

# A Second Global Conflict and the End of the European World Order

## Old and New Causes of a Second World War

- Chiang Kai-shek's leadership of the Guomindang led the Nationalists to power in southern China, and they then moved north. Japan was fearful of renewed Chinese control of Manchuria and invaded, eventually creating the independent Manchukuo. In Germany, the Weimar Republic had been hard-hit by the Depression. Hitler promised to end economic hardship and stop the advance of communism. Both Germany and Italy under Mussolini rearmed and took part in the Spanish Civil War. The conflict prepared Germany and the other nations that took part for World War II. Under Franco's dictatorship, Spain withdrew from European affairs.

## Unchecked Aggression and the Coming of War in Europe and the Pacific

- World War II began officially on September 1, 1939, but conflicts began much earlier in Asia. Europeans and their leaders hoped to avoid a major war by pacifying Hitler. Some, including **Winston Churchill**, warned against this policy. The Japanese, from their new base in Manchukuo, attacked China in 1937. After capturing Shanghai and Canton, they also took Nanjing and slaughtered its citizens. The Guomindang moved into the interior. In Europe, Hitler and Stalin signed a nonaggression pact in 1939, and then divided Poland. Hitler's plans were now clear, and Britain and France declared war.

## The Conduct of a Second Global War

- Ally delays permitted Axis victories in the early phase of the war, but when Hitler turned to Russia, victory eluded him.
- The German strategy of **blitzkrieg**—lightning war—was highly successful. Poland was taken in 1939 and much of France by 1940. France had been divided politically and had not prepared for war. Only the south was semiautonomous under the **Vichy** regime. Germany failed in its massive assault on Winston Churchill's Britain, the **Battle of Britain**. Yet the Germans controlled much of Europe and the Mediterranean by the middle of 1941. Erwin Rommel led German troops victoriously across north Africa, adding to the resources available to the Germans. Hitler moved east and then on to Russia, but met Napoleon's

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fate. Again, in 1942–1943, an assault on Russia failed, destroying the German army. As the Germans retreated, the Russians retook areas of eastern Europe.

- German attacks on the Jews and others deemed deleterious to the nation had begun in 1940. In 1942, Hitler undertook the complete eradication of Jews and other undesirables. The **Holocaust** claimed as many as 12 million lives, at least half of which were Jews. The Allies failed to take action against the Holocaust.
- The Battle of Britain absorbed most of the British war effort for almost two years. The United States joined the war after the Japanese attack on **Pearl Harbor**. Britain and the United States joined forces against Rommel in north Africa and then moved into Italy. Mussolini was captured and killed. Anglo-American forces then attacked Germany in north Europe, via Normandy. The **Battle of the Bulge**, 1944–1945, led the Allies into Germany. Adolph Hitler committed suicide in 1945.
- Following the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, the Japanese took British possessions in China, then Malaya, Burma, the Dutch East Indies, and the Philippines. They were pushed out again by the British and fierce local resistance, but U.S. forces played the largest part in the fighting. The Pacific theater centered on strategic islands. In the **Battle of the Coral Sea**, the Japanese were halted and a month later defeated on **Midway Island**. Nearing Japan, General Curtis LeMay ordered the bombing of the country in March, 1945. The United States then went further that summer, dropping atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Japanese surrendered unconditionally.

### War's End and the Emergence of the Superpower Standoff

- The peace treaties ending World War II lacked the scope of the Versailles Peace. The United Nations was established, to be based in New York City. Control over world affairs was no longer to be monopolized by Western powers. Although the primary mandate of the U.N. was to facilitate diplomacy, more specialized branches were subsequently created.
- The **Cold War**, which was to last four decades, resulted from a stalemate in the peace settlement. The **Tehran Conference**, in 1944, allowed the Soviet Union to control portions of eastern Europe, in the face of U.S. objections. The **Yalta Conference** the next year confirmed the U.N. and divided Europe into four occupation zones. A meeting at **Potsdam**, the same year, allowed the Soviet Union to keep Poland. Austria was occupied by the United States and the Soviet Union, and the two powers divided Korea. In the Middle East, Africa, India, and Asia, much of the old colonial territory was reestablished. Two themes emerged. The first was decolonization, the second was the Cold War.

### Nationalism and Decolonization

- Japanese defeat of the Western powers in Asia added to a growing sense that victory over the colonial rulers was possible. **Total war** had exhausted Europe, which was surpassed in global influence by the United States and the Soviet Union. The **Atlantic Charter of 1941**, negotiated by Roosevelt and Churchill, included self-determination for all.
- A British representative, Sir Stafford Cripps, was sent to India in 1942 to try to

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negotiate with the Indian National Congress. The **Quit India Movement** began that year, making debate impossible. The British attempted suppression. The **Muslim League**, led by **Muhammad Ali Jinnah**, was more willing to work with Britain. The Labor government that came to power in Britain after 1945 decided to work with India to achieve independence. Jinnah was persuasive in calling for a separate Muslim state. In 1947, the British handed control of the subcontinent to the Congress Party in India and to Jinnah, first president of Pakistan. Sectarian violence followed the partition. Gandhi was assassinated in 1948. Burma (Myanmar) and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) gained their independence soon after. Other Asian empires also dissolved. The Philippines and Indonesia won their independence.

- During World War II, many African recruits fought for the Allies, but they gained nothing by their loyalty. Industrialization to aid the war effort reversed European policies in Africa, and urbanization followed. Kwame Nkrumah is an example of a leader that took the radical path to independence. Returning to the Gold Coast, he formed the **Convention People's Party**. Standing firm against British threats, he gained a large following and was recognized as prime minister of Ghana in 1957. In other areas, independence came with few confrontations. Léopold Sédar Senghor led Senegal peacefully to independence from France. Belgium retreated hastily from the Congo. By the mid-1960s, decolonization was achieved in all but the settler states.
- In the settler colonies, large numbers of Europeans blocked indigenous nationalist and independence movements. European settlers opposed both the African majority and European administrators' pushes for change. African leaders, thus stymied, often turned to violence. In Kenya, **Jomo Kenyatta** and the **Kenya African Union** supported radical action. The **Land Freedom Army** used terrorism and guerilla tactics, but imprisonment of leaders blocked that strategy. Yet the British negotiated with nationalists, in spite of resistance from European settlers. Kenya gained independence, with Kenyatta in charge. In Algeria, the independence movement gathered around the **National Liberation Front**. As in Kenya, although defeated, the Algerians gained freedom through negotiation. However, French settlers formed the **Secret Army Organization (OAS)**, which was responsible for ending France's Fourth Republic. A brief war ended with Algerian independence in 1962.
- Angola, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe won independence by violent means. Only in South Africa did a white majority retain control against a black majority. Afrikaners, distanced from their original home, felt themselves to be natives and, moreover, were buttressed by convictions of their racial superiority. The **Afrikaner National Party** created **apartheid**, through a mass of legislation. Black Africans were denied equality with white Afrikaners.
- In the Middle East, many countries had freed themselves of European governance, if not influence. Palestine was a point of contention. Muslim rebellions, in 1936–1939, convinced Britain to slow the movement of Jews into the nascent Israel. A Zionist military force, the **Haganah**, was created. At the end of World War II, a stalemate existed. In 1948, the U.N. approved the partition of Palestine. Israel defended itself effectively and gained some territory.

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### Multiple-Choice Questions

- World War II officially began in what year?  
(A) 1940  
(B) 1941  
(C) 1939  
(D) 1935  
(E) 1918
- In 1931, the Japanese army marched into \_\_\_\_\_ and declared it an independent state.  
(A) Korea  
(B) Vietnam  
(C) the Philippines  
(D) Manchuria  
(E) Laos
- Adolph Hitler was the political and ideological leader of the  
(A) Social Democratic Party.  
(B) National Socialist Party.  
(C) Christian Democratic Party.  
(D) Conservative Union.  
(E) None of the above is correct.
- Hitler came to power in Germany  
(A) as a result of entirely legal and constitutional means.  
(B) with the support of socialists.  
(C) after a short, but violent, overthrow of the constitutional government.  
(D) after a lengthy civil war between forces of conservatives and communists.  
(E) as the result of a political assassination.
- In order to avoid a two-front war, Hitler signed a nonaggression pact with this country in 1939.  
(A) the U.S.S.R.  
(B) Japan  
(C) Italy  
(D) France  
(E) Great Britain
- A 1944 Allied landing in this country created a European front against the Germans.  
(A) Belgium  
(B) France  
(C) Sicily  
(D) Spain  
(E) Egypt
- This country chose a path of neutrality and cooperation with Japan in the Pacific theater of World War II.  
(A) Australia  
(B) the Philippines  
(C) Indonesia  
(D) Thailand  
(E) New Zealand
- This institution was created as a result of World War II.  
(A) the League of Nations  
(B) the United Nations  
(C) the World Bank  
(D) the International Monetary Fund  
(E) the World Court
- The Afrikaner National Party in South Africa established a rigid system of racial segregation called  
(A) Boer prejudice.  
(B) voortrekker.  
(C) apartheid.  
(D) swarzfrei.  
(E) Jim Crow.
- How did independence movements in English nonsettler African colonies differ in relation to French and Belgian nonsettler African colonies?  
(A) The English colonies were less successful economically in the long run.  
(B) Their leaders came from among the lower social classes.  
(C) They refused assistance from outside powers.  
(D) They tended to be less violent in nature.  
(E) There were no differences.

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### Free-Response Question

*How did World War II impact the European colonies in Asia and Africa? Are generalizations possible?*

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## ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS

### Multiple-Choice Questions

- **1. (C) is correct.** Although conflict began much earlier in Asia, it was the French and British declaration of war against Germany that began the war.
- **2. (D) is correct.** Japan took much of Manchuria, declaring it independent as Manchukuo.
- **3. (B) is correct.** The National Socialist Party came to be known as the Nazi Party.
- **4. (A) is correct.** Hitler came to power legally, although he set aside constitutional rule soon afterward.
- **5. (A) is correct.** Although Hitler worked with both Great Britain and Italy, he signed a nonaggression pact with the U.S.S.R.
- **6. (B) is correct.** The Allies landed in Europe in Normandy, France, before moving against Germany.
- **7. (D) is correct.** The Philippines remained loyal to the United States, and Australia and New Zealand to the British Commonwealth. Indonesia fought Japanese control.
- **8. (B) is correct.** The League of Nations was created at the end of World War I, and the World Bank and Court and the International Monetary fund came some time after World War II.
- **9. (C) is correct.** The system of apartheid created by the Afrikaners lasted for several decades.
- **10. (D) is correct.** British nonsettler colonies such as the Gold Coast colony (later Ghana) emerged from nonviolent resistance to British rule, while the French and Belgian governments worked more in cooperation with their colonies to help them achieve independence.

### Free-Response Essay Sample Response

*How did World War II impact the European colonies in Asia and Africa? Are generalizations possible?*

When talking of the impact of World War II on Asian and African colonies, it is best to talk about common forces and experiences, while events played out differently in each new nation. For instance, many colonies cooperated with the Allies in World War II, only to experience a sense of disappointment or betrayal when independence was initially denied to them. Also, within many colonies, forces for independence were often in conflict with forces desirous of maintaining colonial rule. World War II demonstrated the vulnerability of the European powers, at the same time as it had fostered industrialization in some African colonies. Thus the Second World War can be said to have embittered and empowered colonies at the same time.

