

The Origins and Conduct of World War II

I. World War II in Europe

A. The Origins of World War II and the Versailles Peace Treaty

1. Reparations
2. War Guilt Clause

B. Why Was Hitler Surprised When England Declared War on Germany?

1. France and England said Germany was not allowed to rearm
 - a. 1935 — Hitler announced German rearmament
 - b. result: nothing happened
2. France and England said Germany was not allowed to occupy the Rhineland
 - a. 1936 (March) — Hitler ordered German troops into Rhineland
 - b. result: nothing happened
3. France and England said Germany was not allowed to unite with Austria
 - a. 1938 (March) — Hitler announced *Anschluss* with Austria
 - b. result: nothing happened
4. France and England guaranteed territorial integrity of Czechoslovakia
 - a. Hitler said he would take “Sudentenland” anyway
 - b. 1938 (September) — Chamberlain and Daladier signed Munich Agreement
5. Allies said Germany was not allowed to occupy Czechoslovakia
 - a. 1939 (March) — German troops occupied Prague
 - b. result: nothing happened
6. Allies said Germany was not allowed to attack Poland
 - a. 1939 (September) — Germany army invaded Poland
 - b. result: France and England declared war on Germany

C. Conduct of World War II in Europe

- 1939 — German–Soviet Non-Agression Pact (August)
 - German and Soviet armies invade Poland (September)
- 1940 — German occupation of France (June)
- 1941 — German army invades the Soviet Union (June 22)
- 1941 (Sept.)–1943 (Jan.) — siege of Leningrad
- 1943 — Capture of Paulus’ forces at Stalingrad (January)
 - Capture of Rommel’s forces in North Africa (May)
 - Western Allies invade Sicily (July); Italy surrenders (September)
- 1944 — D-Day (June 6)
 - Warsaw Uprising (August–September)
- 1945 — Yalta Agreement (February 4–12)
 - Nuremburg Trials (November 1945 to October 1946)

II. World War II in the Pacific

A. Origins

1. Japan — Showa Period (1926–1989) — Emperor Hirohito
2. World Depression
 - a. Japanese economy hit hard
 - b. From Westernization of Japan to Japanization of Asia
3. Mukden Incident (1931)
 - Manchukuo – puppet state in Manchuria
4. Attempted military coup (February 1936)
5. Japanese invasion of China (1937)
6. Japanese invasion of Indochina (1940–1941)
 - a. U.S. embargo against export of scrap iron, rubber, and oil (July 1941)
 - b. Ministry of Education issues “The Way of Subjects” (Summer 1941)
 - c. Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor December 7, 1941
 - d. Japanese attack on Philippines December 8, 1941

B. Ending

1. Bombing of Civilians
2. Atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima (Aug. 6, 1945)
3. Soviet Union enters war against Japan (Aug. 8, 1945)
4. Atom bomb dropped on Nagasaki (Aug. 9, 1945)
5. Japanese offer of surrender (Aug. 10, 1945) – accepted 4 days later
 - a. attempted military coup (August 14–15, 1945) — Major Kenji Hatanaka
 - b. Hirohito’s radio address to Japanese nation (August 15, 1945)

Recommended Reading:

– Lester Brooks, *Behind Japan’s Surrender: The Secret Struggle That Ended an Empire*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1968.