

Americas involvement in WW2

Before the attack on Pearl Harbour, America was reluctant to get involved with the war. Many political leaders believed that it would be best for America to stay out of foreign affairs

In 1935 Congress passed the Neutrality Act to prohibit arms manufacturers from exporting firearms and ammunitions to other countries at war. When the act was renewed in 1936, Congress also prohibited American citizens from making loans to foreign nations involved in conflict.

The Lend-Lease Act was passed in 1941. This act allowed the president to transfer defense materials to certain countries. These supplies were transferred to China, Britain, the Soviet Union and other countries.

Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. This prompted the United States to officially enter the war. Italy and Germany quickly declared war on the U.S. One of the most famous events involving American soldiers was the Normandy invasion. On June 6, 1944, General Eisenhower led allied troops into France. They were able to liberate Paris by the end of August during the same year.

After the war had finished, a conference was held in Potsdam, Germany, to set up peace treaties . The countries that fought with Hitler lost territory and had to pay reparations to the Allies . Germany and its capital Berlin were divided into four parts. The zones were to be controlled by Great Britain, the United States, France and the Soviet Union. The three western Allies and the Soviet Union disagreed on many things and as time went on Germany was divided into two separate countries : East Germany , which had a Communist government and West Germany, which was a democratic state . Berlin was also divided into East and West Berlin. Austria was also occupied by the four Allies from 1945 to 1955.

One by one, the Russians started to take over countries in eastern Europe and install Communist governments there. The division of Europe was the beginning of the Cold War, between the democratic nations of the west and the Communist countries of eastern Europe. The Iron Curtain marked the border between these two regions.

After the war many Nazi leaders were arrested and punished for what they had done in the war. The most famous war trials were held at Nuremberg,

Germany. Those who were responsible for brutal crimes were sentenced to death.

Many problems arose after the war was over. One of them focused on the city of Berlin which was deep inside the Russian zone. In June 1948, the Soviet Union tried to drive the western powers out of Berlin by blocking all routes to the city. For a whole year the Allies flew in food, fuel and other things that the population needed to survive . Finally , the Russians gave up and the blockade ended. In 1961 the Russians built a wall around Berlin to stop their citizens from escaping to the west.

The biggest task was to rebuild Europe, which lay in ruins . In 1948 the United States set up the Marshall Plan to help Europe's economy . 18 nations received 13 billion dollars worth of food machines and other goods .

During World War II , four of the Allied powers—the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and China— agreed to create an organization that should work for peace . In April 1945 fifty countries signed a charter and gave birth to the United Nations.

The end of the war also increased the rate of decolonization from the great powers with independence being granted India (from the United Kingdom), Indonesia (from the Netherlands), the Philippines (from the US) and a number of Arab nations, primarily from specific rights which had been granted to great powers from League of Nations Mandates in the post World War I-era but often having existed de facto well before this time. Also related to this was Israel gaining independence from its previous status as part of Mandatory Palestine in the years immediately following the war. Independence for the nations of Sub-Saharan Africa came more slowly.

The aftermath of World War II also saw the rise of the People's Republic of China, as the Chinese Communists emerged victorious from the Chinese Civil War in 1949.

