

History Revision Notes – Twentieth Century Conflict (Paper 1)

The First World War (1914 – 1918)

- Causes**
- The Triple Entente (Britain, France and Russia) and the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy) meant that any attack could result in a World War.
 - Long term tensions in Europe (e.g. France hated Germany for taking Alsace and Lorraine).
 - Nationalism – i.e. every country wanted what was best for them.
 - Imperialism / Colonisation – e.g. the scramble for Africa.
 - The arms race (navy = Britain and Germany, army = France and Germany).
 - War plans were made – e.g. the Schlieffen Plan (Germany) and Plan 17 (France).
 - The murder of Archduke Franz Ferdinand was the spark that caused the war.
- War Plans**
- The Schlieffen Plan → Defeat France through Belgium in 6 weeks.
→ Alliance of Britain with Belgium, so joined the war.
 - Plan 17 → France would attack and regain Alsace and Lorraine quickly.
→ Failed – troops went back towards Paris.
 - Returning French troops intercepted Germans – won Battle of the Marne.
 - Race to outflank each other – ended in stalemate, and trenches dug.
 - Gallipoli Campaign → Churchill aims to open supply routes for Russia (1915).
→ Take Turkey out of the war, capturing Constantinople.
→ 1st landing (Anzac Cove) failed – Turks prepared.
→ 2nd landing failed – British relax – Turks build forces.
→ Trenches dug out – stalemate again.
- Warfare**
- Russian advance = failure (biggest defeats = Tannenburg and Masaurian Lakes).
 - New weapons developed – flame throwers, machine guns, gas warfare, and tanks.
 - Mainly defensive weapons – easy to defend, hard to attack (stalemate in trenches).
 - If troops sent “over the top” nearly all were killed.
 - Difficult conditions in trenches – dangerous, rats spread disease, bad food, disease (trench foot, shell-shock), people wanted a “blighty one”, to be sent home.
 - Verdun – French try to defend 17 forts against German advance, succeed.
 - Battle of the Somme – French / British offensive = a million killed for 15km land.
 - Battle of Jutland (war at sea) – Germans did more damage, but retreated first. After battle = blockaded in the ports for rest of the war (Britain controlled the seas).
- The Home Front**
- Zeppelins attacked Britain from the air – searchlights helped to shoot them down.
 - Propaganda = used to get people to sign up (before conscription was introduced).
 - Women had to work in the factories etc. – the men were fighting in the trenches. Many of these jobs were dangerous, and women had a lot of responsibility.
 - This was the first step towards giving women the vote.
 - DORA (Defence Of the Realm Act) = restrictions, e.g. rationing and censorship.
 - Mandatory conscription introduced in 1916 (propaganda, e.g. Kitchener)
 - Conscientious Objectors refused to fight because of their beliefs (e.g. Quakers), but they still helped the war effort, an often did dangerous jobs.
- The war ends**
- Russia = starving and defeated. Revolution – “peace at any price”. Treaty of Brest-Litovsk takes Russia out of the war.
 - Zimmerman telegram promises Mexico Texas if joins the war. This and US ships sunk by U-boats prompts USA to enter war. But 6 months needed to get troops over.
 - German Ludendorff Offensive (final “push”) – bulge in trenches, Germans attacked from 3 sides by General Foch, Germans tired without supplies – therefore failed.
 - French Nivelle Offensive – failed. French army mutiny – Petain orders them shot.
 - 3rd Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele) – still stalemate.
 - Allied victories – Italy beat Austria, Turkey defeated, Bulgarian army surrenders.
 - Germany asks for an armistice (end to fighting).
 - German High Seas Fleet ordered for a final attempt at victory, but sailors mutiny.
 - 2 politicians signed an appeasement whatever the terms – Kaiser fled to Holland.
- Peace Treaty**
- Treaty of Versailles signed (1st World War considered as a “war to end all wars”).
 - Germany blamed for the war, her territory is divided up, and her army is limited. Massive fines (reparations) imposed. Rhineland = demilitarised.
 - Austria-Hungary broken up and forbidden to unite with Germany.
 - Turkey’s empire broken up. Poland made as an independent country.
 - Britain and France grow to the height of their powers (unfair?).

The Second World War (1939 – 1945)

- Causes**
- The Treaty of Versailles was harsh on Germany – feelings of resentment.
 - Adolf Hitler
 - Racial ideas (persecution of the Jews).
 - Acts aggressively – rearms, wants living space (Lebensraum).
 - Charismatic leader – promising a “greater Germany”.
 - Aggression in Europe
 - Mussolini rises in Italy – invaded Ethiopia.
 - Spanish Civil War (helped by Italy and Russia).
 - Japanese invasions China to expand territories.
 - Nazi-Soviet Pact makes Russia and Germany allies (but hate each other).
 - The Depression in America helped Hitler to rise to power.
 - Four steps to war
 - 1) Unite Germany and Austria.
 - 2) Unite Sudetenland (Czechoslovakia) with Germany – Hitler appeased by Chamberlain at Munich Conference.
 - 3) Take over the rest of Czechoslovakia.
 - 4) Invade Poland – Britain / France = war on Germany.
- Warfare**
- Hitler used “Blitzkrieg” (lightening warfare) in order to quickly invade and take over a country, using a combined attack by aircraft, tanks and artillery.
 - Britain / France = not able to begin fighting immediately – it was a “phoney war”.
 - Preparations for war – women / children evacuated to countryside, air raid shelters built, “blackout” at night, mandatory gas masks.
 - Hitler invades Denmark and Norway – Chamberlain replaced by Churchill.
 - Operation Yellow – Hitler invades Holland and Belgium, then France by going around the Maginot Line – occupy North. South France = Vichy France (Petain).
 - Evacuation at Dunkirk – ships from Britain save British troops (live to fight another day). Great British defeat, but used as propaganda – i.e. the “Dunkirk spirit”.
 - Battle of Britain
 - Operation Sealion – German troops waiting to invade, but need control of the air.
 - Luftwaffe winning – RAF airfields badly damaged.
 - Switch attacks to London – RAF reorganises forces.
 - RAF defeat Luftwaffe a week later – 60 planes lost.
 - Hitler switches to night time bombing – Britain won Battle of Britain, but Blitz begins.
 - The “Blitz”
 - Aim to damage trade, production and British morale.
 - ARP (Air Raid Precautions) introduces shelters, blackouts, air raid sirens, and barrage balloons.
 - Didn’t do as much damage as anticipated, but Britain still alone.
- Allies expand**
- Operation Barbarossa
 - Germans invade Russia, looks like Russia will fall.
 - Stalin recovers – war leader for Great Fatherland War.
 - Scorched-Earth policy / factories moved beyond Urals.
 - Lend-lease aid from USA / determined to fight.
 - Germans pushed out – Stalingrad, Kursk, Leningrad.
 - War in Pacific
 - Japan attacks Pearl Harbour, 1941 = US war on Japan.
 - Japan is slowly pegged back by US Navy – “island hopping”.
 - Allied bombing damages German industry.
 - Germany and the Axis powers have captured too much territory too fast – can’t hold onto it (“victory disease”).
 - Allied victory at El Alamein gives them the advantage in Africa.
 - January 1944, Allies attack Gustav Line (Italy) – push Germans to Gothic Line.
 - June 1944, Operation Overlord – D-Day landings / Germany driven from France.
 - Air attacks on Britain (V-1 and V-2 pilotless rockets) continues.
 - Allies increase bombing on Berlin – win control of the German skies.
 - Battle of the Bulge
 - Allies try to invade Germany from France – General Montgomery fails to cross the Rhine.
 - Eisenhower orders a slower advance.
 - December 1944, Germans drive Allies back (Battle of the Bulge), but lose thousands of men and weapons.
 - Germans can only defend – Allies advance.
 - Throughout 1944, Soviets drive Germans back to Germany – poised to strike at Germany itself by the end of the year.
 - 1945, Soviets get to Berlin first – meet with US and British forces in Berlin.

- End of the war in Europe (V.E. day = 7th May).
- Japan carries on war in Asia – USA use atomic bombs (Hiroshima and Nagasaki).
- End of the war in Asia (V.J. day = 15th August).

The Cold War (1945 – 1989)

- Definition*
- Political conflict between the USA (democracy) and the USSR (communist).
 - It was a “cold” war, because there was no fighting (although there nearly was).
 - Competition – e.g. the space race, the arms race (nuclear), and sports.
 - Conflicts abroad – Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, Berlin Blockade.
 - Alliances – NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) = democratic alliance, Warsaw Pact = communist (Soviet) alliance.
- Berlin Blockade*
- Germany is occupied (1945) – split into 4 zones (British, US, French, Soviet).
 - British, US, and French zones combine to form West Germany (capitalist).
 - Russia creates (and exploits) East Germany – iron curtain through Europe.
 - Marshall Plan gives money to countries if become democratic – USSR refuses.
 - Berlin lies in the East – but both sides want it.
 - Stalin blocks access to Berlin by road and rail.
 - Have to save Berlin (Truman doctrine of containment) – Berlin airlift.
 - Berlin wall built in 1961.
- Cuba*
- Playground for rich Americans in the 1950s.
 - 1959, Fidel Castro takes power. US factories “nationalised” – US cuts trade links.
 - CIA tries to oust Castro at the Bay of Pigs – failure!
 - Castro turns to Russia – missile bases set up (could wipe out USA).
 - Stand-off between Kennedy and Khrushchev – brinkmanship.
 - US naval blockade of Cuba.
 - Eventually both sides back down – a “hot-line” is established.
- The Arms Race*
- Effects of nuclear attack = blast, dust, heat, radiation. Long term effects = radiation, deformities, climate changes (nuclear winter).
 - Range – tactical = battlefield, theatre = one country, strategic = country to country.
 - Cuban missile crisis (1960 to 1962)
 - Nuclear proliferation (1960s and 1970s)
 - NATO / Warsaw Pact – having weapons is a deterrent (i.e. MAD theory – Mutually Assured Destruction).
 - CND (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament) emerges – unilateral = one country disarming, multilateral = more than one country disarming.
 - Reduction – treaties and SALT talks (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks).