

## ***Chapter 21***

# **THE SECOND WORLD WAR**

### 21.100 THE WEAKNESS OF THE DEMOCRACIES: AGAIN TO WAR

#### *Study Questions*

1. What factors explain the pacifism of the Western powers in the 1930s?
2. Describe the emergencies precipitated by Hitler from 1933 to the eve of the Munich crisis in September 1938. Why was the Rhineland episode especially disturbing?
3. Why was Italy dissatisfied with the peace arrangements of 1919?
4. How did the League of Nations respond to Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia and Japan's invasion of China?
5. How did the civil war in Spain affect international relations and public opinion in the United States and elsewhere? In what sense was the Spanish Civil War a rehearsal for the Second World War? What impression do you carry away from viewing Picasso's Guernica, shown on p. 849?
6. When and how did the alliance between Germany, Italy, and Japan come into being?
7. Why was the Munich crisis considered the climax of the appeasement policy? Describe the position taken in the crisis by (a) the French, (b) the British, and (c) the Russians.
8. Explain the circumstances under which the Western powers abandoned the policy of appeasement. Why did the negotiations with the Soviet Union fail?

#### *Key Discussion Sentences*

1. From the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 to the outbreak of European war in 1939, force was used by those who wished to upset the international order, but never by those who wished to maintain it.
2. The Spanish Civil War split the world into fascist and antifascist camps.
3. The Munich crisis, with its death sentence to Czechoslovakia, revealed the helpless

weakness into which the western European democracies had fallen by 1938.

4. The Nazi-Soviet Pact of August 1939 stupefied the world; it was recognized as the signal for war.

### *Identifications*

Maginot Line	Haile Selassie	Rome-Berlin Axis
Neville Chamberlain	<i>Anschluss</i>	Anti-Comintern Pact
Neutrality legislation	Spanish Popular Front	Sudeten Germans
The Saar	Francisco Franco	Munich conference
Nonintervention policy	Nazi-Soviet Pact	The Rhineland

### *Map Exercise*

1. Consult the map, Europe, 1942, on p. 864 in your text. Can you locate each of the trouble zones of the 1930s mentioned in Section 21.100?

## 21.101 THE YEARS OF AXIS TRIUMPH

### *Study Questions*

1. What was meant by the term *Blitzkrieg*? What does the illustration on p. 854 suggest about the German military tactic?
2. Describe the opening stages of the Second World War in eastern Europe. Why was the opening stage of the war in the West called the “phony war”? How did this stage end?
3. Why did France collapse? What happened to the country after defeat? Discuss the choices confronting the French.
4. What role did the Vichy government play in support of the German new order in Europe?
5. In what sense did Hitler dominate the European continent by the summer of 1940?
6. How did Britain react to the Nazi conquests? How did the United States react? Describe the nature and results of the battle of Britain.
7. What explanations are there for Hitler’s decision to invade Russia? Describe the results of his Russian campaign by the summer of 1942.

8. Describe major military developments in North Africa from 1940 to mid-1942.
9. What policies had the Japanese followed during the European war? What were the consequences of the Japanese attack in 1941?
10. How do the illustrations on p. 854, 857, and 860 depict various phases and aspects of the war?

### *Key Discussion Sentences*

1. In the winter of 1939–1940 all was deceptively quiet in the West.
2. The fall of France in June 1940 left the world aghast.
3. In 1940, as in 1807, only Great Britain remained at war with the conqueror of Europe.
4. The Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939, which had precipitated the war, like the alliance between Napoleon and Alexander I, was never a warm or harmonious understanding.
5. In North Africa fortunes were fickle.
6. With the war raging in Europe and the European imperial powers unable to deploy military forces in their Asian colonies, Japanese expansionists saw a propitious moment to assert themselves in east Asia.
7. American opinion was divided over intervention in the war.
8. The Japanese held up the idea of a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.
9. For the Soviet-Western alliance, 1942 was the year of dismay.

### *Identifications*

<i>Blitzkrieg</i>	New order	Scorched earth
Moscow	Dunkirk	Vidkun Quisling
El Alamein	Vichy France	General Hideki Tojo
Collaboration	Four Freedoms	Capture of Singapore
Resistance movement	Lend-Lease	Albert Speer
<i>Festung Europa</i>	Battle of Britain	

### *Map Exercises*

1. Study the map on p. 864, Europe, 1942. Which areas were incorporated into Hitler's empire? Which states were allied with Germany in the war? Which states were occupied by the Axis and were at war against the Axis?

## 21.102 THE WESTERN-SOVIET VICTORY

### *Study Questions*

1. Explain the nature of the coalition aligned against the Axis by 1942. Why were the Russians dissatisfied with the failure to open a true second front?
2. What evidence was there in late 1942 and in 1943 that the tide was beginning to turn in favor of the Allies?
3. Describe the preparations for the invasion of Normandy, the nature of the military operation, and the events that followed. What setback did the Allies encounter in December 1944?
4. Describe the sweep of Russian operations in this same period. How did the war in Europe end? How did political decisions play a part in Russia's advances at the war's end?
5. What major operations were undertaken in the Pacific? How did the war end in that theater?
6. What was the Holocaust? What were individual and collective responsibilities for the events surrounding it? How does the map on p. 870 suggest of the "final solution"?
7. What do the illustrations on p. 871 and 874 suggest about the Nazi concentration camps?
8. Compare military and civilian casualties in the Second World War with the casualties of the First.

### *Key Discussion Sentences*

1. By 1942 the Grand Alliance against the Axis aggressors, which could not be created in the 1930s, had at last been consummated.

2. From 1942 on, the Soviet government regarded the failure to establish a second front as new evidence of anti-Soviet feeling.
3. By the end of the war, the Soviets were in control of all major capitals of central and eastern Europe—a military situation that would carry major political consequences.
4. While plans were being made for a full-scale invasion of Japan, two atomic bombs in August 1945 hastened the end of the war.
5. The Second World War of the twentieth century was over, the greatest conflict in human history.

### *Identifications*

Combined Chiefs of Staff	Katyn Forest
Remagen	Siege of Leningrad
Final Solution	Auschwitz
Stalingrad	Battle of the Coral Sea and at Midway
Wannsee meeting	North Africa
Bulge	Admiral Doenitz
“Island hopping”	Dresden
Okinawa	Sicily
Polish underground	Iwo Jima
Marshal Badoglio	Hiroshima
Persian Gulf	Normandy
Guadalcanal	

### *Map Exercises*

1. Study the maps in your text on pp. 868–869, The Second World War. Explain the position of the Axis partners at the point of their maximum advances in 1942. What overall global threat seemed possible? What major phases of the war are shown for the Atlantic theater and the Pacific theater?
2. Study the map on p. 870 in your text, the Holocaust. What does it tell you about the death camps and the Nazi attempt to destroy European Jewry?
3. Can you locate each of the places mentioned in Section 21.102?

## 21.103 THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE PEACE

### *Study Questions*

1. How did the peace settlement after the Second World War differ from the settlement after the First World War?
2. Discuss the ideological basis of the peace as it took form during the war.
3. What can be said for and against the demand for unconditional surrender?
4. How did the attitudes toward the postwar settlement differ among Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin? What position did each of the wartime leaders take at (a) the Teheran conference and (b) the Yalta conference?
5. What were the circumstances under which the Yalta conference took place? What major political decisions were reached at Yalta? What role did the war in Asia play in these discussions? Evaluate the criticisms later made of these decisions.
6. Explain the agreements reached at Potsdam. Why were the decisions made on the German eastern boundaries so important?
7. Explain the division of Germany after the Second World War.

### *Key Discussion Sentences*

1. In the Atlantic Charter, and in the Four Freedoms enunciated by President Roosevelt, the ideological basis of the peace was proclaimed.
2. Throughout the war Roosevelt, unwilling to disturb the unity of the Western-Soviet coalition in the global struggle in which America was engaged, followed a policy of postponing controversial territorial and political decisions until victory was assured.
3. Churchill, steeped in traditional balance-of-power politics, saw the need for bargaining and making political arrangements in advance of the peace.
4. The strategy that would win the war in the next eighteen months, decided upon at Teheran, all but guaranteed the Soviet domination of postwar eastern Europe.
5. The Declaration on Liberated Europe, promising sovereign rights of democratic self-determination, provided a false sense of agreement.

6. Roosevelt believed it essential to win the Soviets over to the idea of an international organization.
7. At Potsdam, in July 1945, after the German collapse, the Big Three met again.

### *Identifications*

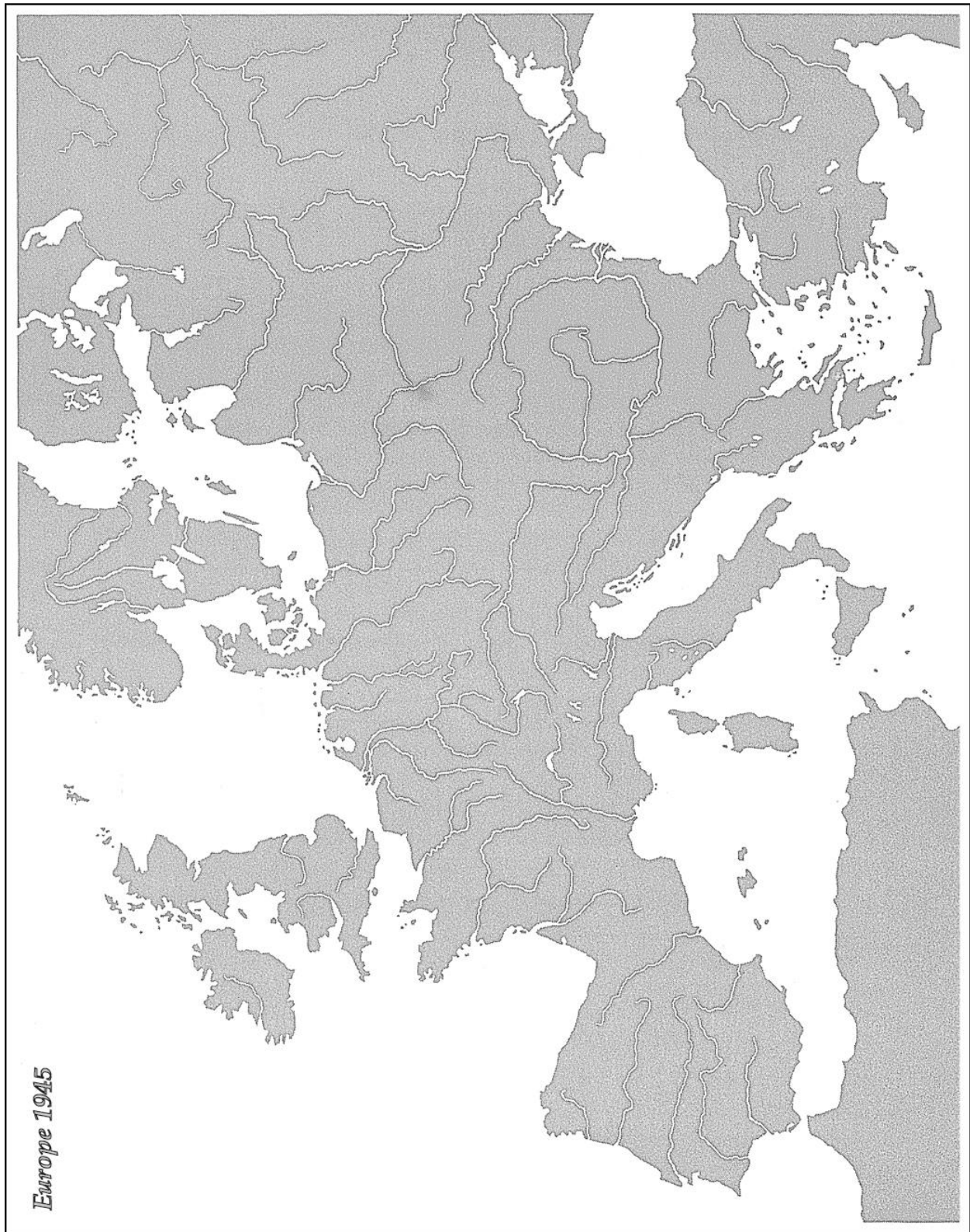
Atlantic Charter	Curzon line	Kaliningrad
Casablanca	Szczecin	Teheran
Potsdam conference	Declaration on Liberated Europe	Yalta meeting
Oder-Neisse	United Nations	East Prussia

### *Map Exercises*

1. On the outline map, Europe 1945, indicate the new political boundaries of eastern Europe at the end of the Second World War. Show (a) Russian territorial expansion in eastern Europe and (b) changes in the Polish-German border. Source: A History of the Modern World, p. 864.
2. What changes in Polish territory occurred at the end of the Second World War? Trace those changes on the outline map mentioned above.

### GENERAL ESSAY QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 21

1. How would you compare the origins of the Second World War with the origins of the First? How was the coming of war in 1939 linked to dissatisfaction with the peace treaties of 1919? What special role did Adolf Hitler play in the coming of the Second World War, joining of the Western powers, and the Soviet Union?
2. Describe the successes of the Axis powers in the early years of the war. What were the stages in the eventual Western-Soviet victory? What factors contributed to that victory?
3. The Second World War has been called the greatest conflict in human history, in part because of the heavy toll of civilian lives. How would you assess the responsibility of each of the major powers for the destruction of civilian populations and for atrocities during the war?
4. Why was the Soviet-Western wartime coalition unable to lay stable foundations for peace for the postwar world?



## GENERAL DISCUSSION PASSAGES FOR CHAPTER 21



1. Peace in the abstract, the peace that is the mere absence of war, does not exist in international relations. Peace is never found apart from certain conditions. (p. 843)
2. Historians often disagree about the social or political consequences of warfare, but the Second World War was unquestionably one of the definitive, shaping events in modern world history. Both the haunting memories and complex legacy of the Second World War still influence modern cultures and people everywhere in the twenty-first century. (p. 844)
3. The Nazi-Soviet Pact stupefied the world. Communism and Nazism, supposed to be ideological opposites, had come together. A generation more versed in ideology than in power politics was dumbfounded. (p. 853)
4. Roosevelt described Britain as “the spearhead of resistance to world conquest”; the United States was to be “the great arsenal of democracy.” Both were fighting for a world, he said, in which the Four Freedoms were to be secure—freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. (pp. 856–857)
5. Few realized, wrote the United States Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall some years later, how “close to complete domination of the world” were Germany and Japan and “how thin the thread of Allied survival had been stretched.” (p. 861)
6. Because precision bombardment of factories and other military targets proved difficult either by day or by night, the air assaults became area bombings; German cities were bombed mercilessly, and (as in the German air attacks on British cities) most of the casualties were civilians. (p. 863)
7. Stalingrad (or Volgograd as it was later renamed) became a turning point not only in the history of the war but in the history of central and eastern Europe as well. (p. 866)
8. The Allied contribution to the Soviet war effort was indispensable, but Russian human losses were tremendous. The Soviet Union lost more men in the battle of Stalingrad, for example, than the United States lost in combat during the entire war in all theaters combined. (p. 866)
9. Loss of life resulted from what the Nazis called their “Final Solution”—that is, their systematic genocidal program of destroying the Jews and Judaism. Although word of this annihilation policy reached the outside world through the Vatican and other sources, the Allied leaders at first disbelieved the reports, and then, giving priority to their military objectives, did nothing to stop the systematic slaughter. (p. 870)

10. Churchill, less sanguine about the future and about “diplomacy by friendship,” would have preferred a franker definition of spheres of influence. Such ideas were ruled out as the thinking of a bygone era. (p. 880)
11. A generation reared to mistrust the fabricated atrocity tales of the First World War painfully and belatedly became aware of the real German horrors of the Second. (p. 872)
12. Genocide, the planned, systematic effort to destroy a whole people, was the greatest of the Nazi sins against humanity. (p. 872)
13. Survivors described extraordinary acts of courage and human will among the prisoners in Nazi death camps, but the Holocaust has become the modern world’s most terrifying example and memory of systematic murder and human brutality. (p. 872)
14. The atomic bomb, like the death camps of the Holocaust, soon became another haunting memory and symbol of the new forms of violence and mass destruction that a staggeringly costly global war had bequeathed to humanity. (p. 873)
15. The Second World War of the twentieth century was over, the greatest conflict in human history. The same cold impersonal statistics that had recorded 10 million killed in the First World War reported 15 million military deaths and (unlike the First World War) more than twice as many civilian fatalities. It was also the most widely dispersed global war that has ever been fought. (p. 873)