull up, TitaniumCarbide, Woolfy123, LUxlii, Gmt2001, Prof.Mammal, Slickmoves, ClueBot NG, Lhimec, Gilderien, LittleJerry, JC Bills, DTParker1000, Labranewf, Iritakamas, Carbon editor, ColdWarCharlie, Cmckain, Frietjes, Delusion23, Alphasinus, Braincricket, Neljack, Rezabot, Dalekcan, CaroleHenson, DontClickMeName, Chitt66, Crohall, Ryan Vesey, MarcusBritish, Godwhale, Neogeolegend, Shelleyesque, Sassiesam, Crazymonkey1123, Pluma, Miracle dream, Helpful Pixie Bot, Popcornduff, Brovary, Gkvxyz, Aquario, Calidum, Gob Lofa, Andrey Rublyov, BG19bot, Neptune's Trident, Mohamed CJ, WendyPage777, JoJaEpp, Sambian kitten, Jay8g, Northamerica1000, Navhus, Laurence0001, PhnomPencil, HIDECHI001, Dzlinker, Uhlan, AvocatoBot, Konullu, User1961914, J991, Marcocapelle, উদ্দীপ্তালুকদর, Cold Season, Eep07, DAREALKKROX, FutureTrillionaire, StickyWikis, TrebleSeven, TClapton, Soerfm, Jeancey, Pakon111, Ernio48, Zedshort, Hamish59, Gaylencrafts, Edthed, Jmccormick927, Gillette.ben, Sprutt, Abootmoose, Matthew David González, Loriedrew, Findblogging, Mumbai0618, Jason from nyc, Wheeke, Rwenonah, Aqua Regia72, Boeing720, Bakkedal, HueSatLum, Kata89, Cyberbot II, The Elixir Of Life, ChrisGaultieri, Archchinook, Liamcop, Nick.mon, Adnan bogi, Khazar2, Esszet, 23 editor, Stumink, JYBot, AsadUK200, DylanLacey, Fun & helpful, Dexbot, Dissident93, Irondome, Einstein2, Rothbardanswer, ASA1234, Br'er Rabbit, LightandDark2000, Mogism, Mannat (Mannot), AJWpreposter, Mxheil, XXzoonamiXX, Acoma Magic, Afrasclient, Pokajanje, Bluebasket, Wikidona, NAKFANS, NightShadow23, Buuhai, Srourouke, Tonimicho, MarsBarLover, Buddy777, Roberthistoria, Blaue Max, HarveyHenkelmann, Faizan, Epicgenius, FallingGravity, DMorpheus2, General1962, Oreotoast, BreakfastJr, Kiwi228, Michipedian, Yolvandy vargas, Kazim5294, Melonkelon, Govgovgov, Inglok, Hardcoreromancatholic, Alex Khan93, Dustin V. 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Paperoverman, GorgeCustersSabre, Brandon5485, RibotBOT, JJ Georges, Jean-Jacques Georges, Doulos Christos, Tv554377, A Drake There Is, Bob0845, Shadowjams, SixBlue-Fish, RightCowLeftCoast, Dead Mary, FrescoBot, NAKALAK, Surv1v41st, CaptainFugu, Kierzek, Lothar von Richthofen, Recognition, Serbianboy, HJ Mitchell, FairoozAdams, Tetraedycal, BLKRDR, Citation bot 1, Trueshow111, Pekayer11, Pinethicket, I dream of horses, Poliocretes, Tanweer Morshed, Aerolin55, Tom.Reding, Hnksm~enwiki, Chumchum7, DAVilla, Pikiwyn, Hambino437, Tahir mq, Just a guy from the KP, Reconsider the static, White Shadows, Aleksveliki, Iokerapid, Haaninjo, Fox Wilson, Dinamik-bot, Sangjin-hwa, Gulbenk, Thorscvet, Diannaa, MyMoloboaccount, DARTH SIDIOUS 2, Splinter1044, Jiffles1, Mean as custard, YouWillBeAssimilated, RjwilmsiBot, Yaush, Alfons2, DASHBot, Mr. Anon515, EmausBot, John of Reading, Dolescum, WikitanvirBot, Immunize, BLM Platinum, Dewritech, Mashaunix, Nerdalex0128, Britannic124, Slightsmile, Tommy2010, 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Wells, Mgiganteus1, EXcentra, XinJeisan, IronGargoyle, Zenbobby, Like tears in rain, Roninred, PseudoSudo, Ckatz, PParkerT, White.matthew.09, Nullchain86, Eonechoes, Grandpafoot-soldier, Aeluwas, Mr Stephen, Publicus, Xiaphias, 2T, Buckboard, Mets501, Ace Class Shadow, Djspromo, Ryulong, Rip-Saw, Onetwo1, TPIRFanSteve, Mizuphd, Peyre, Spiffytech, EricR, Zepheus, Hu12, Stephen B Streeter, Politepunk, Keith-264, Sangkyul, Kanatonian, Melnorme, Mwhite66, Electrified mocha chinchilla, Lottamiata, Shoeofdeath, Highspeed, Jarbru, Parkinsons, Civil Engineer III, Leebert, SYx, MoleculeUpload, Tawkerbot2, SeanMD80, ChrisCork, Frothy70, TotalMobile, HDCase, Sansbras, Cyrusc, Anthony22, VoxLuna, CmdrObot, Ale jrB, Tobes00, Japanese historian, RFW 27, Stacecom, Brian.morris, Sjmcfarland, SammyJames, Triage, Emperor Hirohito, JUJ754, Scohort, Emperor Hirihito, Nunquam Dormio, CWY2190, Scrivener72, THF, Pseudo-Richard, JFMATLOCK, Noha307, Varcolac~enwiki, Lentower, Avilia, Otashiro, StayinAnon, Richard Keatinge, Xilog, Sc3161a, Haileyhat, Angelsfreeek, Fred8615, CMG, Danrok, Reywas92, Treybien, Steel, HokieRNB, Bellerophon5685, Bardak, Travelbird, Vinyanov, MKen, Crowish, Vlad2000Plus, Tec15, Bobo12345, Daniel J. Leivick, Jedonnelley, K Wedge, Chamoquemas, Trystero11, Tawkerbot4, Attilitus, Wikipidian, JByrd, Dchristle, DumbBOT, Now might i do it pat, JCO312, DiScOrD tHe LuNaTiC, Starionwolf, DBaba, Armscontrol, Garik, JayW, Sparticus001, After Midnight, Gonzo fan2007, NMChico24, Factorial 57, Omicronpersei8, Cancun771, Remoah, Hillshum, Pustelnik, HBNayr, Think8359, East 99 187killum, TAIWAN, FG Fox, Mombas, EvocativeIntrigue, Thij's!bot, VoABot, Epbr123, Kubanczyk, Dubc0724, David from Downunder, Daniel, Keraunos, Jörg1979, Mojo Hand, Staberinde, West Brom 4ever, Bobblehead, SGGH, Remort, SpxZA, Kubel, E. Ripley, Kaaveh Ahangar~enwiki, Squibbles, Lithpiperpilot, Srose, Heroeswithmetaphors, Natalie Erin, Ohaider, Legend Saber, Jokem, Gossamers, AntiVandalBot, The Obento Musubi, Lamentation, Whogue, Luna Santin, 17tracks, Edit Centric, Opelio, Vamsae, Shirt58, Jj137, Gmgarretson, Alphachimpbot, SkoreKeep, David Shankbone, Billdescoteaux, Mestre, Historypre, Arx Fortis, Firefreak, Kothari.sagar, 1Rabid Monkey, Ingolfson, TivicBot, Caper13, DagosNavy, Fennessy, JANdbot, Physio, CombatWombat42, MER-C, The Transhumanist, Briancollins, Rumple Stiltskin, Magellan 7, DocEss, Smulthaup, Ipoellet, Archduke Ferdinand II, Sarah777, Flying tiger, RRennalls, East718, Heartinsanfrancisco, New world man, PhilKnight, Ryan4314, Demophon, Wasell, Jan Akkerman, Yamasha, Gtation, Stanfordsiver, Canjh, Gatorinvancouver, Bongwarrior, Xn4, Mileage, Whamilton, Rem01, Doug Coldwell, Coredumperror, Bodominjarvi, Ed!, Kiloalpha, Nyttend, Skew-t, WODUP, The Anomebot2, Hisownspace, Mahmoud Mahmoud, KConWiki, Cgingold, Boffob, \$yD!, Gomm, Tokino, THEMICK, JaGa, Wdflake, Textorus, Johnbrownsbody, Paststuart, Magpie83, Stephenchou0722, Juni0r75, MartinBot, Phantomsnake, Venrix, BetBot~enwiki, Dht, Iakane49, Hvarako, Ustye, Rettetast, Clarin, Kiyokun, CommonsDelinker, AlexiusHoratius, Noodler450, Sendtbo, Celticbum, Bowel Movement, Pomte, Fried eggs, Djma12, ShoWPiece, Artaxiad, RockMFR, J.delanoy, Pharaoh of the Wizards, Seadugenga, Bogey97, Richiekim, Slot777, NightFalcon90909, Maurice Carbonaro, Shluh, Ginsengbomb, CodeCarpenter, Carolaba121, Booboo123, Bluesquareapple, Winterpepper, Tdadamehd, Whitewolf79, Cybersquire, Zanewe, Paris1127, Mr Rookles, Mrg3105, LA Songs, Ndunruh, DadaNeem, Gaussgauss, NM Ted, Lonchi**.en, FJPB, Wunleashed, Rumpelstiltskin223, OliverHarris, KylieTastic, Peepeedia, U.S.A.U.S.A.U.S.A., Cspahn, Sdbal 1wiki, DMcer, Makrisj, Ja 62, GOTMILK555, Banjodog, Hellohollar, Izno, RjCan, Xiahou, Messuper, ACSE, Dansen3008, Diluvial, Morf01, Lights, Hugo999, Eratosthene, Johnfos, Wiki235, AlnoktaBOT, Seniorsag, Soliloquial, XSaruSanx, Mlrbryant, TXiKiBoT, Blooooo, Dialh, ANNAfoxlover, Jajaklar82~enwiki, Asarlaf, Joekarlin, Dchall1, Michelet, Ann Stouter, Zurishaddai, Dormskirk, Ann weller tagge, Qxz, Joe a lewis, Bsharvy, Lexington50, Reginald Maulding, Melsaran, Skullfiend, Loki~enwiki, Leafyplant, Techpeace, Bob Andolusorn, Solo1234, Mkumpumphrey, SGT141, UnitedStatesian, Kundsefs, Draxeargon, Arigato1, Quindraco, WinTakeAll, Dgf3592, Randall uob~enwiki, Theleopard, Greswik, Fizbin, Xxgigglebox99, Haseo9999, BilabialBoxing, Y, Angrymansr, Spike2131, Carinemini, Clintville, Grahamboat, Spinningspark, Mallerd, Master of the Óríchalcos, Entirelybs, HelpMaBoab, ManfrenjenStJohn, Sealman, Azukimonaka, Pjoef, Stratavarious1, Chinaman88, Wcteach, Nagh, Chosen One 41, Brainfsck, LOTRrules, Kbrose, Fanatix, HowardMorland, Kwekwc, Lordbrooker, Shyjayb, RHodnett, Benji77, Zeechyboogydoog, Jclark256, Slater-steven, TJRC, Drewfus92, Jordan armstrong, Skootles, Their are no arnos, Gerakibot, Rob.bastholm, Moorespoint, Quasirandom, The-hornet, Tomwhite56, Srushe, SeiteNichtGefunden, Eekomg, Adabow, Radon210, HannibalofCarthage, Masgatotkaca, Oda Mari, Keiryou, Yerpo, SeventhHaido, Mimihitam, Smocking, Faradayplank, Pac72, Lightmouse, Tokugawa.c~enwiki, Mkeranat, Icedevil14, Stonedead, Afernand74, Pediainsight, Sev Snape, Nitmeare, Remakeeee, Yoda of Borg, Gtadoc, Vanished user ewfisn2348tu12f8n2fio2utjfeoi210r39jf, Janggeom, Benny the wayfarer, Cyfal, AtomikWeasel, Kjtoho, Meowist, Mygerardromance, Anyeverybody, Ascidian, Asthma bronchiale, Comfort women demanding justice, Paduken, SevenOfDiamonds, WikipedianMarlith, Lethesl, Twinsday, DrGabriela, Martarius, Brprivate, MBK004, Elassint, Cuprum17, ClueBot, DP08, Binksternet, Hatcher, RisingSunWiki, Fasettle, Kevjumba, Britishsyrian, Allgood-namesalreadytaken, Firkenknecht, Gregcaletta, Der Golem, Ranger Steve, SuperHamster, Mpdi1989, Nightquest, Auntof6, PMDrive1061, Ktr101, Kjramesh, Alexbot, Resoru, Doloco, Vin Kaleu, Asmaybe, NuclearWarfare, EhJJ, Mrawesomenmanforeverwoo, Revgraves, Central Data Bank, BlueCaper, Txnman307, M.O.X, CowboySpartan, Alexey Muranov, Redthoreau, Takabeg, SchreiberBike, Audaciter, Al-Andalus, C628, Jaggedben, Zilkane, Thingg, Tsp greenday, Spinoff, MelonBot, ShipFan, Adamfimo, Johnuniq, Indopug, Herunar, Redhill54, Bennyyz21, Fastily, BodhisattvaBot, Snarlimonsta, Wikiuser100, FellGleaming, 21stCenturyGreenstuff, Little Mountain 5, Facts707, SilvonenBot, Mm40, Necropirate, Matma Rex, Red1001802, Johnkatz1972, Airplaneman, HexaChord, Addbot, Mortense, Bosoxrock88, Jojhutton, Jan Hofmann, Quokly, Ironholds, Reedmalloy, Download, Z. Patterson, C9900, LinkFA-Bot, Brufnus, Olawe, Setanta747, Emdrgreg, Lightbot, Pietrow, Zorrobot, Arbitrarily0, HerculeBot, Mps, Odder, Amateur55, 高木あゆみ, Luckas-bot, Yobot, Ptbotgourou, GateKeeper, Jimjin, Paul Siebert, Vrinan, Bility, AnomieBOT, VanishedUser sdu9aya9fasdsopa, Sammy85, Professor Tournesol, DoctorJoeE, lexec1, IRP, Bosonic dressing, FangedFaerie, Archaeopteryx, Tintero, Citation bot, Fleaman5000, Ninjasaiif, Kasaalan, Quebec99, LilHelpa, FreeRangeFrog, Xqbot, Capricorn42, Ourshelp, Estlandia~enwiki, Robert300, Ninjateen69, The-Gunn, Jgarpal, Tyrol5, Srich32977, J appleseed2, GammaEagle, Guoguo914, StealthCopyEditor, Xerxes247, Anotherclown, Uniwersalista, CHJL, ChillyMD, AustralianRupert, Corollo12, Dou Gweler, Cgersten, Green Cardamom, Tktru, FrescoBot, ShelbyBell, Tobby72, Lothar von Richthofen, Vinceouca, Wilsonang123, Aruseusu, Drunauthoried, Hawksprite, SuperDutchGuy, Meishern, AndresHerut-Jaim, Cannolis, JMilty, Slastic, Citation bot 1, Jpepperman95, Trueshow111, Innerche, Rayjameson, HRoestBot, Abductive, Fuzbaby, Bronco213, Phoenix7777, Hessamnia, Genialimbecile, Electricmaster, KevThei, Lightlowemon, Mercy11, Trappist the monk, Flybywire e2c, Sisyphos23, Dinamik-bot, Cjomoran, SeoMac, Товарищ, Mr.98, IRISZOOM, Knopfffabrik, HighcoMan, RjwilmsiBot, Alph Bot, BertSeghers, Burmiester, GabeMc, DASHBot, EmausBot, WikitanvirBot, Ghostofnemo, BillyPreset, Rail88, Boundarylayer, Dewritech, Jirka62, L235, Challisrussia, RememberingLife, Dcirovic, Thecheesykid, Italia2006, Illegitimate Barrister, Raubfreundschaft, Theirrulez,

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Leivick, Benjiboi, Ciava, Cocopuffberman, Bigjake, Tawkerbot4, Doug Weller, Dr. Manos, Schrodingers Mongoose, Hockeygirl17, Chrislk02, LazerTruck666, Ulritz, DBaba, Eeesh, McMachete, Whoisericc, Optimist on the run, Kgbmlo, FalloutFan15, Sirmylesnagopaleentheda, JBH62990, Mathew5000, Inkington, Kozuch, Pinkie sango, Omicronpersei8, Daniel Olsen, Crum375, TAIWAN, Gimmetrov, Nishidani, Mtijn, Andosmith, Joebedford, EvocativeIntrigue, Malleus Fatuorum, Thegoodson, Daa89563, Sisalto, Biruitorul, Kubanczyk, Gajjin42, Wardestryer, Kablammo, Varavour, WH1953, Jd2718, Insanelygreat, Keraunos, Deborahjay, Vincentvivi, PanAndScan, Luigifan, Lions342002, WilliamH, Entoman, West Brom 4ever, Tapir Terrific, Merbabu, Remort, Nachmore, Picus viridis, Sivazh, Catsmoke, JustAGal, Mnemeson, Hmarcuse, CPBOOTH, Jimhoward72, AgentPeppermint, Pebene, Ronhatcher, Julius, Blathnaid, Tocino, MinnesotanConfederacy, Deipnosophista, Dawnseeker2000, TeslaMaster, Romperromperome, Danielfolsom, MachoCarioca, Melvai, Porqin, Ju6613r, Gossamers, AntiVandalBot, Hyperscope, Majorly, Luna Santin, Dbrodbeck, Opilio, Carolmooredc, EarthPerson, Antique Rose, Prolog, Tangerines, Atreyufan, Dotdotdotdash, Aemathispd, Semifreddo, Darklilac, Credema, Matthew Chowder, MECU, Trombone-player, Webville, Zedla, Alphachimpbot, G Rose, TlatoSMD~enwiki, Or guetta, Falconleaf, Scrumshus, Trbosplc682, RisingJapaneseSun, Aende~enwiki, Manocheese, Canadian-Bacon, Sluzzelin, Erxnmedia, Bigjimr, HanzoHattori, JAnDbot, Dogru144, Husond, Mousescribe, Cudent shlimazel, Dimension31, Wanderer602, Mike D 26, MER-C, BlindEagle, Epeefleche, Avaya1, Jackanapes, Daniel Supreme, Andrew Powell, Tohru Honda13, Evrenosogullari, Ph.eyes, Gerash77, VeronicaPR, Pozcircuitboy, OhanaUnited, Neoroy5, Rick.Wicks, Jake34567, Ecphora, Hecht, Hobson, TAnthony, Bearly541, Rothorpe, Ultracobalt, Y2kcrayjoker4, Stardotboy, SiobhanHansa, Acroterion, Yahel Guhan, Reichsgauleiter Hansen, Coffee2theorems, Ratty5, The Myotis, Magioladitis, GomiTaroGeorge42, Unused0029, Vomifares, Bongwarrior, VoABot II, Hbhiggens, Jarekt, Crimperman, AuburnPilot, Dentren, Wikidudeman, Fattyqd, JNW, Pnzfaust, Harelx, Mangalaiii, Stevecolbert, Bigdan201, Nih926, Steven Walling, Nyttend, Type 40, Mezmr, Xanthippus, Chesdovi, Dvptl, Froid, Zephyr2k~enwiki, Avicennias, Kkule, WietsE, Ahadland1234, Wazzally, Danntannerisgod, Talaiden, EliteMike, Generic Character, ÁrdrRuadh21, WhatamIdoing, Steevm, Sanket ar, Jaakobou, Animuum, Cgingold, Simonxag, Keltik31, MyTigers, The deleter, Regards.Yours truly, Mikolik, Anthraxx56@yahoo.com, CheeseBastard, User009, Smartiepants831, Bobby H. 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Varnent, Gekbi, Alexsanderson83, Steinberger, Jawms, Repentance, Pancasila-enwiki, GrahamHardy, 123nick321, Xe0us, Radiotelemetry, Signalhead, KratosY, Hugo999, Goalie1998, Malik Shabazz, Hammersoft, VolkovBot, Tourbillon, TreasuryTag, Xspiritdannyx, Mondoblasto, Meal Head, Wiutynametg, Alex ateah, Biggus Dictus, Nug, Alfietucker, Firstorm, Uhrwerkaffefass, Chlyn, Arkan88, Crane7, Adrian two, JoshuL, MethMan47, Vulgarkid, Epson291, Paulcicero, Lilidor, Butseriouslyfolks, Anyobody, TXiKiBoT, Erik the Red 2, WarPwny, Jacob Lundberg, Asdeweo, SeanNovack, Tumblingsky, Motacilla, Gandoman, Moreno Valley User, Emolotricity, Sportsnut356, Tomseg, Uch, Miranda, Jurock, Hayden5650, Prankster0139, Ninarosa, Muzzamo, Z.E.R.O., ElinorD, Rexroad, Tehpwnz, T-bonham, HENRYtastic, AlysTarr, Lvivske, Qxz, Elspeth Monro, Toasterpirate, Zhunter, C.J. Griffin, Curadream, Steven J. 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Hertz1888, Going2getbant666, ReX0r, I Might Be Wrong, Vexorg, Parhamr, Mbz1, Dawn Bard, Viskonsas, Muttonking, TheSexyTruckMan, ConfuciusOrnis, Raphael555, Cwkmail, Dinlo juk, JabbaTheBot, Rabbeinu, ILikeLycanthropy, Prezen1, Evenscout742, Crazypants2007, GlassCobra, Caveman 07, Keilana, Donnyj, Fotkin, Ekomg, Xenophon777, Digwuren, Arbor to SJ, Cops3456789012, Topher385, Wombatcat, Dazza1991, DarkMario91, Booner47, Oxymoron83, M.azemoon, George.sawdon, Huang renai, Steven Crossin, Lightmouse, Skinny87, Scotty128, Cortagravatas, Theeighthendless, Gregor847, Amdwinxgrl, Hairwheel, Moletrouser, DancingPhilosopher, Pediainsight, Doufet, Vividonset, Branstu, Regigmund, Belligero, Mona23653, Alatari, Jacob.jose, Hamiltondaniel, Realm of Shadows, Anyeverybody, Modelun88, TaerkastUA, Driftwood87, Pem56, Micov, Derek Yoda's friend, Struway2, Lindum, Jobas, Randy Kryn, Ignatiusantioch, Miyokan, Hadseys, Sheavsey33, Gr8opinionater, Muhends, ImageRemovalBot, Jens58, Steve, Darrudi, Ishpacerfan, RegentsPark, YSSYguy, Martarius, Beeblebrox, ClueBot, Grumpy otter, Toddy Ball 2, QueenofBattle, Binksterne, Hutcher, PipepBot, Salom Khalitun, Chocoforfriends, Brendan44, EoGuy, Enthusiast01, Unbuttered Parsnip, Gaia Octavia Agrippa, Firham74, Wanderer57, WanderSage, Dingiswayo, Senzangakhona, CasualObserver'48, Andranikpasha, Photouploaded, Drmies, Bobisbob, VQuakr, Jacurek, Anapazapa, ABShippee, Robby.is.on, Skäpperöd, Sw258, Hello565, Ritterschaft, Yenemus, Niceguyedc, VandalCruncher, Parkwells, Bab-a-lot, Kakashisensei76, Nromeo425, CharlieRCD, Solar-Wind, Rhino666, Counteraction, Sdancer0195, Thisglad, Pernambuko, Supergodzilla2090, Beenagent, DragonBot, MCadbury, Atomsgive, Maruapo, Relata refero, Resoru, Bwawwe, John Nevard, Smurfdawg, Wilsone9, Mst48, Muhandes, Panoramix303, Untilcited, Ccollom, Datastat, Slayer pwns, Coinmanj, Grey Matter, NuclearWarfare, Daddy fat saxx, Liist5, Sabenko, Wonderflash111, Arjayay, Blackhawk9188, Andros64, David Sher, Smurfymo, CowboySpartan, SoxBot, Mtsmallwood, Artvandelay365, Jarrad355, Muro Bot, Jack-A-Roe, BOTarate, The golden easter party man, Thehelpfulone, Pucka Pow, Okiefromokc, Wikibrownie, Shlishke, Singularity42, Cogdis4, Tezero, Editor2020, B15nes7, Jradjarhead, DumZiBoT, Anewpester, Darkicebot, Jorjarule, Guru Fatha Singh Khalsa, SMP0328., Captek, AlanM1, Will-B, Fastily, Soledad22, Paperstapler, Eckstasy, ODonOJ, Feinoha, LeheckaG, Fraucote, Easackett, Steven407653, Dkcolts95, WikHead, Warslegacy, Mm40, Good Olfactory, Lemmey, Surtsicna, HexaChord, JSmith2010, Falconke, Willber15, Brokentoken, Addbot, Wran, TBulba, Some jerk on the Internet, Jafeluv, Beamathan, Jojhutton, FokkertISM, Edom23, Piratebum23, Hicks.jonathan, Apoyon, Swifty277, Kits2, Lenbrown, Hollando, Emperor1993, Scientus, Cgd8d, Shirtwaist, Leszek Janiczuk, Hellothero4562, Mark97, NjardarBot, Proxima Centauri, Amerul, Mateogamble, Ferroeque, Lihaas, AnonymousFTW1, Grawgzw, Mosedschurte, Super duper jimbo, Ghost109, LinkFABot, Blaylockjam10, HonorTheKing, Gentledude, Tobit2, Bostit, Ddde23, Taopman, Tassedethe, Stidmatt, Coolaidstyle, Numbo3-bot, Mangostenmaster, Ondewelle, Tide rolls, Captain Obvious and his crime-fighting dog, Malwinder25, Lightbot, Msmyth, Legobot, Dr-pickem, Lucon50, Luckas-bot, AadaamS, Yobot, Blckhawk1234, JJARichardson, Ptbotgourou, TaBOT-zerem, Holden 94, PMLawrence, Cimicifugia, Reenem, Paul Siebert, Ayrton Prost, Wikiwikid, Whatever404, Francescogiusti1, Azcolvin429, MacTire02, Anonymous from the 21th century, Synchronism, Kupiti, Doc Zen, AnomieBOT, Anne McDermott, Tryptofish, FeelSunny, Floquenbeam, Yeshua-David, JackieBot, Scythian77, Rejedef, Mahmudmasri, Bukubku, Truth or consequences-2, KittenX3, Ckruschke, Nutsterr, Citation bot, Ewikkjmco, Eunomiac, ArthurBot, LovesMacs, Quebec99, Cliftonian, LilHelpa, Xqbot, Mostlyghostly, Alteregoz, Alexlange, Dawnp, Potetaris, A455bcd9, Ulf Heinsohn, Tad Lincoln, AuthorityTam, Anonymous from the 21st century, J04n, GrouchoBot, Off2riorob, Abce2, Swd, Corruptcopper, Universalista, RibotBOT, Guitarstar8675, Shattered Gnome, Marowmerowmer, Garfield365, Ajnem, RCraig09, Prezbo, Fredy.00, Erik9, Ikan Kekek, Doftoubab, RightCowLeftCoast, Cekli829, Pr1nce0fDarkn3ss, FreeKnowledgeCreator, Pecoc, FrescoBot, NSH002, Kierzek, PaulBommel, Tobby72, James Dunlap, Ace of Spades, Lothar von Richthofen, Beckenbauer1974, Nojan, RoyGoldsmith, Scaleshombre, 13afuse, MathFacts, Bill the Cat 7, Piano hcl, MGA73bot, Hirpex, Cs32en, BenzolBot, Pooroldlu, CircleAdrian, Cannolis, Citation bot 1, Nightsturm, Careful With That Axe, Eugene, VOBO, Slobodan Grasic, Tigerjojo98, Biker Biker, I dream of horses, Rule 56, Atomic blunder, Jahailyass, Consummate virtuoso, Beganlocal, Tom.Reding, Chumchum7, Stellarkid, Moonraker, MastiBot, Motorizer, Jim Fitzgerald, Cmguy777, Cullen328, DingleNutZ, Jandalhandler, My very best wishes, Cramyourspam, AustralianMelodrama, Gasta220, Rob.HUN, Trappist the monk, MustaphaMond, Abbas Adejonwo, Throwaway85, Lotje, Mattghg, Sarah73, Genealogykid82, Jamiroquai1fan, Arkelweis, Dillster22, SixersFan64, Phil A. 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 - Piotr Gursztyn, "Rzeź Woli. Zbrodnia nierozliczona" , Demart, Warszawa 2014

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- Adományozó/Donor : Berkó Pál.
- **File:Polish_victim_of_German_Luftwaffe_action_1939.jpg** *Source:* https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/fb/Polish_victim_of_German_Luftwaffe_action_1939.jpg *License:* Public domain *Contributors:*
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Original artist: T/4 Sidney Blau, 163rd Signal Photo Company, Army Signal Corps

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