

CHAPTER 36-NEW CONFLAGRATIONS: WORLD WAR II AND THE COLD WAR

In 1931, the Japanese invaded Manchuria and then in 1937 launched a full-scale invasion of China. These acts were the start of World War II. The Japanese invasion of China was marked by large-scale attacks on civilians, including the bombing of Shanghai and the “Rape of Nanjing.” There was resistance from both the Nationalists and communists who formed a “united front” against the Japanese, but the two could not work together and Japan succeeded in gaining control.

In Europe, both Italy and Germany moved closer to war with the rest of Europe. Italy, while on the side of the Allies during World War I, had felt slighted at the Paris Peace Conference. Italy had suffered large losses in World War I and the economy was in ruins. Mussolini promised Italians a return of national glory and an empire. To acquire this empire, Mussolini annexed Libya and then invaded Ethiopia.

Germany resented the Treaty of Versailles because of the harsh conditions imposed on the nation. Hitler came to power, in part, because of his objections to the treaty. He blamed Jews and liberals for Germany’s defeat as well as the acceptance of the Treaty. Once in power, he ignored the Treaty, rebuilt the military, took back the Rhineland, annexed Austria (with the approval of many Austrians), took back the Sudetenland, and in 1939 seized Czechoslovakia. At every step, Britain and France failed to stop him because they did not want another war. In 1939, Germany invaded Poland and started World War II in Europe. Hitler seized most of Western Europe, almost conquered Britain and, in what was a major error, invaded Russia in 1941.

In Asia and the Pacific, Japan continued to expand and in 1941 attacked the United States at Pearl Harbor. 1941 brings both the United States and Russia into the war against the Axis powers.

The Russians defeated the Germans when they invaded and pushed them back into Eastern Europe while the Americans and British pushed the Germans out of North Africa and then invaded Italy. The United States and Britain then invaded Western Europe at Normandy in 1944 and forced the Germans back into Germany. Defeated on both fronts, Hitler committed suicide. Germany surrendered soon afterward.

In the Pacific, the Japanese were defeated by the Allied forces on islands throughout the Pacific. The Japanese islands themselves were bombed continuously. Finally, in August of 1945, two atom bombs were dropped on Japanese cities and the emperor surrendered.

World War II had several major impacts on society. The Holocaust, spurred on by the German idea of racial superiority, resulted in the murder of millions of people considered to be inferior including Jews, Gypsies, the handicapped, the mentally ill, political enemies, and religious leaders. Women were also impacted. They joined the workforce as they had in World War I, but they were also in uniform and members of resistance groups.

With the end of the war there seemed to be the possibility of a united world. The alliance between Russia and the west and formation of the United Nations seemed to strengthen that hope. But the divisions in thinking between the United States and the Soviet Union were too great and resulted in the “Cold War.” One of

the “hot” spots in the “cold” war was the conflict between North and South Korea. This soon involved China and the Soviet Union on the side of the North, and the United States and the United Nations on the side of the South.

Key Concept 6.1 Science and the Environment

III. Disease, scientific innovations and conflict led to demographic shifts.

Key Concept 6.2 Global Conflicts and Their Consequences

IV. Military conflicts occurred on an unprecedented global scale.

V. Although conflict dominated much of the 20th century, many individuals and groups including states opposed this trend. Some individuals and groups, however, intensified the conflicts.

Key Concept 6.3 New Conceptualizations of Global Economy, Society and Culture

I. States, communities and individuals became increasingly interdependent, a process facilitated by the growth of institutions of global governance.