

I. World War I

A. Long-term Causes

1. Nationalism
2. Economic Rivalries
3. Alliances – Central Powers (Austria-Hungary, Germany, Turkey), Allies (Russia, France, Great Britain).
4. Militarism – Germany and Britain raced to build the largest armies.

B. Immediate Causes

Assassination of Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand by a Serbian national.

Germany and Turkey joined forces to support Austria. Russia came in to protect Serbia. Very quickly – all of Europe was engulfed in war.

C. Innovations

1. trench warfare
2. machine guns
3. poison gas
4. airplanes

D. Effects

1. Millions killed, injured, and/or displaced.
2. Treaty of Versailles – created League of Nations, called for massive reparations to be paid by Germany, causing extreme hardship and contributing to the next world war.

II. Russian Revolution

The Russian Revolution began in 1917 due to economic hardships and a general dissatisfaction with the Tsarist government lead by Nicholas II. The people rebelled against the monarchy by protesting in the streets. Nicholas' Army met them with force. Bloody Sunday was the rallying cry for an all out Revolution. (Bloody Sunday was when thousands of protesting workers were slaughtered by Nicholas' White Army). This gave the Communist Party – also known as the Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Lenin, a strong foothold with the people. The Tsar's government was overthrown and the Communist took control of Russia, changing the countries name to the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics). The Tsar and his immediate family were murdered to insure that the Romanov Dynasty could never rise again and threaten Lenin's Communist government. After Lenin's death, Josef Stalin became the leader of the USSR. He would rule as a tyrant, killing or exiling anyone he felt was a threat to his Communist regime. Communism would remain the official government of the Soviet Union until 1991.

III. World War II

A. Causes

1. The rise of Fascist Dictators in Italy, and Germany made war almost inevitable.
2. League of Nations Failed
3. Hitler invaded the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia. Britain allowed it, trying to prevent war.
4. Germany invaded Poland.

B. War in Europe

1. Germany developed the blitzkrieg and quickly overran much of Europe. Hitler was unable to defeat Britain, however.
2. Germany attacked the Soviet Union. They fought bitterly, and over several years, the Soviets pushed the Germans back.
3. Hitler attempted to kill all Jews in the Holocaust. About 6 million Jews and 5 ½ million other ‘undesirables’ were murdered in the concentration camps and forced labor camps that were located throughout Germany and Poland.

C. War in Asia

1. Pearl Harbor – U.S. joined the Allies when Japan dropped bombs on Pearl Harbor.
2. American forces began “island-hopping” – liberating Pacific islands from Japanese control.
3. U.S. dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing tens of thousands.

D. End of the war

1. By 1945, Allied troops occupied all of Germany. Hitler committed suicide and Germany surrendered.
2. Japan surrendered after the atomic bombs were dropped.

E. Effects

1. The Allied forces occupied Germany and other Fascist countries, which later formed into democratic, and peaceful countries.
2. The collapse of European power left two Superpowers in control of the world: The United States and the Soviet Union. Their differences in viewpoint and in national interests rapidly led to the Cold War.

IV. Cold War and the Collapse of Communism

- A. Between 1945 and 1950, the wartime alliance between the U.S. and the Soviet Union broke down and the Cold War began. An “Iron Curtain” divided Eastern and Western Europe.

- B. The city of Berlin was divided into 4 sectors: French, British, American and Soviet. The Soviets formed a blockade to try to force the city to collapse and become communist. This led to the Berlin Airlift, which saved the city and the Soviets eventually stopped the blockade.
- C. Both the U.S. and the Soviet Union avoided head-on confrontation, but engaged in a worldwide competition for influence.
- D. Gorbachev's attempted reforms led to the collapse of Communism in the U.S.S.R. and in Eastern Europe.

V. European Union

The European Union was created to strengthen the economic systems of participating countries by reducing or eliminating taxes between trading countries. Many of the nations have merged their currencies into the Euro Dollar. The central idea behind the European Union was to compete economically with the United States, China and Japan. And to claim Europe's share in the Global Economy.