

1: Milestones: " - Office of the Historian

The Pacific half of World War II, which began with Japan's attack on the American naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, , ended almost four years later when Japan surrendered to American-led Allies on September 2,

For more information, please see the full notice. Decolonization of Asia and Africa, " Between and , three dozen new states in Asia and Africa achieved autonomy or outright independence from their European colonial rulers. In some areas, it was peaceful, and orderly. In many others, independence was achieved only after a protracted revolution. A few newly independent countries acquired stable governments almost immediately; others were ruled by dictators or military juntas for decades, or endured long civil wars. Some European governments welcomed a new relationship with their former colonies; others contested decolonization militarily. The process of decolonization coincided with the new Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States, and with the early development of the new United Nations. Decolonization was often affected by superpower competition, and had a definite impact on the evolution of that competition. It also significantly changed the pattern of international relations in a more general sense. The creation of so many new countries, some of which occupied strategic locations, others of which possessed significant natural resources, and most of which were desperately poor, altered the composition of the United Nations and political complexity of every region of the globe. In the mid to late 19th century, the European powers colonized much of Africa and Southeast Asia. During the decades of imperialism, the industrializing powers of Europe viewed the African and Asian continents as reservoirs of raw materials, labor, and territory for future settlement. In most cases, however, significant development and European settlement in these colonies was sporadic. However, the colonies were exploited, sometimes brutally, for natural and labor resources, and sometimes even for military conscripts. In addition, the introduction of colonial rule drew arbitrary natural boundaries where none had existed before, dividing ethnic and linguistic groups and natural features, and laying the foundation for the creation of numerous states lacking geographic, linguistic, ethnic, or political affinity. After the Japanese surrender in , local nationalist movements in the former Asian colonies campaigned for independence rather than a return to European colonial rule. In many cases, as in Indonesia and French Indochina, these nationalists had been guerrillas fighting the Japanese after European surrenders, or were former members of colonial military establishments. These independence movements often appealed to the United States Government for support. While the United States generally supported the concept of national self-determination, it also had strong ties to its European allies, who had imperial claims on their former colonies. The Cold War only served to complicate the U. Several of the NATO allies asserted that their colonial possessions provided them with economic and military strength that would otherwise be lost to the alliance. Government did not force the issue, it encouraged the European imperial powers to negotiate an early withdrawal from their overseas colonies. The United States granted independence to the Philippines in This might serve to shift the international balance of power in favor of the Soviet Union and remove access to economic resources from U. Events such as the Indonesian struggle for independence from the Netherlands "50 , the Vietnamese war against France "54 , and the nationalist and professed socialist takeovers of Egypt and Iran served to reinforce such fears, even if new governments did not directly link themselves to the Soviet Union. Thus, the United States used aid packages, technical assistance and sometimes even military intervention to encourage newly independent nations in the Third World to adopt governments that aligned with the West. The Soviet Union deployed similar tactics in an effort to encourage new nations to join the communist bloc, and attempted to convince newly decolonized countries that communism was an intrinsically non-imperialist economic and political ideology. The newly independent nations that emerged in the s and the s became an important factor in changing the balance of power within the United Nations. These new member states had a few characteristics in common; they were non-white, with developing economies, facing internal problems that were the result of their colonial past, which sometimes put them at odds with European countries and made them suspicious of European-style governmental structures, political ideas, and economic institutions. These countries also became vocal advocates of continuing decolonization, with the result that the

UN Assembly was often ahead of the Security Council on issues of self-governance and decolonization. The new nations pushed the UN toward accepting resolutions for independence for colonial states and creating a special committee on colonialism, demonstrating that even though some nations continued to struggle for independence, in the eyes of the international community, the colonial era was ending.

2: Military history of the United States during World War II - Wikipedia

When World War II ended, the United States was in better economic condition than any other country in the world. Even the , combat deaths suffered by Americans paled in comparison to any other major belligerent.

It killed more people, cost more money, damaged more property, affected more people, and caused more far-reaching changes in nearly every country than any other war in history. The number of people killed, wounded, or missing between September and September can never be calculated, but it is estimated that more than 55 million people perished. More than 50 countries took part in the war, and the whole world felt its effects. Men fought in almost every part of the world, on every continent except Antarctica. The United States hoped to stay out. Drawing on its experience from World War I, Congress passed a series of Neutrality Acts between and , which were intended to prevent Americans becoming entangled with belligerents. Americans in general, however, while not wanting to fight the war, were definitely not neutral in their sympathies and the acts were manipulated, to the frustration of genuine isolationists, to lend more support to the Allies than the Axis. Historians do not agree on the exact date when World War II began. Most consider the German invasion of Poland on September 1, , to be the beginning of the war. Others say it started when the Japanese invaded Manchuria on September 18, . War officially began on September 1, , when Germany attacked Poland. Germany then crushed six countries in three months – Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, and France – and proceeded to conquer Yugoslavia and Greece. By early , all major countries of the world were involved in the most destructive war in history. World War II would go down in the history books as bringing about the downfall of Western Europe as the center of world power, leading to the rise of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics U. That, combined with the outcome of World War I , led to major repositioning of world power and influence. That was fertile ground for the emergence of various forms of totalitarian governments in the Soviet Union, Japan, Italy, and Germany, as well as other countries. Many countries had liberal democratic governments following World War I, but dictatorship developed during the s and s, which destroyed democratic rights. The Germans found it easy to blame the harsh Treaty of Versailles for their troubles. Germany set up a republican form of government in . Many Germans blamed the new government for accepting the hated treaty. People who could not find jobs began to drift into the Communist and National Socialist parties. Prior to , Britain, France, and Germany were the industrial and financial centers of the world. Following World War I, those countries lost their positions and the United States filled their place. America dominated the world market of food, minerals, and industry. When the stock market crashed on October 29, , the financial crisis had worldwide consequences and the reaction of nations to the dire financial straits of the Depression had a huge impact. After World War I, Germany, Italy, and Japan – anxious to regain or increase their power – adopted forms of dictatorship. The League of Nations was unable to promote disarmament. When Adolf Hitler came into power, he promised to end the humiliating conditions caused by German defeat in World War I. Economic problems were among the fundamental causes of World War II. Germany, Italy, and Japan considered themselves unjustly handicapped in trying to compete with other nations for markets, raw materials, and colonies. The Depression destroyed the market for imported silk from Japan, which had provided the country with two-fifths of its export income. Military leaders took control of the government, and in , Japan invaded China, looking for more raw materials and bigger markets for her factories. The League of Nations called a conference of 60 nations in Geneva, Switzerland, in . The conference was one in a long line of disarmament conferences that had been occurring since the end of World War I. Germany, whose military power had been severely limited by the Treaty of Versailles , announced that world disarmament had to be accomplished, or Germany would rearm and achieve military equality. France refused to disarm until an international police system could be established. The conference adjourned temporarily and by the time it was back in session, Hitler had become chancellor of Germany and was already preparing to rearm. Germany withdrew from the conference, which ended in failure, without any hope for disarmament. America prepares for war After the war began in Europe in , people in the Americas were divided on whether their countries should take part or stay out. Most Americans hoped the Allies would win,

but they also hoped to keep the United States out of war. The isolationists, wanted the country to stay out of the war at almost any cost. Another group, the interventionists, wanted the United States to do all in its power to aid the Allies. Canada declared war on Germany almost at once, while the United States shifted its policy from neutrality to preparedness. It began to expand its armed forces, build defense plants, and give the Allies all-out aid short of war. Roosevelt called upon the United States to be "the great arsenal of democracy," and supply war materials to the Allies through sale, lease, or loan. The Lend-Lease bill became law on March 11, 1941. During the next four years, the U. S. At the height of its strength in 1945, the United States had six million in the Army; 3.5 million in the Navy; 2.5 million in the Army air forces; 1.5 million in the Marine Corps; and 1 million in the Coast Guard. In 1945, the United States had about 2,000 airplanes and warships. By 1945, it had about 80,000 airplanes and 2,000 warships. The United States used draft laws to build their armed forces. Factories in the United States converted from civilian to war production with amazing speed. Firms that had made vacuum cleaners before the war began to produce machine guns. As men went into the armed forces, women took their places in war plants. By 1945, more than two million women were working in American war industries. In shipyards and aircraft plants, Rosie the riveter became a common sight. Officials discovered that women could perform the duties of eight of every 10 jobs normally done by men. Most governments, both Allied and Axis, had to ration the amount of consumer goods each person could use. In the United States, rationed items included meats, butter, sugar, fats, oil, coffee, canned foods, shoes, and gasoline. Congress gave the president power to freeze prices, salaries, and wages at their levels of September 15, 1941. The United States imposed a special excise tax on such luxury items as jewelry and cosmetics. The government also set up a civil-defense system to protect the country from attack. Many cities practiced "blackouts" in which cities on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts dimmed their lights. Ordinarily, the glare from their lights made ships near the shore easy targets for submarines. Every country in the Americas eventually declared war on the Axis, but only Brazil, Canada, Mexico, and the United States actually provided military forces. Great Britain and the United States worked out the broad strategic outlines of the war. They considered Germany the greater and closer enemy. The Allies fought to preserve their countries and stabilize Europe, as well as destroy Nazism and establish democracy. The Soviet aim was to drive out the Nazis and emerge strong enough to continue communization of the world. Germany and its six allies were known as the Axis. The Allies mobilized about 62 million men and women, while the Axis mobilized about half that number. The goal of the Axis powers was simple. Germany intended to build up a powerful empire by occupying territory to the east and south. Then, after overrunning France, it would use air assaults to force Britain to make peace. Hitler had two aims: His ally, Benito Mussolini, had his own aims: Italy hoped to take advantage of German successes to grab territory for itself. Japan had no plans for invading the United States mainland. That was followed by moves into Austria and Czechoslovakia, and finally, on September 1, 1939, German forces invaded Poland. That brought a declaration of war from France and Britain. Some historians believe that the Soviet Union leadership knew in the spring or early summer of that Germany planned to invade Poland in September. Thus, the Soviet Union signed a nonaggression pact with Germany just two weeks before the attack. They also made a secret agreement to divide Poland with the Germans after the conquest. Also, despite having signed a non-aggression treaty with Joseph Stalin, Hitler turned on his ally and prepared to become the master of Europe. Germany and Italy declared war on the United States on December 11, 1941. It was quite important in strategic terms, with the Mediterranean and the British African Empire at stake. It was the only theater in which the Western Allies engaged both German and Italian ground forces. Hitler did not want British planes within striking distance of his one major oil source, the Ploiesti fields in Romania, and in November 1941, he prepared his soldiers to join in the fight. More than 1 million German and Italian prisoners of war were taken. Following seesawing control of Libya and parts of Egypt, British Commonwealth forces succeeded in pushing the Axis back. The dispersion of the Axis forces throughout Europe during this time was an important reason why the Allies were able to gain the upper hand in North Africa. Hitler was preoccupied with the Russian front and many divisions of the German army were already committed to it. North Africa was essentially used as a springboard for the Allied invasion of Sicily in July and Italy in September of the same year. Along with worldwide domination, Hitler also aimed to rid the world of various ethnic, religious, national, and secular groups. The Holocaust began in 1941 and continued until 1945. The goal of the

Nazis was to attempt, on an industrial scale, to assemble and exterminate as many people as possible. Concentration camps were established and mass executions carried out. The Jews of Europe were the main targets, but Hitler also targeted Poles, Slavs, gypsies, the disabled, and gay men. By the end of the war, approximately six million people had been killed by the German Gestapo or the SS.

3: Pearl Harbor - HISTORY

World War II cost the United States an estimated \$ billion in dollars - equivalent to 74% of America's GDP and expenditures during the war. In dollars, the war cost over \$ trillion. In dollars, the war cost over \$ trillion.

Louis Johnston and Samuel H. Preparedness Agencies To oversee this growth, President Roosevelt created a number of preparedness agencies beginning in , including the Office for Emergency Management and its key sub-organization, the National Defense Advisory Commission; the Office of Production Management; and the Supply Priorities Allocation Board. None of these organizations was particularly successful at generating or controlling mobilization because all included two competing parties. On one hand, private-sector executives and managers had joined the federal mobilization bureaucracy but continued to emphasize corporate priorities such as profits and positioning in the marketplace. War Production Board In January , as part of another effort to mesh civilian and military needs, President Roosevelt established a new mobilization agency, the War Production Board, and placed it under the direction of Donald Nelson, a former Sears Roebuck executive. Nelson understood immediately that the staggeringly complex problem of administering the war economy could be reduced to one key issue: Though neither Nelson nor other high-ranking civilians ever fully resolved this issue, Nelson did realize several key economic goals. He thereby also established a precedent for planning war production so as to meet most military and some civilian needs. The CMP obtained throughout the war, and helped curtail conflict among the military services and between them and civilian agencies over the growing but still scarce supplies of those three key metals. Office of War Mobilization By late it was clear that Nelson and the WPB were unable to fully control the growing war economy and especially to wrangle with the Army and Navy over the necessity of continued civilian production. Beneath the highest-level agencies like the WPB and the OWM, a vast array of other federal organizations administered everything from labor the War Manpower Commission to merchant shipbuilding the Maritime Commission and from prices the Office of Price Administration to food the War Food Administration. Taxation However, these agencies were often quite successful in achieving their respective, narrower aims. Beginning in , the government extended the income tax to virtually all Americans and began collecting the tax via the now-familiar method of continuous withholdings from paychecks rather than lump-sum payments after the fact. The number of Americans required to pay federal taxes rose from 4 million in to 43 million in Over that same period, federal tax revenue grew from about 8 percent of GDP to more than 20 percent. The average income tax rate peaked in at Though the bonds returned only 2. Bonds served as a way for citizens to make an economic contribution to the war effort, but because interest on them accumulated slower than consumer prices rose, they could not completely preserve income which could not be readily spent during the war. Price Controls and the Standard of Living Fiscal and financial matters were also addressed by other federal agencies. Between April and June , the period of the most stringent federal controls on inflation, the annual rate of inflation was just 3. With wages rising about 65 percent over the course of the war, this limited success in cutting the rate of inflation meant that many American civilians enjoyed a stable or even improving quality of life during the war Kennedy, Improvement in the standard of living was not ubiquitous, however. In some regions, such as rural areas in the Deep South, living standards stagnated or even declined, and according to some economists, the national living standard barely stayed level or even declined Higgs, Labor Unions Labor unions and their members benefited especially. By , approximately The War Economy at High Water Despite the almost-continual crises of the civilian war agencies, the American economy expanded at an unprecedented and unduplicated rate between and The gross national product of the U. War-related production skyrocketed from just two percent of GNP to 40 percent in Milward, As Table 2 shows, output in many American manufacturing sectors increased spectacularly from to , the height of war production in many industries.

4: United States - World War II | www.enganchecubano.com

World War II was the biggest story of the 20th Century, and its aftermath continues to affect the world profoundly more than 65 years later. (This entry is Part 20 of a weekly part.

It ruled a wide-reaching empire. This week in our series, we look at how British power gave way to American influence after World War Two. One can almost name the day when this happened. It was February twenty-first, nineteen forty-seven. British diplomats in Washington called the State Department. They had two messages from their government. The first was about Greece. The situation there was critical. Greece had been occupied by Germany during the war. Now it was split by a bitter civil war. On one side of the fighting was the Greek royal family supported by Britain. On the other side were communist-led rebels supported by Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. British forces had helped keep Greece from becoming communist at the end of World War Two. A few years later, Britain could no longer help. It needed all its strength to rebuild after the war. So, on that February day in nineteen forty-seven, Britain told the United States it would soon end all support for Greece. Turkey was stronger than Greece. But the concern was that it, too, could become communist unless it received outside help. Britain warned the United States that the Soviet Union would soon extend its control all the way across eastern Europe to the eastern Mediterranean. It called on President Harry Truman to provide strong American support to help Greece and Turkey resist the communist threat. Britain, in effect, was asking the United States to take over leadership of the Western world. The United States was ready to accept this new responsibility. For months, relations between the United States and the Soviet Union had been growing worse and worse. But Soviet actions after the war shocked the American people. The Soviet Union wanted to block western political and economic influence in central and eastern Europe. It wanted to extend its own influence instead. So, after the war, it forced a number of countries to establish communist governments. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia, all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and, in some cases, increasing measure of control from Moscow. He described it as an "iron curtain" falling across the middle of Europe. This iron curtain divided Europe into a communist east and a democratic west. China was a divided nation at the end of World War Two. The forces of Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek controlled the southwestern part of the country. Communist forces under Mao Zedong controlled the north. Chiang and the Nationalists won several early victories over the Communists. But Mao and his forces used a growing hatred of the Nationalist government to win support. Slowly, they began to win battles and capture arms. Early in nineteen forty-nine, communist forces took control of Peking -- now Beijing -- and Tientsin. They captured Shanghai and Canton. By the end of the year, Chiang and his Nationalist forces had to flee to the island of Taiwan. The fall of the Nationalist government on the mainland caused a bitter political debate in America. Some critics of the Truman administration thought the United States had not done enough to help the Nationalists. The Truman administration rejected the charges. It said Chiang caused his own defeat by failing to reform and win the support of the Chinese people. Secretary of State Dean Acheson described the defeat this way: Nothing that this country did or could have done within the reasonable limits of its capabilities could have changed that result; nothing that was left undone by this country has contributed to it. It was the product of internal Chinese forces, forces which this country tried to influence but could not. A decision was arrived at within China, if only a decision by default. He said, "I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. After a brief but intense national debate, Congress agreed. Truman then launched an effort to save the Greek economy and reorganize the Greek army. Soon after that, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union ended their aid to Greek rebels. The civil war in Greece ended. American help for Greece and Turkey was the first step in what became known as the "Truman Doctrine. Truman was willing to use military force to stop the spread of communism. But he also believed it was equally important to build up western European nations so they would be strong enough to defend themselves. Europe was suffering terribly after World War Two. There were severe shortages of food

and fuel. Many Europeans were beginning to look to the communists -- to anybody -- to save them. This is one reason why Truman and his advisers developed a plan to rebuild the economies of Europe. Marshall had led American troops as a general in World War Two. This idea became known as the "Marshall Plan. People were starving, he said. There had been food riots in France and Italy. There was not enough fuel. People were cold and sick. Tuberculosis was breaking out. As Truman said later, "Something had to be done. The answer is simple. The United States is the only country in the world today which has the economic power and productivity to furnish the needed assistance. To be quite clear, this unprecedented endeavor of the new world to help the old is neither sure nor easy. It is a calculated risk. It is a difficult program. And you know, far better than I do, the political difficulties involved in this program. The Soviet Union and its allies refused help. Sixteen other countries, however, welcomed the aid. From nineteen forty-eight to nineteen fifty-two, administrators of the Marshall Plan worked with these countries. The United States spent thirteen billion dollars. Agricultural production in Marshall Plan countries increased by ten percent. Industrial production increased by thirty-five percent. Production in some industries, such as steel, increased by much more. There were political results, as well. Stronger economies helped prevent communists from gaining control of the governments in France and Italy. Some Europeans criticized the Marshall Plan. They said it increased tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union in the years after the war. Yet few could deny that the plan was one of the most successful international economic programs in history. You can find our series online with transcripts, MP3s, podcasts and pictures at voaspecialenglish.com. David Jarmul This was program For earlier programs, type "Making of a Nation" in quotation marks in the search box at the top of the page.

5: The U.S. Home Front During World War II - HISTORY

Japanese agriculture changed after World War II when the United States implemented a policy of land reform. This helped food production in Japan. Apart from agriculture, its industries were now being restored and foreign trade allowed them export their goods and pay for imports.

If the Japanese military could successfully attack Hawaii and inflict damage on the naval fleet and casualties among innocent civilians, many people wondered what was to prevent a similar assault on the U. Visit Website This fear of attack translated into a ready acceptance by a majority of Americans of the need to sacrifice in order to achieve victory. During the spring of , a rationing program was established that set limits on the amount of gas, food and clothing consumers could purchase. Families were issued ration stamps that were used to buy their allotment of everything from meat, sugar, fat, butter, vegetables and fruit to gas, tires, clothing and fuel oil. Meanwhile, individuals and communities conducted drives for the collection of scrap metal, aluminum cans and rubber, all of which were recycled and used to produce armaments. Many of these workers were women. Indeed, with tens of thousands of American men joining the armed forces and heading into training and into battle, women began securing jobs as welders, electricians and riveters in defense plants. Until that time, such positions had been strictly for men only. Soon afterward, Walter Pidgeon , a Hollywood leading man, traveled to the Willow Run aircraft plant in Ypsilanti, Michigan , to make a promotional film encouraging the sale of war bonds. One of the women employed at the factory, Rose Will Monroe , was a riveter involved in the construction of B and B bombers. During the war years, the decrease in the availability of men in the work force also led to an upsurge in the number of women holding non-war-related factory jobs. By the mids, the percentage of women in the American work force had expanded from 25 percent to 36 percent. Just over two months after Pearl Harbor, U. President Franklin Roosevelt signed into law Executive Order , which resulted in the removal from their communities and the subsequent imprisonment of all Americans of Japanese descent who resided on the West Coast. Executive Order was the offshoot of a combination of wartime panic and the belief on the part of some that anyone of Japanese ancestry, even those who were born in the U. Despite the internment of their family members, young Japanese-American men fought bravely in Italy, France and Germany between and as members of the U. By the end of the war, the th had become the most decorated combat unit of its size in Army history. Baseball and the Battlefield In January , Kenesaw Mountain Landis , the national commissioner of baseball, wrote a letter to President Roosevelt in which he asked if professional baseball should shut down for the duration of the war. During the war, 95 percent of all professional baseball players who donned major league uniforms during the season were directly involved in the conflict. Feller, in fact, enlisted in the U. Navy one day after Pearl Harbor. Because baseball was depleted of so many able bodies, athletes who otherwise likely never would have made the big leagues won spots on rosters. One of the more notable was Pete Gray , a one-armed outfielder who appeared in 77 games for the St. Louis Browns in Not all those who served in the military were superstars. Over minor leaguers also were killed. Other players overcame debilitating wartime injuries. One was Bert Shepard , a minor league pitcher turned air force fighter pilot. The following year, he pitched three innings for the Washington Senators in a major league game. The movie-going experience included a newsreel, which lasted approximately 10 minutes and was loaded with images and accounts of recent battles, followed by an animated cartoon. While many of these cartoons were entertainingly escapist, some comically caricatured the enemy. As for the main program, movie theaters showed non-war-related dramas, comedies, mysteries and Westerns; however, a significant segment of feature films dealt directly with the war. Scores of features spotlighted the trials of men in combat while demonizing the Nazis and Japanese who perpetuated the conflict. Many appeared in government-produced training films and morale-boosting short subjects. Others participated directly in the fighting. Clark Gable , the beloved, Academy Award-winning actor, served as a tail-gunner with the U. Army Air Corps and flew combat missions over Germany. James Stewart , another equally adored Oscar winner, had enlisted in the corps even before Pearl Harbor. He eventually became a B combat pilot and commander and also flew missions over Germany. They were riveted by the frontline reports from such

legendary journalists as Edward R. Meanwhile, big bands, most famously the orchestra headed by Glenn Miller , and entertainers such as Bob Hope performed before thousands at military bases. These programs were aired directly on the radio to listeners from Maine to California. Dramatic radio programming increasingly featured war-related storylines. Citation Information The U.

6: Aftermath of World War II - Wikipedia

*occupied by Britain, France and the United States after World War II and developed into a prosperous democratic nation
Britain, France, United States, and the Soviet Union Germany was divided into 4 zones after World War II occupied by these countries.*

Share via Email A close-up of a page from a ration book. However, was different, so different that it has been called Year Zero. The capacity for destruction had been so much greater than in the earlier war that much of Europe and Asia lay in ruins. And this time civilians had been the target as much as the military. The figures are hard to grasp: During the war, millions more had fled their homes or been forcibly moved to work in Germany or Japan or, in the case of the Soviet Union, because Stalin feared that they might be traitors. Now, in , another new word appeared, the DP, or "displaced person". There were millions of them, some voluntary refugees moving westward in the face of the advancing Red Army, others deported as undesirable minorities. The newly independent Czech state expelled nearly 3 million ethnic Germans in the years after , and Poland a further 1. Everywhere there were lost or orphaned children, , alone in Yugoslavia. Thousands of unwanted babies added to the misery. It is impossible to know how many women in Europe were raped by the Red Army soldiers, who saw them as part of the spoils of war, but in Germany alone some 2 million women had abortions every year between and The allies did what they could to feed and house the refugees and to reunite families that had been forcibly torn apart, but the scale of the task and the obstacles were enormous. The majority of ports in Europe and many in Asia had been destroyed or badly damaged; bridges had been blown up; railway locomotives and rolling stock had vanished. Great cities such as Warsaw, Kiev, Tokyo and Berlin were piles of rubble and ash. Factories and workshops were in ruins, fields, forests and vineyards ripped to pieces. Millions of acres in north China were flooded after the Japanese destroyed the dykes. Many Europeans were surviving on less than 1, calories per day; in the Netherlands they were eating tulip bulbs. Britain had largely bankrupted itself fighting the war and France had been stripped bare by the Germans. They were struggling to look after their own peoples and deal with reincorporating their military into civilian society. The four horsemen of the apocalypse " pestilence, war, famine and death " so familiar during the middle ages, appeared again in the modern world. The once great powers of Japan and Germany looked as though they would never rise again. In retrospect, of course, it is easy to see that their peoples, highly educated and skilled, possessed the capacity to rebuild their shattered societies. And it may have been easier to build strong economies from scratch than the partially damaged ones of the victors. Two powers, so great that the new term "superpower" had to be coined for them, dominated the world in The United States was both a military power and an economic one; the Soviet Union had only brute force and the intangible attraction of Marxist ideology to keep its own people down and manage its newly acquired empire in the heart of Europe. The great European empires, which had controlled so much of the world, from Africa to Asia, were on their last legs and soon to disappear in the face of their own weakness and rising nationalist movements. We should not view the war as being responsible for all of this, however; the rise of the US and the Soviet Union and the weakening of the European empires had been happening long before The war acted as an accelerator. It also accelerated change in other ways: The world got atomic weapons but it also got atomic power. Under the stimulus of war, governments poured resources into developing new medicines and technologies. In many countries, social change also speeded up. The shared suffering and sacrifice of the war years strengthened the belief in most democracies that governments had an obligation to provide basic care for all citizens. When it was elected in the summer of , for example, the Labour government in Britain moved rapidly to establish the welfare state. The rights of women also took a huge step forward as their contribution to the war effort, and their share in the suffering, were recognised. In France and Italy, women finally got the vote. If class divisions in Europe and Asia did not disappear, the moral authority and prestige of the ruling classes had been severely undermined by their failure to prevent the war or the crimes that they had condoned before and during it. Established political orders " fascist, conservative, even democratic " came under challenge as peoples looked for new ideas and leaders. In Germany and Japan, democracy slowly took root. In China, people turned increasingly from

the corrupt and incompetent nationalists to the communists. While many Europeans, wearied by years of war and privation, gave up on politics altogether and faced the future with glum pessimism, others hoped that, at last, the time had come to build a new and better society. In western Europe, voters turned to social democratic parties such as the Labour party in Britain. In the east, the new communist regimes that were imposed by the triumphant Soviet Union were at first welcomed by many as the agents of change. The end of the war inevitably also brought a settling of scores. In many parts people took measures into their own hands. Collaborators were beaten, lynched or shot. Women who had fraternised with German soldiers had their heads shaved or worse. Governments sometimes followed suit, setting up special courts for those who had worked with the enemy and purging such bodies as the civil service and the police. The Soviets also tried to exact reparations from Germany and Japan; whole factories were dismantled down to the window frames and were carted off to the Soviet Union, where they frequently rotted away. Much of the revenge was to gain advantage in the postwar world. In China and eastern Europe the communists used the accusation of collaboration with the Japanese or the Nazis to eliminate their political and class enemies. German de-Nazification The allies instituted an ambitious programme of de-Nazification in Germany, later quietly abandoned as it became clear that German society would be unworkable if all former Nazis were forbidden to work. In both Germany and Japan, the victors set up special tribunals to try those responsible for crimes against peace, war crimes, and the catalogue of horrors that came increasingly to be known as "crimes against humanity". In Tokyo, leading Japanese generals and politicians, and at Nuremberg, senior Nazis those that had not committed suicide or escaped, stood in the dock before allied judges. The trials, inconclusive though they were, formed part of a larger attempt to root out the militaristic and chauvinistic attitudes that had helped to produce the war, and to build a new world order that would prevent such a catastrophe from ever happening again. Well before the war had ended, the allies had started planning for the peace. Among the western powers, the United States, by very much the dominant partner in the alliance, took the lead. In his Four Freedoms speech of January, President Roosevelt talked of a new and more just world, with freedom of speech and expression and of religion, and freedom from want and fear. In the Atlantic charter later that year, he and Churchill sketched out a world order based on such liberal principles as collective security, national self-determination, and free trade among nations. A host of other allies, some of them represented by governments in exile, signed on. The Soviet Union gave a qualified assent, although its leader Stalin had no intention of following what were to him alien principles. Roosevelt intended that the American vision should take solid institutional form. This time, Roosevelt was determined, the United States should join. The idea that there were universal standards to be upheld was present, no matter how imperfectly, in the war crimes trials, and was later reinforced by the establishment of the United Nations itself in 1945, the International Court of Justice in 1946 and Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. Stalin was interested above all in security for his regime and for the Soviet Union, and that to him meant taking territory, from Poland and other neighbours, and establishing a ring of buffer states around Soviet borders. The grand alliance held together uneasily for the first months of the peace, but the strains were evident in their shared occupation of Germany, where increasingly the Soviet zone of occupation was moving in a communist direction and the western zones, under Britain, France and the United States, in a more capitalist and democratic one. By 1947, two very different German societies were emerging. Soviet pressure on its neighbours, from Norway in the north to Turkey and Iran in the south, along with Soviet spy rings and Soviet-inspired sabotage in western countries, further deepened western concerns. For their part, Soviet leaders looked on western talk of such democratic procedures as free elections in eastern Europe as Trojan horses designed to undermine their control of their buffer states, and regarded the Marshall plan, which funnelled American aid into Europe, as a cover for extending the grip of capitalism. Furthermore, their own Marxist-Leninist analysis of history told them that sooner or later the capitalist powers would turn on the Soviet Union. Both sides built military alliances and prepared for the new shooting war that many feared was bound to come. In 1949, the Soviet Union exploded its first atomic bomb, giving it parity, at least in that area, with the United States. That the cold war did not in the end turn into a hot one was thanks to that fact. The terrifying new power of atomic weapons was to lead to a standoff suitably known as Mad as Hell" Mutually Assured Destruction. The cold war overshadowed another momentous international change that came as a

result of the second world war. Before much of the non-European world had been divided up among the great empires: Japan and Italy lost their empires as a result of defeat. Britain, France, and the Netherlands all saw their imperial possessions disappear in the years immediately after the war. The Soviet Union was not to lose its until the end of the cold war. Empires crumble The former imperial powers no longer had the financial and military capacity to hang on to their vast territories. Nor did their peoples want to pay the price of empire, whether in money or blood. Furthermore, where the empires had once dealt with divided or acquiescent peoples, they now increasingly faced assertive and, in some cases, well-armed nationalist movements. The defeat of European forces all over Asia also contributed to destroying the myth of European power. The United Nations grew from 51 nations in to by the end of the century. Because of the cold war, there was no comprehensive peace settlement after the second world war as there had been in Instead there were a number of separate agreements or ad hoc decisions. The Soviet Union seized back some bits of territory such as Bessarabia, which it had lost to Romania in The one major exception was Poland, as the joke had it "a country on wheels", which moved some miles to the west, losing some 69, sq metres to the Soviet Union and gaining slightly less from Germany in the west. In the east, Japan of course lost the conquests it had made since , but was also obliged to disgorge Korea and Formosa now Taiwan and the Pacific islands that it had gained decades earlier. Eventually the United States and Japan concluded a formal peace in Because of an outstanding dispute over some islands, the Soviet Union and its successor Russia have not yet signed a peace treaty ending the war with Japan. Remembering the war We have long since absorbed and dealt with the physical consequences of the second world war, but it still remains a very powerful set of memories. How societies remember and commemorate the past often says something about how they see themselves " and can be highly contentious. Particularly in divided societies, it is tempting to cling to comforting myths to help bring unity and to paper over deep and painful divisions. In the years immediately after , many societies chose to forget the war or remember it only in certain ways. Austria portrayed itself as the first victim of Nazism, conveniently ignoring the active support that so many Austrians had given the Nazi regime. In Italy, the fascist past was neglected in favour of the earlier periods of Italian history. For a long time, schools did not teach any history after the first world war.

7: Digital History

The Aftermath of World War II was the beginning of an era defined by the decline of all European colonial empires and the simultaneous rise of two superpowers: the Soviet Union (USSR) and the United States (USA).

They sought peace through isolation and throughout the s advocated a policy of disarmament and nonintervention. As a result, relations with Latin-American nations improved substantially under Hoover, an anti-imperialist. This enabled Roosevelt to establish what became known as the Good Neighbor Policy , which repudiated altogether the right of intervention in Latin America. By exercising restraint in the region as a whole and by withdrawing American occupation forces from the Caribbean, Roosevelt increased the prestige of the United States in Latin America to its highest level in memory. As the European situation became more tense, the United States continued to hold to its isolationist policy. Congress, with the approval of Roosevelt and Secretary of State Cordell Hull , enacted a series of neutrality laws that legislated against the factors that supposedly had taken the United States into World War I. As Italy prepared to invade Ethiopia , Congress passed the Neutrality Act of , embargoing shipment of arms to either aggressor or victim. Stronger legislation followed the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in , in effect penalizing the Spanish government, whose fascist enemies were receiving strong support from Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler. National Archives, Washington, D. When Japan invaded China in , however, he seemed to begin moving away from isolationism. He then quickly denied that his statement had any policy implications , and by December, when Japanese aircraft sank a U. With strong public opposition to foreign intervention, Roosevelt concentrated on regional defense, continuing to build up the navy and signing mutual security agreements with other governments in North and South America. With the fall of France to Germany in June , Roosevelt, with heavy public support, threw the resources of the United States behind the British. He ordered the War and Navy departments to resupply British divisions that had been rescued at Dunkirk minus their weaponry, and in September he agreed to exchange 50 obsolescent destroyers for year leases on eight British naval and air bases in the Western Hemisphere. The question of how much and what type of additional aid should be given to the Allies became a major issue of the election of , in which Roosevelt ran for an unprecedented third term. Public opinion polls, a new influence upon decision makers, showed that most Americans favoured Britain but still wished to stay out of war. An alarmed Roosevelt fought back, going so far as to make what he knew was an empty promise. Roosevelt won a decisive victory. Roosevelt watching while the blindfolded secretary of war, Henry L. Stimson, draws the first number in the first peacetime draft lottery in U. In August Roosevelt met with the British prime minister , Winston Churchill , off the coast of Newfoundland to issue a set of war aims known as the Atlantic Charter. It called for national self-determination, larger economic opportunities, freedom from fear and want, freedom of the seas, and disarmament. Although in retrospect U. Isolationism was a great political force, and many influential individuals were determined that U. In fact, as late as August 12, , the House of Representatives extended the Selective Training and Service Act of by a vote of only to Despite isolationist resistance, Roosevelt pushed cautiously forward. In late August the navy added British and Allied ships to its Icelandic convoys. Its orders were to shoot German and Italian warships on sight, thus making the United States an undeclared participant in the Battle of the Atlantic. During October one U. The United States now embarked on an undeclared naval war against Germany, but Roosevelt refrained from asking for a formal declaration of war. According to public opinion polls, a majority of Americans still hoped to remain neutral. The war question was soon resolved by events in the Pacific. As much as a distant neutral could, the United States had been supporting China in its war against Japan, yet it continued to sell Japan products and commodities essential to the Japanese war effort. Then, in July , the United States applied an embargo on the sale of aviation gas, lubricants, and prime scrap metal to Japan. When Japanese armies invaded French Indochina in September with the apparent purpose of establishing bases for an attack on the East Indies , the United States struck back by embargoing all types of scrap iron and steel and by extending a loan to China. Japan promptly retaliated by signing a limited treaty of alliance, the Tripartite Pact , with Germany and Italy. Roosevelt extended a much larger loan to China and in December embargoed iron ore, pig iron , and a variety

of other products. Japan and the United States then entered into complex negotiations in the spring of 1941. Neither country would compromise on the China question, however, Japan refusing to withdraw and the United States insisting upon it. Believing that Japan intended to attack the East Indies, the United States stopped exporting oil to Japan at the end of the summer. The Pacific Fleet was ordered to move to the Philippines, thereby becoming self-sufficient in crude oil and other vital resources. By the end of November Roosevelt and his military advisers knew through intercepted Japanese messages that a military attack was likely; they expected it to be against the East Indies or the Philippines. To their astonishment, on December 7 Japan directed its first blow against naval and air installations in Hawaii. In a bold surprise attack, Japanese aircraft destroyed or damaged 18 ships of war at Pearl Harbor, including the entire battleship force, and planes. Pacific Fleet, December 7, 1941. On December 8, 1941, Congress with only one dissenting vote declared war against Japan. Three days later Germany and Italy declared war against the United States; and Congress, voting unanimously, reciprocated. As a result of the attack on Pearl Harbor, the previously divided nation entered into the global struggle with virtual unanimity. The United States at war Although isolationism died at Pearl Harbor, its legacy of unpreparedness lived on. Anticipating war, Roosevelt and his advisers had been able to develop and execute some plans for military expansion, but public opinion prohibited large-scale appropriations for armament and defense. Thus, when Pearl Harbor was attacked, the United States had some 2 million men under arms, but most were ill-trained and poorly equipped. Barely a handful of army divisions even approached a state of readiness. The Army Air Corps possessed only 1,000 combat planes, many of which were outdated. The navy was better prepared, but it was too small to fight a two-ocean war and had barely been able to provide enough ships for convoy duty in the North Atlantic. Eventually more than 15 million men and women would serve in the armed forces, but not until 1945 would the United States be strong enough to undertake large-scale offensive operations. War production Roosevelt had begun establishing mobilization agencies in 1940, but none had sufficient power or authority to bring order out of the chaos generated as industry converted to war production. He therefore created the War Production Board in January 1942 to coordinate mobilization, and in April an Office of War Mobilization was established to supervise the host of defense agencies that had sprung up in Washington, D. C. Gradually, a priorities system was devised to supply defense plants with raw materials; a synthetic rubber industry was developed from scratch; rationing conserved scarce resources; and the Office of Price Administration kept inflation under control. Stock footage courtesy The WPA Film Library After initial snarls and never-ending disputes, by the beginning of 1945 production was reaching astronomical totals—double those of all the enemy countries combined. Hailed at the time as a production miracle, this increase was about equal to what the country would have produced in peacetime, assuming full employment. War production might have risen even higher if regulation of civilian consumption and industry had been stricter. Scientists, under the direction of the Office of Scientific Research and Development, played a more important role in production than in any previous war, making gains in rocketry, radar and sonar, and other areas. Among the new inventions was the proximity fuze, which contained a tiny radio that detonated an artillery shell in the vicinity of its target, making a direct hit unnecessary. Of greatest importance was the atomic bomb, developed by scientists in secrecy and first tested on July 6, 1945. Taxes paid 41 percent of the cost, less than Roosevelt requested but more than the World War I figure of 33 percent. The remainder was financed by borrowing from financial institutions, an expensive method but one that Congress preferred over the alternatives of raising taxes even higher or making war bond purchases compulsory. The Revenue Act of 1942 revolutionized the tax structure by increasing the number who paid income taxes from 13 million to 50 million. At the same time, through taxes on excess profits and other sources of income, the rich were made to bear a larger part of the burden, making this the only period in modern history when wealth was significantly redistributed. Social consequences of the war Despite the vast number of men and women in uniform, civilian employment rose from 46 million in 1940 to more than 53 million in 1945. The pool of unemployed men dried up in 1945, and further employment increases consisted of women, minorities, and over- or underage males. These were not enough to meet all needs, and by the end of the year a manpower shortage had developed. One result of this shortage was that blacks made significant social and economic progress. Although the armed forces continued to practice segregation, as did Red Cross blood banks, Roosevelt, under pressure from blacks, who were outraged by the refusal of defense industries to

integrate their labour forces, signed Executive Order on June 25, It prohibited racial discrimination in job training programs and by defense contractors and established a Fair Employment Practices Committee to insure compliance. By the end of nearly 2., blacks were at work in defense industries. As black contributions to the military and industry increased, so did their demands for equality. This sometimes led to racial hostilities, as on June 20, , when mobs of whites invaded the black section of Detroit. Nevertheless, the gains offset the losses. Lynching virtually died out, several states outlawed discriminatory voting practices, and others adopted fair employment laws. Full employment also resulted in raised income levels, which, through a mixture of price and wage controls , were kept ahead of inflation. Despite both this increase in income and a no-strike pledge given by trade union leaders after Pearl Harbor, there were numerous labour actions. Workers resented wage ceilings because much of their increased income went to pay taxes and was earned by working overtime rather than through higher hourly rates. In consequence, there were almost 15, labour stoppages during the war at a cost of some 36,, man-days. Strikes were greatly resented, particularly by the armed forces, but their effects were more symbolic than harmful. The time lost amounted to only one-ninth of 1 percent of all hours worked. Because Pearl Harbor had united the nation, few people were prosecuted for disloyalty or sedition , unlike during World War I. The one glaring exception to this policy was the scandalous treatment of Japanese and Americans of Japanese descent. The Japanese-Americans lost their liberty, and in most cases their property as well, despite the fact that the Federal Bureau of Investigation , which had already arrested those individuals it considered security risks, had verified their loyalty. The election Roosevelt soundly defeated Gov. Dewey of New York in the election , but his margin of victory was smaller than it had been previously. His running mate, chosen by leaders who disliked former vice president Henry A. Wallace for his extreme liberalism, was Sen. Truman of Missouri , a party Democrat who had distinguished himself by investigating fraud and waste among war contractors. After a series of conferences in December , Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill announced the formation of the United Nations , a wartime alliance of 26 nations. In Roosevelt began planning the organization of a postwar United Nations, meeting with congressional leaders to assure bipartisan support. In addition to political harmony, Roosevelt promoted economic cooperation, and, with his full support, in the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund were created to bar a return of the cutthroat economic nationalism that had prevailed before the war. Throughout the war Roosevelt met with Churchill and Stalin to plan military strategy and postwar policy. His last great conference with them took place at Yalta in Crimea in February There policies were agreed upon to enforce the unconditional surrender of Germany, to divide it into zones for occupation and policing by the respective Allied forces, and to provide democratic regimes in eastern European nations.

8: The American Economy during World War II

As in World War I, the United States, Great Britain, France, and the 47 countries siding with them were known as the Allies. Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor in brought the United States into the war on the Allied side.

Visit Website Instead, the sanctions made the Japanese more determined to stand their ground. During months of negotiations between Tokyo and Washington, D. It seemed that war was all but inevitable. Where Is Pearl Harbor? Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, is located near the center of the Pacific Ocean, roughly 2, miles from the U. Therefore, no one believed that the Japanese would start a war with an attack on the distant islands of Hawaii. Additionally, American intelligence officials were confident that any Japanese attack would take place in one of the relatively nearby European colonies in the South Pacific: Because American military leaders were not expecting an attack so close to home, the naval facilities at Pearl Harbor were relatively undefended. Almost the entire Pacific Fleet was moored around Ford Island in the harbor, and hundreds of airplanes were squeezed onto adjacent airfields. To the Japanese, Pearl Harbor was an irresistibly easy target. Destroy the Pacific Fleet. On December 7, after months of planning and practice, the Japanese launched their attack. At about 8 a. Bombs and bullets rained onto the vessels moored below. The ship exploded and sank with more than 1, men trapped inside. Next, torpedoes pierced the shell of the battleship USS Oklahoma. With sailors aboard, the Oklahoma lost her balance, rolled onto her side and slipped underwater. Impact of the Pearl Harbor Attack In all, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor crippled or destroyed nearly 20 American ships and more than airplanes. Dry docks and airfields were likewise destroyed. Most important, 2, sailors, soldiers and civilians were killed and about 1, people were wounded. But the Japanese had failed to cripple the Pacific Fleet. By the s, battleships were no longer the most important naval vessel: Some had returned to the mainland and others were delivering planes to troops on Midway and Wake Islands. As a result, the U. Navy was able to rebound relatively quickly from the attack. Roosevelt addressed a joint session of the U. Congress on December 8, the day after the crushing attack on Pearl Harbor. I believe I interpret the will of the Congress and of the people when I assert that we will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost, but will make very certain that this form of treachery shall never endanger us again. Rankin was a pacifist who had also voted against the American entrance into World War I. For the second time, Congress reciprocated, declaring war on the European powers. Start your free trial today.

9: How did the United States change after WWII? | eNotes

After the December 7, 1941, Japanese attack on the American naval fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, the U.S. was thrust into World War II, and everyday life across the country was.

Much of Europe and Eastern Asia had been destroyed by the fighting and bombings that had taken place over many years. Allied Leaders discuss Europe Source: Many of the countries in the west returned to the same governments and borders they had prior to the war. However, Germany was divided up into Eastern and Western Germany. Europe was in much need of financial aid due to all the roads, bridges, buildings and more that had been destroyed in the fighting. They maintained control as Japan recovered from the war. Japan would become an independent nation again in 1952. The plan was for Russia to control the North and the Allies the South until a free election could be held for the entire country. This never happened as Russia later refused and the country is still split to this day with North Korea controlled by communists. It was between the communists and the nationalists. The communists won and the nationalists fled to Taiwan. War Crimes After the war, many leaders from Japan and Germany were brought to trial. They had violated the rules of war according to the Geneva Convention and had also committed crimes against humanity. These crimes included the Holocaust, slave labor, and the terrible treatment and torture of prisoners of war. Many of these leaders were executed for their crimes. German leaders under trial for war crimes Source: The United Nations was formed on October 24, 1945. There were 51 original member nations including 5 permanent Security Council members: These countries were run by communist governments and had their own alliance called the Warsaw Pact. The Cold War never escalated into full war due to the fear of what would happen to the world if many countries started dropping atomic bombs. The Cold War would last for the next 45 years. Activities Take a ten question quiz about this page.

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